

Harrop Procter Community Cooperative Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025



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Introduction

The Harrop Procter Community Cooperative (HPCC) was created with a commitment to a belief that it is possible to operate with vision and responsibility *and* be financially sustainable. Considering our experiences over the past 20 years, and the changing landscape we see before us, the Board of HPCC committed in the spring of 2021 to undertake a thorough review of its activities and refresh its strategic priorities and its plans for achieving them.

The past few years have been challenging ones. While nothing is ever constant, it seems to many of us that the pace of change and uncertainty is accelerating. Traditional business strategies, government policy approaches and the way we engage in public dialogue are coming up against crises flowing from issues neglected too long, the undeniable impacts of climate change, changing population demographics and the impacts of a global pandemic. A rethinking of the ways we live and work is underway.

This plan has been drafted with input from the cooperative’s membership, staff and volunteers, likeminded community forest organizations, and our best collective interpretations of the risks and opportunities that lie ahead. It is intended to become a living document – reviewed considering actual results and adapted to meet the changing circumstances that we encounter in the years ahead.

History and Purpose of HPCC

The Harrop Procter Community Cooperative was formed in 1999 to operationalize forestry activities, after the Harrop Procter Watershed Protection Society successfully applied for the forest license for the area from the BC Ministry of Forests. After decades of blockades and protests that left those who worked in forestry feeling devalued and attacked, and those with environmental concerns feeling concerned and antagonized, when the government announced that a license for this area would be issued, members of the community decided to take a different approach, together.

Once formed, HPCC applied for the forestry license - intending to manage logging activity according to community values, employing our own skilled community members in the enterprise. It was one of the first community forest licenses granted in the province of BC and has been one of the most successful for more than 20 years. In 2011, our local sawmill began operating, adding value to our local wood products and delivering on the commitment to provide local employment from our forests. Harrop Procter Forest Products is the only community forest-owned sawmill in the Province of BC.



The Harrop Procter Community Cooperative is a community service co-op, registered in the province of BC with the following purpose:

- To manage public forests in the Harrop-Procter area according to ecologically based forestry principles.
- To stimulate locally based employment from these forest lands that is socially equitable; and
- As much as possible, provide to members and the community
 - Forest management services
 - Forest-related educational, recreational, business and employment opportunities
 - A model of ecologically based community forestry that provides health and social well-being to the community

Vision

A resilient forest ecosystem sustaining a vibrant community.

Mission

To actively manage our forests for the resilience and health of our community and environment

Values

In all our activities, the Board and Staff of the HPCC are committed to the following values:

- Honouring the land on which our community is situated, ensuring it for future generations
- Respect and transparency in all our interactions – with each other, with members, with our community and the public
- Innovation and curiosity as foundational to continuous learning and sharing from our experience
- Openness to a range of perspectives

Principles

The work of HPCC is intended to reflect in action our belief in the following principles:

- Healthy rural economies and communities require healthy, resilient ecosystems
- Resource management in community watersheds should:
 - be directly influenced by the community
 - reflect a thoughtful, sustainable approach
 - maintain a healthy range of options for the future
 - reflect a balance of environmental, social, and economic values
 - provide local employment and community benefit
- Fostering a culture of innovation and learning is a source of organizational strength

Situational Assessment (SWOT)

As HPCC has evolved over the years, a great deal has been learned. In the last few years significant challenges and new opportunities have emerged that have implications for the cooperative in the future. The impacts of climate change and the volatility of wildfire risk are increasingly felt. Covid 19 required HPCC to rethink the way we operate day-to-day and implement changes to ensure the safety of staff and customers. Wild fluctuations in the market for lumber and wood products have provided unexpected revenues that will help the organization prepare more confidently for the future.

Our strengths include a solid foundation of community values and support for local management of our forests, hard earned expertise, and a strong reputation across the province for the work that we do. HPCC staff and board members regularly reach out to mentor and educate other groups, provide consulting services to local landowners, and participate in research on forest management and watershed protection. The cooperative now employs a dozen area residents and in the last 3 years has provided financial and materials support to more than twenty local community organizations.



Looking ahead, we see opportunities to strengthen the connection to watershed stewardship activities in the area, increase our capacity to educate and consult, maximize the value-added utilization of our wood products, and continue to provide local employment and a safe, collaborative working atmosphere.

Of course, there are also challenges facing HPCC in the coming years. Climate change and the risk of wildfire constitute an enormous threat to the forest ecosystem, homes, businesses, agriculture and water supply in the community and the community forest. The current political and economic environment around forestry and lumber production is fluid – with fluctuations in pricing and costs that are difficult to plan for. Additionally, timber harvesting and sawmill operation are both inherently risky activities, and a robust approach to risk assessment and mitigation strategies must be a key priority for HPCC.

Organizationally, one consideration from operating for more than two decades is recognizing the need to remain current and connected with the community as it grows and changes. As our founding members, senior staff and longtime volunteers move on and new families come into our community, it is vital that opportunities to learn about and participate in HPCC are encouraged. To continue to meet the vision and mission of the organization for the future, the next generation of leaders must be supported to take the reins.

