

Upcoming Events

Jun 3-5 [BC Historical Federation](#) Virtual Conference: *Surrey Historical Society*.

June 3 Vancouver Museum exhibit “[That which Sustains Us](#)” opens

Sep 13-16 [Canadian Institute of Forestry AGM](#)

Sep TBA—FHABC AGM

[The Treefrog News](#) event listings

Perspectives on the ABCFP presidency in the early 1980s.

While working with Allen Hopwood on articles he is writing for us (*Herb Doman article page 1, Les Reed fonds on page 7, Book report in [Issue 109](#), and more in the works*), Allen shared an interesting document with us. It provides insight into the working of ABCFP in the 1980s, and we consider it of historical interest, so have published it on our website for those interested in that subject. [Read/download here](#).

Allen Hopwood, RPF served as President of ABCFP in 1982-83 and manages Woodlot 0082, an eco-forestry operation near Courtenay BC, as shown in this 2014 [Youtube presentation](#).

Printed Newsletters

We email links to both the 8.5”x11” version and the 11”x17” version of the current Newsletter to members, and invite those who want a printed version to make their own arrangements. Some prefer the 8.5”x11” version on a home printer; some prefer to take the tabloid 11”x17” version to Staples or other sources of tabloid printing and make it booklet-style. Some choose black and white, some print it in colour.

Next Issue: Sep 2021

- More of the Burch and International series’

- Your Story?
- Contact us at newsletter.editor@fhabc.org
Website: fhabc.org



Issue #110

June 2021

look for #111 Sep 2021

Ideas deadline July 15

Website:

fhabc.org



British Columbia



Summer Issue



[Back-issue Link](#)

From the Editor

By Dave Florence newsletter.editor@fhabc.org

The eight pages of content in this issue includes several abstracts which are linked to the full articles on our website, so the overall “read-time” is larger than ever!

We begin with Allen Hopwood’s two-page retrospective on the exciting life of risk-taker Herb Doman. *Page 1*

Another episode from the memoirs of Mike Meagher features early days in BC, Toronto and in Europe *Page 3*

Our Gerry Burch piece contains some personal and perhaps controversial thoughts about Silviculture. *Page 4*

The well-illustrated piece about an interesting project in Sri Lanka is authored by Hugh Marshall. *Page 5*

We continue the Q&A started last issue with responses from our four longest-serving directors. *Page 6*

We’ve become interested in Archival Notices and plan to feature more in future issues. *Page 7*

We provide small notices about:

- A Vancouver Museum exhibit, *Page 3* &
- the Terry Reksten Fund,
- our digitization project,
- an ABCFP presidency memoir,
- how to join FHABC, and
- upcoming events (*such as they are in these Covid-19 times!*). *Page 8*

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Harbanse Singh (Herb) Doman (1932-2007)

By Allen Hopwood, RPF, who worked as a forestry consultant for many years and now owns and manages Woodlot 0082, an eco-forestry operation near Courtenay BC. Allen provides some personal insights into the life of Herb Doman, including an interesting possibility for the Island Plantation Reserve which never happened.

A general history of Doman can be read in this [Wikipedia article](#).

In 1944 when he was twelve, Herb Doman's father (a small-scale sawmiller and logger) died and he had to quit school to support his family. Before he was sixteen, he was driving a truck delivering sawdust. This led to a sawmilling company near Duncan which he and his brothers started when he was 21 (1953). Doman Lumber grew into one of BC's larger forestry enterprises and was its most efficient Coastal sawmiller.

But Doman came late to the timber supply table. Most of the Coastal forests had been allocated by the late 1970s. BC's major Coastal licensees had timber supplies beyond their mills' needs but were reluctant to sell their excess to a more efficient competitor. These major licensees were undercutting their tenures' allowable harvest levels and the Forest Service was sanctioning it. The consulting company I partially owned was hired by Doman to acquire much-needed timber tenures. We were successful in helping him obtain two large licences auctioned on the remote



From worldforestry.org

mid-Coast, but they were not enough.

