HARROP-PROCTER COMMUNITY CO-OPERATIVE

A Case Study in Converting Crown Land Forest Tenure to Co-operative Stewardship

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One sector in which successful co-operatives have developed in Canada is community forestry. The community forestry sector consolidated in British Columbia in the 1990s as communities and environmentalists began to organize against the failures in timber management within a forestry system that allocated huge tracts of forest land to state ownership as Crown lands. Community forestry refers to a form of forest tenure that gives communities control over surrounding forests so they can manage them with a long-term view, as well as benefit directly from the use of forest resources. Community forests typically involve local participation in all stages of forest management and a consensual-voluntary-compliance rather than top-down-command-and-control type enforcement[1].

The Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative, which operates a community forest around the towns of Harrop and Procter on an arm of Kootenay Lake in British

[1] See: McArthy, 2006.

List of Abbreviations

AAC	Allowable Annual Cut	HPCC	Harrop-Proctor Community Co-operative
B.C.	British Columbia	HPFP	Harrop-Procter Forests Products
MoF	Ministry of Forests	HPWCPC	Harrop-Proctor Watershed and Community Protection Committee
HP	Harrop-Proctor	HPWCPS	Harrop-Proctor Watershed and Community Protection Society
		HPCF	Harrop-Proctor Community Forest

Columbia, is a shining example of a conversion, not from a previous business but from a non-profit "society" concerned with environmental protection and social wellbeing. The Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative tells a story of how legacies of oppositional politics can combine with neoliberal policy in paradoxical ways to create a political space for the emergence of co-management opportunities. It also reveals how a consistent emphasis on environmental protection, local community collaboration, and stewardship in the widest possible sense of the term—as opposed to merely the for-profit bottom line—can become a viable basis for managing a much-valued natural resource.

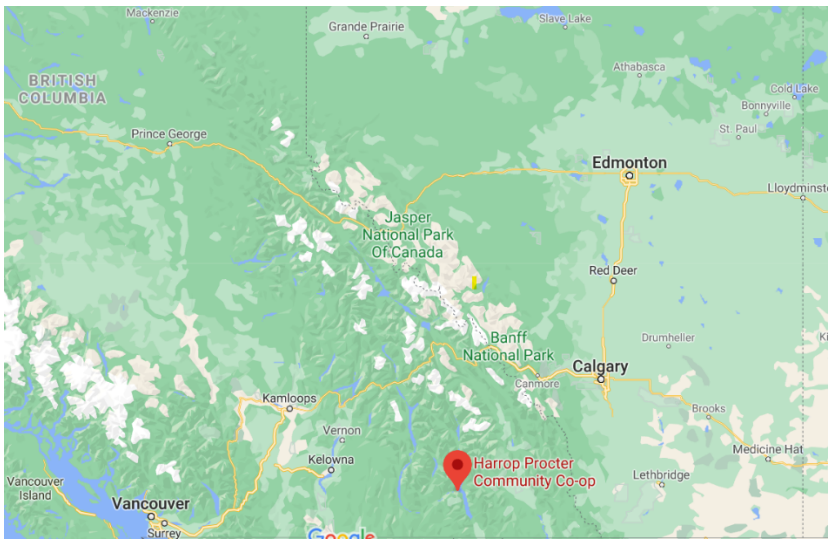
Kevin, Rami, Eric, David
source: www.hpcommunityforest.org

The case study is organized into four sections that detail the evolution of Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative (HPCC), exploring its conditions of possibility in the *pre-conversion* period, the processes by which *conversion* took place, and *post conversion* developments. It will conclude with a consideration of *lessons and takeaways* for our interest in exploring the conditions for, and promoting, successful co-operative conversions.

Pre-conversion: [1977-1999]

What were the conditions of possibility?

