

Talking About Forestry

Roy Strang, PhD, RPF(Ret)

Like many other foresters, from time to time I'm asked to talk about forests and forestry to public groups ranging from elementary school pupils to seniors' activity clubs. For too many of them their understanding of forestry has come from the news media so that they 'know' that clear-cutting is bad and that Smokey Bear doesn't like fires; a few may even have heard of the softwood lumber dispute with the U.S. In a forestry province with an increasing urban population, we need to do all we can to inform the community.

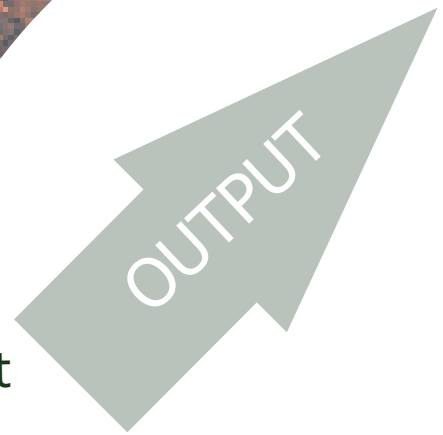
I've found that the tree ring diagram on the next page is very useful in explaining the breadth, scope and complexity of forestry; and of course it helps that most school children are familiar with the annual rings. The skeletal form makes it easy to tailor discussions to any particular audience and their level of comprehension while ensuring that all elements are mentioned.

I highlighted harvesting and wood production because of their economic and environmental significance but also to show that within ecological constraints, output depends on the landholder's wishes. The lower input half is particularly helpful at school career fairs or when talking to school counsellors about employment possibilities in the vast world of forestry. It makes the point that today's forest professional needs a broad understanding rather than just a broad back and there is need for generalists as well as specialists in the many disciplines involved. It's no accident that communication is at the core.

The diagram has been well received whenever I've used it and has been made available to anyone who wants to try it out.



Fisheries
Air & Water
Wood Fibre
Wildlife Habitat
Range Land
Recreation



Forest management is about much more than trees ...

Communication
Ecology, Plants & Animals
Soils & Topography
Climate
Physiology
Silviculture
Nurseries
Harvesting
Protection: Fire, Disease & Insects
Survey & Inventory
Technological & Business Skills

