

January 2014

E

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------	--------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<b>NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION</b>
<b>TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION</b>
<b>Madison, Wisconsin, USA, 11 - 13 June 2014</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE RESILIENCE WORKING GROUP</b>
<b>Futuring and Scenarios for Building a more Resilient Forest Sector</b>

### Introduction

1. Resilience and adaptability in the face of globally-driven changes are important attributes for maintaining sustainability and global competitive position in the natural resource sectors. A key capacity for building resilience is “foresight” or the ability to understand global drivers of change and to anticipate issues and potential future consequences that emerge because of them.
2. The skills and tools that will result from this initiative will adapt concepts and processes from the field of foresight development to enhance the ability of resource management organizations in North America to wrestle with an environment of growing uncertainty and rapid change. The approaches proposed here are being used successfully by highly performing and innovative organizations around the world.
3. This work will capitalize on the unique strengths of the NAFC to connect and leverage existing resources within the North American forest sector. The project will introduce the NAFC to the power of foresight methods and processes and it will enable connection with expertise in foresight planning inside and outside the sector. Developing and analyzing alternative future scenarios would allow the members of the NAFC to better anticipate emerging issues, define areas of common interest for joint action, identify critical knowledge gaps, forge new partnerships, and modify programs.

### Background

4. Adaptive capacity is the ability of an individual, organization, or social-ecological system to adjust to changes, to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, and to cope with consequences. Adaptive capacity derives from assets and resources (such as knowledge, networks, human capital) and institutions and governance mechanisms that enable the mobilization of resources for the purposes of transforming and adapting. Resilience is the ability of a social-ecological system to reorganize and retain necessary functions in the face of change and disturbance. Adaptive capacity can be viewed as the ability to manage or influence resilience.
5. Critical capacities for building resilience include learning to live with change and uncertainty, nurturing diversity for resilience, combining different types of knowledge for learning, creating opportunity for self-organization towards sustainability, and alertness to patterns of change, especially

those that challenge the underlying assumptions that drive current strategies and programs (Berkes et al. 2003).

6. Alert institutions can view global drivers of change as sources of risks and opportunities and anticipate changes in order to shape programs that are robust, i.e. work under a range of conditions. Alertness to change is enhanced by the ability to gain insight about a range of possible, plausible, and preferable futures (“futuring” or “foresight” skills). Resilient institutions develop capacity for foresight (Pelli 2008, Weeks et al. 2011) or “reading” the range of alternative futures and identifying emerging issues for program development.

### **Value Proposition**

7. This work is being designed to deliver multiple benefits, following Berkes (2003), Bengston et al. (2012), and others. Expected contributions include:

1. Better understanding of the role of futures and foresight capabilities in building institutional resilience and adaptive capacity in the North American forest sector.
2. Realization of several benefits of enhanced foresight capacity (Bengston et al. 2012) including:
  - a. understanding key uncertainties and identifying emerging issues early, allowing us to deal better with surprise, anticipate unintended consequences, and decrease reaction time to rapid change,
  - b. clarifying multiple external perspectives about trends and plausible futures (e.g. the perspectives of the NAFC working groups and stakeholder groups), and
  - c. shaping preferred futures and future pathways.

### **Deliverables**

8. A report to NAFC that outlines accepted practices in building foresight capacity, emphasizing scenario planning, its expected benefits and costs, and a recommended process for developing and using scenarios in the North American forest sector. This foundation report would outline how to integrate forest resource assessments and forecasts and global futuring efforts into a proposed scenario planning exercise for NAFC members.

9. A scenario-based strategic assessment process that engages NAFC officers and members in developing and evaluating alternative futures and recommending resilience/adaptation strategies for anticipating emerging issues.

10. A “North American Forest Futures” report that presents a set of working scenarios, trend and issue descriptions, and implications for forestry institutions. NAFC working groups would be widely involved in providing information and perspectives in the development, interpretation, and deployment of these scenarios. The report would be provided to members of the forest sectors in NAFC countries for their uses in planning processes at multiple scales. The report would offer “core” or “default” continental futures that would serve as a resource for national and regional planning and place-based collaborations.