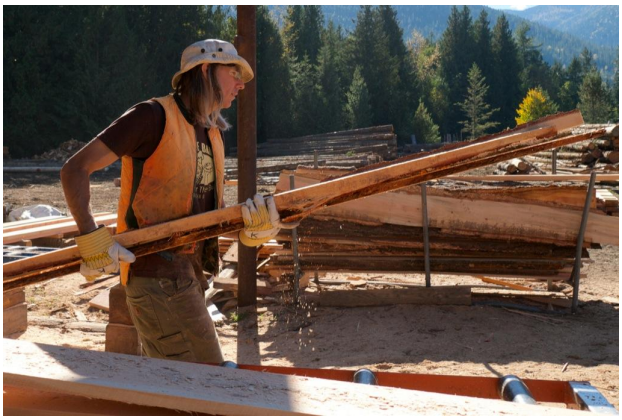
Like all British Columbia communities located on and near Crown forest, the towns of Harrop and Procter had experienced decades of aggressive timber logging using clear cutting practices. Harrop and Procter are two small communities situated eight kilometers apart on the south shore of the west arm of Kootenay Lake in the Central Kootenay Region of British Columbia. The population of Harrop-Procter is about 600 people, comprising about 250 households, many of which rely on old-time resource-based economic practices, such as farming, milling and forestry. On balance, Harrop has traditionally been more engaged in farming, while Procter has been associated with businesses involved in road construction. Increasingly the towns are witnessing some resettlement by urban professionals drawn to the beautiful natural environment, and who are known locally as the "urban refugees."



Harrop-Procter's Location.
source: Google Maps

Harrop-Procter, as they are known together, is accessible only by ferry, some 27 kilometers from the city of Nelson, BC. The government of British Columbia had extensively issued long-term use rights to logging and timber firms in the province, and environmental protection laws were considered by the local population to be weak. Beginning in the mid-1970s, residents began to organize. They had no procedural or legal recourse to participate in the formal

processes of forest governance. And yet they sought approaches that would go beyond direct-action protest. To do so, they developed a collaboration with an environmental scientist from Selkirk College who was interested to document local experience[2]. Bruce Fraser, the scientist, undertook a forest planning process that involved surveying residents about their concerns with the present arrangement. The main issue raised by the residents was watershed management. Through community gatherings surrounding this forest planning process, a strong sense of community collaboration developed.



Kevin with slabs.
source: hpcommunityforest.org

The research generated a report in 1977, which argued for community participation in forest management and timber harvesting. At the time, such proposals would have been viewed as a radical departure from the status quo. The report also recommended against the planned construction of a road system nearby the communities of Harrop and Procter, in view of the damage that would be caused to the watershed. The recommendations of the report were summarily rejected by the BC Ministry of Forests (MoF), which became evident to the community eight years later when the Ministry "unilaterally" released a logging plan in the region that involved building a main-haul road exactly where Fraser had cautioned against doing so[3]. A "contact committee" was formed at a community meeting of Harrop-Procter residents to send letters of complaint to the MoF and demand that the community be consulted in MoF forest planning processes.

One of their claims was that the residents of Harrop and Procter have many ideas that could strengthen forestry planning. The letters also refused to give consent to a unilaterally developed plan, even though residents did not have official status to

[2] UBC, 2018.
[3] UBC, 2018.

approve or reject MoF plans. The local forest district (the lowest administrative level used by the MoF in BC to administer forest lands) ignored these appeals on the assumption that they were not representative of the wider community[4], and proceeded with the plans to begin logging activity and build a main-haul road to gain access to the contested watershed. In response, the committee determined to formalize their contact committee to form, in 1984, the Harrop-Procter Watershed and Community Protection Committee (HPWCPC). The HPWCPC in turn formed the West Arm Watershed Alliance, comprised of local communities opposed to clear cutting and seeking to influence forest management, engaging in both tactics of blockading the main-haul road as well as attempting to work strategically with the MoF District office. It is important to underscore that community members were involved in both protest and logging/road building.

Erik, Kevin, David with Remi.
source: hpcommunityforest.org

Now the MoF had to listen, and the HPWCPC met continuously over the next few years with the local forest district office to share their ideas on forest management, while they also attempted to form more formal partnerships with the government, which were rejected. The MoF continued to act unilaterally but could no longer ignore the voice of the Harrop and Procter communities; under enduring conditions of tension and conflict, the MoF undertook its own survey of the Harrop and Procter communities, confirming what Fraser had reported 15 years previously—that the communities wanted a say in forest management, to protect their watersheds, and to reduce the cut as well as end clear cutting.

The response by MoF was to create a wilderness park to protect some of the areas to the south that had been slated for clear cutting and road development. Incredibly,

[4] UBC, 2018.

