



Appendix 3:

Interview Guide

Ecosystem Based Management Challenges for Alberta and Saskatchewan Forests

Introduction

Local, national, and international support for the concept of Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) is almost universal. This contrasts sharply with the reality of the degree to which EBM principles are being implemented. Two earlier projects, EBM Dialogue Sessions and an EBM Roadmap Workshop, helped to identify social issues preventing forward movement on EBM such as stakeholder resistance and mistrust. Another potential barrier to the integration of EBM concepts is the collective requirements, structures, and expectations of existing policies and practices — and by association, the many current tools and assumptions. This project will address this gap.

The fRI Research Healthy Landscapes Program (HLP) has been conducting EBM research since 1996 and has been a leader in defining EBM and providing knowledge and tools to forest land managers. The HLP partners are very interested in furthering implementation of EBM in Alberta and Saskatchewan, especially for forest units held under commercial tenure. Much progress has been made but significant challenges remain. The purpose of this project is to identify those challenges and suggest opportunities to further advance EBM implementation. Funding is provided by FRIAA and HLP Partners.

My name is Rick Bonar. I'm a consultant working on a project for the HLP entitled Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) Challenges and Opportunities. In 2016, I retired from the position of Chief Biologist for West Fraser, based in Hinton, Alberta, where I worked for 28 years. My involvement with fRI Research started in 1992, and I was President from 2009–2017. My education includes a PhD in forest wildlife ecology from the University of Alberta and I have 46 years of natural resource management experience.

My main task is to review documentation about EBM in Alberta and Saskatchewan and describe challenges and opportunities related to further progressing EBM implementation.

To add value the Project Team decided to interview a select group of people who have EBM knowledge in relation to forest land management in the two provinces to further explore some of the important 'soft' challenges and opportunities that are more likely to be institutional or relational resistance or openness to change that are not reflected in published documents.

You have been selected for the interview phase and we appreciate your participation in an interview. The interview is planned to take between 60–90 minutes, depending on your availability and how deep we get into discussions.

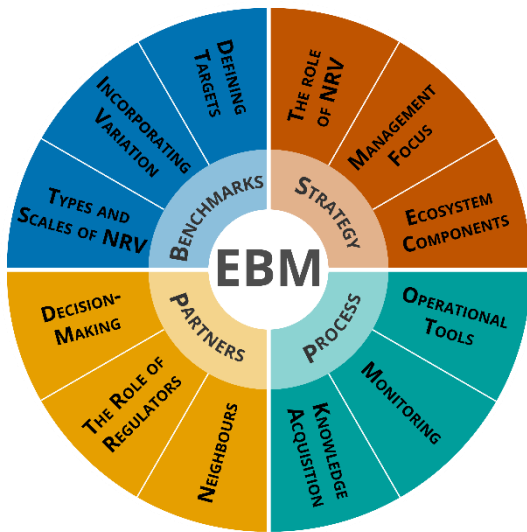
Interview responses will be kept in strict confidence among the report authors. Summaries and any quotes used in the report will remain anonymous.



Project Scope

The project scope includes all forest areas, associated forested and non-forested ecosystems in Alberta and Saskatchewan, with emphasis on four main land use categories: commercial forest tenure areas, non-commercial forests, federal protected areas (National Parks) and provincial protected areas. You are free to focus on any category or aspect in the interview process.

EBM Definition Background



There is widespread agreement that maintaining ecological integrity is a primary forest land management goal regardless of the type of forest land use (e.g., protected forest, commercial forest, non-commercial forest, non-forest ecosystems). People also generally agree that maintaining ecological integrity and associated human wellbeing is what EBM aims to do. Then discord begins. There are many definitions of EBM and even more statements of what it would take to achieve it. Ironically, seeking broad agreement about what EBM is and how it could differ from and improve current practices is both a significant challenge and opportunity.

The fRI Research HLP has developed a working definition of EBM, using the visual structure of a wheel with four inner pillars and 12 outer elements. The wheel is not definitive—there is no consensus right or wrong as to all of what constitutes EBM. But it helps to frame discussions toward EBM as an aspirational goal with many possible pathways, not a binary (success/failure) achievement.

Interviewee Affiliations:

Federal Government – 2
 Energy Industry – 1
 Consultant – 1

Provincial Government – 8
 Forest Industry – 6
 Environmental Non-government Organization – 2



Introductory Questions

- Please provide a brief description of your education and experience background.
- Please tell me about your current job/position. What does your work entail in general?
- Please expand about your roles and responsibilities in relation to EBM?

Project Specific Questions

- What are your thoughts about EBM as a management approach for forest ecosystems?
- How do you think EBM differs from what is presently practised?
 - In relation to commercial forest tenures, how do you view EBM as a concept in relation to other concepts such as sustainable forest management, integrated resource management and sustained yield forest management?
 - In relation to protected areas, how might EBM improve on the way things are being managed now?
 - What does EBM in non-commercial forests look like?
- Do you think EBM offers opportunities to improve management when compared to the *status quo*?
- Do you think EBM can/should be incorporated into the existing management framework, or do we need a paradigm shift in management approach to implement EBM?
 - The current divided-command-control paradigm of natural resource management has served us in Canada for more than a century. EBM explicitly questions that paradigm in favour of a more holistic and collaborative approach. Do you think that is realistic? If not, what is standing in the way?
- Do you think EBM or EBM aspects are being practiced now?
 - If no, why not?
 - If yes, in what way(s)?
- What do you see as the major challenges to further EBM implementation in your province/area of responsibility/interest?
- Have you experienced the compromise or rejection of EBM-related ideas?
 - If so, can you share the details (with the promise of security of anonymity and generalization of any feedback)? Lots of careful deep diving!
- In what ways could we be moving closer to EBM right now?
 - What are the low-hanging fruits?
 - Are there opportunities that have not yet been explored and tested?
- Are there any other challenges and opportunities not covered in the interview that you would like to mention?

Expression of gratitude for time and willingness to participate!

Ask about the possibility of reviewing draft report.

Wrap up and follow up information if applicable.