I came up with the idea of getting a licence over the Island Plantation Reserve. This Reserve was made up of thousands of hectares in hundreds of parcels of second-growth stands (planted or naturally regenerated) scattered throughout the E&N Grant area, administered by the BC Forest Service. These were properties that had reverted to Crown Provincial ownership due to non-payment of

(Continued on page 2)

Membership: New or lapsed member?

\$20.00 annually, or three years for \$50.00

To join, or renew Membership by email and e-transfer:

1 Print a membership form from the website, complete, scan and email it to us at info@fhabc.org

2 Send an electronic fund transfer of your dues (\$20/year, or \$50 for 3 years) to treasurer@fhabc.org

To join, renew, or correspond by mail: *Print a membership form from the Forest History Association of B.C. 427 Walker Avenue Ladysmith, BC V9G 1V7*

Print a membership form from the website, complete, scan and mail, along with your cheque made payable to “Forest History Association of BC”.

Interested in helping us deliver our forest history program financially? Donations can be made [here through Canada Helps](#), with a tax receipt arriving immediately.



Oral History Digitization Project Update

Readers of our December issue may recall our [report on page 16](#) about a project to digitize some tape recordings of interviews conducted by Gerry Burch about 20 years ago.

After an internal review, we look forward to announcing Zoom sessions for members and the public to listen to some of these recordings and join discussions about them.

Project manager Claire Williams, UBC/RBSC, reports that we have now received 35 digitizations from our contractor [Deena Media](#) and will soon select several for transcription and online access.

When funds become available, we will facilitate additional recordings of oral or video histories with online access for the BC forest history community.

[Friends of the BC Archives](#)

[Due by June 30!](#)

Terry Reksten Memorial Fund [Call for Applications \(2021\)](#)

We’d like to remind small forest-history-related archives, museums, and historical societies to apply for grants from the Terry Reksten Memorial Fund, administered by the Friends of the BC Archives and adjudicated in collaboration with the Archives Association of BC and the Reksten family. Find eligibility criteria and submission process [here](#).

For projects that involve forest history, in the required “statement on the significance of the project”, FHABC would be pleased to provide supportive comments if your plans coincide with our objectives.

(Continued from page 1)
property taxes. I visited and assessed most of these parcels, developed a forest management plan, and calculated a sustainable harvest level. A business plan was produced which included Doman building a pulp mill on Vancouver Island and managing the young forests intensively¹ (which was not being done by the BC Forest Service). The economic returns to Vancouver Island's economy would have been enormous and perpetual.

Despite Herb Doman being well connected with then Premier Bill Bennett, the Forest Service turned down the proposal, keeping these lands for First Nations' treaty settlements, trades with forest companies for desired parklands, and development. Doman was an outsider; the concept was too unconventional. Today, there is no Island Plantation Reserve; a few Woodlot Licences and small parks are the only forested areas left undeveloped and in public ownership.

Doman had built his enterprise by being efficient and taking chances. Two stories will illustrate.

The integrated Coastal forestry companies were inefficient and wasteful sawmillers. Doman would buy pulp log booms from major companies for a fraction of the price of a sawlog boom. He would then



From Ken Goudy Collection

¹ The plan included the application of intensive silviculture (spacing young stands, fertilization, prompt reforestation) and commercial thinning (logging the poorer trees to concentrate future growth on the more valuable trees to enhance

Image from a corporate stock certificate



take out the logs that could be sawn in his modern mills, and sell the remaining, genuine pulp logs for the same price he paid for them.

Doman would sometimes have a ship loading lumber at one of his mills before he had actually sold the lumber and knew the ship's destination.

Despite being a multi-millionaire, Doman was unassuming. Once, long before I got to know him through business, I was hitchhiking near Duncan with my toddler daughter. Herb picked us up in his Cadillac and took us to our destination which was out of his way. He was pleasant and down-to-earth.

Although he ran one of the biggest forestry companies in BC, he kept his head office in Duncan. "Everybody said you couldn't have a head office in Duncan but of course I had to prove differently. We built here. People get here."

But he took two gambles too many.

To get access to needed timber supplies and to integrate his operations with a pulp mill, in 1980 Doman entered a joint venture which bought Rayonier Canada's timber tenures, sawmills and pulp mills in BC. But the deal put his company into heavy debt. In 1989, he increased his ownership share in the joint venture

growth rate and value). Both these approaches to forest management are labour-intensive and greatly improve financial returns. The Doman mills were efficient enough to profitably convert the small logs from commercial thinning into lumber.

and his debt load. Doman Industries never recovered.