11. An active community of practice for foresight capacity building, populated by planners, analysts, leaders, and managers in the North American forest sector. The community of practice would be supported by a web-based resource center - “Resilient Forest Futures” - with tools, information, and linkages among practitioners important to advancing the use and modification of scenarios, futures research, and resilience-building approaches.

### **Terms of Reference**

12. This project would be considered an exploratory effort, to be evaluated and reconsidered for continuation at the end of two years (October 2015). This trial period would give the NAFC leadership and working groups’ opportunity to provide input, participate in scenario exercises, and judge the utility of the approaches and tools. All activities will strive to capture the unique strengths and worldwide connections of the NAFC coalition and to avoid duplication of any services or products already available from individual members.

## Workflow and Task Assignments

13. Principals in the overall effort include:

- Tim Sheldon, Canadian Forest Service
- Representative of CONAFOR
- David Cleaves, USDA Forest Service

14. Other parties committed to work on this include:

- Linda Joyce, USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station
- David Bengston, USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station
- Tim Williamson, Canadian Forest Service, Northern Forestry Centre
- Kelvin Hirsch, Canadian Forest Service, Northern Forestry Centre
- David Price, Canadian Forest Service, Northern Forestry Centre
- Representatives of CONAFOR

15. Workstream I – Scenario planning

1. Develop a “white paper” report outlining the concept of scenario planning, strengths and weaknesses, benefits and costs, and its applicability to futuring in the forest sector.
2. Review sets of scenarios being used by forestry institutions and the global business and sustainability communities. Synthesize existing forest sector resource assessments and futures reports – identify key uncertainties, assumptions, and trends and distill 5-7 major trends or key issues that could shape the context for the sector for the next 20 years.
3. Construct a set of future scenarios combining climate, economic, social/demographic, and other large scale drivers of change. Through several iterations of engagement and feedback, develop these scenarios into a “North American Forest Futures” report.
4. Confer with NAFC leadership and working groups and other sources in the construction of scenarios and in-depth analysis of trends. Develop a preliminary scenario exercise for NAFC working groups and leadership at the October 2013 meeting in Madison, WI.
5. Develop a second “white paper” report outlining how scenario planning can be brought together to find ways to enhance resiliency. Build these into the scenario planning process.

16. Workstream II– Community of Practice

1. Draft a plan for building and supporting an extended community of practice for “foresight” capability development and connection.
2. Extend invitation throughout the North American forest sector for involvement in an exploratory community of practice.
3. Design and launch a “Resilient Forest Futures” web-based toolbox and elicit ongoing feedback in improving it to support users and better implement deliverables.
4. Deploy tools from all work streams to NAFC members and others with provisions for ongoing feedback, evaluation, and revision.

### **Funding Needs**

- Travel for at least one face-to-face work session for each work stream involving three people (one from each country) - a total of nine people in 3 sessions.
- Travel to engage NAFC work groups in scenario assessment at their meetings.
- Compensation for limited number of guest speakers to stimulate scenario development.
- Scenario development resources

### **References:**

Bengston, David N, Robert L. Olson, and Leif A. DeVaney. 2012. The future of wildland fire management in a world of rapid change and great uncertainty. In Proceedings of 3<sup>rd</sup> Human Dimensions of Wildland Fire, April 17-19, 2012, Seattle Washington. International Association of Wildland Fire, Missoula, MT.

Berkes, et al. 2003. Navigating social-ecological systems: building resilience for complexity and change. Cambridge University Press.

Pelli, Paivi. 2008. Review on forest sector foresight studies and exercises. European Forest Institute (EFI) Report 29.

Weeks, Don, Patrick Malone, and Leigh Welling. 2011. Climate change scenario planning; a tool for managing parks into uncertain futures. Park Science 28(1): 26-33.