SEA Benefits to Industry:

A Case Study of Integrated SEA in Saskatchewan's Forestry Sector, Canada

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International Association for Impact Assessment 2004
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Introduction

SEA is not widely recognized as a valuable tool for industry
- **emphasis on SEA for government-based PPP initiatives**

Long-term goal of SEA?
- **move towards the integration of environmental aspects with planning and development in all stages of decision-making**

If SEA is to meet its potential, as a valuable business tool in addition to its policy role, then it must become relevant and responsive to industry.
(Marshall 2003)

Key Questions

- Why should industry adopt SEA?
- What are the selling points of SEA to industry?
- What is the added value of amalgamating SEA principles with industry planning and decision-making practices?

'Integrated' SEA:

- SEA principles part of industry planning and decision-making

Background

There are few cases of ‘formal’ SEA practice amongst industrial proponents in Canada

There are examples of ‘informal’ SEA practices:

- **do not actually carry the SEA name tag**
- **not implemented under any formal SEA system or requirements**
- **do demonstrate the broad principles of SEA**

Example:

- **20-Year FMP Assessments**
- **Saskatchewan, Canada**

‘Informal’ SEA in Saskatchewan

EA Act does not explicitly define ‘development’ to include policies or plans

- **amendment (Section 9.1) requires EA of FMPs prepared by industry**

> ***…forest management activities pursuant to a 20-year forest management plan within the meaning of The Forest Resources Management Act are deemed to be a development, and no person shall proceed with those activities until ministerial approval has been obtained for that plan.***

3-major FMP assessments under this requirement in recent years

- **not formally labeled as SEAs**
- **do integrate SEA principles**

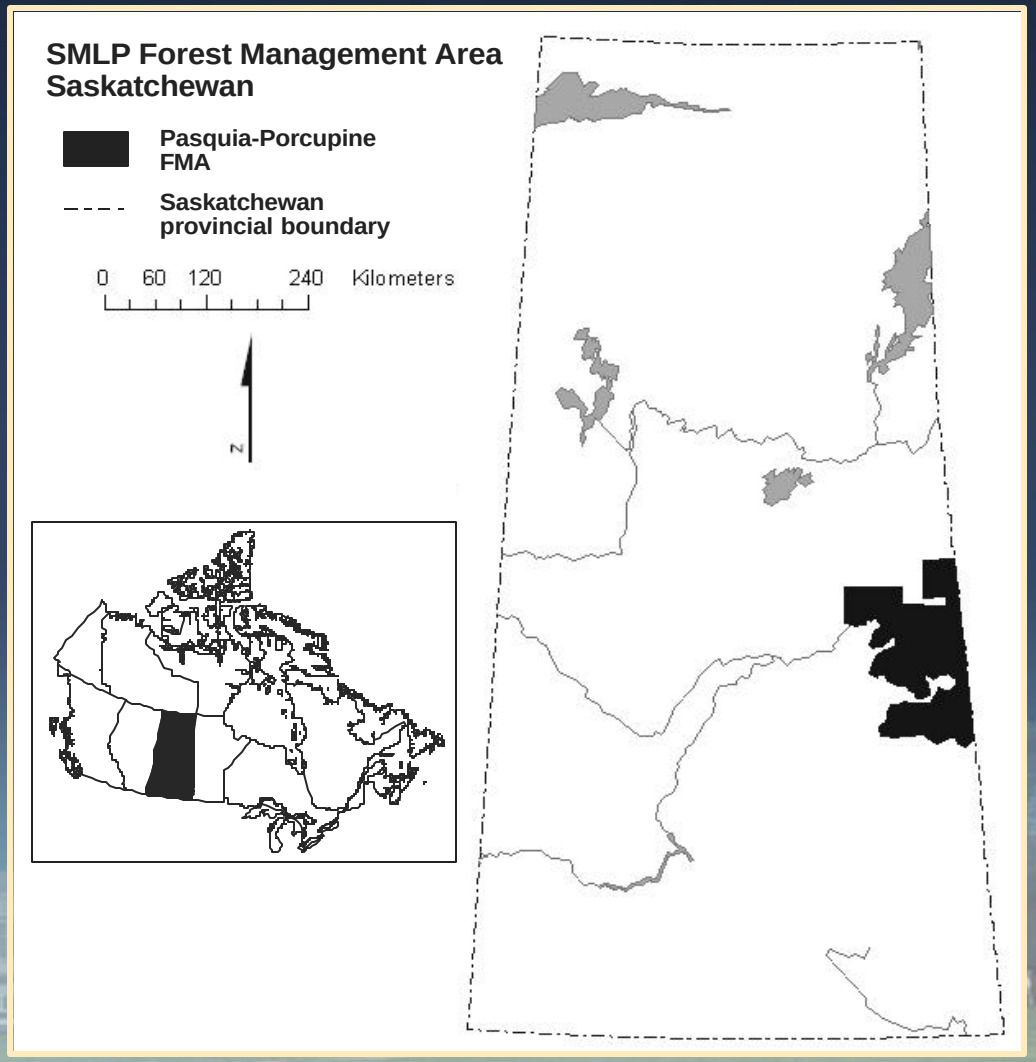
Case Study: Pasquia Porcupine FMP Assessment