To make matters worse, US forestry giant Louisiana-Pacific, after a year of accumulating Doman shares, made an offer to buy the whole company in October 1988. Louisiana-Pacific withdrew its offer a month later, possibly after more careful scrutiny of Doman's books. Herb Doman was accused of informing former BC Premier Bill Bennett and his brother of the collapsed deal five minutes after being informed himself. The Bennett brothers immediately sold 500,000 Doman shares, avoiding a huge loss. Six months later, the three men were acquitted in BC Provincial Court of insider trading. But the BC and Ontario Securities Commissions carried out investigations which dragged on for years, culminating in conviction by the BCSC in 1996. A Supreme Court of Canada appeal followed. It failed and the three men ended up paying \$1 million to the BCSC and receiving securities trading bans. His connection with Bill Bennett had not got him the licence over the Island Plantation Reserve, but Doman was loyal to his friend even though it involved an illegal act.

By the mid 1990s, debt, poor markets and increasing competition put more pressure on the company and its founder. Huge interest payments precluded capital upgrades to the mills. Efficiency dropped. Herb Doman had a severe stroke in 1995, never fully recovering. He died in 2007. The company limped along under his son, Rick, until sold in 2004.



Archival Notice: Francis Leslie Clay (Les) Reed (1927-2017)

By Allen Hopwood, who brought this fonds to our attention. Allen helped his friend Les Reed prepare the material for its submission to Rare Books & Special Collections, (Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, University of BC.)

FLC Reed was raised in a small Alberta farming community. He obtained a B.A. in Economics at Lewis and Clark College in Oregon (1954) and an M.A. in Economics at the University of Oregon (1959).

Mr. Reed served as a research economist with Stanford Research Institute in Oregon. Subsequent positions led him to Forest Industrial Relations Ltd., Council of Forest Industries and Hedlin Menzies and Associates Ltd. He was a member of the delegation that presented Canada's case before the US Tariff Commission's 1962 hearings on softwood lumber.

Mr. Reed then began a period in consulting economics and spent two years with the Federal Prices and Incomes Commission as Director of Price Reviews. In 1972 he founded FLC Reed and Associates Ltd., specializing in resource development and regional analysis, which operated eventually in 40 countries.

In 1978 his company exposed the dismal state of forest management across the country in its published report: *Forest Management in Canada*. This led to Mr. Reed being hired in 1980 to head the Canadian Forestry Service where he oversaw the agency's reorganization and its development of a series of more appropriate policy initiatives (including A Forest Sector Strategy for Canada.) Mr. Reed then began the negotiation of a series of federal-provincial cost-sharing agreements aimed at tackling our country's huge backlog of non-satisfactorily restocked lands; implementing intensive management on selected forest stands; stepping up forestry research, and assisting Canada's forest industry.

In 1984 he moved to UBC's Forestry Faculty where he engaged in forest policy research and teaching while

participating in federal and provincial forestry affairs. Upon his retirement in 1992, he was named Professor Emeritus and resumed his career in international consulting.

Special appointments in Canada include The Premier's Wilderness Advisory Committee, the Prime Minister's National Advisory Board on Science and Technology, Honourary Member of the Association of BC Forest Professionals, the Canadian Forest Advisory Council, the National Advisory Board on Model Forests, and the boards of Forintek, FERIC, and the Pulp and Paper Research Institute of Canada. He also served on the Boards of the Canadian Bible College / Canadian Theological Seminary and Regent College.

International appointments include nomination to the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth Forestry Association, and the Science Advisory Board of the Temperate Forest Foundation.

Mr. Reed published a number of works including, *"Two centuries of softwood lumber war between Canada and the United States"*: a chronicle of trade barriers viewed in the context of timber depletion.

The UBC archival contents are thorough (after 1979) and well-organized. They cover not only the technical, political and policy aspects of Canadian forestry during Mr. Reed's multi-faceted career but also his passion for forest-related culture. This material is essential to understanding forestry in Canada from the 1960s to the early part of this millennium and provides the history of a man who in my opinion, did more than anyone else to improve our country's level of forest management.



