

Wilderness Politics in British Columbia: A 30-Year Review

A Synopsis of *Talk and Log*, by Jeremy Wilson (1998)

Introduction

This report is a synopsis of a book entitled *Talk and Log: Wilderness Politics in British Columbia*. The book was published in 1998 by Jeremy Wilson, with the Department of Political Science at the University of Victoria. *Talk and Log* provides a detailed review of wilderness politics in B.C. from 1960 to 1996, recounting the impacts and changing strategies of the three major players involved: government, the environmental movement, and industry.

Because forest development in Alberta has lagged that of B.C., and because the same party has been in power in Alberta for almost 30 years, wilderness politics in Alberta have differed from those in B.C. However, in many important respects both provinces appear to be following the same general path, albeit with a 5-10 year lag in Alberta. For this reason, the insights provided by Dr. Wilson are of great value for all that are interested in forest management in Alberta (as well as in other jurisdictions).

This report is basically just a series of excerpts from the book. My contribution has only been to organize the excerpts into a logical flow and to do some minor editing as required for readability. I strongly encourage anyone who finds this information of value to read the entire book. It is highly readable, and contains a wealth of information that obviously could not be captured in this brief synopsis. The book is available directly from UBC Press (www.ubcpress.ca) or can be ordered in by your local bookstore (~\$30.00).

General insights on government and policy-making

Governments the world over muddle through. They try to plan, but mostly they react. They spend a fair bit of time grappling with states of full or partial paralysis brought on by uncertainty, inadequate information and capacity, internal divisions, and conflicting advice or pressures. They are frequently forced to wrestle with circumstances beyond their control, or with the unintended consequences of their decisions. For the most part they move incrementally. Overwhelmed by the complexity of problems they confront, decision-makers lean heavily on preexisting policy frameworks, adjusting only at the margins to accommodate distinctive features of new situations. Occasionally, when the planets are aligned, governments seize the opportunity to consolidate disparate policy tendencies into a coherent shift in policy direction. But reformers usually find it difficult to protect territory won; change is followed by back-sliding and reversal.

Policy making is mostly about expediting or delaying the way immutable forces unfold, or about nudging the resultant change trajectories a few degrees to one side or another.

Success in the arts of political mobilization and pacification requires mastery of political language, an aptitude for recognizing which symbols will be potent in different situations, and prowess in the art of constructing political spectacles. Skilful political operators are able to present interpretations of problems that, as need be, either reassure or galvanize public anxieties.

Symbolic politics: an aroused public is placated by a symbol-laden policy response. In the ensuing mood of quiescence, the authorities proceed to nullify the putative intent of the policy, their efforts largely unnoticed by the public. Those disposed to question policy are confronted by flux, uncertainty, and complexity — by a picture that is well designed to overwhelm all but the most skilful and persistent critics. The complexity and fluidity of forest policy represent real advantages to those wishing to exclude non-experts from the debate.

What public officials do, where they sit, whom they interact with, and what they see and know all tend to generate distinctive state policy positions.

The bureaucracy's capacity (and willingness) to administer policy, and the environmental movement's capacity to scrutinize this administration are both important.

To understand the policy decisions we must examine both the forces pressuring them and the ideas shaping the context within which they operate. We need historical analysis to discern the important respects in which present policy options are constrained by past choices.

Advice regarding the technical or scientific credibility of different options flows along what we can think of as an ideas stream. Through learning, debate, and testing within the policy community, and through distillation of advice in and around the bureaucracy, this raw material is shaped into interpretations of problems and solutions. The pressure and ideas stream constantly interact to determine which issues are given priority, and which interpretations of these issues guide the policy response. At the same time as they are working to shape societal perceptions and mobilize citizen support, interest group leaders try to influence the way knowledge is assembled and accredited within the policy community and distilled into advice within the bureaucracy.

Analysis of maneuvering by the adversaries leads frequently back to consideration of their attempts to use and manipulate knowledge, expertise, and uncertainty. Forest environmental policies have evolved at the interface between science and politics. This is unquestionably a field in which ideas and knowledge matter. Ideas may shape agendas, which can profoundly shape outcomes.