CP141 Tour. Bob, Dave, Jorne and Mia.
source: hpcommunityforest.org

however, the logging operations within the Harrop-Procter watersheds were not protected by this response, and logging was still set to go ahead. Residents held more meetings, resulting in the incorporation in 1996 of their movement as the Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Society (HPWPS) (a "society" is the term for non-profit organizations in British Columbia). For funding, volunteers relied heavily on community fundraisers as well as private philanthropic foundations. A foundation grant from Silva Forest Foundation allowed HPWPS to "open an office, employ a coordinator, and hire local professionals to assist with a business and management plan"[5]. HPWPS consulted with Silva Forest Foundation for technical assistance in creating an ecosystem-based watershed protection plan using innovative harvesting practices.

HPWPS also campaigned door-to-door with residents of the villages of Harrop and Procter, resulting in more than 60% of the adult population joining the Society. With an innovative plan, and widespread popular support, HPWPS was thus ready to respond immediately upon being invited by the Ministry of Forests to submit a proposal for a Community Forest Pilot Agreement. In July of 1999, Harrop-Procter was awarded a five-year licence with an allowable annual cut (AAC) of 2,600 cubic metres[6].

In the meantime, a legislative framework for community forests had developed over the preceding two years. The environmental movement, in conjunction with the ruling NDP government, had sought to establish stronger environmental protection laws and

[5] https://hpcommunityforest.org/about-hpwps/
[6] UBC, 2018.

stronger regulations to control forestry in the province However, neoliberal ideology was gaining a strong hold in Canada in the 1990s, and market rationality had become the favored logic for governance, including in forest governance[7]. Market incentives and cost-benefit analysis moved to center stage. In forestry, the 1997 Jobs and Timber Accord, led by the BC provincial NDP government of the day, was the result. The title of the Accord reveals the emphasis on creating jobs and harvesting timber. Environmental protections would have to be subject to a cost-benefit analysis that, not surprisingly, played well into the hands of industry[8].

Keith Powell at Harrop-Proctor.
source: Google Images

Paradoxically, the neoliberal climate allowed for a compromise section of the 1997 Jobs and Timber Accord (JTA) to allow for the creation of community forest tenure on an experimental basis. Thus, in 1998, the BC Ministry of Forests created the Community Forest Agreement Program (CFAP), allowing for ten pilot programs, of which Harrop-Procter was selected as one.

[7] McArthy, 2006.
[8] McArthy, 2006.

Table 1: Catalyzing Factors for Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative's Conversion into a Co-op	
Previous enterprise characteristics	• The forest was previously under the management of the government of British Columbia, which had extensively issued long-term use rights to logging and timber firms in the area. • Communities of Harrop and Procter felt that community involvement in forest management was inadequate and were concerned about overlogging. • The political space for innovation afforded by a neoliberal policy turn that allowed a small, compromise program to test community management approaches.
Group/ Community stakeholder characteristics	• A formal, registered association of local interests (the Society), that acted as an institution rather than a collection of individuals and gave institutional legitimacy to the initiative. • The Society was protesting clear cutting and promoted an eco-systems based approach to forest management. • Action rooted in a supportive membership base united around a common interest connected with a shared everyday-life concern. • Oppositional practices that galvanized the community and presented a credible threat to the BC Ministry of Forests. • Wider regional alliances between local communities and their neighbours strengthened the ability of Harrop-Procter to enact change.
Supporting organizations/ institutions characteristics	• An early ally in the scientific community, the professor from Selkirk College, who could help raise community concerns in a report format. • Some financing and foundation support, namely from Silva Forest Foundation, to help convert residents' ideas into a credible plan.

Conversion: Through what processes? [2000-2008]

Initial set up

Twenty-seven communities applied for the new Community Forest Pilot Agreements in 1999, with nearly 100 having expressed interest[9]. Ten applicants were selected by a committee representing stakeholders in BC forestry—MoF, unions, environmentalists, forest product companies, academics, and First Nations. Each pilot project was awarded a five-year license with the stipulation that the experience would be reviewed by MoF before renewal was considered.

Members of the Harrop Procter Community Co-operative.
Source: HPCF website

In 2000, HPWPS learned that it was one of the successful applicants selected for the MoF Community Forest License five-year pilot project. It took another year of negotiations with the MoF before the HPWPS was given the go-ahead for its Community Forest License. HPWPS received an area-based license covering 11,000 ha of Crown land and an allowable annual cut (AAC) of 2,600 cubic metres, which at the time was the lowest harvest volume of community-held forest lands in BC. Water protection remained the primary motivation for the Harrop-Procter communities to become involved in forestry, given the degradation of area streams from past logging. The management philosophy of Harrop-Procter Community Forest (HPCF), the ecological forest harvesting and lumber business arm of Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative, is rooted in ecosystem-based conservation planning, which is described

[9] McArthy, 2006.

as "a method of ecosystem protection, maintenance, restoration, and human use that, as the first priority, maintains or restores natural ecological integrity—including biological diversity—across the full range of spatial and temporal scales"[10].

