

Cultural Heritage Resource Stewardship Monitoring: Taking the First Steps in the Field

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The summer field season is upon us, and the FREP cultural heritage resource value team is hard at work on multiple fronts. This newsletter describes several ongoing projects and initiatives that our team will be engaged in over the next several months.



Haida Gwaii Forest District. Photo Credit: Lisa Levesque, 2007.

Quality Assurance...

...is the consciousness and the discipline to meet the highest standard through systematic processes and continuous improvement.

The FREP Mission:

To be a world leader in Resource Stewardship Monitoring and effectiveness evaluations; providing the science-based information needed for decision-making and continuous improvement of British Columbia's forest and range practices, policies and legislation.

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/frep/index.htm>

UNDERSTANDING THE SPATIAL AND QUALITY ATTRIBUTES OF CULTURALLY IMPORTANT PLANT SPECIES

Aboriginal Peoples continue to rely on traditionally used forest botanical species for cultural, recreational, subsistence, and economic activities. The wide range of plant species with cultural significance to First Nations requires diverse



forest ecosystems in which to thrive. In some cases, very specific quality attributes are also required—attributes that make a particular gathering site, or a plant itself, sufficient or desirable for cultural use.

In this project, we are developing standard methods and protocols to collect information on the spatial and quality attributes of culturally important plant species. Our confirmed partners include the Centre for Non-Timber Resources, and the Haida and Nak'azdli First Nations. Initially, we will gather background information on local species of interest through workshops, interviews with knowledgeable elders and community members, and



literature searches. We will also review existing ecosystem mapping and inventories for the study areas (TEM/PEM, vegetation inventories, BEC, etc.). We will then further develop and test draft vegetation inventory methods and field cards that

incorporate cultural use and quality information. In 2009, we will undertake additional field-testing and inventory work to refine the protocols and resultant map data.

The mapping data obtained through this project will be vitally important to improve our understanding of the distribution, abundance, and quality of culturally significant habitats and species within defined geographical areas. It will also allow FREP to critically evaluate the effects of current and future harvesting and forest development activities on the availability and accessibility of plants of importance to First Nations.

FIRST NATIONS FREP TECHNICIANS

Many of FREP's First Nations partners desire an active role in field monitoring within their traditional territories, particularly monitoring associated with cultural heritage resources (CHRs) on the land base. Development and testing of field monitoring protocols continues, and a close working relationship with our First Nations partners is critical to the success of this work. FREP is therefore excited to welcome four new First Nations Monitoring Technicians who will support the program's activities during the 2008 field season in the Fort St. James, Chilcotin (Alexis Creek), Cascades (Lillooet), and Haida Gwaii forest districts.

These technicians will provide numerous tangible and intangible benefits for the program. For example, they will:

- build district capacity and improve our ability to complete an increasing number of resource value monitoring protocols;
- play a key role in testing and advancing the development of indicators and protocols;
- help to determine local priorities for CHR monitoring;
- raise awareness and support among local First Nations for FREP; and
- raise awareness within the MFR about First Nations forest values and knowledge systems.

For the technicians themselves, we hope that these positions provide an opportunity to gain professional field experience in the resource management sector. Welcome to Bruce Baptiste (Tsi Del Del First Nation), Darwyn John (St'at'imc Nation), Sean Brennan (Haida Nation), and Dwayne Martin (T'lazt'en Nation)!

DEVELOPING CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE FIELD CARDS AND PROTOCOLS

In the coming months, our team will test and finalize resource stewardship monitoring field checklists and protocols for known and geographically defined cultural sites or features. More specifically, this routine monitoring will be designed to assess two important questions:

- How often are licensees actively managing for known First Nations interests at the cutblock level (e.g., conserving or protecting culturally modified trees, changing block boundaries to avoid spiritual sites, etc.)?
- How effective are different management approaches at conserving or protecting these known and geographically defined sites or features (e.g., windfirm buffers around features, selective harvesting to conserve understory plants, etc.)?



Draft checklists and protocols were discussed and finalized at a provincial meeting in Kamloops on July 8–9, 2008. The sites and/or features we are focusing on this year include:

- culturally modified trees (pre- and post-1846);
- cultural trails;
- traditional, spiritual or ceremonial use sites or features;
- ecological features with cultural significance (e.g., bear dens, eagle's nests);
- archaeological sites; and
- cultural plants

The finalized checklists and protocols will be pilot-tested during the summer of 2008 in the Fort St. James, Chilcotin, Cascades, South Island, Nadina and Haida Gwaii forest districts in collaboration with several First Nations partners. A follow up workshop will be held in September 2008 to review and modify the checklist and protocols based on lessons learned in the field.

REVIEW OF CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN RESULTS AND STRATEGIES – DISCUSSION PAPER

This discussion paper reviews a subset of the approved CHR results and strategies contained in forest stewardship plans (FSPs). Its main goals are to:

- identify trends or similarities in FSP results or strategies developed across the province;
- profile examples of FSP results and strategies as a learning tool for forest managers when designing, reviewing, or approving future CHR results and strategies; and
- provide some critical reflection on the possible implications of these findings for further discussion among professionals.

A final draft is currently under review. The discussion paper will be released in early August, 2008.



Although there are some commonalities, each First Nation in BC has a unique interpretation of what the cultural heritage resource value represents. Determining what cultural heritage resources or cultural values on the landscape are, and should be monitored, will therefore be an ongoing learning process for FREP.