Photo Courtesy UBC Archives
Banham, J. (1985, March 31). Les Reed [P].
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0146738>

Fonds RBSC-ARC-1706

- Leslie Reed fonds 1966 - 2013

<https://rbsearchives.library.ubc.ca/leslie-reed-fonds>
- Canadian Forestry Service documents, 1979 - 2013
- Forestry research and teaching materials, 1977-2013
- Forestry industry reports, 1966 - 2004
- Memoirs, 2013
- Court case documents, [ca. 1992]
- Interview and public speaking tapes, 1983 - 1996

Claire Williams, Forestry Archivist at RBSC, shared: "Unfortunately none of it is digitized... yet! We are always open to taking reproduction requests or offering the remote reading room service described here:

<https://rbsc.library.ubc.ca/visiting/>

This archival notice could be the start of a series. The FHABC Newsletter welcomes "Archival Notice" articles to bring to our readers' attention to other significant Archival material, such as the [Aleza Lake report in Issue 102](#).



Our longest-serving FHABC officers

In the previous issue #109 we published responses to two questions from four newest FHABC Directors.

We continue this theme with our four longest-serving officers.

Our complete list of Directors/Officers is shown on page 3 of the newsletter. [Read all Q&A responses here.](#)

Mike Meagher, Director

A retired forester living in Victoria BC.



What sparked your interest in BC forest history?

Early life on the slopes facing Nelson, where trees and other benefits abounded. I played “in nature” and developed a taste for being out in the woods, streams, and puddles. This led to a career in forestry: from summers fighting fires for the BC Forest Service in Penticton, stints at U of T, a PhD at UBC, and work with BCFS, CFS, and as a consultant. A high school friend, Geoff Bate, was FHABC President in 1996 and encouraged me to join during a BCFS social. I was near retirement, had been “around a bit” and thought his suggestion tempting, so did.

What are some things you want to do while a Director with FHABC?

I'll continue assisting with Newsletters as an Editor, encouraging others to join FHABC and to submit manuscripts, and continue submitting some of my experiences for publication.

David Brownstein, Webmaster

A principal at [Klahanie Research](#) in Vancouver BC



What sparked your interest in BC forest history?

I love all things botanical. I'm also pretty curious about how things came to be as they are. Thus an obsession was born.

What are some things you want to do while Webmaster at FHABC?

While no longer a director, I'm always available to help facilitate archival donations. The webpage

Eric Andersen, Vice Pres

A [research and communications consultant](#) in Squamish BC



What sparked your interest in BC forest history?

The history of forest management and the people and industries associated with it is part of understanding where we live – anywhere in B.C. My interest started locally, in Squamish, where a lot of new people are curious, and old-timers and industry veterans are keen to preserve and tell their story. Years ago, I linked up with Bill Young and Bill Backman, two of the founders of the FHABC. The network was then still new. They offered enthusiastic moral support and sent me an article, “What to do until the archivist comes”.

What are some things you want to do while vice-president with FHABC?

I would like to see our organization and its programs strengthened further. We can play a key role in fostering collaboration around the Province among interested individuals, local societies and museums in advocating, interpreting, presenting and protecting forest history. I'd like to help expose the diversity of this field of interest: Evolving landscapes, economic history, technology, ideas, links to faraway places, great stories – something for everyone to relate to. Forest history is important to the forest management and industries of the future, and this is an important message.

demands a surprising amount of effort, to keep up-to-date and functioning. Truly it is thrilling to see the FHABC's recent renaissance.

Richard Dominy, President

A retired [professional forester](#) interested in forest history in BC and world-wide, now in Ladysmith BC.



What sparked your interest in BC forest history?

I grew up in south-central Alberta with many scattered forestry relics and small mills in the area. I was privileged to hear local forest history tales from my father and his friends and became fascinated not only by local history but also the importance of forests as the largest and most important biome in the world. This developed an interest to become a Forester, beginning with university summers with the Alberta Forest Service in Kananaskis Country nestled up against the majestic Rockies. How better could it get? Then upon graduation, 36 years with the BC Forest Service: Cranbrook, Invermere, Prince George, and Victoria.

