

The Iisaak Sustainable Forestry Project:

A Partnership

Between

Iisaak Forest Resources Ltd.

And

The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

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1.0 Introduction

The Iisaak Sustainable Forestry Project (ISFP) is a partnership between the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) and Iisaak Forest Resources Ltd. This project will define sustainable resource management for Iisaak. The first community based and First Nations driven CBT initiative, the ISFP will aid in the development and monitoring of criteria and indicators, and will build capacity for the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations.

Clayoquot Sound is located on the west coast of Vancouver Island, specifically along the lines of 49° 0' N - 49° 35' N latitude and 125° E 25' - 126° E 35' W longitude, (CBT, 2000). A distinctly unique environment, the Sound is characterized by steep mountains, numerous islands, streams and lakes. Exposed to the temperament of the northwestern Pacific Ocean, Clayoquot Sound is battered with gale winds and more than 300 cm of precipitation annually, (Pacific Rim National Park, 2002). This spectacular temperate rainforest contains rich biodiversity attracting visitors from around the world.

2.0 Background

2.1 Iisaak Forestry Resources Ltd.

Iisaak Forest Resources Ltd., a joint-venture forest company between the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations (51%) and Weyerhaeuser Company (49%), operates on 87,664 hectares (ha) within the Clayoquot Sound land base, (Smart Wood Program, 2001). “The strategic intent of Iisaak is to develop a viable economic model for conservation and management of coastal old growth forests that are not formally protected but nevertheless contain important ecological and cultural values,” (Iisaak, 2002^a, p. 4).

Iisaak aims to be a global leader in conservation-based management of natural forests and the production of forest products and services. Iisaak means “respect” in the Nuu-chah-nulth language, appropriately illustrated through addressing issues of sustainable development, the role of partnerships, and interdisciplinary problem solving relative to conservation in the management of forestlands in the Clayoquot Sound Region, (Iisaak, 2001^a, p. 7).

Iisaak was formed in 1998 as an interim measure in the land claim treaty process between the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations and the British Columbian government. Iisaak has established two memorandums of understandings; gaining the support of five environmental organizations including Natural Resources Defense Council, Greenpeace International, Greenpeace Canada, Sierra Club of British Columbia, and the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, as well as an agreement with the Clayoquot South Community, (Iisaak, 1999^a & 1999^b). Iisaak, the largest FSC-certified forest products company in Canada, maintains a “Quadruple Bottom Line” philosophy, which describes the company’s commitment to economic, environmental, social, and cultural sustainability.

2.2 Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

A biosphere reserve is an area designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to demonstrate innovative approaches to living sustainably within the natural environment. “There are over 400 biosphere reserves and each of them represents one of the world’s major ecosystems,” (CBT, 2002, p.1).

The Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (CSUBR) was designated on January 2000. The biosphere reserve includes the lands, waters and communities of the Sound. The three main goals of the biosphere reserve are: Conservation of Biodiversity, Sustainable Development, and Capacity Building. The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) is the agency responsible for achieving the objectives of the CSUBR.

The mission statement of the CBT is:

To assist the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Region Community to achieve its vision by providing funding and logistical support for research, education and training initiatives that promote conservation and sustainable development. The CBT will facilitate the sharing and exchange of knowledge and experience both locally and globally. The CBT will accomplish these objectives by working creatively and proactively within the framework of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme. (CBT, 2002, p. 3)

3.0 Iisaak Sustainable Forestry Project

Appropriate to the goals and objectives of both Iisaak and the CBT, the purpose of this project is twofold:

1. To provide to the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations with:
 - Training and education,
 - Professional development, and
 - Skill development specific to the forestry industry.The project, over its three-year duration, will enhance the knowledge and experience of the participants, thereby enabling them to successfully compete for various levels of employment in resource management industries.
2. To implement a program designed to monitor criteria of sustainability. Using accepted economic, environmental, social and cultural criteria and indicators, the program will set out to measure Iisaak’s progress towards sustainable development and economic viability.

Iisaak’s Forest Stewardship Council certification and the Clayoquot Sound Scientific Panel have set economic, environmental, social, and cultural targets for sustainable forestry. The evaluation of the monitoring results over the three-year project will

illustrate the impacts of the implementation of these targets, and will provide direction for the long-term sustainability of Iisaak as a forest resources company and the future management of the Clayoquot Biosphere Reserve's zones of cooperation.

