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Decision Support Framework: A mental model for integrating the environmental and human dimensions into management decisions related to changes in natural disturbance events

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	<p>Kathie Swift RPF Manager – Knowledge Exchange FORREX Forum for Research and Extension in Natural Resources Kathie.Swift@forrex.org</p>	<p>Al Wiensczyk Extension Specialist FORREX Forum for Research and Extension in Natural Resources Alan.Wiensczyk@forrex.org</p>	
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Abstract

Almost everything a human being does involves making some form of decision. As the complexity of the decision increases, so does the process involved in making that decision. Climate change is expected to cause shifts in natural disturbance regimes. Thus, a major challenge facing natural resource managers and policymakers in BC will be adapting post-disturbance land management decisions and activities to address these shifts. To help meet this challenge we have proposed a framework, in the form of a mental model, designed to provide strategic guidance on one possible way to integrate projected changes in natural disturbance regimes into actions and decisions on the ground. The goal of this model is to promote local decision-making using information and tools to build forested ecosystems that are resilient to the potential and uncertain shifts in natural disturbance regimes.

The framework is supported by a number of topical syntheses designed to document the expected shifts in the frequency and severity of major disturbance types, to define and quantify the potential effects of natural disturbances and the incremental effects of management decisions on natural (watershed values, forest succession, forest carbon, and biodiversity) and human (social, economic, and cultural communities, including First Nations) systems. In this presentation we will discuss the proposed framework, provide examples of how it is currently being used and applied locally in central British Columbia, and briefly describe some of the supporting work associated with this project.

Biography

Kathie Swift RPF is a fourth generation forester and is one of the founding extension specialists of FORREX. Her current role with FORREX is Manager-Knowledge Exchange. She brings to her extension role a diversity of experiences in her over 25-year involvement in forestry – everything from conducting research to running forestry education programs in her local school district. She has an avid interest in problem-solving, and strives to put context around natural resource management issues so that the solutions developed are practical and effective in their application. Kathie is currently registered with the Association of BC Forest Professionals as a Professional Forester: she holds an Honour's Bachelor of Science in Forestry from Lakehead University and a Masters of Science from the University of British Columbia.

Al Wiensczyk RPF has been an Extension Specialist with FORREX Forum for Research and Extension in Natural Resources in British Columbia since 1999 and brings a blend of research, extension and operational experience to his program area. His area of expertise is in the field of Ecosystems and Stand Management and his recent work has focused on synthesis and extension of information on silvicultural systems, forest health, growth and yield, and vegetation management. Al is currently registered with the Association of BC Forest Professionals as a Professional Forester. He holds an Honour's Bachelor of Science in Forestry and a Master of Science in Forestry degrees from Lakehead University.