

2016 LITTLE FORT LET'S TALK FORUM
SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 2016
LITTLE FORT, BC

Harley Wright, Board Chair, Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society (LNTCFS) addressed the crowd and gave a brief overview of the purpose of the summit.

- Economic Development in the North Thompson Valley
- Job opportunities
- Try to overcome barriers for smaller communities

He explained that it was initiated by the Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society who in turn approached, SIMPCW, the District of Clearwater, the District of Barriere, the TNRD and the North Thompson Communities Foundation to partner.

Fred Fortier from SIMPCW First Nation provided a blessing to start the day.

Harley introduced Colleen Hannigan, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) from the District of Barriere and Grace Baker, Chartered Mediator as the facilitators for the day. Colleen and Grace outlined the agenda and introduced the speakers for the morning.

BILL BOURGEOIS – NEW DIRECTION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT LTD. (Ppt available on website links)

- Regional focus
- Strategic decision making
- Economic Clusters
- Forestry pilot project

Vision, Goals

- Require focus
- Basis for strategic decision making
- Focusing priority action / projection
- Information for investors
- Development Invoices
 - Local government identify regional strategic desires

Forest Sector – Concept of Clusters

- Groups of Entities working together should be geographically within 2 hrs of each other
- Burning roadside logging residue – economic opportunities
 - Proposals – within Kamloops region
 - Residue-based products – Real value fibre pilot project.
- Need a supportive cluster
- A journey not an event
- Businesses need to count on one another and work together – cluster concept

Q&A&Comments

- It was suggested that The Ministry of Forests has to get on board. If a company has residue and chooses not to use it they can get district manager to approve. It was suggested that there are too many barriers within the Ministry of Forests.
- Another comment was that these waste piles have been discussed for 30 plus years.

- Bill replied that he feels the Ministry is OK but the Politicians are not. The problem for licensees is that their allowable annual cut goes down. The government feels all is fine.
- You would need at least a 10 year supply. We can do it through Community Forests and First Nations Woodlots. Smaller licensees.
- It was asked how much residue is available in the North Thompson. Bill replied that Walt Klenner has been working on that. Taking samples out of piles to determine what is in the piles and collecting data.

KARL RAINER –RAINER’S CUSTOM MEATS

Karl bought the 270 acre farm where he was raised from his parents. His parents initially shipped cream. In 1986 they switched to milk. When Karl’s family was young, he worked in the bush for Stamer Logging along with running the farm. He and his family built the farm up to the point that Karl didn’t have to work in the bush anymore and just farmed. When their oldest son took meat cutting they stopped shipping milk and went strictly to beef and the slaughter house.

He noted that farming is probably at the top of the chain because if there are no farms there is no food.

They raised their kids on the farm. They started meat processing in approximately 2002. Trying to stay one step ahead of gov’t regulations. Currently employ 3 full time staff and 3 – 4 part time staff year round. The biggest hurdle has been the government rules and regulations. Now it is getting easier as the government is getting more streamlined. They currently compost their own waste. They do not have a permit to sell compost.

It was asked what the average cost of starting up a farm was. Karl replied about \$600 - \$ 700 thousand. It is hard to make the money back. The milk business worked good for them.

The Canadian government just gave away 3% dairy to gain meat exports to Europe.

The Rainers have been getting students from France for the last 2 years. It seems that we’re a little behind in equipment.

Q&A&Comments

- Someone asked can small farms work in clusters to market and support each other? Karl advised that they currently sell fish from the fish farm in Little Fort along with some of their neighbor’s eggs in their storefront. People are getting concerned with where their food comes from
- It was asked what could be done to improve their farming business?
 - Probably marketing
 - Streamline inspections – currently the Minister of Agriculture is involved with the slaughter and then the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is involved for the rest.
 - The ministry usually sends students for the inspections

DAVID ARSENAULT – COMMUNITY FUTURES (Ppt. available as link)

- Non Profit
- Federally funded
- Guided by volunteer board of directors

Programs

- Business loans
- Self-employment
- Coaching and advisory
- Community economic development

Community Futures helps companies with small business loans – new ventures where, being higher risk, banks tend to not help new ventures and business. They work with clients – coach and help them be successful, help with business plans and help business connect to resources that can help

Community Economic Development

- Focus on creating employment stable economies, mentor, facilitate, provide general guidance.
- Financial support and in kind contribution
 - They have recently put money into a feasibility study to buy local.
- Small business accounts for 98% of all business in BC
- Small business account for 85% of exports
- 83.5% per 1,000 people in BC have a small business
- 38% of these are women

They do have some money to lend and may partner with the Business Development Corporation (BDC)

Bill Kershaw is their volunteer Chairperson and he will be available at the roundtable discussion after lunch for questions.

