

March 2011

Community Forest Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a community forest?

A: A community forest is a forestry operation managed by a local government, community group, or First Nation for the benefit of the community. Community forests help communities diversify their local forest economies. These are area-based tenures, which allow communities to manage harvesting operations as well as other values such as trails and recreation sites, wildlife, water supply, and scenic viewsapes.

Q: Who is involved in the Cheakamus Community Forest?

A: The Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW), Squamish Nation, and Lil'wat Nation are partners in the community forest venture with Richmond Plywood acting as the operating contractor.

Q: Why does Whistler want to operate a community forest?

A: The RMOW has long recognized the primary importance of sound land management on the viewsapes and watersheds of the area to support the long-term economic, social and ecological viability of the resort community and to the regional economy. The community forest clearly recognizes that the natural beauty of the area is a strong draw for tourism and has those values at the top of mind when planning community forest operations.

The primary benefit of a community forest is that the RMOW and its partners will have management control of forest harvesting surrounding Whistler and not a private forestry company

Q: Does this mean Whistler can stop logging in the area?

A: No. The community forest tenure carries a legal obligation mandated by the Ministry of Forests and Range to harvest 20,000 cubic metres of wood per year, which is substantially less than has been harvested in the past by private companies. The Cheakamus Community Forest successfully negotiated with the Ministry of Forests and Range to reduce the amount of timber to be cut in the area from 33 – 36,000 m³ to 20,000 m³. If the community forest did not exist, private companies would be harvesting up to that amount each year with extremely limited input from Whistler.

The community forest partners hold the community forest tenure in an incorporated Limited Partnership. The Cheakamus Community Forest Society is responsible for planning, management, and operations. The Cheakamus Community Forest Society has contracted the operations to a local forestry operator - Richmond Plywood.

Q: Is old growth forest being logged?

A: Harvesting of some old growth trees will occur, but there will not be large clear cut openings as has been done in the past, and the CCF is focusing on second growth areas. Approximately 50 per cent of the Community Forest land is old growth forest, particularly in the upper elevations. To minimize the impacts of harvesting and place priority on community values, the community forest is developing an ecosystem-based



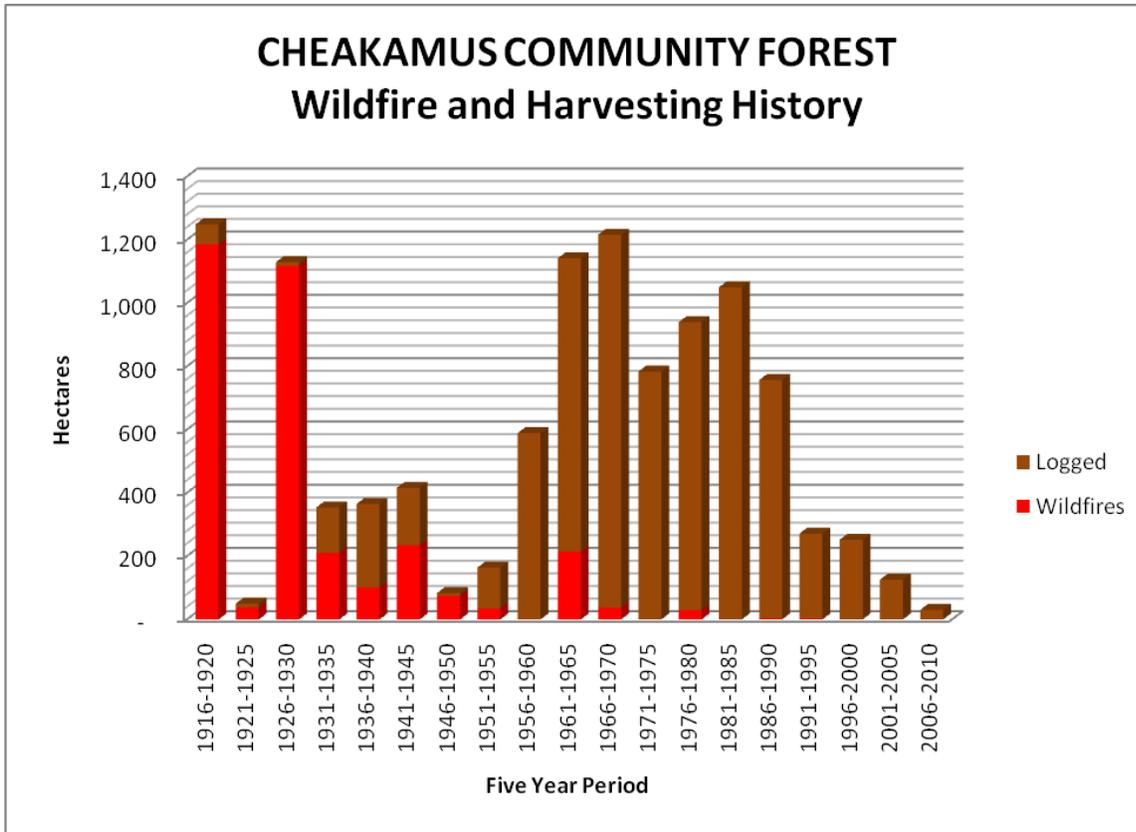
management plan with EcoTrust Canada, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating a conservation economy, based on small-scale, sustainable harvesting that Richmond Plywood has committed to carrying out. The partners are particularly interested in small group selection, variable retention and shelterwood silviculture systems, and managing for visual quality, watersheds, recreation and cultural values.

