

SVHI Forest Management Notes

Concern:

SVHI has been designated as a large wildfire risk. We have a large amount of unhealthy forest on private land and surrounding our community on crown land.

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) has helped to identify the problematic wildfire areas surrounding our community on crown land only. A small area of crown land has undergone wildfire risk reduction. But not nearly enough.

What can SVHI do to reduce this wildfire risk? This is a safety issue. It's not a factor of if a fire will come through the valley, it is a question of when it will happen. When a wildfire does come through the valley the community will be severely affected and may actually end the sustainability of our community. Look at Lytton? SVHI needs to address this issue with a forward-thinking plan.

Terminology:

Ha/yr - Hectares per year

M3 - meters cube

Peelers - High value log min 11" (8" w/o bark) Diameter length 17' (\$150/M3)

Saw Log - Everything else that can be made into a 2"x4" (\$110/M3)

Forest Products:

Peeler Logs

Saw Logs

Private Local Milling *i.e. Goshala, Cabins, Dimensioned Wood*

Secondary Market *i.e. picnic tables*

Firewood

Teepee poles

Rails

Posts

Chips/Hog Fuel

Grazing Areas for livestock

Our Current Forest:

It is unhealthy. One might think that by cutting no trees we are protecting and creating less karma. What's happening is actually the opposite. By not cutting trees we are encouraging a dying forest. We can see evidence of an unhealthy forest everywhere. Bruce Morrow told me this several times when we worked on the study for the CWPP. I recently walked our forest with a log buyer from West Fraser Mills and he pointed out a tremendous amount of ill forest. Bottom line is that our forest is starving. Plus, there are pests and blight (pine beetle, fir beetle). Zero natural spacing between tree canopy.

The **growth rate** of our current forest is approximately 1.27m³, in-other-words our forest has shut down. We can see large areas of dead trees, dying trees, infested trees. This means that our forest isn't growing. This can be seen in tight growth rings. 10" Diameter trees being 50yrs old is typical of a dying forest. The current growth is less than 300M³/Ha/yr.

A Healthy Forest:

In our area, a healthy forest has tree spacing between crowns of 5-7m. It would have a growth rate of 4%+ yearly. This means that 4% of the forest can be harvested each year to maintain a healthy growth rate. Water needs to be able to reach the ground. Sunlight needs to be able to reach the ground. Grasses, flowers, animals, birds, bugs, carnivores, rabbits, deer and all other wildlife would flourish in a healthy forest. Plus, healthy forests don't have pests like pine beetles. On top of all that, healthy forests survive wildfires. In fact, healthy forests are **designed** to survive wildfire.

How do we get to a healthy forest?

Remove 60-70% of tree stems. Reduce to approximately half the forest by volume. Our forest is starving, so we need to reduce the amount of trees. The trees are fighting for limited resources. We remove all low grade trees, dying trees, and crowded areas. We recreate the 5-7m spacing with all the good strong healthy trees.

To do this would cost money and it is not cheap to harvest this amount of trees.

How can SVHI afford to Fire Proof our community?

The East Ridge of our valley as an example: We have approximately 200 hectares of land on our east side of the valley. This is the land above and behind Lalasamayi home. Bruce Morrow and I walked this area for the CWPP program. According to Bruce this area doesn't meet the necessary criteria for Marketable Wood Products, in-other-words, a normal logging company would not harvest trees from an area like this as there isn't enough marketable wood to cover the costs of the harvest.

Then, I met with a small logging company out of Lillooet and a log buyer from West Fraser. Fortunately, the current market is such that logging in an environmentally conscious way to preserve the forest does pay. It doesn't pay much though. Basically an area like this has very little marketable wood, but the current log prices are high and mills are desperate for logs. Dave Mcrae, a logger from Lillooet, has reorganized his company to use small equipment to help fireproof land areas like ours. He believes that there's enough marketable wood in that 200 hectares on our east side to cover the costs of rebirthing our forest. Spacing 5-7 meters between canopies. Leaving the strongest and healthiest trees. This would take approximately 3 months of work for Dave's team of 3.

Benefits for SVHI:

- A **safer forest** that has a better chance of wildfire survival.
- A **4% or higher growth rate**. That means 4% of the remaining healthy strong trees can be harvested sustainably each year! Peeler trees have the highest price attached to them. It might take a few years after the harvest to reach this growth rate.
- There will be **thousands of TP poles, rails, posts** available. Literally 20,000-30,000 rails!
- **Firewood in huge amounts**. Like years of supply. This could be used for our school, temple, and seniors. Actually everyone in the community will have as much firewood as they could use. If we decide to cut the 4% growth annually then all the above products would continue for as long as we maintained our forests.
- **Wood Chips would be plentiful**.
- **Revenue and Employment Opportunities**. There wouldn't be much employment in the harvesting side of this project. Opportunities for revenue would be in the secondary marketing i.e. selling rails, chips etc.
- **The forest would be healthy**. No burning or slash piles. All slash would be chipped and blown into swales to replicate large dead down trees which are essential for a healthy forest. Dave has experience in making forest natural settings like parks in Whistler and other private landowners.
- **Approximately \$30,000-\$50,000 would come in this harvest**. As the landowners, there is a small stipend that would come even in a poor wood area like the east side of the valley.

Other examples in Saranagati:

Other areas in SVHI have better timber and would thus give all the above benefits as well as higher dollar amounts. These areas can be determined. Private land can also be harvested if devotees wish and these amounts I guess would stay with each individual landowner.

Today's Market:

Net Profits	
Peeler logs \$150/M3	Saw Logs \$110/M3
Costs	
Harvesting Cost \$65/M3 Trucking Cost \$30/M3 Misc Cost \$5/M3	
Total Cost \$100/M3	
Gross Profits (Net Profits - Total Cost)	
Peeler logs \$50/M3	Saw Logs \$10/M3

Secondary Market Opportunities:

There's an opportunity for SVHI to start a medium sized milling operation. I'm not talking about the kind of mills that can be seen currently within our valley. I'm referring to a medium size Scragg mill. These mills can be operated very efficiently and many smaller land owners invest in mills like this and sell or use the products in secondary markets. There's an opportunity for SVHI to start a post and rail business. The market for posts and rails is quite large in our area and many suppliers are finding difficulty supplying the likes of HH. There's an opportunity to sell wood chips. These chips are referred to as Hog Fuel which is essentially dirty wood chips. There's an opportunity to sell firewood.