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BC Journal of Ecosystems and Management

Volume 4 - Issue 1

Published by FORREX Forum for Research and Extension in Natural Resources

Abstract

Evolving ecosystem management in the context of British Columbia resource planning

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Ecosystem management is an approach to natural resource planning that theoretically places environmental issues on an equal footing with the economic concerns that dominate resource use. This approach recognizes the importance of both a healthy environment and access to natural resources. Each of these factors is an implicit element of human security, a political concept that promotes the protection of human lives and livelihoods. Ecosystem management acknowledges the role of humans as an integral part of the ecosystem; however, it does not define the ways in which humans and the ecosystem interact. This lack of definition makes the practical application of ecosystem management difficult.

In this paper, we examine the application of ecosystem management principles in British Columbia's Clayoquot Sound. We propose that human security can act as an imperative for the expanded consideration of social networks and environmental pathways in the practice of ecosystem management. Theories from the social and natural sciences are supplied to support the science-based application of ecosystem management. These underpinnings enable managers to better define ecosystem boundaries and to integrate expanded social networks into management plans.

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