

# Lakes Resiliency Project – Draft Current Condition Report – What We Heard

## Preamble:

The Province of BC publicly engaged on the draft current condition report for Lake Resiliency Project during the spring of 2023 utilizing the govTogetherBC website. The report detailed the current condition of a wide range of values across the Lakes Timber Supply Area and the large area-based tenures within its external boundary. The engagement event provided the general public with an opportunity to read the report, rank their top five values of concern, propose how those values should be managed in the future and comment on how the changing and increasing natural disturbance be addressed. Both the Current Condition Report and the survey responses (summarized below) will inform the development of a Forest Landscape for the project area and the revision of current biodiversity legal orders that apply.

*Due to the limited responses received we acknowledge that the report may not be reflective of the broader opinions felt by those in the region.*

## Question 1: In what region do you live?

Figure 1:

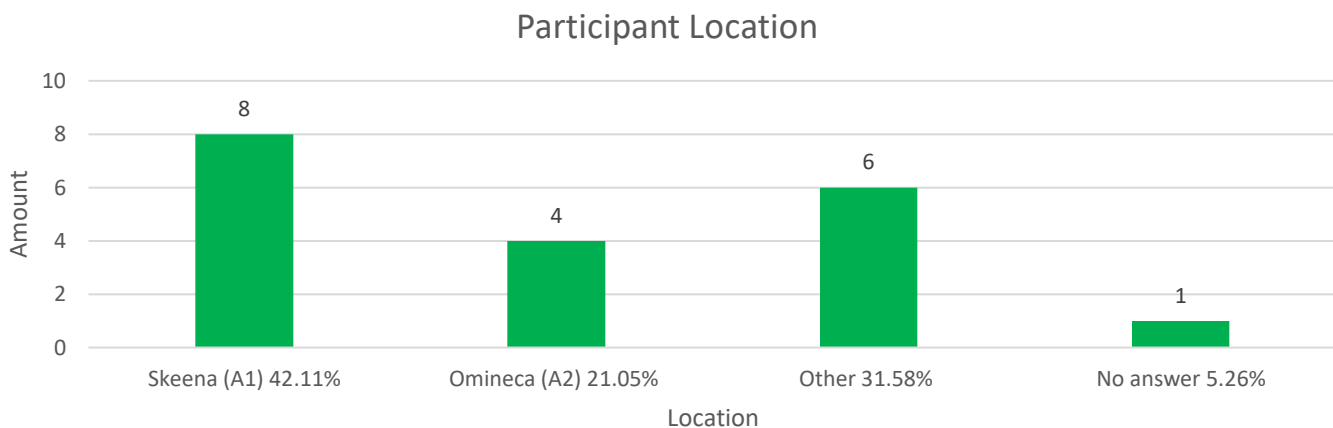


Figure 1: Shows the placement of participant location. Most participants (8) are in the Skeena region, 6 selected other, 4 are in the Omineca region and 1 chose not to answer.

Question 2: I am responding to this questionnaire as:

Figure 2:

### Participant Occupation

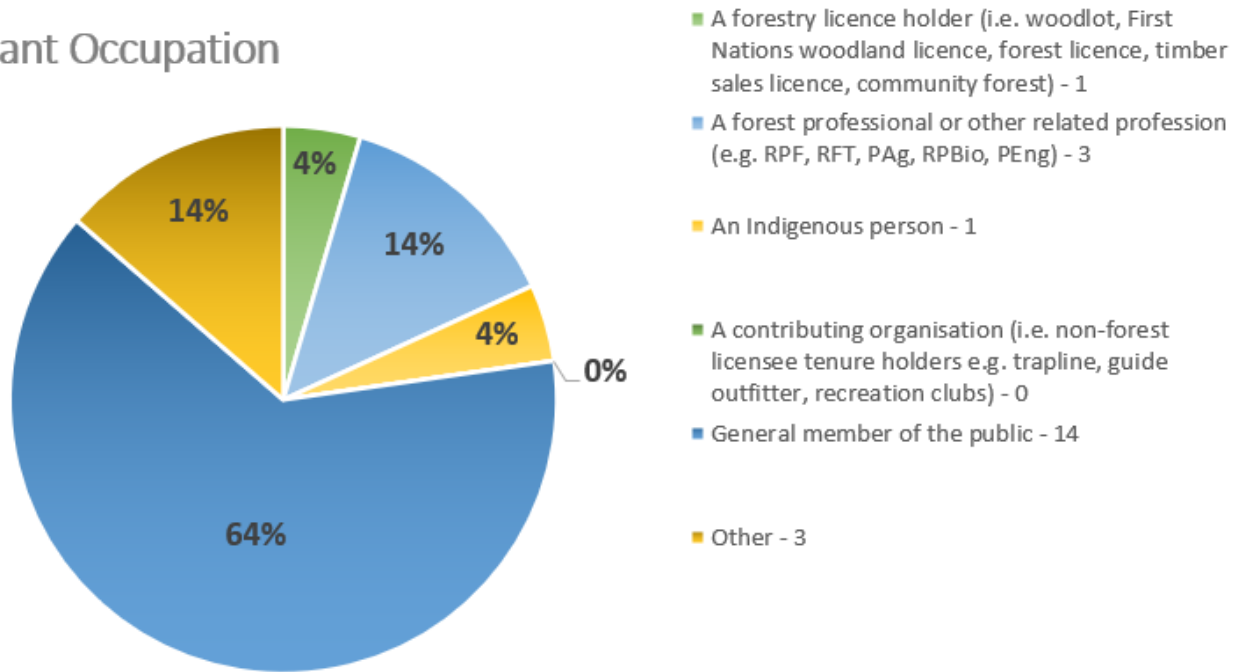


Figure 2: Shows the distribution of self-identified labels. 14 people are general members of the public, 3 are forestry professionals, 3 chose other, 1 is a forestry licence holder, and 1 identified as an Indigenous person.

Question 3: From the list of values below, please rank the top five you are most concerned about with respect to how they are managed under current forest management.

Figure 3:

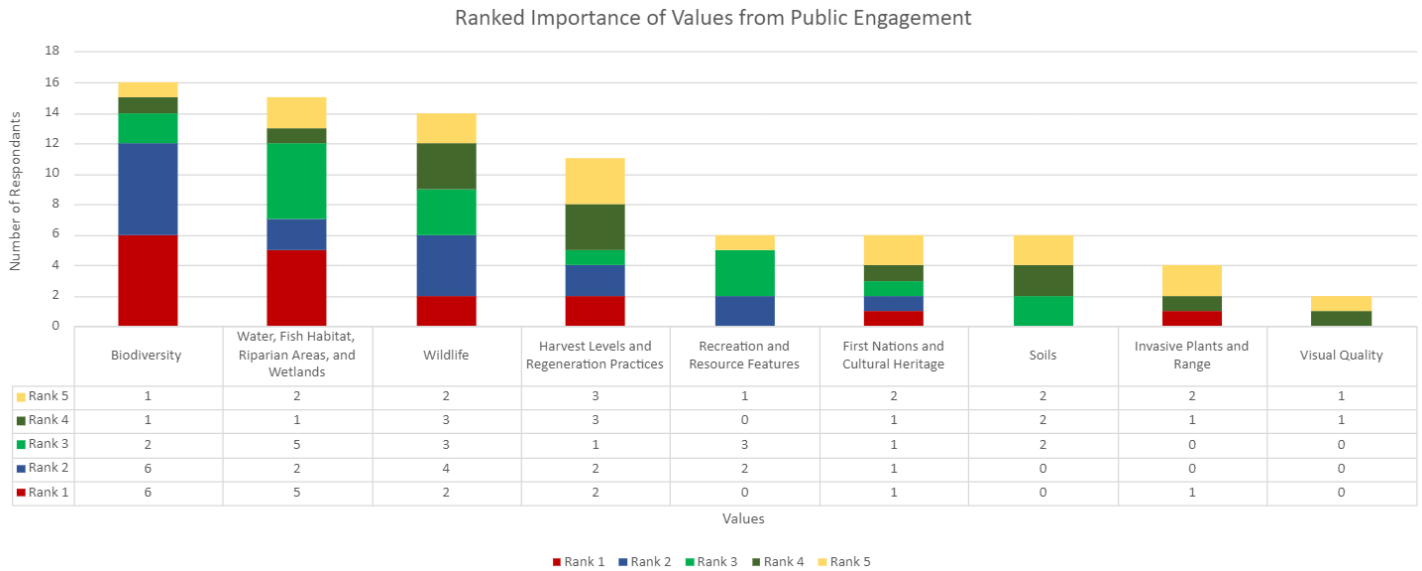


Figure 3: Shows the distribution of rated values from highest to lowest. Biodiversity was ranked number 1 most important, number 2 was Water, Fish Habitat, Riparian Areas, and Wetlands, number 3 was Wildlife, number 4 was Harvest Levels and Regeneration Practices, number 5 was Recreation and Resource Features, number 6 was First Nations and Cultural Heritage, number 7 was Soils, number 8 was Invasive Plants and Range, and Visual Quality was ranked number 9.

