

***Implementing Sustainable Strategies for
Rural Land Use Planning & Resource
Management of Publicly Owned Assets: an
analysis of environmental assessment
systems being developed by the British
Columbia Ministry of Sustainable Resource
Management.***

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Paper Outline

- Overview of land use facts for British Columbia.
- History of development of land use planning & resource management system for rural & remote regions of northern British Columbia.
- Identification of opportunities to improve system by introducing EIA processes.
- Delineation of lessons-learned over past three years.

Overview of land use facts for Province of British Columbia

● Population (2001)	Millions	% of Total
Total Provincial	3.9	100
Urban (Cities/Towns/Villages)	3.2	82
Rural	0.7	18
Lower Mainland/Capital R.	2.6	67
● Land Area	Square Km	% of Total
Total Provincial	926,492	100.0
Urban (Cities/Towns/Villages)	6,668	0.7
Rural	919,824	99.3
Lower Mainland/Capital R.	3,988	0.4

History of development of planning system for BC's rural & remote regions

- 1910 – First Royal Commission on Forest Resources recommended creation of Forest Service & designation of “forest reserves.”
- 1912 -- Forest Act & BC Forest Branch created.
- 1937 -- Report on Forest Resources encouraged adoption of sustained yield regulation.
- 1944 – Sloan Commission recommended movement from “unmanaged & unregulated liquidation” to “planned & regulated policy.”
- 1947 -- Forest Act - first sustained yield policy.
- 1956 – Second Royal Commission - little progress - sustained yield planning & management system.

History continues

- 1976 -- Pearse Commission - balance between industrial forestry & other land uses.
- 1980s – Environmental backlash & growing First Nation's activism.
- 1991 – Election of a left of center government promising reform to planning used on Crown Land.
- 1992 -- Protected Areas Strategy introduced which undertook to raise proportion of Crown Lands under conservation from 6 to 12 %.
- 1995 -- New Forest Practices Code is established and a series of guidebooks are released including the Biodiversity Guidebook.

History continues

- 1996 – Land Use Co-ordination Office created & establishment of comprehensive process to develop Strategic Land Use Plans.
- 2001 – Results-based management is brought into practice to achieve Sustainable Resource Management. Creation of the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM).
- 2002 – New strategy of Sustainable Resource Management (SRM) planning - landscape level.

