



# Systematic Solutions for Addressing

**Due to the size of British Columbia and its relatively small population,** much of the work forest professionals perform in BC is in remote areas — places the public might visit for a hunting or fishing trip, but not where the public actively recreates on a daily basis.

More uncommon are situations where forest operations are right on the fringe of communities, which is the case for much of Mosaic Forest Management's private managed forest lands. Our managed forests are located near several Vancouver Island communities, and consequently, activities are often in the view-shed of a large population. Some of these forests are places where the public regularly recreates, or they may also be a source of community drinking water. As a result, there are numerous local expectations and values to consider, ranging from someone's favourite dog walking trail to a popular local swimming hole.

## The Challenges

Mosaic manages Crown tenure in the northern part of Vancouver Island and Johnstone Strait, where the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and related provincial strategies like visual quality objectives (VQOs) and special management zones (SMZs) apply. In its southerly holdings, most of the land is privately owned managed forest, where the *Private Managed Forest Land Act* (PMFLA) is the primary legislation governing forest practices. Private owners managing under a forest management plan must address five key public environmental values: soil productivity, drinking water, fish habitat, critical wildlife habitat, and reforestation. Public values like recreation and visual landscapes are managed by private landowners voluntarily, or like Mosaic, under the requirements of voluntary third-party environmental certification programs.

---

*Pam Jorgenson, RPF, is Manager of Community Initiatives and Certifications at Mosaic Forest Management. She has worked in the forest sector on the BC Coast and the Interior for over 20 years and has experience working for industry, consulting, academic, and safety organizations.*

For decades, our forest professionals and managers working on private land have been identifying special forest values by meeting with staff and elected community officials, First Nations, and local public to understand local interests and potential concerns in interface areas. Detailed notes about these meetings are stored in block files, and staff have always shared information about past practices. But what happens when the person who led the relationships and community conversations retires? Who will know to look for old meeting minutes or remember the names of the local representatives that were engaged 20 years ago?

It wasn't long ago this situation occurred. Several senior leaders were close to retirement and were sharing some of the long-term commitments they'd made with community leaders. There were some very specific, measurable things, like extended riparian buffers on important fish streams and no harvest zones in certain unique stands — not requirements under the legislation, but voluntary measures they had put in place to consider community interests. These commitments were made decades ago to city representatives and had been upheld by staff through this long period. We realized that moving forward, we needed a better way to track and record these historic commitments and engagements — a system that would allow a new staff forester to identify non-standard commitments as well as other local considerations in their regular planning process without having to comb through old files and meeting minutes.

## The Solution

Our solution has been to create a GIS layer that identifies areas of public interest. We call it the social values layer. It is a spatial layer that is updated as interests and commitments change. For example, when we sign a new mountain bike trail management agreement with an organized group, we add a polygon into the system so the geographic area is visible on maps, and we record tabular information about the commitment, as well as the local contacts.

---

**Concludes page 20**



*Group ride with Mosaic staff and Nanaimo Mountain Bike Club executive on the Doumont Trails, located on Mosaic private land. Photo credit: Morgan Deno (Nanaimo Mountain Bike Club).*

# Public Interests in Managed Forests



*Colin Koszman, RPF, one of Mosaic's land use foresters at a recently installed slab bench on a trail system managed by the Cowichan Lake Trailblazers on Mosaic private land. Photo credit: Pam Jorgenson, RPF.*



*Bike trails were identified during layout, and cleaned post harvest on private lands near the Town of Qualicum Beach.* Photo credit: Pam Jorgenson, RPF.



*The North end of Buttle Lake/Upper Campbell Lake area has several social values polygons mostly due to recreational use. A campground and visual corridors for tourism operations are some of the values identified here. Red zones are areas that will trigger highly modified approaches to harvesting and outreach (the red zone seen here is directly adjacent to BC Parks Buttle Lake Campground); orange zones will have somewhat modified approaches; and yellow zones will have mildly modified approaches, but are still of some significance.*



*Walking a trail along the Nanaimo River on a field tour with elected officials, First Nations, and a variety of interested local public.* Photo credit: Pam Jorgenson, RPF.

**Continued** from page 12

When hauling on a road early in the morning results in neighbour complaints, we map the area and record the issue and the solution so we can make different plans in the future. When we meet a new neighbour who requests a specific walking trail be maintained, we map the trail and add the person's name and request into the tabular data of the GIS layer.

When new areas are being planned by our field planners, the block is automatically run through the GIS overlay, and if the newly proposed block or road intersects one of the social values polygons, the proposed unit is tagged as having public interests the planner must consider and review.

To be more specific, our team ranks each social values area with a colour/ranking:

Red = High	Orange = Moderate	Yellow = Low	Green = Status Quo
------------	-------------------	--------------	--------------------

Depending on the classification of the social values area as Red/ Orange/Yellow, specific actions are expected, with more involved strategies being put into play as rankings increase. In all cases, Mosaic's land use foresters — forest professionals with a mandate to work with communities — sit down with planning foresters and often other professionals to come up with site-specific strategies for each area, potentially including things like meeting with local officials and interested public, managing existing recreational trails, running visual assessments, offering community firewood, hosting tours, scheduling forestry activities outside of tourist season, and more.

### The Results

Our social values management system is now in full implementation. Planning forest professionals consider the social values' ranking of new blocks early in their processes and work with land use foresters to develop effective operational strategies for meeting social values objectives. Teams also meet quarterly to discuss these future harvest areas and roads, reviewing key values and determining how to proceed given the historic information and current objectives.

We are regularly updating all social values polygons and tabular information and using this data to record long- and short-term commitments in these areas, as well as pointing to files in our network that will provide additional information.

We also recognized later in the development process the social values GIS layer could be used to better plan timber supply impacts of managing areas for high public interest. We anticipate systematically lower harvest levels in red and orange zones, so we have adjusted the timber supply assumptions accordingly.

Overall, the social values management system has set-up our organization for success in the long run. Having a simple, landscape-level approach to tracking local interests is a key step for a company operating regularly in the community interface. With interested parties ranging from a single neighbour to First Nations and local governments, we are addressing the challenges of tracking each group's requests and interests in a strategic, searchable, and pragmatic way. Discussing social values has become a standard action in our business with all professionals involved, and it is here to stay. ✪