

The Timber Supply Review Project was initiated in 1992 to review timber cutting throughout the province and determine sustainable levels of annual allowable cuts. The project resulted in reduced cuts of about a million and a half cubic meters of wood and the loss of more than 2,000 jobs, as the study found that logging rates could not be sustained over time. It concluded that in 1990, some 10.47 million cubic meters of timber was cut while the sustainable harvesting rate was only 7.78 million cubic feet. Most of the resultant job losses occurred in the resource communities, and policy makers did little to alleviate the problem. The job losses were blamed on environmentalists; displaced workers complained that protecting endangered species had become more important than preserving the livelihood of families. Tension, conflict, and anger split communities and made collective efforts to find solutions almost impossible.<sup>20</sup>

In 1993, the provincial government, prompted by projections that forest harvests were likely to decline by 15 to 30 percent over the next fifty years, established a Forest Sector Strategy Committee. The committee, made up of representatives from industry, labor, environmentalists, local governments, provincial agencies, First Nations, and other stake holders, sought to find ways to balance the competing values of forests, as sources of timber, habitats for fish and wildlife, watersheds, recreational areas, home to Native peoples, and ecosystems of critical importance to current and future generations.<sup>21</sup>

By the mid-1990s, British Columbia had put in place a number of policies aimed at public lands, natural resources, and timber. The Forest Renewal Plan seeks to increase the value of timber resources, through investments in value-added manufacturing, worker training, and environmental quality. The Protected Area Strategy seeks to double the amount of lands protected as wilderness and parks. The Forest Practices Code is the provincial law that regulates timber harvesting and seeks to protect watersheds and wildlife. The Commission on Resources and Environment was created to help resolve land disputes and guide a comprehensive planning effort to develop broad regional plans and more specific Land and Resource Management Plans is the fourth element in the province's land use policy. These policy efforts are affected by other programs, including the provincial Timber Supply Review, which collects information on resources and recommends harvest levels and the B.C. Treaty Commission, Interim Measures, and First Nations' Policy Forums, established to help resolve treaty disputes and ensure recognition of the rights and concerns of First Peoples.

The province has undertaken a very ambitious policy effort to assist the timber industry and other industries to ensure economic growth, protect environmental quality, and provide for broad public participation. How well have they achieved these goals? How appropriate are the goals, given the challenges and opportunities represented by the province?

### **The Forest Renewal Plan**

The British Columbia's Forest Renewal Plan, released in 1994, was touted as the result of co-operation and shared vision among stakeholders that was "unlike any in the world today."<sup>22</sup> The Forest Renewal Plan promised to achieve five goals: