

Empowering the Regions of B.C.

- Bob Williams / 2017
P.I.B.C. Conference
Prince George
- Former Minister of Lands
Forests & Water Resources
- Former Deputy Minister
Crown Corporations
- Former Chair ICBC
... and teacher at SCARP

In B.C.

We are two provinces

- ▶ The Coast
- ▶ The Interior & North

- ▶ Booming on the urban coast
- ▶ Flat or declining in the Interior

It is a failure of the public imagination as the great American Wendell Berry argues about our rural landscape.

Human capital is not valued because of our forest tenure system

There is no access to the resource.

An absentee corporation

or

Absentee government

Ignores community and manages what it sees

as

a Digitalized World

The Mission Statement (2010) of the B.C. Forest Service was:

“To provide superior service to resource stakeholders by supporting competitive business conditions and by managing forest and range values”

Which is a terribly narrow view of their responsibility in managing the 250 billion dollar asset that our forests represent.

We must of course be much more...

Wendell Berry makes the point:

Industrial economics has clouded our being so much that it has almost stifled our imagination.

We could have our giant natural regions performing both more effectively and fully as part of a decentralized province, led by a Forester General. We could have thoughtful agents of change that facilitate new settlement in our hinterland - with woodlots, community forests, supporting cooperatives and new hamlets, pockets of settlement where only massive corporate tenures were before as well as building a stronger and more diverse value - added industry, and better industrial plant.

The corporate names of the past:

- ▶ MacMillan Bloedel
- ▶ Weldwood
- ▶ Crown Zellerbach
- ▶ Fletcher Challenge
- ▶ B.C. Forest Products
- ▶ Doman

and countless others have collected the public rent of the resource and moved on

Leaving a small oligopoly in Control

- ▶ Canfor
- ▶ Tolko
- ▶ West Fraser
- ▶ Western Forest Productions

and a few others controlling some 20 million hectares.

THE SYSTEM IS BROKEN... WE HAVE TO FIX IT...

Our recent unhappy history compels us to fix BC's under-performing forest sector.

- ▶ After 100 years our BC Forest Service was eliminated by this government in the past year.
- ▶ Forest Research Branch disbanded
- ▶ Even annual reports were terminated
- ▶ Forestry inventory and data is not kept up to date; there is no satisfactory reporting of our numbers
- ▶ Forest stewardship has been weakened and nominally transferred to corporations without adequate monitoring and oversight on plans
- ▶ We have over-cut and have no assurance of sustainability
- ▶ Our coastal forests have flat-lined in terms of output and productivity
- ▶ The Chief Forester role greatly reduced
- ▶ We remain in this continual state of decline

FORESTRY

▶ A monstrous failure under this government:

- ▶ Decline in allowable cut, a huge decline.
- ▶ Most sawmills closed in our history.
- ▶ Huge decline in employment.
- ▶ All a result of over-cutting.
- ▶ Forest Service eliminated on it's 100th anniversary, when it was most needed.

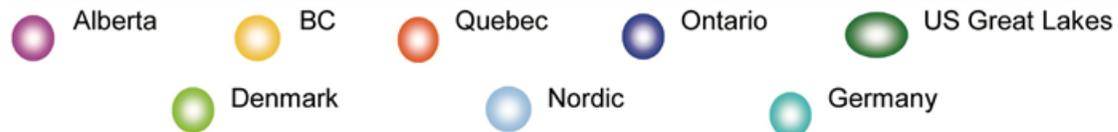
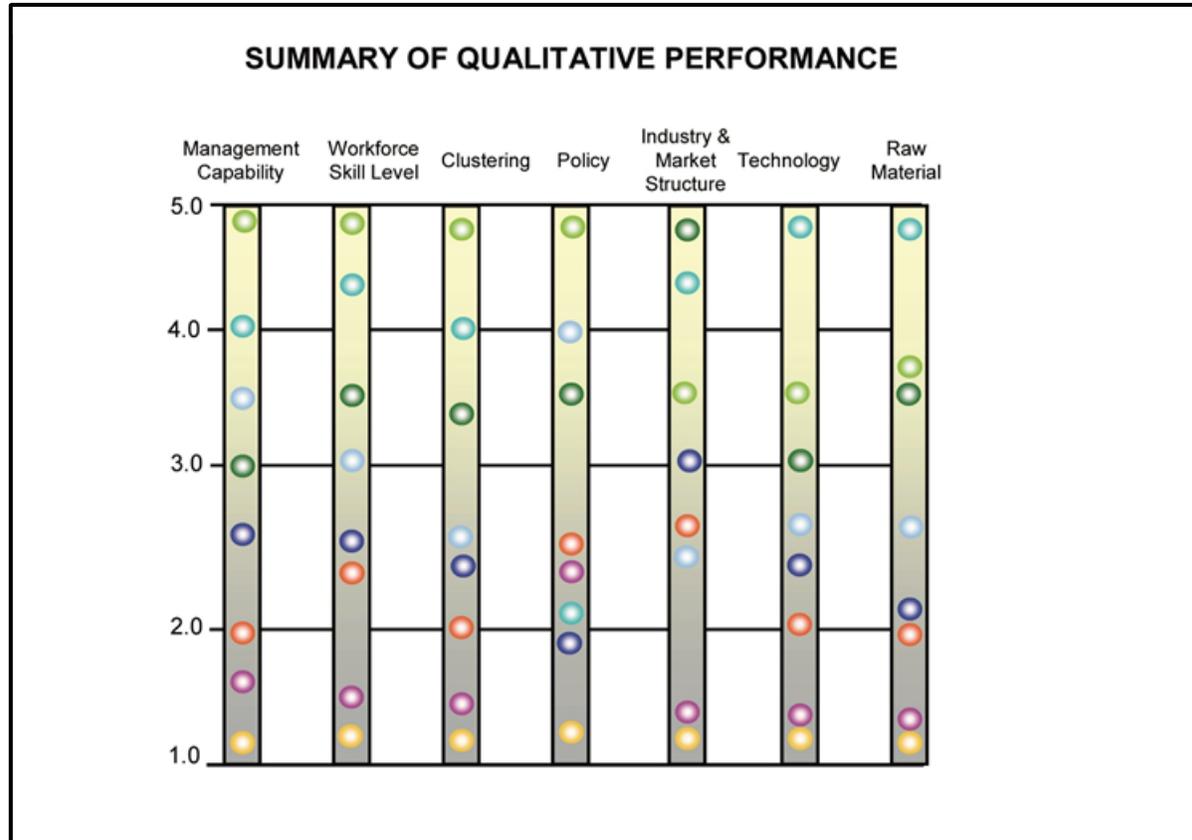
▶ Compared to Swedes with the same land area:

They have been able to:

- ▶ Double the cut.
- ▶ Double the production.
- ▶ 50 % more employment.
- ▶ 50 % more new forest as a result of superb planning.

BC FORESTRY:

A FAILURE RELATIVE TO OUR COMPETITION



- ▶ Value Added in forestry is only 10% of our total forest exports
- ▶ Ontario has 63% of their exports in the value-add category
- ▶ And...
- ▶ We even grow for volume rather than quality which could be four times in value

The result:

- ▶ Rural life is impoverished
 - ▶ Diversity is lost
 - ▶ Small enterprise cannot naturally evolve because of the lack of access to use public lands
-
- ▶ And yet -
 - ▶ We have a few small examples that we should replicate elsewhere
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- ▶ And integrate with First Nations
 - ▶ Mission Municipal Tree Farm
 - ▶ Revelstoke Community Tree Farm
 - ▶ North Cowichan Municipal Forest
 - ▶ Creston Community Forest
 - ▶ Lumby - Vernon Log Yard
-
- ▶ But we lose our young folks from these regions

CREATE A FOREST CHARTER

- ▶ Our forests are one of the provinces' great iconic assets.
- ▶ We must establish new standards of forest management in the Charter.
- ▶ We must begin to emulate our peers and manage intensively with more planting, enhancing and thinning.
- ▶ We must preserve most of our ancient forests.
- ▶ The Forester General must report each year on the progress made.

The Columbian Basin Trust

- ▶ The result of the thinking of James W. Wilson, our first planning professional responsible for re-settlement on the Arrow Lakes and his book:
 - ▶ “People in the way”
- ▶ Who urged me to think of additional compensation for that great region.
- ▶ I took it to Premier Glen Clark when Deputy Minister
- ▶ The idea that we should share the rent of the view with the region
- ▶ He responded:
 - “If we do it there, everyone will want it”
- ▶ I responded:
 - “I hope so Minister, I hope so”

With that came Columbia Power

Literally empowering them to
make choices economically
and environmentally

The longer term goal

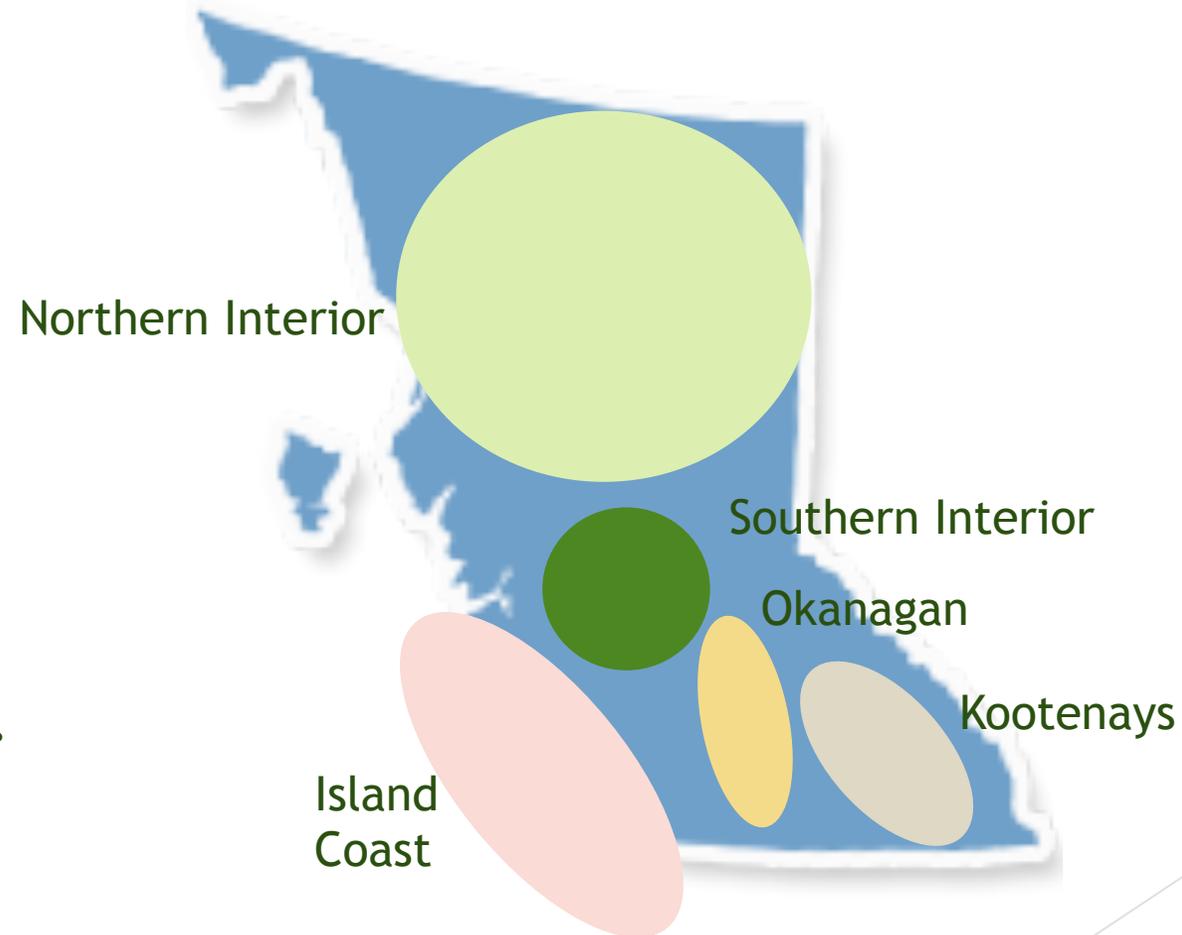
Was to decentralize natural
resource management...
water... AND... forests.

CREATE THE OFFICE OF FORESTER-GENERAL

- ▶ To report to the whole legislature all the time; not just to a Minister and partisan government.
- ▶ To be the custodian of all information, data, and forest inventory.
- ▶ To coordinate with Regional Foresters in the five great regions of the province to establish plans for each region.
- ▶ To report to independent Standing Committees of the Legislature for those regions. Local MLA's would populate each committee.

The Macro Regions of BC

The closer to
the people,
the better
forestry will be.



The Provincial Legislature

BREAK IT UP!



Standing Regional Committees of the House

Standing Committees of the House

- ▶ A brilliant idea from Alistair Crerar
- ▶ One of great early planners in B.C.
- ▶ From the early Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board
- ▶ and
- ▶ subsequently the Director of the Environment & Land Use Secretariat of the Barrett government
- ▶ who
- ▶ pioneered Integrated Resource Management for B.C

A case in point...

- ▶ The need to decentralize the forests of the Cowichan Valley
- ▶ 88% of the CVRD is in locked up forest tenures
- ▶ TFC's and TimberWest
 - ▶ (former E&N Lands)
- ▶ The largest First Nation in the province on a postage stamp reserve
- ▶ The need for new opportunities & access
- ▶ The need to provide more first nations and local employment
- ▶ The logs go out unprocessed
- ▶ WFP pays only 25¢ a cubic meter to the Crown for half of its cut
- ▶ It's time to join the dots.

And... as an aside; the Kamloops question....

KAMLOOPS

- ▶ Recognize the case for Kamloops to be the regional centre for the Southern Interior.
- ▶ Two great rivers.
- ▶ Two national railways.
- ▶ However 3 generations of Bennetts' twisted everything to Kelowna and their family land holdings... Highways, bridges, services, UBC Okanagan, etc.
- ▶ NDP originally planned on ICBC locating in Kamloops.
- ▶ We could still move the ICBC call centre to Kamloops - the largest call centre in the province.
- ▶ Peak employment at the call centre could benefit students at Thompson Rivers University and the whole city.
- ▶ Develop a partnership with the University's development arm to investigate the "inland port" opportunity in the Kamloops basin.