

Arrowsmith Timber Supply Area Timber Supply Review

Summary of Public Input

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This is a summary of the public input that has been received on the Timber Supply Review in the Arrowsmith Timber Supply Area. This summary does not assess the feasibility or validity of the input or whether it relates to the clearly defined mandate of the chief forester in the allowable annual cut determination.

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Background

As part of the review of timber supply in the Arrowsmith Timber Supply Area, the British Columbia Forest Service distributed the *Discussion Paper* and two technical reports—the *Timber Supply Analysis Report* and the *Socio-Economic Analysis*. The public was encouraged to review and comment on the accuracy of the information in these documents and to provide additional information. This report summarizes the input received during the 90-day review period. This information was provided to the chief forester for his consideration when he reviewed the allowable annual cut for the Arrowsmith Timber Supply Area.

The first section of this summary, Public Review Process and Response, outlines the public review process implemented by the Forest Service, and describes the types of public input received. The second section, Public Input, summarizes the public input in sufficient detail to indicate the range of input received. The original submissions (with personal identifiers removed in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*) can be reviewed at the Port Alberni and Duncan Forest District offices.

Public Review Process and Response

District Staff actively solicited public input on the Timber Supply Review in the Arrowsmith Timber Supply Area through the following actions:

- copies of the three documents were mailed out local interest groups, the media, stakeholders, elected officials, government agencies and First Nations
- a letter accompanying the mail-out offered group or individual meetings to discuss the Timber Supply Review. The *Discussion Paper* also included a response form, which readers were encouraged to complete and return to the district manager

- an information display was set up at the fall fair in Port Alberni
- briefings were provided to government agencies and MLAs Dale Lovick, Gerard Janssen, and Leonard Krog
- five open houses were held (Table 1) following advertisements in newspapers in Victoria, Duncan, Parksville, Port Alberni, Ucluelet and Tofino

As Table 1 shows, 38 individuals attended the open houses. The Forest Service also received two completed response forms and three written submissions (see Appendix 1). A major forest company commissioned a consultant to review the assumptions and methodology in the Arrowsmith Timber Supply Analysis Report, and to test alternative analysis inputs. This review is referred to as the "industry review" in this report.

Activity (No. of participants)	Date
Open Houses	
Port Alberni (4)	Sept 11, 1995
Ucluelet (1)	Sept 13, 1995
Parksville (12)	Sept 14, 1995
Nanaimo (15)	Sept 19, 1995
Duncan (6)	Sept 26, 1995

Table 1: Participation in public information sessions

Public Input

In this section, public input on the information presented in the three Timber Supply Review documents for the Arrowsmith Timber Supply Area is summarized under the following headings:

- timber supply analysis report
- socio-economic analysis
- public discussion paper

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Public input on other ongoing government processes that may influence timber supply in the Arrowsmith Timber Supply Area in the future is summarized at the end of this section.

Timber Supply Analysis

Industry review

The industry review suggests that attempts by the Forest Service to update and improve some of the inventory data introduced uncertainty to the analysis. The uncertainty results from the lack of geographic relation of the data estimates to the forest cover. The review presents timber harvest forecasts using the unimproved inventory data for environmentally sensitive area reductions and for defining visual quality zones. Each forecast shows a very small increase over the Forest Service base case.

Other sources of uncertainty discussed in the industry review are:

- the use of modelling and analysis procedures that are not well suited for an area with a very fragmented land base
- the poor quality of some portions of the inventory
- the possibility that managed-stand yields are underestimated

The industry review presents a number of harvest forecasts that show increases in timber supply over the Forest Service base case. The alternative timber supply analysis inputs examined are:

- use of special site indexes where they exist in the inventory
- reversion of 50 per cent of the Timber Licence areas in a greened-up condition
- use of the upper end of the range of allowable denudation for visual quality objectives
- fertilization and commercial thinning in Douglas-fir stands
- allowance for negative bias in old-growth site index
- minimum harvest ages based on culmination of mean annual increment
- removing all visual quality objectives.

A suggested alternative harvest forecast to the Forest Service base case is presented that uses the following inputs:

- special site indexes where they exist in the inventory
- reversion of 50 per cent of the Timber Licence areas in a greened-up condition
- the upper end of the range of allowable denudation for visual quality objectives
- standard environmentally sensitive area reductions based on the inventory data

The forecast indicates that the current allowable annual cut could be maintained for two decades before declining by 5 per cent per decade over three decades to 410 000 cubic metres per year. It would remain at this level until decade 15 when it would increase to the long-term level of 455 000 cubic metres per year.

The industry review suggests that to improve analysis results, or at least decrease uncertainty in future analyses, the following should be undertaken:

- gather complete inventory data prior to analysis
- obtain field data on managed stands to support yield predictions
- investigate green up timing
- review old-growth site indices
- review land removals in light of modern integrated resource management
- clarify all policy issues with regard to timber availability, including setting targets for integrated resource management products
- use a geographic information system to prepare data to avoid pro-rata netdowns to the land base, and
- address land base fragmentation through improved modelling techniques

With the exceptions of the above issues and the suggested changes to analysis inputs, no recommendations were provided to improve the data, assumptions or computer model used in the Forest Service analysis.

Public Input

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Industry input generally supports the industry review.

Socio-Economic Analysis

One submission expresses concern that the *Socio-Economic Analysis* creates a fear of local job loss with a drop in logging rates, whereas with Forest Renewal B.C. there is reason to believe this will not be the case. The author also points out that while the base case initial harvest level is less than the current allowable annual cut, it is an increase from the actual average harvest between 1991–1994.

One submission questions whether the economic impact assessments considered that the overall decline in harvest levels would likely lead to increased timber prices due to the law of supply and demand.

Another respondent suggests that the presentation of data showing jobs and revenue per cubic metre for major and minor licensees and for various tenures might give better information on the economic benefits from the forest resource.

Discussion Paper

Environmental and socio-economic objectives

The following concerns regarding the environment were stated.

- the extent of past cutting restricts our ability to maintain biodiversity and seral stage distribution
- that potential climate change and the resulting impacts on forest growth were not considered in the Timber Supply Review
- the lack of knowledge of habitat requirements and current status of some species might mean that all values are not being managed for, and
- the growing importance of tourism will lead to more pressure to protect the visual quality of the landscape, specifically the backdrop of the Broken Islands Group

The following socio-economic concerns were raised.

- contrary to the impression in the *Discussion Paper*, there will be a cost associated with reducing the harvest rate because of the shrinking harvest levels in other areas
- there is no discussion of the fact that with lower harvest ages, such as those indicated by the minimum harvest ages, the product focus will shift from high-quality sawlogs to pulp and low-quality sawlogs. Data showing the profitability of various forest sectors might be helpful

The following recommendations were made.

- process more wood locally to retain and create jobs
- experiment with true eco-forestry because it will provide continuous work per hectare and even more jobs if small portable mills are used to process the timber at the cutting site. True social stability and long-term viability of the forest ecosystem might be possible if the timber supply area was divided into 200-hectare parcels, each supporting one family
- Forest Service employees should be aware of some excellent logging techniques used in the 1960s
- make maximum use of all forest land for harvesting purposes. Use television to educate the public by showing selective logging
- focus on jobs per hectare not jobs per cubic metre.
- do not harvest at a level to meet processing capacity
- the forest industry should rely on cultivation and good utilization rather than timber quotas to remain strong

Current Management Practices

Forest health and unsalvaged losses mentioned in the *Discussion Paper* prompted the following comments and questions.

- only dead trees should be removed from infested areas because the survivors represent the resistant gene pool.
- doesn't evidence now show that some fires should be allowed to burn to remove (artificial) fuel loads?

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- is the root rot mostly in old growth or in the replanted areas?
- what will happen if wildfire or catastrophic windthrow occurs on a large part of the timber supply area?

Comments regarding timber utilization were as follows.

- the western redcedar loss factors may underestimate actual losses
- government and industry accept high breakage levels in redcedar even though this can be prevented by using special harvesting techniques
- waste and residue levels should be included in the timber supply analysis data to help the reader judge how well the TSA has been managed
- there should be better utilization of blowdown, dying trees and small-diameter timber. Different methods of enforcement should be used rather than fines; e.g. requiring removal of broken wood

Viewscape management

One submission states that the green-up and visual quality provisions were put into place to protect forest values such as landscape, soils, and salmon habitat, and, therefore, are needed. Modifying the visual quality guidelines to free up more timber should not be considered.

Allowable annual cut adjustment

One submission suggests that the allowable annual cut should be lowered by at least 30 per cent because:

- timber supply will be reduced from the base case with implementation of the Forest Practices Code, Vancouver Island Land-Use Plan, and Clayoquot Sound Scientific Panel recommendations
- the longer the reductions are postponed, the greater they will have to be in future decades, and
- it is necessary to achieve a sustainable rate of harvest so that the environment, communities and economy are not jeopardized.

Another respondent states that the allowable annual cut should be set no higher than the long-term harvest level of 385 000 cubic metres for reasons similar to those above and also because:

- the 1994 harvest volumes were close to this amount, so the short-term effect would be to maintain the status quo
- reductions to the land base from urbanization may not have been fully taken into account

Based on the results of the industry review, one submission indicates that the goal should be to maintain the current allowable annual cut.

The industry review concludes there is no technical reason to reduce the harvest.

Related processes and issues

Comments on other ongoing government processes in the Arrowsmith Timber Supply Area are summarized here to indicate perspectives on issues that may influence timber supply in the future.

Forest Renewal B.C.

One submission points out that Forest Renewal B.C. is available to create jobs. It suggests that the proportion of money taken from the Arrowsmith Timber Supply Area for Forest Renewal B.C. should be monitored to ensure that an equal proportion flows back to support jobs in the timber supply area.

Protected Areas Strategy

One submission states that the old-growth or older second-growth Coastal Douglas-fir subzone variants in eastern portions of the timber supply area are under-represented in the Protected Areas Strategy, so the remaining pockets should be protected.

Appendix 1

Submissions received by the Port Alberni and Duncan Forest Districts

Industry

International Forest Products (letter and report "A Review of the Arrowsmith TSA Timber Supply Analysis," prepared by Timberline Forest Inventory Consultants)

Interest groups

Sierra Club of British Columbia

Individuals

Two *Discussion Paper* response forms and one letter