Throughout the three decades surveyed, participants in the BC forest environment policy process invested heavily in influencing the ideas stream. Policy actors across the sector drew on this stream for guidance, sustenance, and legitimacy. The adversaries tried to pull sympathetic scientists into the debate. Although the field can be characterized as

"science-based", the contending sides frequently tried to impose artificial certainty on areas marked by considerable doubt and dispute.

Those challenging the status quo will try to inject new ideas, seeking to influence those with the potential to bring about a sought-after shift in the regulatory regime. When confronted with novel and possibly dangerous ideas, those with a vested interest in the old agenda will naturally go through stages of denial and resistance. They may first try to discredit the threatening new ideas. Failing that, they may try to re-label the old wine by incorporating terminology associated with those ideas into a revamped defence of the discredited practices. But once the discourse shifts, all actors will begin to feel the constraining effects (as well as the creative potential) of the changes. Supporters of the status quo will find themselves impelled to defend their actions in terms of the new concepts and understandings.

Policy choices have to be defended, both to the public and to other members of the policy community. In order to be defensible, policy has to have at least a modicum of intellectual respectability. It cannot be defended with concepts and ideas that are discredited or outmoded; legitimization strategies must draw on the currently credible discourse. What is important ultimately is that **in buying into a discourse, those trying to defend a policy must accept the full package, including the tests and standards implied. In so doing they may very well find themselves trapped into complying with tests and standards not to their liking.**

The strength of the political alliances favouring a set of ideas and claims will obviously make a difference. So too though may factors relating to an ideas merit. The accreditation processes may be influenced by the weight of scientific support or evidence, and by whether or not central ideas and claims have gained acceptance in other jurisdictions, particularly admired ones.

The translation of ostensible policy goals into actual results depends on the precision with which those goals are stated, on the competence and capacity of the agencies applying the policy, and on the cues agency personnel receive from superiors.

Because environmental officials have been relegated to subordinate positions in the bureaucratic pecking order, and because the federal government has rarely been able to summon up the political will needed to take on the forest industry and its provincial government allies, officials in both agencies have largely had to content themselves with advisory roles and with what they could achieve through interagency bargaining. Most of the important policy decisions described in this book were preceded by interagency consultation or negotiation.

The federal Fisheries Act gives the federal government a strong mandate to control logging impacts. The Dept. Fisheries and Ocean's performance reflects the fishing industry's political weakness relative to the forest industry, the forest industry's continued political clout in Ottawa, and the federal government's shaky legitimacy in BC. Nor have they had the political resources needed to engage effectively in the kind of federal-

provincial conflict which is likely to result from vigorous attempts to enforce the Fisheries Act.

General insights on the development coalition

The state is impelled to protect the interests of big business because, by dint of their control over key decisions on investment and employment, major companies are in a strong position to influence the levels of economic prosperity and employment. A theory of corporate power requires no conspiracy theory of politics. Rather, politicians simply understand that to make the system work, government leadership must often defer to business leadership. The relationship is usually best characterized as privileged yet conflictful. However, business power should not be assumed to be stable across time.

The development coalition's inability to contain environmentalism in BC was linked to its legitimacy problems. **Everything the environmental coalition was able to accomplish in the 1990s was underwritten by the success of the 1980s efforts to call into question the legitimacy of the forest liquidation-conversion project and the development coalition's control of forest land.**

By 1988 the forest industry had initiated advertising campaigns (Forests Forever) with an estimated annual price tag of more than \$1 million. By 1990, however, evidence mounted that public perceptions of the industry had actually become less positive over the course of the campaign. The industry then (1991) conceived and launched the BC Forest Alliance (BCFA), with a first year budget of over \$1 million. By 1994 the BCFA budget was \$2.7 million. The BCFA was designed to neutralize the impact of environmentalism. One of the key elements was a shift to broad-based worker-led support groups in forest-dependent communities (Share groups).

General insights on the environmental community:

Despite facing some strong political resistance, the environmental movement has proposed alternatives heretofore unexamined, cast light on some shadowy zones of the policy-making process, and forced government and industry to defend practices and assumptions that, for far too long, went unchallenged.

The BC Wilderness Movement transformed the agenda and disrupted the industry-Forest Service policy monopoly by confronting features of the public consciousness that had hitherto favoured the development coalition. Capitalizing on shifts in societal values, it engineered a surge in participation from corners of the community that had previously been apathetic or less intensely involved than pro-development actors. It invested heavily in delegitimizing the rationale for the forest liquidation-conversion project, and in popularizing alternative visions of forests and the forest economy.

