

Report

Date June 15, 2022
Subject 2021 Annual Forestry Report

File:

PURPOSE

To provide a general summary of the metrics and activities conducted within the Forestry Department in 2021.

BACKGROUND

Each year the Municipal Forester prepares an annual report containing key Municipal Forestry Reserve (MFR) metrics and information about activities from the previous year for the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) and Council's review. The report is typically released at the same meeting where the Municipal Annual Report is brought forward to Council, providing additional detailed information related specifically to the MFR.

Historically, the FAC would review the annual report prior to it being presented to Council. However, with the forestry review currently in process and no FAC meetings presently scheduled, the annual forestry report is being brought forward directly to Council with the Municipal Annual Report.

The 2021 Annual Forestry Report describes MFR metrics and activities consistent with the MFR management model currently under review. Given the forestry operations review, public engagement and First Nations consultation processes, it is anticipated that future annual reports will be consistent with any new or altered forest management models that Council subsequently adopts.

DISCUSSION

Harvest Summary

Total Area = 0ha*

Total Volume = 68m³

Harvest Cost = \$4,710 = \$69/ m³

Gross Revenue = \$9,143 = \$134/m³

Net Revenue = \$4,433 = \$65/m³

Forestry Program Total Net Loss = (\$509,476)

*Only minor danger tree salvage harvesting was completed with no measurable area

Log Sales Summary

Domestic sales = 36m³ (53%)

Export sales = 32m³ (47%)

Planting

Costs \$ 20,467 Budget \$ 23,460

In spring 2021, 33ha were planted with 28,536 seedlings. The total cost for each tree planted was \$1.17/tree. Seedling costs were \$0.57/tree*, and planting costs were \$0.60/tree (includes fertilizer).

*seedling costs include seed cost, cold storage and shipping

Planting Summary:

Species Planted	# Planted	% of Total Planted
Douglas Fir	26,406	92%
Western White Pine	1080	4%
Western Red Cedar	1050	4%

Tea-bag fertilizer application at time of planting = 18,638

Since 1987, the Municipality has planted 2,286,152 seedlings and harvested 1567ha – all of which has been replanted.

Road Maintenance

Costs \$18,577 Budget \$24,400

- Danger tree removal along forestry roads throughout the MFR allows safe access for forestry activities, public access and emergency vehicle access.
- Southview Terrace forestry road repair and upgrade for emergency vehicle access and trail surface improvement.
- Dust control was applied to the forestry road entrance to Mount Prevost.
- Culvert and ditch cleaning along with road grading/repair of forestry roads on Maple Mountain, Mount Prevost, Mount Sicker and Grace Road.
- Road repair and maintenance on Mount Prevost access road to the Cairn parking lot.

Site Preparation (hazard abatement)

Costs \$0 Budget \$ 0

There was no hazard abatement required in 2021.

Fire Protection

Costs \$ 10,761 Budget \$ 13,500

- There were no large forest fires within the MFR in 2021.

- Additional fire fighting equipment was purchased to add to the current equipment inventory.
- The Mount Prevost, Mount Sicker and Grace Road gates were closed due to high fire hazard on June 25 and re-opened on September 21, 2021.
- Council adopted the 2020 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

Security and Vandalism

Costs \$ 20,433 Budget \$ 11,000

Staff discovered significant cutting of both standing and blowdown trees throughout the MFR. There were also notable increases in gate/lock vandalism and garbage dumping. In response to stopping this activity, staff acted on several initiatives that have been successful in reducing this activity. These initiatives included:

- Promoting public awareness, education and reporting by installing additional signage, through media/TV interviews and social media posts;
- Increased and ongoing patrols within the MFR;
- Working with RCMP and the Bylaw Services Team on various initiatives;
- Increased fine amounts for non-compliance in applicable Bylaws;
- Researching and implementing video surveillance options; and,
- Working with Crime Stoppers to improve public reporting of illegal activity.