What are some things you want to do while President of FHABC?

I'd like to move us toward a more dynamic place with new opportunities; continue to recruit Directors with diverse backgrounds; attract more members who embrace the past and celebrate the possibilities of the future; develop a modern vision, a modern look, and a modern feel; increase sharing the excitement of BC Forest History with others in BC, Canada, and the world; and help transform FHABC into a more progressive, well-managed organization that people will all be proud of.

Book and Media Reports

... selected from our

Facebook Group Page

Over 330 members, and growing!

FHABC director Eric Andersen and others shared several links:



Three of the finalists for the Lieutenant Governor's historical writing competition wrote [forest history related titles](#). Decision day: June 5. Good luck to all!

We've enjoyed many interesting cross-posts from:

- [Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society](#)
- [Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History](#)
- [Boundary Heritage](#) [Lost Kootenay \(Forestry Lookouts\)](#)
- [BC Interior Forestry Museum and Forest Discovery Center](#)
- [BC Forest Discovery Centre \(Duncan\)](#)
- [BC Labour History Centre](#): Post about Clay Perry, one of the original founders of our Forest History Association of BC.

An interesting SFU Study:

[Ancient Indigenous B.C. forest gardens](#)

Book release: [A Journey Back to Nature](#) shows never-before-seen photos of Strathcona Provincial Park during the 1930s.

GONE “Buggy” in the Cariboo and then Travels Afar

By Mike Meagher RPF (ret) A follow-up to Mike's earlier pieces in Issues [#104](#) and [#108](#). This segment has two parts. In Part 1, Mike describes his final summer before completing his BSF degree working in the Interior. In Part 2, he describes his travels afar first to Toronto for his M.SCF. Studies, and then to Europe. The full article can be found on our [website here](#).

Abstract

Part One - “Buggy” in the Caribou

The March-April 2018 issue of the “BC Forest Professional” contained an article by Tim Ebata, RPF, and Lorraine MacLauchlan, Ph.D., RPF, RP Bio, of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development titled “The Douglas-fir Beetle Dilemma” that was focused on a serious outbreak of beetle parasitism in the Cariboo and Thompson-Okanagan areas forests. Also, it was highly reminiscent of my “Buggy” summer prior to graduating from UBC.

Five summers after High School graduation spent among trees as future lumber or pulp and contemplating 1956, my last summer and chance to broaden my experience before completing my BSF degree, I

decided it would be a good time to find a more “biological” summer of work. Luckily, I landed a job with the Federal Government's Insect and Disease Program. After attending the obligatory two-week UBC Forestry field camp near Haney, I arrived mid-May at the Program's Office in Vernon for introduction to the crew. Dr. Les McMullan was in charge, assisted by Michael Atkins, a Medical student at UBC.

Mike goes on to describe his work and life in the Caribou that summer.

Part Two - Travels afar

My interest in “biology” and serendipity led to a more interesting life: after four years in reforestation work with the BC Forest Service, I trekked east for post-graduate M.SCF. studies in Toronto. After reading articles re forest soils and tree growth, several from Danish publications, and

lacking a job in BC, I considered a personal “Forestry” tour in northern Europe with the purpose of comparing my experience with big forests in large expanses with their contrasts to much smaller expanses under high population pressures. Luckily, I was much assisted by a Danish U. of T. Professor on my Master's Committee and his contacts, who were major helpers by arranging my next contact person, and travel advice.

Mike goes on to describe his travels in Europe.

The [full article can be read here](#).



FHABC Newsletter team

Editor: Dave Florence

Committee: John Parminter, Mike Meagher, Dave Lang, Eric Andersen, David Brownstein

Submissions??: Yes, Please!

email us at newsletter.editor@fhabc.org

2020/21 FHABC officers:

President, Richard Dominy
Vice Pres., Eric Andersen
Secretary, Dave Lang
Treasurer, TBA (Pres. acting)

Eight Directors at large:

Katherine Spencer Mark Clark
Sarah Giesbrecht Richard Olak
Mike Meagher Dave Florence
Ira Sutherland Claire Williams

Webmaster: David Brownstein
(Online? [Read here](#) for more about our Directors and Officers)

That Which Sustains Us

Museum of Vancouver Exhibit Opens June 3, 2021!