The environmentalist's prospects were limited by sunk costs — by the complex set of economic, social, and psychological commitments that solidified as the society became

increasingly dependent on the program of old-growth liquidation set in motion by earlier policy decisions. However, these and other constraints must be seen as malleable.

Any forces that corrode public confidence in sustained yield automatically shake the tenure pillar, call into question the devolution of public authority to companies and professional foresters, and threaten the rationale for the entire forest liquidation-conversion project.

Community environmental organizations face a number of internal stresses arising from variations in values and ideology, the loose affiliation of members, reliance upon voluntary effort, diverse organizational structures and leadership styles, as well as lack of financial resources. Yet, high motivation, cadres of dedicated activists, and unorthodox tactics, create strong survival capacity. The BC movement's greatest sources of strength are its broad public support, its large and intensely committed pool of activists, its diversity, and its access to important allies both inside and outside the province.

From some perspectives, maturation might be expected to lead to some homogenization of approaches. To the contrary, however, the wilderness movement has, if anything, become more diverse. The diversity of approaches does contribute to episodes of intergroup tension, but it also represents an obvious political asset. It means that the movement is able to cover a range of tactical bases, and that some segment of the movement can usually be counted on to gravitate quickly to the approach deemed most appropriate in a particular circumstance.

Groups differ in their lobbying approaches. Some rely mainly on communicating directly with government. Such organizations emphasize the importance of maintaining good access to key decision-makers and stress the homework needed to make a strong case to politicians. Other groups put a higher priority on an indirect approach, premising their efforts on the belief that politicians are moved by evidence of public concern. These groups focus on educating citizens and encouraging supporters to express their views to politicians.

Policy brokers: individuals that operate at the interface between government and society, deriving influence over the policy process from their sensitivity to changes going on around them, their connections to prominent actors throughout the policy community, and their access to information and ideas.

Most environmental movement communications incorporate a strong emotional pitch. More often than not, these centre on photo images.

By in large, the movement's efforts to focus attention on poor forest practices and threats to wilderness areas have been helped by the media.

The movement also increasingly emphasized international public opinion and boycotts. The movement has begun to realize that internationalization carries certain downside risks, including a loss of control and a potentially malignant intensification of the media

spotlight. However, international pressure has had a major influence on the Harcourt government's land use and forest practices initiatives.

The unceasing cultivation of allies has been very important, including some segments of the labour movement, commercial fishers, wilderness tourism, professional biologists and other scientists, national environmental groups, and First Nations.

The movement wisely chose to invest heavily in indirect lobbying, in approaches aimed at encouraging supporters to express their views to government. The movement's accomplishments in the areas of agenda setting and issue definition were founded on effective criticism and imaginative promotion of alternative visions. The movement also contributed significantly to the pressure for forest policy change. Each shift brought new constraints on forest exploitation, forcing the development coalition to reconsider how best to legitimate its control over the resource. New ideas meant new tests for industry; however, the tests remained flexible and the escape routes plentiful.

Environmental groups have had three key weaknesses: (1) access to key Ministry of Forests officials has not been good, (2) financial resources have been inadequate, and (3) internal discord. Advocacy groups are more prone to financial instability than are those in other categories. This is especially the case for groups that tie funding to particular campaigns. Also, easy money cuts grassroots groups off from their sources of community support.

Protected area campaigns: historical themes and insights

Elements of successful campaigns:

- Effective spokespeople
- Use of photographic images (books, etc)
- Enlistment of scientists to conduct research to provide scientific basis for protection
- Public slide shows
- Full-time lobby at legislature
- Letters to cabinet ministers
- Expanding list of organizations and individuals endorsing the cause
- Media (esp. Haida protests)
- National and international attention
- Development of an alternative economic vision
- Protests and confrontations

By tying up dedicated movement volunteers in area-specific processes (1970s and 1980s), the government was facilitating business-as-usual logging across the larger uncontested portion of the land base.