GORDON BORGSTROM - SOUTHERN INTERIOR BEETLE ACTION COALITION

After the mountain pine beetle epidemic they formed the beetle action coalition. They were provided with funding from the provincial government. SIBAC contributes to research on what they can do to help rural communities

Accomplishments – local

- Have supported over 100 projects
- Feasibility study. Hire consultants. Lots of rural communities have similar or the same issues.
- Green energy studies
- Wood waste – David – Feasibility studies. Dunn Lake, Barriere
- Rural communities have to have more control of their own resources. Need a lot more community forests and First Nation's woodlots.
- Try to provide advice to government
- Are well researched and documented
- Made 6 top recommendations to government and the government has taken action on 3 rural BC project recommendations
- A lot of discussions with government and the government did create new funding programs.
- Focus on smaller communities

- Governmental rural support groups
- Find new ways for communities to invest in themselves

Population Projections – Local Health 2017 – 2030

- Loss of resource sector jobs
- The interior has 15% less mills, handling same volume
- Loss of small business
- Loss of disposable income
- Loss of industrial taxation revenue
- Loss of younger families

In the North Thompson

- In 1986 had more younger families
- In 2015 the # over 70 years old is higher than the provincial average
- In 2040 it is estimated that 29% of the population will be over 70 years old
- Need to attract young people

Have a look at other world organizations

- Provide good advice to government for rural communities
- Make investments to stimulate growth in rural areas
- Key roles 2016 – 2018
 - Serve as an effective voice on rural issues
 - Connect rural communities to resources
 - Effective catalyst to advance rural development
 - Working with the BCCFA to create more community forests and 1st nations woodland tenures
 - Facilitate the creation of local rural investment organizations
 - Complete a rural housing and seniors care
 - Develop and deliver a rural intern project

STEPHANIE MOLINA – MARKETING DIRECTOR, TOURISM WELLS GRAY

- Destination tourism marketing for Clearwater, Vavenby, Wells Gray
- Goal to become sustainable year round
- In 2012 the economic impact of tourism in Wells Gray Country was \$ 21,513,261
- Anecdotally, the community has found the tourism sector to be increasing on an annual basis.
- May – October the Visitor Info. Centre is 1 of the busiest in BC
- Affiliated with Destination BC
- Attract international tourism
- Thompson Okanagan regions top foreign markets: BC, Alberta, Washington, California and Europe
- Benefits regional economy and employs people
- TOTA – leverage marketing dollars
- NT Valley marketing committee
 - Work with tourism businesses to develop more for the Winter season
 - Need to attract younger budget travelers.
 - Are working with SIMPCW on the Mountain bike trail system from Barriere to McBride.

CHERYL THOMAS – SMALL BUSINESS

Entrepreneurship is described on Wikipedia as the process of designing, launching and running a new business. Starting a company that offers a product or service for sale. Creating a brand new business takes 3 – 5 years of very hard work.

- Need good people on your team
- Diverse people
- A lot of small business are turning to e-business

We all need to support each other and work together.

LESLIE GROULX, CAO, DISTRICT OF CLEARWATER

Advised the group they got the province to do a vehicle count at the roundabout last summer and there was 500 vehicles per hour through the roundabout. There are soon to be announcement about new employment opportunities in Clearwater providing 40-50 jobs and possibly more.

Key challenges to economic development in rural communities are:

- Capacity
- Labour analysis
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Daycare
- Need for broadband cell service

MAYOR VIRGINIA SMITH and COLLEEN HANNIGAN, CAO – DISTRICT OF BARRIERE

Mayor Smith spoke about the District of Barriere's sustainable water reclamation plant. She advised there is 1500 square feet of unused greenhouse space available that they are hoping to generate some revenue from.

- Creation of a sustainable operational plan bringing all aspects of education, agri-business, horticulture, innovation together.
- We need to create a revenue base
- Education – Thompson Rivers University, along with the High School Senior Sciences.
- Barriere House may look at a worm farm for job creation
- People that can't grow year round now could try growing a revenue generator or food source year round
- Each house hooked up to the system will pay \$ 40.00 per month to start although the actual cost should be \$60/mth when including long term infrastructure replacement

BRIAN BONDAR – NATURAL HISTORY & INTERPRETIVE CENTRE CONCEPT

- Tourist Information Centre along Highway 5 at Barriere. Many tourists travel our highway. Would like to create a centre to showcase our wildlife, First Nations culture and history all together in one place. All would enhance each other.

- Current partners on board in principle – District of Barriere, the Barriere and Area Chamber of Commerce, TNRD Director Bill Kershaw, SIMPW Councillor Tina Donald, the Lower North Thompson Tourism Society, and Brian Bondar.