

Scientific/Ecological Research Planning Committee Meeting – September 20, 2004

Start 9:00 End 12:00

BV Center Members Attending:

Dave Coates, Phil Burton, Ken White, Frank Doyle, Lisa Mahon

Discussed issues relating to the overall framework or scientific context of BV Centre ecological research:

Climate Change

-suggestion by PB that there is money available through various climate change initiatives through the fed gov and prov gov

-researchers interested in disturbance ecology, population dynamics, changes in population distribution and range should not be swayed by climate change titles

-fed gov – CCAIRN

-prov gov – WALP – climate change initiative

-FD applied for and received \$5000 in funding for the BVC to address part of Q1 under Climate Change Research area - What key ecological processes show/demonstrate the statistical variability associated with climate parameters? a) retrospective analysis of climate data (norms, variances, extreme events) b) retrospective analysis of ecological data (dendrochronology, cones, fire return interval, natural disturbance, growth and yield, PSPs, hydrological flow regimes, water temperature, snow pack, etc.)

-discussion about what we will be able to accomplish with these prov funds

-Q by PB about how FD defined the region (eg. Bulkley Valley or North)

-PB suggested that we keep the description broad—ie. North – to enable a) expansion of project, and b) collaboration with other institutions

-agreement that we need to decide on priorities for prov funds and then apply for additional funding from prov or fed sources to address other knowledge gaps in climate change e.g. (a - b above)

-for example, prov money could be used to compile climate and ecological data sets and additional fed money could be used to search for ecological signals

-some discussion about change in tree species and BEC distribution due to climate change

- meeting held this past summer on Vancouver Island by MoF and UBC
- information is available on Forest Sciences, UBC website
- some discussion about climate change and how forest change and distribution will impact forest species, particularly species at risk
- few forest dwelling species are now listed provincially eg. QCI NOGO is still listed but many other species have been removed from the list
- climate change and changes in forest structure and function (eg. lichens, insect biomass) may have an impact on the quality of habitat for forest dwelling species
- federally, species designated as threatened or endangered are listed by COSEWIC and then Recovery Teams make decisions about the status of the species; this group may also make suggestions for meeting knowledge gaps but it does not designate research funds; main source of funding for many listed species is Endangered Species Recovery Fund (ESRF) administered by World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- further discussion about the difficulty of trying to predict habitat requirements in the future, especially when there is a lack of information or lack of agreement about habitat requirements for many species across different regions
- PB suggests that the answer may be to maintain a wide diversity of habitats to ensure that species have many different habitat types

Mountain Pine Beetle

- discussion of MPB Initiative (MPBI) administered by Canadian Forest Service (CFS) and the Pacific Forestry Centre (PFC)
- the group noted that funding call # 4 will occur from Oct 11, 2004 to Nov 1, 2004
- PB stated that MPBI will fund shelf-life studies – short-term studies, chronosequence studies and hydrological studies
- PB and LM note that MPBI website has not been updated from spring funding call # 3 (Spring 2004) and that the general objectives, strategic objectives, and specific projects will remain the same
- biggest concern is that the list of specific projects will remain the same and will not change for this next funding call
- LM expressed concern about 1) the lack of projects coming to the north (specifically MPB affected areas) and 2) the funding process itself

-after calling PFC and discussing the MPBI with administrator Dave Harrison prior to the Spring 2004 funding deadline, LM discovered that specific projects had been formulated by PFC after consultation with an advisory panel (composition of advisory panel is unknown) and that 80% of funding for call # 3 would be allocated to these specific projects; additionally, some of these projects are based on existing projects (eg. calibration of avian habitat models project administered by A.C. MacCleod and F. Bunnell of UBC); LM suggested to DH that other researchers are unlikely to be successful bidders if this project requires habitat models that are unavailable because they are still being developed under a project currently funded by MPBI

-leads to a suggestion to send a letter to our local MP and MPBI expressing our concerns RE: MPBI (lack of projects in the north, limited list of specific projects for which funding is available, equity of funding process) listing credentials of BV researchers, research areas of BV Centre members, and possible list of projects previously submitted to MPBI

-after further consultation and discussion, we came up with a list of projects that the research committee sees as a priority:

1. Ken White – impact of MPB on young pine stands (age 41-60 years, age class 2)
 - a. What is ability of these stands to produce more beetles? Are young pine stands sink habitats?
 - b. What are factors influencing the attack of young pine stands (proximity to mature attack areas, isolation from attack areas, weather patterns, threshold of MPB population density in mature stands)?
 - c. What is the distribution of attack in young pine stands in the N. Interior?
 - d. What is the implication on the timber supply (30-60 years into the future)?

-likely there is some potential for collaboration with S. Lundgren at UNBC

2. Phil Burton – regeneration dynamics of unsalvaged or salvaged stands.
 - a. What is the extent of advanced regeneration in these stands?
 - b. Determine patterns of regeneration in different BEC zones and sites to produce predictive ecosystem maps.
 - c. Use information to assess future impacts on the timber supply.
3. Dave Coates – annual allowable cut implications of management strategies in MPB damaged stands.
 - a. Examine how the type of management practices, the level of protection of live residual trees, and the number and type of stands not salvaged will impact the future availability of timber for harvesting and the stability of forest dependent communities.
4. Dave Wilford – no project outlined here. DW needs to be consulted to find out if he has project ideas that fit within the strategic initiatives provided by MPBI (or other projects he thinks are important)

5. Todd Mahon, Frank Doyle, Phil Burton – not discussed during the meeting but this project is currently being funded by the Sustainable Forest Management Network. Assessing the ecological integrity of beetle-damaged forests at multiple scales.
 - a. Characterize beetle-damaged forests from a habitat perspective.
 - b. Assess the response of keystone prey species and a mature forest avian focal species (NOGO) to beetle damage.
 - c. Evaluate the maintenance of a key ecological process—predator-prey interactions.

Note: Projects outlined by Ken White, Dave Coates, and Todd Mahon were not specifically outlined during our meeting, but later the same day specific details for these projects were sent to me so I included them here.

-further discussion by group as to how we can convince MPBI that understanding habitat and growth/yield issues in different regions is important; there will be large gaps for the Timber Supply Review if assumptions from other work (eg. Eng and Fall) do not apply to other regions in the province

-suggestions that a course of action may be 1) discussion between Kevin K. and chief forester about these issues 2) convince chief forester to go to PFC and MPBI and appeal for funding for projects that will meet this knowledge gap and supply necessary information for Timber Supply Review

-group also suggests that KK send a letter to our MP (Nathan Cullen) and to Paul Addison (Director General, PFC) outlining: concerns about location of MPBI funding, MPBI funding process, list of qualified researchers in the BV, possible list of previously submitted MPBI projects by BV Centre members or other researchers in this region

Community Forest

-no current information available about location, size, representation by community resources board, or other important non-timber values: recreation, research, fish and wildlife

-Sharon Robertson Sharon will be contacted to obtain more information

-BV Centre will need to decide on role in Community Forest

-might be reasonable to gather information on other Community Forests in BC (Revelstoke, Burns Lake)

NEXT MEETING: Monday morning 15th November