A weaker, more transitory environmental movement might have been contained by the combination of resistance, minor symbolic offerings, and miniscule substantive concessions that resulted from early campaigns. But this was an ascendant movement

with significant roots. The assortment of responses tried by the government had none of the hoped-for effects. These responses did nothing to divert the movement or arrest the growth of its support base, analytic sophistication, and level of commitment. Planning processes did absorb significant amounts of environmentalists' energy. This naturally generated some internal debate about the dangers of co-optation and the optimal use of resources. On the whole, however, participation in these processes helped the movement mature. Groups that participated were able to maintain a high level of activity in broader political forums. And participation produced significant educational benefits. The intensity and sophistication of the movement's oversight activities increased as a result. The Ministry of Forests and the industry were slow to appreciate the potential of its new adversary. Unaccustomed to this new level of scrutiny and criticism, ministry personnel sometimes reacted badly, in the process alienating environmentalists and other public representatives, and contributing to the failure of public participation experiments that were supposed to symbolize the government's new openness.

The preservation forces continued to hope that the Ministry of Forests and company claims about the feasibility of logging would wither in the face of hard economic counterarguments. Minister Parker, however, suggested that the new Share group had persuaded the minister that jobs should be subsidized in the Stein.

The ongoing wilderness wars in the late 1980s transformed forest policy into a bad news story for the government, convincing some of its members that major reforms were needed. This general mood of dissatisfaction created some space for reform-minded officials in the Ministry of Forests and the Parks agency. Their design work generated few results during the Social Credit's final years but did provide the foundation for the NDP government's major achievements in the 1990s. Although most members of the policy community agreed on the need for change, they had not come to a consensus on what this might mean. After 1986 environmentalists and their allies moved decisively to control development of thinking about land use planning.

After 1986 and the Brundtland report, environmentalists propelled arguments for major changes by asserting the importance of ecosystem representation and exposing gaps in the existing protected area system. The notion that at least 12% of the province should be protected was popularized.

Changing ministry perspectives were reflected in its 1989 decision to develop an old-growth management strategy. This initiative reflected a recognition that the current strategy of large scale conversion of old-growth to managed forests was unacceptable to a broad spectrum of society. The planning team agreed upon a two-pronged approach: efforts to protect representative old-growth reserves should be complemented by practices aimed at creating or maintaining old-growth attributes in managed forests.

In the Stein, Khutzeymateen, and other areas, groups continued to campaign for preservation even after the government announced what were apparently final decisions to develop. These and other long-running campaigns continually attracted energetic new recruits, adding to the layers of tactical diversity the movement was able to call into play.

Since some groups' support and fund-raising efforts had come to depend heavily on the promotion of special areas, a shift in the 1990s to a more comprehensive approach carried certain risks. These, however, were seen as insignificant in relation to the benefits that would accompany arrival of a wilderness politics that was truly about all of the province's wilderness. Rather than being preoccupied with battles over particular areas, environmentalists would be able to focus on the larger picture. This would make it easier for the movement to put its claims in perspective, allowing it to more effectively make the point that, far from "wanting it all", environmentalists were asking for preservation of a relatively small portion of the land base. Despite shifts towards a more comprehensive approach the movement continued to be pulled towards area-specific campaigns.

Because of the ascendancy of the biodiversity discourse, this meant that government and industry had to acknowledge that their previous concessions to recreation, wildlife, and scenic values were insufficient. The new discourse highlighted values that could be protected only through significantly altered forest practices and the preservation of large expanses of wilderness. The push to preserve old growth and ecological diversity threatened the forest liquidation and conversion project much more directly than the earlier area-specific campaigns.

In the face of all its difficulties, the forestry industry significantly expanded its harvesting activities, increasing the area clearcut from about 150,000 ha in the 1970s to more than 225,000 ha per year by the late 1980s.

NDP first term (1972-1975)

The NDP that took power in 1972 was certainly not a green party. However, it brought to office something more important to the environmental movement: a thoroughly skeptical view of the forest management orthodoxy, especially those parts that had helped legitimate the delegation of control over the resource to large companies.

The 39 months on intense forest policy-making presided over by Bob Williams failed to significantly restructure the BC forest economy. This outcome tells us a great deal about both the general difficulties facing agents of change and the particular obstacles facing reform agendas. An interpretation of Williams' lack of progress must begin by noting that his vision of a more diverse forest economy was not accompanied by a well-developed blueprint for achieving change. Williams brought to office an iconoclastic attitude towards many of the prevailing forest policy orthodoxies, along with a vision of a reformed forest economy. He did not, however, bring either a clear plan for achieving this vision or the patience needed to develop it. Williams' inability to achieve more of his agenda can be linked to a lack of sympathetic expertise and his failure to create a realistic implementation plan. It can also be partially attributed to his inability (or disinclination) to do what was required to mobilize public support. Williams and his key advisors also had too much on their plates.