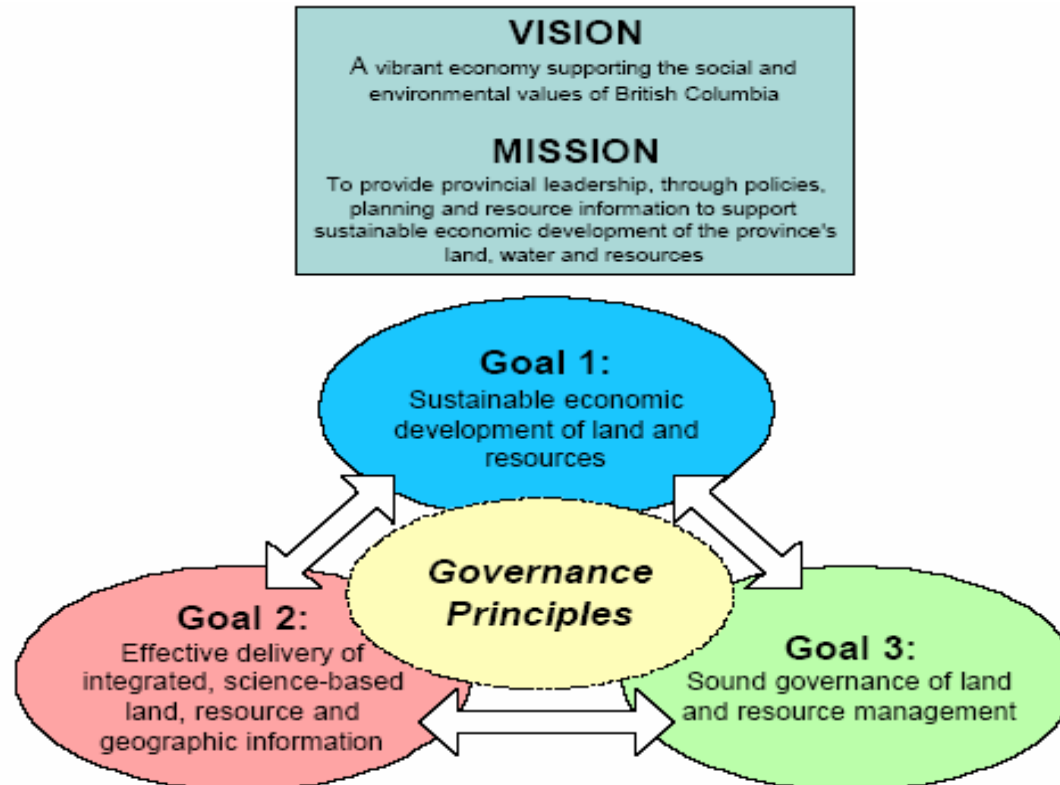
Summary Observations

- 1945 to 1991 -- top-down approach to land use planning & management - desire to promote resource-based model of economic development.
- Mid-1980s -- environmentalist backlash, combined with growing First Nations' activism. In 1991, NDP elected - resolve 'the war in the woods'.
- Period from 1991 - 2001 -- New phase of participatory strategic land planning.
- Period 2001 - Present -- Liberal government elected & undertakes comprehensive review/reorganization of delivery of provincial government services. New Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management.

Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (Created in 2001)

- Land & resource planning, policy development & data collection responsibilities centralized in MSRM.
- **Mandate:**
- To promote a vibrant economy through the sustainable development of BC's natural resources while maintaining environmental integrity.

MSRM Vision, Mission, Goals and Governance Principles for Sustainability



**Source: Vision, Mission and Goals outlined in the Ministry's 2003/04-2005/06 Service Plan*

Governance Principles for Sustainability

- **Certainty in decision-making**
 - Certainty
 - Competitiveness
 - Efficiency
- **Accountable and Responsive Government**
 - Accountability
 - Continual improvement & innovation
 - Science-based decision-making
 - Transparency
- **Shared Stewardship**
 - Inclusion
 - Integration
 - Shared responsibility

Mechanism for Implementation - -MSRM

- Staff of 730 in four divisions operates within five defined Core Business Areas
 - Sustainable Economic Development -- Resource Management Division develops resource-based opportunities through land & resource plans, facilitates
 1. development of tools to improve decision-making &
 2. increased participation with First Nations.
 - Integrated Land and Resource Information – Land Information Services Division collects & maintains data base of registry, resource, & geographic information.
- First two Business Areas account for over 80% of Ministry's activities.

Anticipated Service Outcomes

- To increase level of certainty required for optimal development of land & resources.
- Ministry staff anticipate that new mandate & policy will result in a shift in land use planning.

- **From**

- Slow & costly process
- Government led
- Consensus-based
- Multi-agency

- **To**

- Expedited & time-limited
- Partnerships
- Consultative review
- Single authorities/responsibilities



BC's Land Use Zones.

Land Use Zone	Percentage of Provincial Land Base
New Strategic Land Use Plan Protected Areas	4.9
New Non- Strategic Land Use Plan Protected Areas	2.0
Original Protected Areas	5.6
Special Management Zones – Non-logging	1.5
Special Management Zones – General	14.9
Enhanced	15.9
Agriculture/Private	3.4
General/Unclassified	26.3
Unplanned	<u>25.4</u>
Total	100.0

Opportunities to Improve System by Introducing Strategic EIA Processes

- Sadler and Verheem (1996) define Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as:
“a systematic process of evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed policy, plan and programme initiatives in order to ensure that they are fully included and appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision making on par with economic and social considerations.”

Opportunities to Improve System (continues)

- Noble (2002) observes that:

“while Environmental Impact Assessment focuses narrowly on the potential environmental impacts that may arise from a specific development project, SEA is set within a context of broader visions, goals and objectives.. The strategic component of SEA is the process of defining goals or visions in terms of the desirable principles to be established, proposing alternative possibilities to achieve these principles, and selecting the most desirable approach.”

Summary Observations

- Centralization of planners in one agency - critical mass exists to introduce multifaceted planning techniques such as Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- MSRM responsibility for development of principles, strategic policies & legislation - framework to incorporate SEA at policy, plan & programme level.
- Governance Principles for Sustainability - provide first steps in developing comprehensive set of operational sustainability principles to inform decision-making.

Delineates Lessons-learned over the past three years

- Centralization of planning responsibilities resulted in:
 - expedited planning processes.
 - heightened awareness as to who is responsible for (who isn't) land use & resource planning.
 - past difficulties in ministries not fulfilling their planning responsibilities eliminated.
- Movement from Consensus-based Planning Model to Consultative Review will most likely result in:
 - difficulty to garner public support as users of resource base will not play an active role in planning.
 - continued lack of integration of community & resource planning processes.

Lessons- learned (Continues)

- Partnership driven planning will result in:
 - expedited & time-limited planning - respond to economic opportunities - may not deal with broad land use & resource issues.
 - immediate outcomes - economic focus at early stage of plan process - unclear on long-term impacts to social & environmental issues.
- Over the past decade, political system has used participatory planning & environmental assessment to effectively resolve land use conflict. Opportunity to build upon this knowledge & experience.