Strategic Priorities

With the experience of board, staff and founding members, our assessment of the current environment *and* the opportunities to respond to it in alignment with the values and principles of the cooperative, HPCC has established the following strategic priorities for the next three years:

- 1. Strengthen our core operations, including adaptation and risk mitigation responses to the effects of climate change**
- 2. Actively engage the community and beyond to build knowledge and resilience in managing watersheds**
- 3. Continue to strengthen the organization and its sustainability and relevance**

Translating Strategies into Action

While our strategic priorities provide HPCC with clear goals to aim for, to achieve them specific actions must be planned, implemented and their results evaluated. Each area of operation within the cooperative has developed specific work plans to contribute to the collective momentum to realizing Harrop Procter Community Cooperative's vision.

1. Strengthen our core operations, including adaptation and risk mitigation responses to the effects of climate change

Forest Operations

- Continue to manage Harrop Procter forests in accordance with our tenure requirements and community commitments. Complete an East/west fuel break from Harrop to Procter to protect residences, infrastructure, and forest values within 5 years. Develop landscape level fuel breaks (West Harrop Ridge/East Harrop Ridge/East Procter) within 10 years
- Integrate HPCC's climate change adaptation project (jointly funded by HPCC and CBT) into our operation forestry program.

Mill Operations

- Continue to improve the efficiency of milling and value-added operations at the Harrop Procter Forest Products sawmill site.
- Implement infrastructure improvements to sustain the mill operations for the long term, including:
 - Implementation of three phase power service
 - Renovations to mill buildings to provide appropriate spaces for staff to take breaks, a first aid area and a sheltered customer/sales area.

- Multiyear plan for the purchase of new and replacement equipment needed to sustain operations, diversify production of wood products and support new waste management strategies.
- Incorporate more efficient inventory management systems to accurately account for materials produced, stored, and sold.
- Identify opportunities to reorganize and/or expand yard and wood storage areas more effectively.
- Incorporate improvements to working areas of the mill to provide shelter for staff from extreme weather and improve safety.

Community

- Develop a communications and engagement strategy to improve information sharing and opportunities for input from membership and the community on HPCC plans and activities.

Governance

- Ensure appropriate budget reserves are established for both forest and mill operations, to ensure capacity to respond to changing circumstances and/or emergent situations.

2. Actively engage the community and beyond to build knowledge and resilience in managing watersheds



Forest Operations

- Develop a HPCC Forestry Outreach Program, to include both local outreach activities and engagement provincially to share HPCC’s forest model and practices. Although much of this activity has been happening for several years, development of a more structured approach to this will facilitate HPCC’s capacity to communicate offerings and invite participation.
- Locally, provide a range of engagement and educational opportunities designed to:
 - Provide information and education on the management principles and science behind HPCC forestry decisions,
 - Support landowners regarding fuel reduction treatments and forest management on private land
 - Educate new residents and visitors using our road networks recreationally with informational signage to foster greater understanding of forestry practices, courtesy, and best practices for recreational users. Gather information on visitation and usage patterns to inform future strategies.
- Broader Outreach to include:
 - Collaborations and partnered research projects (UBC/Suzanne Simard study, UBC/Lori Daniels fuel treatment study),
 - Field tours with outside groups such as other community forests, students, and other interested parties.

Mill Operations

- Incorporate more frequent reporting on mill operations in newsletters and membership communications – including educational information on wood products, staff activities and membership benefits.

Community

- Develop a community donations program with assigned budget and approval criteria to ensure equitable response to requests for donations, and provide transparency on financial/wood product donations made
- Consider partnerships to maximize effectiveness of donation administration (such as Osprey foundation, RDCK, CBT etc.)
- Review and refresh Scholarship program to improve awareness, align with similar academic award programs and revise eligibility if appropriate

Organizational Governance

- In collaboration with the Board and membership of the Harrop Procter Watershed Protection Society, consider opportunities and strategies to refresh our shared mandates and better align the two organizations

3. Continue to strengthen the organization and its relevance

Forest Operations

- Develop a succession plan for HPCC’s Forest Manager and expand lists of qualified contractors to ensure future operational capacity.

Mill Operations

- Adjust production, sales, and invoicing processes to electronic system to reduce inefficiencies and errors and provide improved data for planning, information sharing and accountability.
- Expand waste management strategies to maximize utilization of wood products and support potential partnerships in utilizing waste material from lumber production.
- Develop and implement human resources strategies/policies to ensure HPCC continues to be a collaborative and respectful workplace and can provide locally based employment into the future.

Community

- Consult widely and assess opportunities to strengthen the relationship with and sustainability of the Harrop Procter Watershed Protection Society. This may include consideration of a broad range of options, including formally linking the organizations, unification of membership, and funding for HPWPS activities.
- Improve linkages and/or develop partnerships with aligned organizations, such as Friends of Kootenay Lake, West Kootenay EcoSociety, Columbia Basin Water Hub, North

Kootenay Lake Water Monitoring program, etc. to consider shared projects that benefit the community and all partners.

