



Forester's Summary



It sure is amazing how time flies when you are a part of progress. Over the past year I have been involved with forestry, primarily, such as implementing the Short Term Forestry Agreement (STFA), Northwest Forest Rehabilitation Enhancement Program joint planning, Watershed Planning meetings, Ministry of Forests and Range referrals and meetings, economic development discussions, Gmlitxwit meetings, strategic planning in Prince George and. most recently, Gitxsan Forest Enterprises.

To start with, the STFA is a huge step for the Gitxsan as I believe this agreement will enable the Gitxsan to be more involved with watershed planning, forest management, decision making, economic opportunities, and revenue sharing. The STFA is comprised of four broad areas: funds, tenure, consultation, and watershed planning (Gitsegukla Pilot Project). From my perspective, the implementation of the STFA has been quite slow. However, there has been movement with the funds and additional discussions around consultation and watershed planning. As for the tenure, the next step would be to send in a letter stating we are prepared to move forward with the non-replaceable forest license (NRFL) and then negotiations will commence with identifying the operating areas. As stated in the STFA under Section 5.1.8, operating areas will consist of “a representative timber profile and logging chance relative to other Licensees and BCTS taking into account the quality of timber, access, and commercial viability.” Basically we have a say of where the tenure can and will be located based on economic viability.

On a weekly basis, I'm making attempts to let the local Ministry of Forests and Range know what our concerns and interests are as they relate to the land and resources. It sure is a struggle at times since they seem to think the status quo of managing our resources and notification is suffice for their needs. However, court decisions like Delgamuukw and Yal says we have a legal interest in every inch of the territory including all resources. It is time for BC Timber Sales to get on side with dealing with the concerns and interests of the Gitxsan Simgiigyet. It is only a matter of time for them to realize they truly are required to work with the Gitxsan Simgiigyet.

In August, I was appointed by the Gmlitxwit to be a board of director of Gitxsan Forest Enterprises Inc. By being a director I will assist in getting the GFEI operational, which in my mind will provide opportunities and benefits to the Gitxsan through employment, capacity building, training, and generating wealth. This is a great opportunity to provide my knowledge and experience to the forestry business and also to learn from other industry players. My primary objective for GFEI is a successful business so these other opportunities and benefits will be there for the Gitxsan and for generations to follow.

For this upcoming year, I will be involved in a similar role as last year with GFEI, STFA Implementations, watershed planning, NWFREP joint planning, and Ministry of Forests information sharing. I am very grateful to be working for the Gitxsan Nation. The Gitxsan Treaty Society board, staff and Simgiigyet are all very supportive. They all conduct themselves in a professional manner and assist me when I need the help. I am very excited about this year as I believe we are moving in the right direction with many ideas to explore.

Cameron Stevens

