

JEM's own voyage of discovery: A world of relationships to explore

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Connections. Relationships. Interdependence. As human beings, we value our relationships with other people above all. And as we learn more about the workings of nature, it is clear that ecosystems also depend on intricate webs of relationships. A spirit of discovery infuses this issue of the *British Columbia Journal of Ecosystems and Management*—discovery of forgotten pasts and possible futures, as well as ongoing exploration of the relationships that govern ecosystems on various scales.

Society's historical relationship with the mighty Columbia River is the subject of Don Gayton's "Ghost River." Gayton describes how dams and development have resulted in catastrophic degradation of the Columbia. He challenges us to approach restoration of the river's flow and function with "biological ingenuity," and to understand that a brighter future for the river depends on long-term energy conservation.

Foresters depend on science-based tools to help them make sound management decisions. In his article on site index estimates, Steve Stearns-Smith delves into the connections between a site's potential timber productivity and site factors, such as topography, soils, and climate. His discussion highlights the central role of site tree selection in developing and applying direct and indirect estimation tools. He also points to important differences in how site index estimates have been derived for old-growth and second-growth stands, and the positive implications these differences have for future timber supply.

Several articles in this issue explore the relationships between forest resource dynamics and site conditions. Alan Wiensczyk and Shannon Berch summarize various factors that influence the abundance of pine mushrooms. Their findings lay the groundwork for future mapping of commercial mushroom sites. These maps will enable forest planners to integrate the harvest of pine mushrooms with timber production objectives. As interest in agroforestry grows, this ecosystem-based approach will assume greater significance.

Also of significance to agroforestry are the findings of Maja Krzic, Timothy Ballard, Klaas Broersma, and Reg Newman, whose study evaluated the long-term effects of cattle grazing on lodgepole pine growth and nutrition on three regenerating cutblocks. Their results provide evidence for the compatibility of cattle grazing and forestry in their study area and support further investigations on the integrated use of forested rangelands in southern British Columbia.

Philip Comeau's research explored the relationships between understorey light levels in young aspen stands and measures of stand growth, such as basal area, stand density, and average diameter. He offers a diagrammatic representation of light-density–diameter relationships that could provide a useful tool for management decisions in young mixedwood stands in northeastern British Columbia.

Paul Picard and Stephen Sheppard envision a future in which partial-cutting regimes could help forest managers to balance Visual Quality Objectives and the public's preference for lower levels of landscape alteration with the need for sustained timber yields. Their two-part paper provides an in-depth look at the relationships between visual resource management and timber availability, and demonstrates that increased harvests can be achieved with minimal visual impact. Clearly, in a discipline that connects science, art, and psychology, balances must be struck.

The topics covered in this issue are as varied as they are complex. The vision for *JEM* is to provide the reader with a reliable, high-quality periodical containing various article formats—perspective pieces, field and extension notes, and research synopses. We hope that some articles are directly relevant to your interests, and that the others illuminate the ecological, social, and economic context of today's critical natural resource management decisions. We encourage you to send comments or articles that respond to the papers presented in *JEM*.

We appreciate our connection to you, *JEM*'s reader, and will continue working to enhance access to the articles we publish. We are researching abstract indexing services as one option, and are improving links to Journal articles through NRIN, the Natural Resources Information Network (<http://nrin.forrex.org>). We also welcome your feedback, and are developing a section of the Journal to give voice to readers' responses. Thanks for contributing to the growth and evolution of *JEM*!

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