- Provide opportunities for increased community participation on projects or other organizational activities, to give a range of volunteer opportunities. These may include trail expansion, alternative business opportunities (guest facilities, tours, non-timber forest products harvesting, educational workshops and presentations).

Organizational Governance

- Using the opportunity of the transition to electronic inventory and invoicing management, develop robust and timely management reporting to guide leadership decision making.
- Review and refresh an organizational set of policies and procedures to improve clarity in expectations and process for board and staff, and support organizational continuity.

Summary

The Harrop Procter Community Cooperative is well-positioned to continue its mission of managing forests in the interests of the community. Working actively with the clear goals and objectives outlined in this strategic plan provides a roadmap towards achieving its vision, allowing for transparency and accountability to the membership, and a means to continually adjust as we move forward in an ever-changing environment.



HPCC Work Plan 2022 – 2025 and beyond			
Project	Activity	Description	Timeframe
Forest Operations			
Manage tenure to mitigate risks of wildfire	Complete east/west fuel break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect existing lower elevation fuel treatments to create a continuous defensible fuel break between Harrop and Procter Create permanent fire access, including road and trail access, to community fuel breaks 	2022 - 2026
	Complete landscape-level fuel breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop continuous north-south fuel breaks at a landscape scale to mitigate wildfire risks in our watersheds Create permanent fire access, including road and trail access to landscape-level fuel breaks 	2022 - 2030
Climate Change Adaptation	Integrate Project Activities into Operational Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize forestry operations to address forest areas at highest risk to fire and drought Retain and/or introduce fire and drought resilient species and genotypes Realign high risk forest types to be more resilient to climate change 	2022 - 2026
HPCC community Outreach	Local Outreach Program/Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a forestry engagement and outreach program for Harrop Procter community 	2022 - 2026
	Regional and Provincial Outreach Program/Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate actively in public discussions regarding forest management, including public presentations and workshops 	2022 - 2026
	Research Programs Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate in academic and applied research projects, especially regarding climate change and fire management 	2022 - 2025
Succession Planning	Ensure long-term HPCC forest management capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a succession plan for HPCC Forest Manager and expand lists of qualified 	2023 - 2024

		contractors to ensure future operational capacity	
Mill Operations			
New & Replacement Equipment	Develop capital equipment plans for new and replacement equipment, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Handler • Double/Triple Resaw • Processor • Molder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop capital equipment plans to ensure mill is equipped to optimize production efficiency, make best use of fiber supply, and provide timely availability to customers. 	2022 - 2026
Inventory Management & Invoicing System	Implement electronic invoicing and inventory management software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand capacity of HPCC financial software to increase efficiency, reduce paperwork handling and improve accuracy of invoicing and inventory management. • Expand data reporting to support analysis and operational decision making. 	2022
Mill Structures Improvement	Covered work area to reduce staff exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install shade cloth to reduce sun exposure. • Research longer term solutions for four season shelter. 	2022
	Addition of dedicated staff lunchroom, improved customer reception area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create appropriate space to provide privacy and an opportunity to get out of the elements for staff breaks and first aid needs. • Develop plans for a covered reception area to provide shelter for waiting customers. 	2022
Mill Infrastructure Improvement	3 Phase Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and implement critical upgrade for HPFP development. 	2022
	Develop plan for yard organization and land area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop long term plans to optimize current and future land base for HPFP operations. 	2024 - 2025
Expand Waste Management Strategies	Develop and implement new strategies to better utilize waste materials from mill production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and implement strategies to maximize utilization of waste materials, including firewood, biochar, wood shavings and mulch products. 	2024 - 2025

Community Engagement			
Communications Plan	Develop communications plan to increase outreach and information sharing with membership and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a plan to align communications to members and the public via newsletter, social media, HPCC website, email, or other formats 	2023
HPCC Donations Program	Review and refresh policies, budget, and approach to community donations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a clear outline of process and criteria for funding requests to HPCC from community organizations 	2022
Scholarship Program	Refresh criteria and increase awareness of scholarship program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand opportunities to support local students in their education 	2022
Governance			
HPCC Policies & Procedures	Review, refresh and/or develop more comprehensive policies and procedures for HPCC board and staff operations to clarify expectations and ensure organizational continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current policies, and develop a supportive set of policies and procedures to guide board and staff into the future 	2023
Human Resources Strategies	Develop and implement human resources strategies to foster a collaborative and respectful workplace culture providing locally based employment into the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create human resources plan that outlines recruitment strategies, compensation and benefit policies, discipline and termination policies, training, and occupational health and safety provisions Ensure that an employee handbook and employee onboarding process is developed for current and new employees of HPCC/HPFP. 	2023
Management Reporting	Utilize electronic inventory and invoicing system to develop more effective management reports to guide planning and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand current data reporting to more fully inform management and board decision making 	2022