4.0 Iisaak's History

Iisaak's forest management operations occur on Tree Farm Licence 57 (TFL 57), which was created in 1999 by subdividing Weyerhaeuser's TFL 44. "TFL 57 is dispersed throughout Clayoquot Sound and is interspersed with TFL 54 (Interfor), the Arrowsmith Timber Supply Area, Pacific Rim National Park, Strathcona Park, and other Protected Areas. Timber Licence T0846 (T0846)... is located in the Bedingfield watershed unit of Clayoquot Sound," (B.C. Ministry of Forests, 2001, p. 1). Iisaak's TFL 57 has an annual allowable cut (AAC) of 115,535 m³, of which the total volume of wood harvested to date by Iisaak was 22,197 m³ in 2000, with 10,182 m³ from primary harvest and 12,015 m³ from salvage operations, (Smart Wood Program, 2001; B.C. Ministry of Forests, 2001). Iisaak did not harvest in 2001, and has recently recommenced harvesting operations August 1, 2002 in the Cypre Watershed.

Iisaak has subdivided TFL 57 into two main categories, "ehmiis (areas that are very precious) and active forest management areas. The ehmiis are within the integrated management zone as defined by the Clayoquot Sound Land Use Decision (e.g. they are not Protected Areas)," (Iisaak, 2001^b, p. 12). Rooted in the "Nuu-chah-nulth philosophy of *Hishuk-ish ts'awalk*, the belief of respecting the limits of what is extracted and the interconnectedness of all things," (Iisaak, 2001^a, p. 7), Iisaak emphasizes respectful management of all areas within its TFL, legally protected or not.

An illustration of this is Iisaak's commitment to implementing the variable retention harvest system recommended by the Clayoquot Sound Scientific Panel (CSSP), "which is intended to maintain ecosystem integrity by retaining trees and patches of forest to protect a variety of values and ecosystem components", (B.C. Ministry of Forests, 2001, p. 9). Intending to mimic natural environmental events specific to Clayoquot Sound, Iisaak conducts dispersed retention – single tree selection, group selection and worm cuts (thin strips less than 10 m wide) – and aggregate retention, also referred to as patch cuts, (Long Beach Model Forest, 2002). Through these methods, Iisaak recognizes the high conservation value forests comprising TFL 57, and to date averages 70-80% retention in the Cypre Watershed.

Iisaak's present management and operating structure consists of Resources, Engineering, and Silviculture / Communications Foresters, administration staff, a contracted general manager, and an active board, (Iisaak, 2002^b). All of Iisaak's harvesting activities are contracted out. Between the years 1999 and 2001, Weyerhaeuser has contributed 83% of the operational investments, and the remaining 17% has been provided by the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, (Iisaak, 2002^b). During this time, Iisaak has gained FSC certification and recognition from the World Wildlife Fund; established the Bill 82 – Forest Status Amendment Act – Forest Practices Code Pilot Project; and has completed

Phase 1 of the CSSP recommended Landscape Level Planning for all operating areas, (Iisaak, 2002^b; Iisaak, 2001^a).

5.0 Iisaak's Future Direction

Iisaak is in the process of creating their first management plan specific to TFL 57 (MP#1), due at the end of this calendar year. In the mean time Iisaak has been using Weyerhaeuser's TFL 44 Management Plan #3 (MP#3), and has established compatible forest management objectives, (Iisaak, 2001^b). Iisaak updates their Forest Development Plans annually, maintaining accurate detail on all their resource management activities. Iisaak is presently contracting Coulson Forest Products to conduct the 2002 variable retention helicopter logging in TFL 57. The total harvest volume for TFL 57 is targeted at 51,000 m³ this year, with 15,000 m³ from salvage operations, (Johnsen, 2002).