Silviculture

Activity	Type	Area Treated	Cost	Budget
Plantation Brushing	Manual	8.6ha	\$8,139	\$10,200
	Herbicide	0	0	\$0
Invasive Species Control	Manual	*see below	\$11,030	\$15,000
White Pine Pruning	Manual	25.2ha (4145 Trees)	\$14,501	\$12,000
Silviculture Surveys	Various	132ha	Completed by Forestry Staff	

*Invasive Species Control Summary:

Tansy Ragwort – Various locations on Mount Richards and Maple Mountain

Scotch Broom – Various locations on Mount Richards, Maple Mountain and Stoney Hill

Gorse – Various locations in Stoney Hill and Genoa Bay Road

Tree Protection

Costs	\$ 35,886	Budget	\$ 29,950
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- Removed 4,720 browse protectors. (\$1.91/tree)
- Installed 8,100 browse protectors. (\$2.02/tree)
- Re-Use 600 browse protectors. (\$2.53/tree)
- Purchased 8,000 stakes.

Community Relations and Contributions

Revenue generated from the MFR pays for all associated expenses for managing the forests within the MFR. It also helps fund community relations by contributing to activities in a variety of ways:

- Annual high school scholarship and bursary winners chosen - \$2,400 awarded.
 - ~\$156,000 total awarded since 1998
- Annual high school woodworking contest winners chosen with \$1,000 in prizes awarded. A total of 10 students entered their book shelf project into the contest.
 - ~\$19,050 total awarded since 2001
- Annual firewood donations program was suspended until the conclusion of the forestry review.
- Zero firewood permits and two salal permits were issued to the public.
- There were no Forest Legacy funded projects in 2021.

Forest Tours

Maple Mountain Public Forestry Tour – September 2021

- The Municipal Forester guided 13 participants through hiking/biking trails, stopping at various locations to talk about the MFR history, general forestry operation, silviculture practices, recreation, and recent events such as the wildfire and blowdown that occurred in 2018.

Other Notable Activities

- Forestry staff:
 - Continued working with an ecologist with the Conservation Data Center under the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, conducting research and surveys looking for potential rare species of plants and ecosystems in various locations within the Municipal Forest Reserve.
 - Supported work by a Research Ecologist with the Ministry of Forests, to establish a study site for a coast plant phenology and climate change research project on Maple Mountain.
 - Supported work by the Cowichan Watershed Society on a project being conducted in the Chemainus watershed. The project has many components, including a fish habitat assessment, determination of e-flows, and a riparian vegetation assessment.

- Supported Cowichan Tribes, who conduct cultural ceremonies as part of the Ancestors Walk on Mount Prevost.
- Continued to support the BC Purple Martin Stewardship & Recovery Program as they continue work with their Coastal Purple Martin colony monitoring and nest checking program on Mount Richards and Maple Mountain.
- North Cowichan was successful in receiving approximately \$110,000 in funding through a Community Resiliency FireSmart Community grant to conduct detailed treatment prescriptions in identified high fire risk areas as per the CWPP on Mount Tzouhalem, Maple Mountain and Mount Richards. The successful application also included FireSmart assessments for North Cowichan owned critical infrastructure and to develop a wildfire development permit area.
- North Cowichan joined a regional partnership with the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) and Cowichan Tribes, who as a group were successful in receiving \$450,000 in grant funding through the UBCM 2021 FireSmart Economic Recovery Fund grant. The CVRD is managing the project on behalf of the partners, which included hiring two FireSmart Coordinators who are tasked with administering various activities that include regional public engagement and communication, providing public with technical expertise, hosting workshops/information sessions and conducting FireSmart assessments for both residential and farms/ranches. A portion of the grant funding is allocated to implementing fuel reduction treatments as recommended from the FireSmart assessments, of which Khowutzun Forest Services crews are conducting this work.
- Sustained heavy rains in November of 2021, which caused widespread road damage throughout the MFR, most notably on Maple Mountain. Road repairs where access was critical for emergency management purposes were prioritized, along with general road surface and infrastructure repairs completed throughout the MFR.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive for information the 2021 Annual Forestry Report provided by the Municipal Forester..

Report prepared by:

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Municipal Forester

Report reviewed by:

Don Stewart

Don Stewart
Director, Parks and Recreation

Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- (1) 2021 Harvesting Summary
- (2) 2021 Harvest and Profit Summary
- (3) 2021 Statement of Account
- (4) 2021 Annual Forestry Report Photos