

Land Stewardship Committee Report November 2021

For the past year the BCCA Land Stewardship committee has focused on the regulations for Bill 21, passed in 2019. Bill 21 authorized a change from forest companies' Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP's) to Forest Landscape Plans (FLP'S); and with Bill 23 which amends the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA).

FLPs are to be developed more collaboratively than FSPs and the office of the Chief Forester is to be involved in the development and/or approval of these plans. This should result in more consistency across the province than with FSPs which were approved by District Managers with widely differing interests and backgrounds.

The BCCA has been advocating for a legal requirement to manage for a sustained forage resource in addition to a sustained timber resource and for recognition of Crown ALR in the Bill 23 amendments and were expecting to see these changes. Unfortunately, when Bill 23 was introduced the word forage had somehow vanished as had any reference to Crown ALR.

The BCCA immediately met with the Minister and some senior staff to request amendments to correct these deficiencies. Our request was refused.

At the Minister's Practices Advisory Council, I questioned the Chief Forester, who is the co-chair and was told that there was no intention to leave range out of Bill 23 but that an amendment would not be considered.

The Land Stewardship Committee met with Rachael Pollard, Director, Forest Practices Branch and David Borth, Director Range Branch to request amendments to correct the omission of a sustainable range resource and ALR recognition and while David agreed with us Rachael reiterated that no amendments would be considered. She said these omissions could be dealt with when the regulations were developed. This is the same story we heard with the Water Modernization Act, and we now know how well that worked!

Judy Madden, as president of the South Peace Stockmen's Assoc. then organized a meeting to express concerns to our local MLA but that morphed into a larger meeting with BCCA president, vice-pres, LSC Chair, Kevin Boon, and more opposition MLA's, who were very supportive and agreed to propose the required amendments at committee but advised us that as they were outnumbered two to one the amendments would be defeated.

So, after a significant time commitment by BCCA staff and many BCCA volunteers we are now in the same position we were with the original FRPA- no legal requirement to consider a sustained forage resource and no recognition of Crown ALR.

As we move ahead with FLP's, the forage resource and the ranching industry are going to need strong representation because we have first to argue to have our resource considered before we can discuss how it will be considered. There is presently one pilot under way with range interests and we are very fortunate to have Jon Solecki representing us at that table.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike McConnell