MacMillan Bloedel Ltd. and Saskatchewan Crown Investments Corp.

- 1995 partnership (SMLP)

- Pasquia-Porcupine FMA
- SK-MB Border
- Boreal Plain Ecozone
- 2 million hectares
- EA and FMP endorsed in 1997
- 34 primary impact communities

What was the added value of integrating SEA with industry plan development?



Potential benefits emerging from SEA integration

I. Streamlined EA procedures and requirements

Model of strategic business planning (Wever, 1996)
- **implementation efficiency a central concern**

SMLP SEA model:

- **Assessment carried out under SK EA Act and SK Forest Resources Act**
- **Plan development and EA unfolded simultaneously; EA informed the planning process**
- **Integrated plan and assessment document were produced**

Potential benefits emerging from SEA integration

II. Demonstrated industry commitment

Traditional approach:

- what are the potential impacts of the proposal?

SMLP SEA model:

Plan objectives based on Canadian Standards Association vision of 'sustainable forest management' and 'sustainable communities'

- EA guided by 11 FMP goals and objectives
  - ? each paired with selected indicators as basis for assessment

Example:
- 'Provide quality products to meet customer's needs'
- 'Maintain existing forest diversity'
- 'Provide safe and stable jobs'

Potential benefits emerging from SEA integration

III. Facilitated compliance with regulations and standards

Traditional approach:

- **predict impacts, establish EMS, monitor for compliance**

SMLP SEA model:

- **assess plan during its development against goals, objectives, industry standards, and regulatory instruments**
- **29 acts, by-laws and regulations were used as assessment 'indicators' during plan development**
- **(S)EA potentially reduced role of legality following plan development**

Potential benefits emerging from SEA integration

IV. Demonstrated accountability in decision-making

Traditional approach:

- what are the impacts of the proposed plan?

SMLP SEA model:

- identified and assessed 5 strategic plan alternatives
- 'no timber harvesting' (baseline) + 3 alternative harvest and reforestation schedules + proposed SMLP alternative
- consistent set of assessment criteria across alternatives

At a minimum: 'alternatives assessment provided an opportunity for the industry to market its 'preferred' alternative'

Potential benefits emerging from SEA integration

V. Facilitated integration of affected interests and values

Traditional approach:

- **public involvement rarely part of 'industry planning'**
- **'add on' component at the EA stage; after plan development**

SMLP SEA model:

- **early integration – part of plan development**
- **34 primary impact communities; 54 additional RMs**
- **PI initiated during 'plan' scoping in mid-1996**

Potential benefits emerging from SEA integration

VI. Enhanced deliverability and acceptability of final plan

Traditional approach:

- **plan developed and 'measured'**

SMLP SEA model:

- **FMP final document and EA not a 'public surprise'**
- **terms and conditions for approval addressed during plan development**
- **impacts and mitigation measures already identified in proposal**

? 22 residual impacts and 65 mitigation measures proposed in the plan

Conclusions and directions

Under a formal SEA system or informally as a set of planning principles, as a government requirement or as a business tool, SEA can facilitate improved environmental planning processes.

- **SEA is responsive to the needs of industry**

There are benefits to industry from integrating SEA principles with plan development and decision processes

- **efficiency (time and cost saving)**
- **minimizing role of legality**
- **enhancing likelihood of acceptance (transparency and accountability)**
- **demonstrating environmental and social responsibility**

If nothing else… it increases likelihood of plan approval

Conclusions and directions

It is not clear whether:

- **SEA integration will be beneficial to all types of industry**
- **industry at large is willing to (formally) adopt SEA processes**

Direction:

- **case studies of both *formal* and *informal* SEA applications in industry**
- **nature and benefits of SEA across industry sectors**
- **characteristics that contribute to successful industry-based SEA practices**
- **sell the benefits of SEA to industry**