Iisaak's business strategy for 2002 is to "create a product market and investment demand for low-impact management / eco-forestry on the BC coast, sufficient to ensure financially sustainable operations," (Iisaak, 2002^b). A continuation of initially Timber Based (2000-2005), to then Market Premium (2002-2006), and to finally Conservation Value (2004- ongoing) operations is the basis for Iisaak's development pathway, (Iisaak, 2002^b). Through a Pre-Purchase Agreement between Weyerhaeuser and Iisaak, Iisaak is requesting a finance plan to ease the operational burdens of the 2002-2003 harvesting year. Iisaak's adaptive management strategy and "Quadruple Bottom Line" principles have given rise to the proposal of a new AAC for TFL 57 of 76,000 m³, as opposed to the original 115,535 m³, (Johnsen, 2002). One of the primary outcomes expected of the Iisaak Sustainable Forestry Project is to aid in the determination of an annual allowable cut that is sustainable in the long-term for Iisaak as a forest management company.

5.1 ISFP – Iisaak Management Linkages

The Iisaak Sustainable Forestry Project (ISFP) will be incorporated into Iisaak's management and operating structure at various levels. The following management objectives have been selected from the 2001 Forest Management Statement in order to illustrate the range of linkages between the ISFP and Iisaak Forestry Resources Ltd., (Iisaak, 2001^b):

- Manage the resources of the TFL for the benefit of both present and future generations in accordance with sustainable resource management principles.
 - The ISFP will help to determine sustainable forest practices through the development of the criteria and indicators monitoring program, considering sustainable development based upon environmental, economic, social and cultural variables.
- Cooperate with other resource users to develop non-timber forest based enterprises.

- Through a variety of community and regional partnerships, the ISFP will provide training and professional development initiatives in order to build capacity in resource management industries.
- Implement the CSSP planning framework within the legal framework of the Forest Practices Code (FPC).
 - The criteria and indicators monitoring program of the ISFP is intended to monitor the implementation of the CSSP recommended forestry practices, and determine the viability of these practices with respect to Iisaak’s “Quadruple Bottom Line”.
- Provide opportunities for public and First Nations involvement through the FPC requirements defined in legislation and regulations, the Central Region Board, and other informal consultation opportunities.
 - The training and development initiatives of the ISFP are intended to build capacity in the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations communities, and thereby provide participants with the skills to successfully compete for employment opportunities in the resource management field.
- Implement a comprehensive monitoring program as the basis for an adaptive management approach to improve our stewardship.
 - The ISFP criteria and indicator monitoring program is an extension of the initial monitoring conducted by the Long Beach Model Forest in 2000 and 2001, (Long Beach Model Forest, 2002). One of the expected outcomes of the ISFP is a monitoring team, trained by the ISFP and contracted for the extended continuation of monitoring Iisaak’s forest management operations.
- Assign a high priority to maintaining the visual attractiveness of forested landscapes. Manage the various visual landscapes of TFL 57 in accordance with their assigned value and the associated guidelines.
 - Incorporating the multitude of variables specific to Clayoquot Sound, the ISFP monitors economic, environmental, social and cultural criteria and indicators. Included in the social indicators are measures related to scenic values, and recreation and tourism use in the area.

6.0 Conclusion

Iisaak Forest Resources Ltd. was established in response to years of controversy surrounding logging and aboriginal land claims in Clayoquot Sound. Climaxing in 1993 with the Clayoquot Sound Land Use Decision and the subsequent arrest of over 900 protesters, resource management conflicts in Clayoquot Sound have revealed the need for comprehensive partnerships and sustainable development initiatives. The recommendations of the Scientific Panel for Sustainable Forest Management in Clayoquot Sound, and the UNESCO designated Biosphere Reserve have helped to establish the foundation of sustainable development in Clayoquot Sound.

Acting as a network node in the forest management industry of Clayoquot Sound, Iisaak is committed to redefine traditional forest management in the Sound, to a form that is sustainable economically, environmentally, socially, and culturally. Iisaak intends to accomplish this through ecologically sensitive management practices, and building capacity within the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations.

The Iisaak Sustainable Forestry Project, as a partnership between Iisaak and the Clayoquot Biosphere Reserve, shares the Nuu-chah-nulth values of *Iisaak*, respect, and *Hishuk-ish ts'awalk*, the interconnectedness of all things, (Iisaak, 2001^a). Through training and professional development initiatives, the ISFP will provide to the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations capacity building opportunities. Based on Iisaak's "Quadruple Bottom Line" of economic, environmental, social, and cultural sustainability, the ISFP will expand upon the monitoring work of the Long Beach Model Forest. This monitoring program will aid in the determination of sustainable forest management for Iisaak, as well as the future management of the Zones of Cooperation within the Biosphere Reserve.

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