

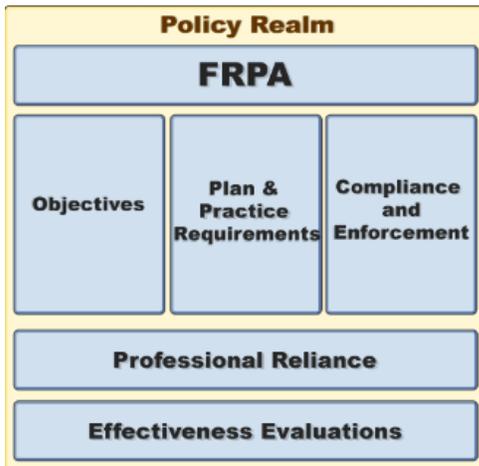
Professional Reliance Model Review (January 16, 2018)

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In March 2008, the Ministry of Forest and Range defined the term “Professional Reliance” as “*Reliance on the judgement of appropriate professionals who are authorized and qualified to provide a service.*”¹

The BC Professional Reliance Model is a key construct of the 2002 *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA), and remains a key part of existing forest legislation and authority for conducting forest operations on public land in BC.

FRPA Functional Architecture



Source: Province of British Columbia

This plan for putting the idea of professional reliance into effect, in my professional opinion, could not succeed. This is not a direct comment on the policy intent of the government or their reliance on professionals (employees of licensees and/or consultants) to implement FRPA, (part of the 2003 Forest Revitalization Plan).

This policy could not succeed because our existing concepts and methods have a disconnect with the land. Humans value constancy in our affairs, while nature favours diversity. An example of this problem is the lack of understanding of the relationship between ecology and economics.

When we try to manage a forest solely to achieve a constant production of trees, the forest will lose its resilience.

¹ <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/library/documents/glossary/Glossary.pdf>

C.S. (Buzz) Holling, eminent Canadian ecologist said, “ *Past efforts in resource management have been essentially trial and error approaches to coping with the unknown.*”²

“ *Citizens and politicians are now frustrated because they are not hearing simple and consistent answers to the following key questions concerning present environmental and renewable resource issues:*

- *what is going to happen,*
- *under what conditions,*
- *when will it happen,*
- *where will it happen,*
- *who will be affected, and*
- *how uncertain are we?*³

Unless our institutions have the knowledge, experience and wisdom to answer these questions well, the best of intentions will fail again.

In “ *People, Forests and Change, Lessons from the Pacific Northwest*” Editors Deanna H, Olson and Beatrice Van Horne, informed by the insights of 57 resource professionals, wrote about the state of the human-forest ecosystem in coastal Oregon, Washington and Alaska.⁴ They see two paths (i.e. trajectories) to the future.

- **Trajectory 1: “Status Quo and Diminishing Returns”**
Their coastal (moist) forests are on a current path of passive federal and regional forest planning of business as usual. The balance of costs and benefits show diminishing returns for biodiversity, wood production and some rural communities.
- **Trajectory 2: “Adaptive Collaborative Vision”** This path is built around the theme of adaptive management where monitoring feeds back into management plans. This provides the foundation for building trust. This path will also reveal the results of management and form the basis for continuous improvement.

The following four trust principles, have helped institutions design sustainable resource management legislation, policies and operations:

- **Clarity:** The mandate under law of what is to be sustained must be exceptionally clear. Sweden in 1993 passed legislation requiring production and biodiversity to be equal. Different goals have different stocking standards. The greater the biodiversity,

² Nikiforuk, Andrew. 2011. *Empire of the Beetle*, David Suzuki Foundation, Greystone Books. Page 200

³ Ibid. Gunderson, Lance, Holling, C.S. and Stephen

⁴ Olson, Deana H and Beatrice Van Horne, Editors. 2017. *People, Forests and Change, Lessons from the Pacific Northwest*. Island Press. 331 pp.

the greater the productivity and resilience, and the greater the value of a forest, at all scales.

- **Accountability:** This principle is central to sustainability. Clarity of mandate and the obligation of institutions to citizen owners require that records be kept to ensure the public understands what is happening in a forest. Performance measures enable people to know what is being produced, and at what cost.
- **Enforceability:** This principle can protect long and short-term commitments to resource sustainability from politically pressured legislatures and managers. Trust principles have not always determined the outcome of a dispute, but when recognized in a court of law, they are enforceable.
- **Perpetuity:** Organizations perform in two time periods, today and tomorrow. The future will not be an extension of the past. When organizations are managed only for today, there will eventually be no tomorrow. Managers must know what is happening now, stop doing what is not working, and keep forests in good working order. When forests maintain their capacity to self-renew, they can be sustained in perpetuity.

Summary

The present model of forest management is failing to sustain ecological, economic and social benefits, not only in BC but also in much of the US Pacific Northwest, from coastal Oregon to Alaska. There is increasing risk to the forest with reduced options for society.

Examples of forests and organizations performing better for their owners and citizens, compared to BC, include:

- Collins Pine Corporation in California, Oregon and Pennsylvania;⁵
- Menominee Tribal Enterprises in Wisconsin;⁶
- State Trust Forests in Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington;⁷
- Swedish Forestry Model.⁸

We can learn from these examples. Let's exercise our responsibilities for the future, especially in this time of climate change.

As the late Peter Drucker said, *'The best way to predict the future, is to create it.'*

⁵ <http://www.collinsco.com/certification/>

⁶ <http://www.mtewood.com>

⁷ <http://www.glo.texas.gov/wslca/>

⁸ https://www.skogsstyrelsen.se/globalassets/in-english/forests-and-forestry-in-sweden_2015.pdf