As the tenure holder, the RMOW and its partners will set the standards for harvesting in line with their sustainability and cultural goals: an opportunity that does not exist for the RMOW outside of a community forest tenure. The actual harvesting will be done by local contractors in accordance with the ecosystem-based management plan and Forest Stewardship Plan guidelines.

Based on this foundation, a silviculture plan was developed that complements these goals. It employs small openings of 2 to 5 hectares using selective and shelterwood harvesting methods, meaning that trees will be left throughout each cut block site.

Remaining Old Growth Area (ha) in the Community Forest - 2009 EBM Plan

Coastal Western Hemlock, Southern Dry Maritime	28%
Coastal Western Hemlock, Southern Moist Submaritime	52%
Mountain Hemlock	85%
Englemann Spruce, Subalpine Fir	100%



The RMOW Council-appointed Forest & Wildlands Advisory Committee (FWAC) will provide advice and input to the management of the community forest, along with the First Nations' referral committees. The public is welcome to contact FWAC members to provide comment. They can do so by contacting AWARE or WORCA which both have permanent seats on FWAC or by contacting Heather Beresford at the RMOW (604-935-8374 or hberesford@whistler.ca).

Q. How much land will be affected by harvesting 20,000 cubic metres?

A: A typical 40' utility pole contains about 0.7 m³. A logging truck carries about 40 m³. A rough estimate of the land harvested through the community forest Annual Allowable Cut of 20,000 m³ is 40 hectares at 500m³/hectare. The community forest landbase is approximately 30,000 hectares.

Q: What is ecosystem-based management?

A: Ecosystem-based management is the gold standard in sustainable forestry. It is fundamentally about ensuring that the entire ecosystem is fully functional and protected through all current and future forest development. It is about going from volume-based to value-based forestry.



Whistler, the First Nations and local stakeholders are working with the non-profit organization Ecotrust Canada to custom design an ecosystem-based management forestry plan with a sustainable harvest level that will not harm sensitive habitat or destroy viewscapes, scenery and First Nation cultural values.

Q: What is the Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP)?

A: A Forest Stewardship Plan is required by government before the CCF can operate. It is the guiding management document written by the CCF and approved by the Ministry of Forests & Range that directs how the community forest will be managed. Under the Forest and Range Practices Act, the results and strategies in Forest Stewardship Plans must be consistent with government objectives, which address values such as cultural heritage resources, soils, water, fish, wildlife, biodiversity, timber, forage, recreation, resource features, and visual quality. The Forest Stewardship Plan was developed using the ecosystem based management plan and describes how the community forest will meet the government objectives through its forest practices.

Q: What is certification by the Forest Stewardship Council?

A: The partners are preparing to have the community forest certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). FSC is a voluntary system to independently audit the practices of forest managers against objective, performance-based standards encompassing environmental, social and economic values. Certified forest managers can then use the FSC logo to market their timber to manufacturers, wholesalers and consumers who are guaranteed that they are buying good wood from sustainably managed forests.

Q: How does operating a community forest meet Whistler's sustainability initiatives?

A: Building on Whistler2020 as a foundation, the community forest will refer to the sustainability plan in its decision-making process, as well as the Xay Temixw Land Use Plan (Squamish), and the Lil'wat Land Use Plan, which all articulate the importance of sound land management to support the long-term economic, social and ecological viability of the communities.

The following community stewardship and management objectives will be used to guide the management of the Cheakamus Community Forest:

- * To support Whistler's community sustainability initiatives by ensuring that Whistler's watersheds and viewscapes are managed in an ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable manner;
- * To manage and direct land management activities in a manner that will conserve and enhance visual values, forest health/habitat values, public recreation values and protect public safety;
- * To foster a cooperative management approach to resource management in the Sea to Sky corridor to ensure that all stakeholders and resource sectors are treated equitably, thereby continuing to support local resource employment;
- * To generate incremental employment, especially for First Nations people, by promoting and soliciting additional investments in land stewardship activities.

Q: How big is the community forest?

A: The total area for the community forest is about 30,000 hectares. Its boundaries are based on the



previous Local Resource Use Plan boundary, and encompass the Brandywine, Callaghan, Madely, Rainbow, 19 Mile, 16 Mile, Wedge, Cheakamus, and Daisy Lake areas.

Q: How is the public being engaged in the proposed harvesting plans?

A: The CCF is committed to working with area residents and stakeholders. It will hold at least two open houses each year – one in the spring before harvesting takes place, and one in the fall to review the season. In autumn 2010, the CCF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with WORCA about how the two will work together, and a permanent seat for WORCA was created on the RMOW Forest & Wildland Advisory Committee (FWAC) which meets monthly to review all forestry issues in the area and reports to Council. AWARE also has a permanent seat on FWAC. The CCF continues to work with commercial recreation operators like Canadian Snowmobiles, Blackcomb Snowmobiles and others, plus has an extensive mailing list that receives updates and the annual reports. If you would like to be added, please contact Heather Beresford at the RMOW.

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