Social Credit (1975-1991)

Although the reasons for the failure of Social Credit's post-1975 attempts to contain environmentalism are complex, the collapse of the legitimation initiatives was critical. Attempts to hold the line on "single-use" withdrawals (protected areas) and impose a Ministry of Forests-dominated land use planning system depended on the development coalition being able to reassure the public that the forest of the province were being well managed. It failed to do so.

The problems in government-industry forest management were a bonanza for critics. Each new revelation added to the arsenal of negative symbols that could be fired at supporters of the forest liquidation-conversion orthodoxy. As the revelations accumulated, pressures for change grew.

Along with the government's growing assortment of general political problems, the disintegration of the 1987-1989 forest policy agenda created space for a lively debate about a wide assortment of reform ideas.

Underlying the difficulties faced in Prince George and other areas was a growing overcapacity problem. It was becoming increasingly apparent that the forest industry's heavy investments in harvesting, hauling, and milling technology had created a set of dynamics where too much capacity was chasing too few trees. Behind the overcapacity lurked heavy debt loads, leading inevitably to a certain degree of desperation on the part of those whose ability to service debt depended on continued access to timber. This desperation naturally translated into political pressure to maintain cut levels, and thereby created major stresses on a system purporting to manage for sustainability.

Public participation in planning only really works where the conflicts being considered can be resolved by minor adjustments to logging or development plans and do not compromise the overall intent. **Where a public group wishes to change a land use designation, such as to prohibit logging, the public participation process is a trap designed to exhaust the participants and to shield politicians and civil servants from discomfiting confrontations.**

The radical thinking of the Forest Resource Commission (1991) about management structures and the tenure system opened space for moderate reformers in the Ministry of Forests. Support for a moderate reform agenda grew and Ministry of Forests conservatives realized that this course might reduce the possibility of big prerogative-shattering changes.

During the 1980s the Ministry of Forests critics had become more politically powerful and scientifically sophisticated. As a result, the ministry had to demonstrate that it was serious about its integrated resource management responsibilities. This meant engaging in some difficult and long-overdue consideration of harvest levels. It meant looking seriously at statutory approaches to the regulation of forest practices. Now, because of

the arrival of the biodiversity discourse, they had no choice but to live with the fact that this concept, and the tests that it entailed, had been transformed during the 1980s.

In 1988 the Social Credit government proudly proclaimed that its goal was to increase the size of the park system from 5.3% of the province to 6% by 2011. With the exception of the Valhalla, the preservationist victories came so much later that in some cases those celebrating the victory were a generation or two removed from those who had begun the struggle.

NDP second term (1991-present)

Harcourt and his advisors knew that it was important to find policy compromises acceptable to both the union and "green" portions of his support base. Both groups were essential.

The Harcourt government's success in quickly implementing its reform package is noteworthy. This was an ambitious package and its execution had to proceed into the face of powerful winds that were elsewhere causing governments to withdraw, deregulate, and downsize. It could be contended that several years of fumbling by Social Credit had created a pent-up demand for change, leaving the NDP the easy task of implementing measures widely regarded as long overdue. The convergence of the party and bureaucratic reform agendas was also important, as were a number of exogenous factors (e.g., American countervail threat, European market action).

As cabinet ministers and key officials became more confident about which stakeholder groups could be depended on, and more adept at constructing the kind of consensual wallpaper needed to sell outcomes to the media and the general public, the NDP turned increasingly to traditional backroom, brokerage politics.

The NDP government had recognized from the outset that its efforts to achieve peace in the woods would have to be greased with dollars. The goals of 12% protected areas and greater ecosystem representation were not politically feasible unless the government was prepared to engineer some "socialization" of the costs likely to be borne by those most adversely affected. Therefore, Harcourt committed himself to ensuring that "not one forest worker will be left without the option to work in the forest as a result of land-use decisions".