In [Issue 105 March 2020](#), we reported that FHABC is partnering with the MOV to provide content for a permanent exhibit that will contain significant forest history content.

Learn more about the [exhibit here](#).

You may wish to watch the live-streamed [pre-opening launch on YouTube](#) scheduled for June 2 at 1:30 pm.

In a future issue, we will share some of the material that FHABC researched and provided to the exhibit.



Mike Meagher

The Golden Age Of Silviculture In B.C.1950-1985

By Gerry Burch. *FHABC is always pleased to publish views and opinions about BC Forest History by Gerry Burch. His experience in the 1950-2000 era included being a vice-president at BC Forest Products, President of CIF and ABCFP, co-founder of FHABC, active consultant and member of many government/industry committees. His writing, not surprisingly, presents a pro-industry bias, but the examples he uses to make his points provide a rich perspective and insights on what foresters did and why they did it. Read more about Gerry's [publications at the UBC Library](#). An abstract follows on this page. For the full article, [read/download here](#).*

ABSTRACT

Following his definition of silviculture, Gerry defines its development in five time periods:

- Pre 1955 - The Beginning
- 1955-1965 - Laying the Groundwork
- 1960-1970 - Renewing the Crop.
- 1970-1985 - The Golden Age of Silviculture
- 1985 -Present- Silvicultural Decline

For the “*pre-1955—the beginning*” section, he gives examples of how the level of forestry in this period was minimal. He describes the nature of the tenures at that time, and explains how and why very little re-planting was carried out. Utilization at this time was, at best, classified as “rough”, with few standards in place. Fire suppression capability was very limited, and formal education opportunities in Forestry were minimal.

For the “*1955-1965, Laying the Groundwork*” section, he comments on the key findings and outcomes of the two Sloan commissions. He notes the professionalization of Forestry through the creation of ABCFP, and the opportunities for education with the impact of raising the UBC Department of Forestry to a full Faculty, which occurred in 1951.

In the “*1960-1970 - Renewing the Crop*” section, he begins by pointing out the challenges face by the large number of recently trained Foresters, and how they rapidly gained experience . He describes the importance of the connection B.C. foresters made with the Western Forest

and Conservation organization, based in Portland, to the development of Forestry in BC.

Gerry goes on to describe the development of Fire mitigation management, and the early days of creating Development Plans for the Forest Management Licences, which has evolved significantly over the years.

He closes that section with a dilemma that Foresters faced.

Gerry begins his “*1970-1985 The Golden Age of Silviculture*” section with

“So, the obvious course of action was the formation of a series of co-operation committees between Forest Service and FML foresters In short order, the following committees were set up and operated for the ensuing decade to determine what options to follow, what costs would be experienced, and further, to determine the impact of these options on allowable cuts.

- Tree Farm Forestry Committee
- Fire Prevention Committee
- Coastal Reforestation Board
- Plus Tree Board
- Fertilization Committee”

He describes and expands upon a series of advances that include:

- Recognition of the need for an increased collection of cones, mainly of Douglas-fir, but, also with other species.
- The setting up of storing standards for seed.
- Creation of additional nurseries.
- Finding the best seeding techniques.
- The establishment of elevation zones

for planting projects.

- Conducting basic studies on forest genetics.
- Delivering innovative programs
- The establishment of a Silvicultural Institute and Forest Management Group
- The expansion of re-inventories of TFL mature stands and second-growth lands.
- Recognizing other forest values.

Gerry then goes on to mention the 1975 Royal Commission Report by Dr. P. Pearse which affirmed support for Area Based Tenures, and describes changes in how silviculture were treated in stumpage appraisal.

Gerry describes some of the advances in silvicultural practices in the second half of this Golden Age period, many possible because of incentives provided by the area-based tenure system.

In the section “*1985 -Present- Silvicultural Decline*” Gerry states: “But, the early 1980s found BC with: a serious recession facing the industry, new legislation in 1986 that entrusted companies with the responsibility for renewing logged areas to a free-to-grow state, and the inclusion of silviculture costs into the stumpage appraisal system. As a result of these and other factors, most forestry firms canceled their incentive programs.”

