



BCCFA 2026 Conference Notes – Session 6

Storytelling as a Tool for Innovation and Knowledge Sharing

Speakers:

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Notetaker: Angela French

Session Summary

This session explored the critical role storytelling plays in advancing innovation, knowledge transfer, and collaboration within the forestry sector. Presenters emphasized that storytelling is more than a communications tool—it is a way to help practitioners, decision-makers, and communities understand what is possible, learn from one another's experiences, and accelerate the adoption of new ideas and practices.

Participants learned how effective stories can build trust, inspire action, reduce duplication of effort, and ensure that valuable lessons from operational trials and innovative projects reach those who can apply them. The session highlighted how storytelling helps bridge the gap between technical information and practical application by making complex ideas more relatable and memorable.

A key focus was the structure of effective storytelling. Presenters outlined a common story arc that begins with context, explores the catalyst for action, follows the journey of learning and adaptation, highlights key insights, and concludes with outcomes and take-home messages. Participants were encouraged to incorporate these principles into reports,



presentations, and other extension materials to make technical information more engaging and impactful.

The session also emphasized the value of authenticity and vulnerability. Sharing challenges, lessons learned, and ongoing adaptation can be just as valuable as sharing successes. Innovation is rarely linear, and documenting the learning process can provide important insights for others facing similar challenges.

Another important theme was recognizing that people learn in different ways. Effective knowledge extension uses multiple communication approaches—including visual, verbal, experiential, logical, and social learning channels—to reach broader audiences. Examples included infographics, videos, field tours, demonstrations, technical papers, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

Key Takeaways

- Storytelling is essential for sharing innovation, lessons learned, and practical knowledge across the forestry sector.
- Effective stories create trust, inspire action, and help audiences understand both the challenges and opportunities associated with new approaches.
- Technical information becomes more powerful when framed within a clear and relatable narrative.
- Sharing learning in progress can be as valuable as sharing completed results.
- Different audiences require different communication methods and learning experiences.
- Authenticity, openness, and adaptability strengthen credibility and connection.
- Knowledge extension should focus on connecting people to practice and experience, not simply transferring information.



Overall Reflection

This session reinforced that storytelling is a critical component of successful forestry practice, not an add-on to technical work. By combining strong narratives with sound science and operational experience, practitioners can improve knowledge sharing, support innovation, strengthen relationships, and help communities better understand the value and impact of forestry initiatives.

More Details!!!

Main Topics Discussed

1. Why Storytelling Matters in Forestry

- The role of storytelling in sharing innovative silviculture practices and lessons learned across BC.
- Connecting practitioners to new ideas, experiences, and operational innovations.
- Increasing trust, inspiration, and motivation while reducing duplication of effort.
- Ensuring knowledge generated through projects reaches practitioners and decision-makers.
- Building capacity and accelerating adoption of innovative approaches through effective communication.

2. The Story Arc and Effective Communication

- Storytelling follows a recognizable structure:
 - Context: Why is this issue important?



- