



FIA–FSP Forest Science Corner

SISCO 2006 Summer Field Tour

Harvesting and site preparation choices for creating and maintaining timber and non-timber resources

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by Kathie Swift, *Early Stand Dynamics Extension Specialist*

Planning was the general theme that permeated the summer Southern Interior Silviculture Committee's (SISCO) 2006 Field tour held August 29–30, 2006—the need for it, the need for it to be flexible, and the need for it to include multiple parties.


In the dry-belt Douglas-fir forests of the Southern Interior, being able to plan for, and meet the diversity of, expected objectives on a land base that contains a mosaic of structures and conditions is going to be a challenge for any forest manager. Attending the summer SISCO gave participants a chance to discuss these challenges.

Hosted by both the BC Ministry of Forests and Range's Southern Interior Forest Region and the Kamloops Forest District, participants had the opportunity to walk through the Isobel Demonstration Forest, Opax Mountain Silvicultural Systems Trial (one of the Forest Investment Account–Forest Science Program's long-term research installations) as well as view the aftermath of the Greenstone Mountain Fire.

On the first day, participants were introduced to the history of the dry-belt Douglas-fir forests in the Southern Interior. According to oral history, as well as historical reconstruction data and documentation, these forests are the result of years of natural and man-made disturbances. Consequently, what managers face today is a landscape that is made up of a mosaic of different stand structures and conditions and, because of its close proximity to communities such as Kamloops, is subject to many social expectations. With the loss of pine-dominated forests due to the mountain pine beetle, Day One speakers indicated that the existing dry-belt Douglas-fir forests will be subject to increased social pressure to meet not only timber objectives,

but also biodiversity, wildlife habitat, range/forage, and recreational opportunities. With this increase in social pressure comes the reality that fire is yet another natural element. Information was presented on this first day outlining the role of prescribed fire as a fuel management technique.

During the second day, participants were presented with another reality—certain forest health conditions may be changing in these forest types. Research was presented to indicate that insect attacks, such as spruce budworm, are becoming more frequent, longer in duration, and broader in scope. Have our past practices created the environment for this forest health change to take place, and will our new practices address it in some way? These were questions that participants were asked to consider as managers of this forest type. Other questions were: Do we have sufficient information to deal with potential trade-offs that may have to be made when so many objectives are involved? And do our existing legislative mechanisms have the flexibility to deal with those trade-offs?

The final stop of the summer tour was the Greenstone fire near Kamloops where issues such as salvage harvesting of fire-killed timber, site preparation and replanting, vegetation response, the effects of domestic forage seeding, and small mammals were discussed. Dealing with the results of fire can be, in terms of planning and managing expectations, as complex as the standing forest. As one researcher put it: "What we think will happen after a fire rarely matches our predictions" 

For more information on the *Forest Management Options for Dry Forest Ecosystems*, please go to: http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/Pubs/RSI/FSP/EN/RSI_EN05.htm

For information on SISCO, please visit <http://www.siscobc.com/>