During this period HPWPS also decided to form Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative (HPCC) and incorporated it as a formal co-operative business entity in 1999. This step was originally taken in part because there is no precedent for a society being granted forest tenure in BC and HPWPS did not want this to become a barrier to moving forward. The formal agreement for the community forest pilot project with the MoF, then, was formally established with HPCC and the license was obtained in late 2000.

Organizational structure

Harrop-Procter organized its involvement in community forestry in a way that allowed the communities to maintain their conservation activities, while also entering into the business side of forestry. The Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Society (HPWPS) is the umbrella organizational form, guided by an elected board of directors from the members of the co-operative and the Society (see organizational chart below). The Board meets on a quarterly basis. The HPWPS founded the Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative (HPCC), while also maintaining the Society as a distinct organization. Thus, in practice, the Harrop-Procter Community Forest entails a two-pronged strategy. At one level, the HPWPS ensures that ecologically robust forest activities are informed by ecosystem research, supported by advocacy, and promoted through public education. In doing so, it continues to promote the preservation of watersheds and a consistent, high-quality water supply. In this stewardship role, and at another level, it oversees the activities of the Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative (HPCC), the non-profit business with a focus on site-sensitive ecologically based forestry practices modeled on the 1992 Silva Forest Foundation planning process. Another stated goal of

[10] Silva Forest Foundation, 2015.

HPWPS after the creation of HPCC has been to "promote and encourage locally based employment available through the development of public forest lands"[11].

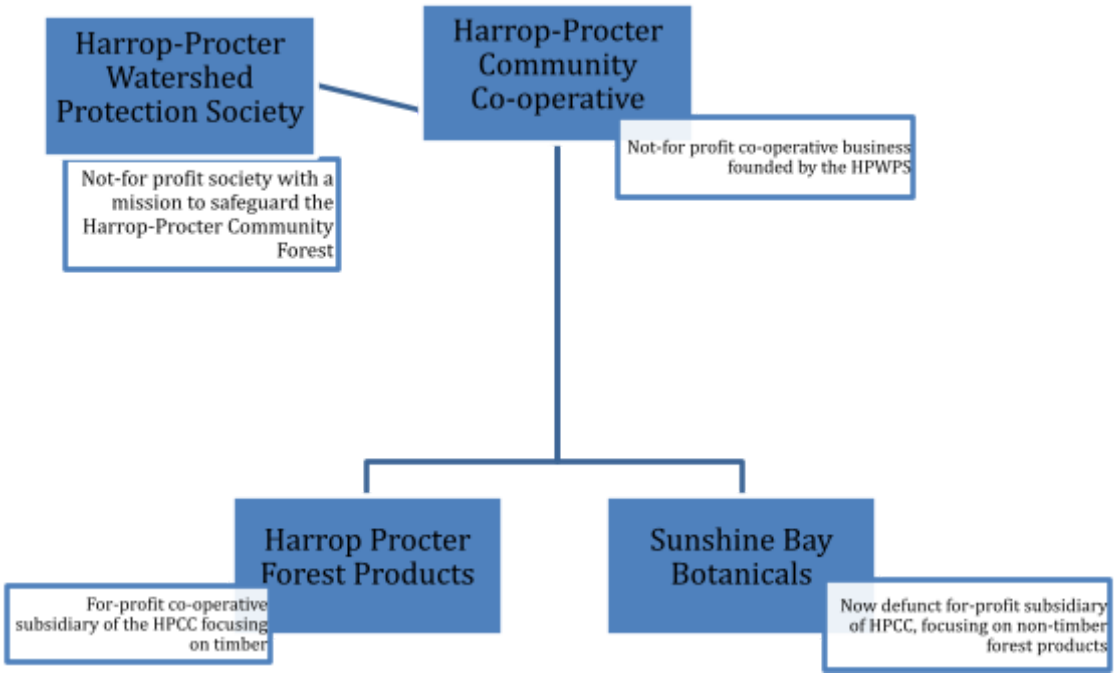


Figure 1: Organizational Chart of the Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative

The HPCC, or "the Co-op," is the business arm that manages forest operations and pursues economic development. The Co-op is a "not-for-profit" organization but has a subsidiary company called Harrop-Procter Forest Products (HPFP) that is a for-profit business. It undertakes logging and sells cedar and Douglas fir lumber to a primarily local retail market. To add value, HPFP also produces a range of wood products including cedar siding, Douglas fir interior trim and flooring, and custom cut timbers[12]. The Co-op's objective, according to its mission statement, is to "develop public forests in the Harrop-Procter area according to site sensitive, ecologically based forestry practices which are modeled on Silva Forest Foundation planning and approved by the Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Society", and to "stimulate locally based employment from the Harrop-Procter Forest lands which is ecologically sustainable,

[11] https://hpcommunityforest.org/about-hpwps/
[12] UBC, 2018

and socially and economically equitable"[13]. Rami Rothkop, a founding member of HPCC and subsequent mill operator, explains the logic of the co-operative structure in relation to the business side of the HPCF: "We picked the not-for-profit co-op [model] because it doesn't mean we weren't trying to make money; it meant that, you know, I could not personally benefit beyond a wage or whatever." Like the water protection society, the co-op is managed by a board of directors elected from the co-operative membership, which is open only to residents of the Harrop and Procter villages and surrounding area.

In 2001, the HPCC founded another subsidiary for-profit business, called Sunshine Bay Botanicals, focusing on non-timber forest products including berries, mushrooms, medicinal plants, and tourism/recreation. The co-op ultimately decided to close down Sunshine Bay Botanicals for reasons that will be further delved into in the next section.

David and Kevin
source: hpcommunityforest.org

Logging began in 2001. In terms of staffing, the co-op started out with a forest manager, office coordinator, and bookkeeper (adding other positions later), and its governance style was participatory, involving several board/staff/volunteer committees that also report to the board. The membership base of the co-operative is appropriately larger than that of the HPWPS (because the latter plays a guiding role). The two organizations build accountability toward one another into their relationship by including members of one another's boards of directors on their own boards[14].

[13] https://bcca.coop/membership/members/harrop-procter-community-coop/
[14] UBC, 2018.

Table 2: Enabling Conversion Ecosystem for Harrop-Proctor Community Co-operative

Type of Support	Enabling Actor(s)	Enabling Action
Financial support	Silva Forest Foundation	• Initial $30,000 grant that enabled HPWPS to open an office, employ a coordinator, and hire local professionals to assist with a business and management plan
	Eco Trust Canada	• Grant during early operations
	Renewal Partners	• Grant during early operations
	Community Futures Central Kootenay	• Grant
	VanCity Capital Corporation	• Grant and financing
	Mountain Equipment Co-op	• Grant

	Columbia Basin Trust (Castlegar)	• $13,360 grant in 2000 for the development of Sunshine Bay Botanicals • $10,000 grant in 2009 for the certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) of HPCF's forest operations and resulting forest products • $93,000 in 2011 for the "the purchase and installation of required equipment for the HPCF value added wood products project" • $15,000 in 2013 for "further development of Harrop Procter Forest Products' existing manufacturing site" • $150,000 in 2016, a grant for undertaking the "Adapting Forest Management to Climate Change" exploratory study[15] • $2,980 in 2018 to "fund technology upgrades to support organizational sustainability"
	The Government of British Columbia	• The government provided HPCF support through its e-team program, which "allows young people to improve the environment and outdoor recreation, gain practical employment and training experience, and promote personal development."[16]

[15] https://ourtrust.org/about/funded-projects/?frm_search=harrop
[16] https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/archive/pre2001/1997/july/bg042.asp

	Community Enterprise Program	• $26,666 grant for the development of Sunshine Bay Botanical
	Aveda (Cosmetics Company)	• HPCF was one of four recipients of Aveda's annual Earth Day fundraising in 2000
In-kind support	Local community	• It is estimated that the local community puts in over 350 volunteer hours each month for HPCF[17]
Technical/ development support	Silva Forest Foundation	• Technical assistance in creating an ecosystem-based watershed protection plan using innovative harvesting practices.
Government Policy/ Program Support	Community Forest Agreement Program (CFAP)	• 1997 Jobs and Timber Accord (JTA) allowed for the creation of community forest tenure on an experimental basis. Thus, in 1998, the BC Ministry of Forests created the CFAP and allowed for ten pilot programs to be launched (of which HPCF was one).