By the midpoint of the NDP's first term, worries about a reparation package for workers had supplanted those about compensation for companies losing timber volumes or land.

Within six months of taking over (1991), the cabinet established a Commission of Inquiry on Compensation for the Taking of Resource Interests. The mandate was to inquire into the principles and processes for determining whether, in what circumstances, and how much, if any, compensation should be paid to the holders of resource interests that are taken for public purposes without the consent of the holder. Instead of a market value approach, the commission endorsed the principle that licensees are entitled to

compensation related to "financial harm done to investments made with the expectation of an uninterrupted supply of a specific volume of fibre" The Crown might, for example, deliver compensation by funding intensive silviculture programs designed to boost allowable cut levels, or by helping purchase replacement timber from third parties. The commission also recommended changing the tenure legislation to give the government a much freer hand to make such deletions for nontimber uses (e.g., forest licences should allow for a noncompensable takeback of up to 10% every five years). The government did not implement any of these recommendations, and instead proceeded to deal with compensation claims on an ad hoc basis.

The Harcourt government had an aptitude for manipulating policy networks. It became more results-oriented and more hard-headed about how to sell its decisions. It recognized that what was important at the end of the day was image: when the premier and his ministers stood up to announce a new policy or decision, the platform's background should contain an array of key stakeholders, including credible spokespersons for environmentalists, unions, First Nations, and companies. Generally though, these decisions reflected growing acceptance of the view that the processes required were not necessarily consistent with complete transparency, comprehensive inclusivity, or the kind of procedural niceties favoured by the new-age conflict resolution consultants who had enjoyed a brief ascendancy during CORE's first year. That is, key NDP actors became more comfortable with a realist's understanding of the unavoidability of traditional political deal making.

Winning public shows of public support from credible environmentalists was comparatively easy. Moderate groups such as CPAWS could be depended upon to be supportive, while less amenable groups such as Greenpeace and Share groups soon came to be relied on to generate the paper outrage need to underline the government's contention that it was crafting middle-ground compromises.

As every government does, this one made judgments about what was politically feasible, about what it could accomplish without depleting political capital. This government, as any BC NDP government must, took into account the certainty that a consolidation of the opposition parties would spell electoral doom. **Its calculations were obviously influenced by its perceptions of where to draw the line between what the industry would reluctantly tolerate and what might drive it into full combat mode.**

Increased scientific uncertainty and controversy have increased government autonomy. Freed of the constraints associated with a dominant scientific orthodoxy's monopolization of problem definition, government actors are in a stronger position to maneuver their way towards politically optimal outcomes.

CORE process

In 1992, the government announced that efforts to find regional land use consensus would be led by an new body, the Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE).

Given the diversity of interests at the tables, it is no surprise that none of the CORE regional processes ended up achieving full consensus. **Some observers speculated that the success of the East Kootenay process stemmed in part from the fact that early walkouts by some environmental groups left this corner of the table in the hands of fairly moderate groups.**

In each case the consultative CORE exercises were succeeded by cabinet-directed ones featuring the hallmark characteristics of traditional brokerage politics.

The forest industry's six-year effort to encourage its workers to move to the forefront of the battle against environmentalists reached its zenith in March 1994, when a crowd estimated at between 15,000 and 30,000 massed on the lawns of the provincial legislature buildings to vent their anger. The message got through to the government. In response, the government accelerated its efforts to devise a transition plan for workers, and launched a major effort to distil the CORE plan into a compromise more acceptable to industry.

Some of the shine went off the CORE process when the cabinet realized that the crunch issues were going to end up back in its lap even after receiving the CORE treatment. Its lustre diminished further as ministers and officials became more confident about their ability to get credible-looking collections of stakeholders to buy into consensus outcomes. Shortly after taking over in 1996, the new leader, Glen Clark, disbanded the CORE process. As the post-CORE phase confirmed, reallocative contests get resolved when authorities declare winners and losers. Here the authorities were able to make things a little better for the losers by providing some promises of compensatory measures. High prices made it possible to launch the rich Forest Renewal Plan. In this way, at least partially, a reallocative issue was turned into an allocative one. The costs were socialized, albeit indirectly. Most of those who would end up sharing the costs — that is those who might have benefited from the windfall stumpage revenue — remained blissfully unaware of the transfers taking place.

