

HGMC – Forestry Strategy

Workshop

Provincial Opening Remarks

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Province of British Columbia to thank all of you for coming and participating in this event. It is hoped we can come away from the two sessions with actions that provide additional opportunities for the people on Haida Gwaii.

Haida Gwaii has been under a significant transformation over the last 10 or so years; it continues today and will continue into the future. Some examples are the new annual allowable cut, ownership change of tenures on island, new regime in forest management in the form of LUOO/EMB, increase in conservancies/protected areas, shared and joint decision making, and a more collaborative/integrated approach to operations on the land base. Haida Gwaii transformation will continue into the future and it will be important we work together to meet the challenges that will arise from change.

Both Governments have worked together collaboratively to define or set the table for the Haida Gwaii land base. With the table set, it is important that the forest industry and those people who garner their living from the forest work hand in hand to develop new ideas of how to utilize the forest. Whether it is timber production, secondary processing, other forest products, educational opportunities, tourism or other innovative ideas Haida Gwaii will have to work together to realize the potential the islands have. It will take openness to explore innovative business to business relationships to realize these ideas. It will take island leadership

While industry works hard to realize opportunities, we cannot forget the importance to ensure people with the right skills are ready at the right time for these opportunities. It will be important that thinking around capacity building, skills training and education, and local employment initiatives are part of the equation for success.

We will not be able to do all the things identified during this workshop, so it will be important to ensure we don't duplicate current efforts, and prioritized items that we feel are within reach. We also must ensure we have local leadership to move those prioritized items forward.

In closing, I would be remiss in not mentioning the need to concentrate on the young people on Haida Gwaii. It will be important to be generating opportunities for them to explore different careers, understand the educational/training requirements, understand HG needs for the future and we must ensure that when these young people are ready, we are ready with jobs/careers that will assist in them remaining on HG.

I wish you all the best over the next couple of days and look forward to seeing the outcome.