It is important to emphasize that the non-profit status of the co-operative was instrumental in allowing for some of the donations listed in the table above.

[17] UBC, 2018.

Post-Conversion: Challenges and strategies for sustainability [2009 - present]

Post-conversion transition

After two five-year licences had been issued, the Ministry of Forests abolished the five-year Community Forest Agreements in 2008 and allowed agreements already in place to remain while meeting performance criteria to roll over into twenty-five-year licences, renewable every ten years. Today, out of fifty community forests in BC, Harrop-Procter remains one of only three that are organized as co-operatives. Several significant changes took place during this phase, including the decision at HPCC to transition away from non-timber forest products (NTFPs), to increase annual allowable yields and start up a mill to add value in the forestry business, and to professionalize operations to support these decisions.

Discontinuing non-timber forest products (NTFPs)

NTFPs had been popular with many members of the HP co-operative because it is a business that is more consistent with eco-forestry principles than logging. The Co-op had established Sunshine Bay Botanicals in 2001, to focus specifically on cultivating herbs and plants for a line of medicinal and culinary botanicals. As HPCF matured and began to face the combination of heavy labour and supply costs involved with NTFP, combined with the low logging yields specified in the allowable annual cut (AAC) it had negotiated with the MoF, the Co-op ultimately decided to close Sunshine Bay Botanicals in 2007[18]. This was the first significant moment in the evolution of the Co-op when community response was torn. And it was timed right before HPCF was awarded a long-term lease and could begin to therefore develop longer-term management visions. In the end, it was a business calculus that drove the decision, on the expectation that forest products would yield a higher return than NTFPs—and would therefore be a more effective area to deploy volunteers and organizational resources.

[18] UBC, 2018

Expansion of forestry operations

The closure of the Sunshine Bay Botanicals allowed HPCF to further concentrate on the timber business and increase funds for forestry operations[19]. There were two significant dimensions of this process. First, while creating a secondary management plan, the co-op decided to increase the allowable annual cut to 10,000 cubic meters. The co-operative conducted its own timber supply analysis and concluded that this increase would still allow HPCF to practice eco-forestry planning; it is still among the lowest AAC for community forests in British Columbia[20]. In addition to yielding more forest products, increasing the AAC would allow HPCF to respond to increasing risks from climate change, especially risks of wildfires.

A 2003 wildfire had impressed on the communities that in fact when you have large tracts of mature coniferous forest, there is an increased risk for wildfires. Thus the higher AAC allowed the HPCF to break up these coniferous forests through logging while also practicing regeneration harvest methods to promote species that are better adapted to fire and drier climate[21]. Again changes in the AAC are typically mandated by the MoF; once again, HPCF was able to initiate and negotiate the change in AAC based on having followed principles of community consultation that are inscribed

Kevin on edger.
source: hpcommunityforest.org

[19] Egunyu, Reed, & Sinclair, 2016.
[20] Egunyu & Reed, 2017.
[21] UBC, 2018.

in the community forestry legislation, combined with having earned the trust of MoF as a result of performing well during the pilot phases. Thus one could say that, in addition to community trust and support, the co-op had earned the trust of the state and was thus at this more mature stage able to operate with considerable autonomy within a co-management framework.

The second dimension of expanding the forestry business was the establishment of a mill. The mill was opened in 2009 and employed four full-time employees, which is in fact seven times the number of jobs per cubic metre of timber than the provincial average, an extraordinary achievement for a relatively small CF[22]. The goal in opening the mill was to ensure that timber was processed within the CF so that added value could be captured there rather than externally. Timber products are sold directly from the mill, which is located in Harrop. Historically the communities of Harrop and Procter had been involved in milling, and in fact the HPCF mill was established on land owned by one of the members, who had an existing small sawmill. HPCC members volunteered in the construction and installation of a new mill on that site, and some funding was obtained from the Columbia Basin Trust, located in the nearby town of Castlegar. The successful operation of the sawmill figured centrally in the HP co-op, winning the Robin Hood Memorial Award in 2017, which has enabled the co-operative to establish an annual $1,000 scholarship for a grade 12 student from HP for their post-secondary education[23].

Rami Rothkop, the Manager of Harrop Procter Forest Products, noted that although the co-operative faced many challenges along the way and did not manage to make a profit right away, the dedication of the community and the support they received from institutional partners allowed them to establish a strong financial footing eventually:

[22] UBC, 2018.
[23] UBC, 2018.

