

Questions and Answers

1. Which positions are returning to the Ministry of Forests?

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands has transferred 47 resource inventory positions and three systems support positions to the Ministry of Forests and Range.
- The resource inventory positions include 35 that have joined the Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch, and nine in MOFR regions.
- The Forest Cover Update section will report to the Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch but remain in Kamloops; the remaining branch positions will continue to work out of the Jutland office.

2. What will inventory staff be doing?

- Transferred staff will be carrying on with their current functions for now. Over the next several months, the ministry will initiate a process to examine what we've learned over the last decade and seek ways to redesign the inventory program.

3. Why are these positions being transferred back now?

- The new Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, which assumed many of the functions in the former Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, has a revised mandate. As a result it will focus on corporate information management and access to the data warehouse; support land use planning; and corporate tenure management, and therefore will no longer provide resource inventory services.

4. Isn't this a lot fewer positions than were transferred to MSRMR back in 2001?

- Yes, there are fewer positions being transferred to MoFR, however MoFR is a much smaller ministry than it used to be as well. The ministry has had to refine its business and business processes to reflect fewer staff.

5. Does this mean government realized it was a mistake to remove resource inventory from the Ministry of Forests?

- In 2001, the decision was made to centralize all resource inventory functions.
- The recent government reorganization, combined with issues such as the mountain pine beetle epidemic, support the decision to return this activity to the Ministry of Forests and Range.
- It was not a mistake but all of us trying something different. Looking forward, the changes underway seem logical and there is more benefit to consider what we learned and look forward to redesigning the inventory program.
- The opportunity to work with broader resource issues will result in benefits to the MOFR and other ministries such as Environment.

6. Are there enough staff left in resource inventory to do an adequate job?

- Resource inventory, like all government operations, went through a downsizing exercise during 2001 – 2003.
- The inventory staff who remain are skilled and experienced, and add a great deal of value to the Ministry of Forests and Range, and to all other resource managers in government, in external agencies and in industry.

7. How is this possible when so many positions have disappeared?

- MSRM Resource Information Branch redesigned many of the vegetation (forest) inventory activities to a more efficient model during the last four years. The business of managing forest inventories will continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of government and industry.

8. How does the current resource inventory section compare with the one that was transferred back in 2001?

- The current inventory section has fewer resources now than in 2001 but has responded by streamlining the business processes, staff consolidation, reliance on third party data collection and dropping some activities that were not sustainable.

9. The chief forester was responsible for maintaining the forest inventory by law in 2001 – will this law be resurrected?

- As part of the review of the forest inventory program in BC, this question will be examined.

10. Will forest inventory continue to be funded through the Forest Investment Account?

- Yes. In fact the strong partnership that MOFR has built with the forest industry will likely improve decisions about allocations for inventory.

11. Won't this just mean more work for other staff in the MOFR, especially Forest Analysis Branch?

- This means a new synergy for both branch staff and inventory staff. We have always been the number-one clients for the resource inventory section, and by working together as a team we will both be able to do our work better.

12. Does this signal a move to restore lost positions and create an inventory section similar to the one that existed 10 years ago?

- No. But you can bet we will work with our new colleagues to build the best resource inventory function possible with the resources we have.