Question 4: Please indicate why you are most concerned about those values and how you think forest management practices relating to those values could be improved into the future?\*

- Declining wildlife populations – reduce harvesting of critical habitat and amount of roads
- Reduce harvesting on the landscape – alters Old Growth and compromises biodiversity
- Harvesting is leading to impacts on water quality, quantity, and flow. Adding legal water objectives to the plan will help forestry management practices
- Wetland and Riparian areas are a concern – many species are dependent on these and will not be able to find substitute habitats
- Forested crown lands belong to all citizens of BC
- There has been mismanagement by government resulting in ecosystems, species, and natural processes that have suffered greatly – allow the environment to recover and restore the values it formerly provided
- Timber is one value, not the most important. We have not done a great job of managing for key values – managing forests for industry and timber extraction has taken precedence over other values for too long.
- Biodiversity – forests should be replanted with diverse species to better adapt to climate change
- Need more creativity in fiber utilization – would be nice to see more selective harvest practices
- Forestry does a better job of being concerned around water management than other resource extraction sectors.
- Soils and Invasive Plants/Range are interwoven – applying Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) into Standard Operating Procedures - find new ways of managing invasive species – stop spraying for invasive species as the impact on soil is long lasting – use ranging sheep trained to target invasive species - Invasive plants impact natural forest succession by competing with vegetation and tree seedlings for resources, leading to erosion and water siltation, increasing fire hazards, degradation of riparian and range zones, degradation of habitat for species at risk and reduction of lumber quality and harvest. Forest managers need to know how to properly identify invasive plants and reduce the spread of invasives by avoiding infested sites and ensuring materials are invasive-free before transport and use. The Invasive Alien Plant Program can support the identification of known invasive plant sites. Invasive species also have significant impacts on First Nation communities.

Question 5: For the values you were most concerned about, how should a changing climate and increasing natural disturbances be addressed?\*

- More resiliency in the forest, reduced harvest, more landscape protections and increased wildfire suppression.
- We can expect more drought, flooding, and warmer water temperatures for fish. Decrease forest harvest near water bodies, restore habitats and provide shading, and link water/land management
- Ensuring a mix of deciduous and fire breaks around communities and protected/other areas (E.G OGMAs), cultural burning practices, and expansion of protected areas.
- Reduce the annual cut and extend buffers around riparian areas & wetlands
- Stop investing in and approving new fossil fuel projects. Stop polluting the planet, destroying ecosystems (e.g., clear cut logging, unrealistic and sustainable AACs), killing species, allowing people to do and go where ever (e.g., recreation). Invest in locally produced renewable energy, not large multinational corporations.
- Base our management policies on the worst case climate change scenarios, while at the same time adapting our activities and management regimes on the best data available - We need to revisit every 5 years or sooner if there has been a major shift in the ecosystems for not only the province but smaller forest districts or particular ecosystems. We can not rely on outdated manuals or procedures.
- FireSmart education and First Nation cultural education
- Fire needs to be brought back into use in a controlled manner
- In the Lakes, managing for resilience means managing forest composition and structure and processes to allow for good fire on the landscape and reducing the potential for catastrophic fire

- Stream temperatures will increase and, in some cases, will enter temperature ranges that will negatively affect fish survival. We can manage for that by explicitly designing forests in sensitive watersheds for shading and there are likely potential means to reduce impacts on late summer stream flows through manipulation of the forest canopy at a watershed level. Need to move away from “reserve it and walk away” system of riparian protection. A system of riparian management is needed where streamside management is integrated with landscape level fuel management, reducing the potential for catastrophic wildfire
- Comprehensive post-disturbance management is necessary to reduce the impact of invasive plants. This includes taking immediate action to recover fire guards, muster points, and staging areas through methods like seeding and revegetation to inhibit the spread of invasive plants and support the recovery of desirable vegetation. Early identification and reporting are key to limiting the spread of invasive species in B.C. considering climate change.

\*Summarized results of public response