There is an element to the community that has always been critical, that there hasn't been a monetary payback right away. And part of the reason is…it's a longer term vision, doing slower forestry and you know, like our answer always has been, well there hasn't been one road collapse, everyone has clean water. All these things are payback but we also have a bunch of money in the bank right now. The co-op has been hugely successful. And when I think of successful, the first thing that comes to my mind isn't money. But money, like it or not, you and I are both in this world, we talked about this earlier. [Money] is important because if you don't have it you don't exist in the business. So … we have managed to make this thing work despite money not being the real support thing.

Co-operative members restoring the mill
source : HPCF website

Furthermore, Erik Leslie, a Forest Manager at HPCC told us in early 2020:

> *We are on a better financial footing now, we have a more established set of forestry practices … We have the same values and same priorities [as we started with] and are now influenced by a more dynamic understanding of forests and how they work in fire and climate change and all that kind of stuff.*

Conversion Lessons from Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative

The concluding section considers takeaways and lessons learned for our purposes of understanding the conditions under which co-operatives can successfully emerge from a transition from a different organizational form. We argue that the Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative, which is much heralded in the literature on community forestry, also has much to offer scholars and practitioners of social economy and co-operative conversion.

Harrop-Procter Community Co-op is unique in this research project because its conversion began with a non-profit organization rather than a for-profit business. Taking a broader view, the transition from Crown lands to the non-profit society and on to the co-operative could be viewed as conversion from Crown land forest tenure in the public sector to eventual co-operative stewardship of the commons. The community

James banding a lift.
source: hpcommunityforest.org

initiative's genesis from a watershed protection society meant that it was rooted in a supportive membership base united around a common interest connected with a shared everyday-life concern. That deep collective origin furnishes the greatest starting point a co-operative could wish for— long-term support and participation by a community that the co-operative is founded to serve.

HPCC maintained its relationship with the community base via organizational practices and structures that sought to institutionalize them. Initially these took the form of door-to-door meetings through which the watershed protection society promoted and secured a majority constituency of support. Once established and licensed, the co-operative itself formed a board and committees through which community members could become and remain involved in the work and governance of the organization. Staffing was minimal and volunteer labor was extensive. The structure of the HPCC also allowed for clear lines of responsibility and purpose. The Society was retained to provide overall direction and support the original core mission of water protection and community engagement. The co-op itself was registered as a non-profit organization but established a for-profit subsidiary to undertake forestry business (Harrop-Procter Forestry Products), as well as a non-timber forest product company (Sunshine Bay Botanicals). This clear organizational structure allowed the organization to make effective decisions about where to deploy resources and which activities to prioritize.

Co-operative members voting at the annual general meeting. source: HPCF website

HPCC also tells an important story about the relationships of co-ops with the state and the economy. We tend to think of co-ops as part of movements for local autonomy. In the case of HPCC we see a more complicated relationship with the state (and the economy) that suggests a negotiated relationship and careful

management of these relations, rather than a quest for autonomy, which might often prove to be economically and politically unsustainable. We see that HPCC was able to take advantage of several kinds of political spaces to pursue its vision and indeed maintain some forms of autonomy. This space was found creatively in the following manner:

[a] within a neoliberal regulatory regime that allowed for community forest tenure on terms similar to private industrial forestry tenure;

[b] environmental protection requirements that favor some of HPCC's own objectives;

[c] relations of trust built up with local state officials over a long period of time;

[d] an established legacy of organizing and protest both locally and within the province as a whole; and

[e] the power inherent in management plans and research studies that HPCC could draw on to promote its vision.

These political spaces allowed HPCC to defend and promote its conservation mission. Once these were secure, it was then able to entertain opportunities for economic growth. The order of operations is critical here, as the business development was consistently guided by conservation and social perspectives and at no time has become the dominant rationale for the co-operative.

While some of these conditions of possibility, such as the way in which a neoliberal regulatory regime ended up creating opportunity for a community-based form of forest tenure, are beyond the reach of a co-operative to control or produce, some of them do offer constructive foundations for conversion planning. Even those factors that may seem merely contextual could only have been seized as opportunities favoring conversion with the kind of preparation and planning exhibited by HPCC. It is our hope that this experience can serve as an inspiration for the overall objective of promoting

co-operative conversions for the protection of environmental commons and local economies now and in the future.

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