

Jumping to Conclusions on Environmental Adaptation

Assisted migration is a great way to proactively mitigate climate change in BC. However, even under the pressures of climate change, we must be careful with our interpretations of experimental findings. In *Healthier and More Productive Black Cottonwood Plantations with Assisted Migration* (September/October 2009), Dr. Xie reviews current research and shows that the southern coastal populations of black cottonwood can grow taller in the Terrace area than the northern population after only three years. Dr. Xie also concludes that southern sources are better adapted to the northern environment than local northern sources. The data confirms this for the first three years of growth. Growing taller and being more resistant to two diseases in three years does not mean that one population is better adapted to an environment than another. What will happen during the rest of the cottonwood clones' lifetimes? There could be an unseasonal frost or a pathogen that is adapted to attacking mature black cottonwood, killing a large proportion of the assisted southern population, while these trees focus their energy budget on growth at the cost of decreased defenses. Further, the research found the northern population showed lack of attenuated synchronization in bud flushing. This is probably a northern tree's way of preventing frost damage to its newly flushed leaves. The northern population could have traded off part of its resistance to the two measured pathogens for higher adaptation to an abiotic damaging agent, such as a more severe northern climate.

The effects of climate change could become severe enough in the northern region so that the conservative habit that the northern population has adapted becomes irrelevant. In this case, the southern population would become better adapted to the region. If the climate does not change to this degree, the extrapolated, generalized conclusions made from this work and the suggested management implications may be premature.

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More Questions About Ethanol

Gurminder Minhas' article (November/December 2009) on producing ethanol from cellulose was very interesting. It would also be great to know how many cubic meters of wood a large scale industrial ethanol plant could process in a year and about how much ethanol it would produce.

Maybe somebody could also explain the current feasibility of building large scale ethanol plants in BC and how much yearly greenhouse gas emissions they would reduce compared to producing and consuming gasoline.

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Put in Your Two Cents

The **BC Forest Professional** letters' section is intended primarily for feedback on recent articles and for brief statements about current association, professional or forestry issues. The editor reserves the right to edit and condense letters and encourages readers to keep letters to 300 words. Anonymous letters are not accepted. Send letters to:

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My Vision of Tomorrow's Forests: Increase Investment in Higher Social Priorities

How much effort has been put forth to address the impacts caused by mountain pine beetle (MPB) and to ensure reforestation of tenured areas within the timber supply area (TSA) that are not typically managed for commercial timber production, such as forest recreation sites and trails? As stated in Alanya Smith's article, *Forests for Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow...* (September/October 2009 BCFP), to be eligible for Forest For Tomorrow (FFT) funding, the prescribed regime of treatments must "meet the FFT return on investment criteria of two percent unless benefits to future timber supply or other resource values reflect a higher social priority." With that being said, how are higher social priorities measured?

Our recreation sites and trails provide opportunities to showcase BC's beauty. Unfortunately, a high percentage of these have been impacted by MPB. How we address these impacts is under the watchful eye of the public. Our treatment options are limited due to funding availability and low economic appeal for the timber resulting in a significant waste (piling and burning).

Alanya Smith introduces the Innovative Tenures Sales License and two major policy shifts to treat MPB impacted stands aiming to reduce the cost of site preparation thereby increasing the amount of area that can be treated while utilizing fibre that would otherwise be piled and burnt. Although these initiatives are a positive reflection of the adaptive management approach implemented through the FFT program, such measures seem to only benefit areas that contribute to the TSA.

Could there be an adaptive management approach to ensure lower cost, more efficient and higher utilization treatments for MPB impacted stands in higher social priority areas such as forest recreation sites and trails? This question would not only be directed to the FFT program but for all the provincial and federal funding sources, as funding has been solely dependent upon programs such as FFT. One might think that a more appropriate question should query the role of the forest professional. However, this would only raise a whole new discussion, because those who manage the forest recreation sites and trails are not required to be designated forest professionals.

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Fire is Part of Forestry

In the President's Report in the November/December issue of **BC Forest Professional**, Jon Lok states that "[s]uppression activities are not professional forestry ..." But they are! The definition in the *Foresters Act* clearly states that professional forestry includes protection.

Besides, all fire management is logically forestry just like any other forest health component. In this sense, it is no different than insect infestations, fungi or wind throw; they are all means with which the forest is damaged. And their amelioration is the function of forestry.

Mr. Lok goes on to state that the association's Council in its public dealing with fire management has chosen to lead from behind. Why? Was it because of the presumption that the Wildfire Management Branch employees are the experts in this area?

If so, this makes no sense. Forest professionals, and by association the Council, are the leaders in all forestry matters. Certainly, they don't need to lead in regards to on-the-ground consideration but the big issues, such as the fire 'triage' that Mr. Lok mentions, need big visions that can't be left to non-professionals.

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