

Strategic Land Use Planning in British Columbia

Ten Years of Solving Wicked
Problems

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Overview

- “Wicked Problems”
- The Situation in British Columbia
- Land Use Planning from 1992 to 2001
 - BC’s Approach
 - Accomplishments and Lessons Learned
- Completing the land use agenda; 2002 to 2004
- Observations and Recommendations

Wicked Problems



...wicked problems tend to arise in a social context.
Wicked problems defy conventional problem-solving approaches, like the “waterfall model” which is characterized by the usual steps of problem formulation, data collection and analysis, presentation of findings, and construction of a solution.”

Sen, 2002

- Properties of a wicked problem
 - No definitive formulation
 - No stopping rule
 - Solutions are not right or wrong, but good or bad
 - No immediate and no ultimate test
 - Every decision matters;
 - An inexhaustible set of solutions
 - Interdependence among elements of a problem
 - The planner can't be wrong

Wicked Problems

“The forestry community is confusing complexity with wickedness”

Allen and Gould, 1996.

The Problem in British Columbia

- Ongoing Land Use Conflicts
- Stein, Carmanah, Walbran, Khutzemateen, Tatshenshini, Haida Gwai
- Clayoquot Sound, 199x
 - The largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history
 - More than 600 people arrested

- BC Round Table
- Forest Resources Commission
- Old Growth Strategy
- Dunsmuir Agreement

■ Situation 1992

- Social consensus on land use and forest management had evaporated
- Old problem-solving approaches had not worked
 - Manage single issues
 - Look for technical solutions
 - Make decisions politically
- No single actor had enough credibility to resolve the problem

Land Use Planning; 1992 to 2001

- 1992; new approach
 - Protected Areas Strategy
 - Creation of Commission on Resources and Environment
 - Creation of Sub-regional Land and Resource Management Plans
 - Forest Practices Code

- Key Features of the Land Use Program
 - Comprehensive planning
 - Multi-Agency
 - Public participation using consensus and interest based negotiations
- “Principles and Process of Land and Resource Management Planning”

■ Accomplishments

■ Process Evaluations

- Local evaluations done following several LRMP's
- Province-wide workshops of planning practitioners
- Simon Fraser University:

- After 10 years, what did people think?
 - Communities that were involved
 - Broad support
 - Significant shift in some areas to a “culture of collaboration”
 - Concerned that plans are not being implemented
 - Forest Industry
 - In most areas, has given industry their “social license” back
 - Cornerstone for certification efforts across the province
 - Concern remains about long term access to the land base

- Environmental Organizations
 - Buy-in, where they participated
- Mining Sector
 - Walked out of land use processes in late '90's
 - Process was not designed to address sub-surface resources
 - Contributed to poor investment climate in British Columbia

- In general
 - Plans took too long
 - Too Demanding
 - Public burn-out
 - Many objectives were ambiguous
 - “Special Management Zones”
 - Planning was not actually finished
 - Landscape or local level planning still required

Completing the Land Use Agenda: 2001 to 2004

- “New Era” Commitments
 - Finish Comprehensive Land Use Planning by 2004
 - In order to increase certainty for economic sectors
 - Streamline processes
 - Increased focus on substance, not process
 - Greater government leadership
 - Processes to be complete in less than two years

- Science-Based Decisions
 - Environmental Risk Assessment
 - Enhanced Social, Environmental and Economic Assessments (SEEA)

- Third Generation Land Use Plans
 - Central Coast
 - North Coast
 - Sea-to-Sky
 - Morice
- www.srm.gov.bc.ca/

- North Coast LRMP
- Complete Land Use Planning:
 - Table convened February 2002
 - Deadline for completion: December 2003
 - Total: 22 months
- Streamlined Process
 - “Pure Sectoral Model”
 - 19 seats at table
 - Government-appointed Co-Chairs

■ Science-based decisions

■ Ecosystem Based Management

■ Coast Information Team

- Independent Science for three LRMP's
- EBM Framework using thresholds, risk, RONG

■ Environmental Risk Assessment

- Impact Assessment Process for North Coast LRMP Scenario Analysis
- Spatial-temporal landscape modeling using SELES
- Thresholds
 - Range of Natural Variation

■ Revised SEEA framework

■ Status

- LRMP table is on track
- Major milestones met
- Table entering scenario development phase

■ Strengths

- Stronger scientific base
 - More credible locally and internationally
 - Plans objectives will be more measurable
- First Nations Participating on a Government-to-Government basis

■ Risks

■ Too much work

- More information to collect
- More scenarios to analyse
- More issues to discuss
- More policies to understand

■ Too little time

- Public volunteers
- Government Staff

■ Too Complex

- Information Overload
- What is ecosystem based management?
- What is a reasonable risk?
- What is sustainability

Is there an “Ingenuity Gap”?

Or

Is this a “Wicked Problem”?

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Observations and Recommendations

- It's a people problem
- Recommendations:
 - Use collaborative processes
 - Consensus-Building
 - Interest-Based Negotiations

- Pursuit of science can overwhelm the process
- Recommendation:
 - Bound the problem
 - Rigorously scope down data and analysis needs
 - Engage technical staff in the process
 - Clearly distinguish where “science” ends and judgement begins

- Leadership Matters
- Recommendation:
 - Recruit some cracker-jack strategic problem solvers
 - Invest heavily in your staff
 - Training