He goes on to explain the reasons, and to read them, you’re going to have to [read/download here](#).

Memories of a Controversial Forestry Project in Sri Lanka

By Hugh Marshall (RPF Ret), living in Powell River, B.C., following significant international experience.

Hugh Marshall describes the difficult conditions and challenges he faced during an overseas project sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and undertaken by Reid Collins & Associates, a Vancouver-based forestry consulting company. Of several CIDA contracts carried out by Reid Collins, the author recalls his assignment as Forestry Supervisor on the Sri Lanka project in the early 1970's.

The purpose of this project was to demonstrate modern

ABSTRACT

In 1972 I joined the B.C. team already embarked on early construction of an 11-kilometre access road to the forest through hilly rice-growing country. Planned for completion in six months, the road eventually took eighteen months, partly due to encountering more rock than expected and the heavy monsoonal rain creating unworkably deep mud. Far more significant, though, was the public outcry at project plans to extract mature trees from the sacred Sinharaja forest and the Government's response to this by setting up a Committee of Enquiry.

Following months of deliberating, this Committee ordered the project temporarily shut down and the team to be on 'stand-by'. After three months of

idleness and frustration for the team, CIDA forced the government to resume the project by threatening to terminate other assistance to Sri Lanka. Once back to work, the team spent weeks repairing washouts on the abandoned access road before completing its construction.

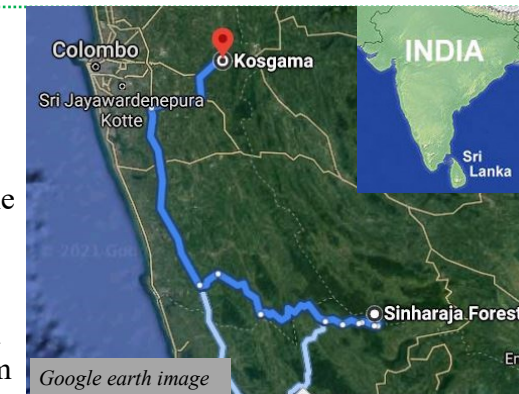
Operations then began on cutting and skidding out selected trees over 50 cm diameter of all species for delivery to a wood-working complex at Kosgama, 90 km away. Damage to the remaining crop proved impossible to avoid given the web of cable-like vines entangling the forest canopy and causing felled trees with their huge crowns to pull down adjacent trees. Despite this, however, the forest was able to recuperate itself amazingly well. When I was invited to re-visit Sinharaja 20 years later, hardly a sign of our logging activity remained.

Project planners had been as over-optimistic about logging as they had about the access road. Instead of delivering 10 or 12 loads of logs a day to Kosgama, no more than five were ever accomplished, usually only two or three. This proved just as well because the inefficient and broken-down wood-yard facilities were unable to deal adequately even with these. At the same time our lower logging productivity helped to reduce the intensity of environmental opposition.

My fondest memories deep in the Sinharaja forest were meeting gem miners, cane cutters and resin collectors; sharing tea with them in a cave or crude leaf hut; solitary lunches feeding crumbs to fresh-water crabs and scorpions; encountering tree vipers, jungle spiders, a giant

logging methods in the 7,000-hectare Sinharaja Forest, located in the south-central wet zone of Sri Lanka. As one of the last remnants of virgin tropical rainforest in the country, the project attracted fierce environmental and political opposition. *An abstract appears below. Images by the author.*

[Read/download the full version here.](#)



earthworm and once a recent leopard monkey-kill. More mundane were soakings and chills from downpours in the darkened forest, and ever-present millions of land leeches. We often wondered how Sinharaja leeches survived before Canadians arrived.

Logging ceased in 1976 at the end of the project and Canadian equipment was parceled out to miscellaneous ministries and departments. In 1988, the United Nations declared the Sinharaja Forest Reserve a World Heritage Site, today visited only by occasional tourists and researchers. Peace had settled over a turbulent and forgotten fragment of shared Reid Collins' and CIDA history.

[Read the full version here.](#)



The goal of the Sinharaja project was to demonstrate mechanized logging, which meant replacing the more traditional, slower but less destructive use of elephants.