CORE was not in the position to lead the kind of political bargaining needed to resolve land use uses. However, we should not underestimate the role the tables played in preparing the ground for these deals. The tables did in many instances reduce tensions between traditional adversaries and helped clear a path towards compromise by providing credible options around which real bargaining could take place. In effect, by exposing the degree of polarization, the CORE processes helped to define a broad "decision space" within which the government could appear to be reasonable and moderate.

The thunderclaps of environmental protest precipitated by the 1993 Clayoquot Sound decision reverberated outwards for the next three years and profoundly influenced the context that shaped crucial decisions on land use and forest practices for the remainder of the NDP's first term.

Forest Practices Code

The NDP's Forest Practices Code initiative would not have unfolded as it did had BC's environmental groups not managed to bring international attention to their campaign to protect old growth. Also, cabinet saw poll returns during 1993 and 1994 indicating strong public support for a tough regulatory stance.

Minister Petter had taken to heart the advice of former minister Bob Williams: **don't try to solve problems that the public don't know exist. Therefore, a series of fisheries audits were done, that demonstrated the ineffectiveness of voluntary compliance.** Primed with this advance information it is not surprising that the public was ready to support the Forest Practices Code before it was introduced into the legislature in 1994.

It is difficult to know how much of role international pressure played; however, in its dealings with companies and workers the government lost no opportunity to emphasize the seriousness of the boycott threat. The pitch was "would you guys like to lose 10% of your allowable cut or 50% of your world market?" In Harcourt's judgment it was important that we have the pressure to light a fire under the recalcitrant part of the industry.

In contrast to land use policy networks, Code development networks generally kept nongovernment actors on the margins.

Although the Code does increase the breadth and depth of the regulatory system, the new regime is different not so much because of changes to the substance of the rule book, but because of the expanded authority given those applying the rules. The shift was billed by the government as changing the "legal framework for the regulation of forest practices from a primarily contractual framework with statutory backup, to a primarily statutory framework with contractual backup." Many policies previously spelled out in guidelines were codified into law. The Code made detailed planning procedures (including public review provisions) obligatory, authorized increased government monitoring and enforcement, and expanded the range and severity of penalties. In addition the Forest Practices Board was established to investigate complaints by the public, conduct and report mandatory periodic audits of company performance, and issue an annual report.

Province-wide, the cost increase attributable to the Code was between 20-30%.

The Sierra Legal Defence Fund contends that the Code "fails miserably in creating an enforceable set of rules", primarily because of a wide list of discretionary exemptions. There is also not mandated commitment to maintaining biodiversity, ore even enunciating conservation principles. **In 1995, the Forests minister decreed that the average reduction in allowable cut due to the Code should not exceed 6%.**

Another danger of the Code is that industry may one day use it to justify moving into riparian zones and other environmentally sensitive areas that are now considered inoperable (and not included in allowable cut calculations).

The Code's potential has been proscribed by the government's 6% cap edict. Meanwhile, the industry's efforts to "streamline" administration of the code provide a discouraging reminder that **although forest rule books may change, the pressure for sympathetic administration never relents. For the most part, forest land use policy continues to be implemented in the shadows, far from public scrutiny.**

Some significant substantive concessions and some deep bows in the direction of biodiversity were needed. However, critics see the Harcourt initiatives as a 1990's-style re-legitimation strategy. In the end, the industry was left in a stronger position to pursue the remaining stages of the forest liquidation project. Furthermore, the development of the reform agenda has made challenges to the corporate/bureaucratic structure of power more difficult. Taking into account these different perspectives it seems fair to conclude that the BC wilderness movement has won some important battles but not the war.

If the wilderness movement is going to move beyond the gains made in the early 1990s, and pursue the goal of ecosystem management, the movement must confront the issues raised by its failure to counter the political power of timber workers and their supporters. The movement has expended considerable effort in convincing these workers and the general public that the jobs-versus-environment construction rests on a false dichotomy. Worker's problems, it has argued, have much more to do with technology and company job-shedding strategies than with new protected areas. These efforts have borne little fruit. Some environmentalists will argue in the years ahead that such accommodative strategies are futile, and that the cleavage between the movement and workers should in fact be sharpened. A more urban-rural showdown in which the greater electoral weight of urban areas would eventually prevail. Others will no doubt counter that such a strategy is too risky.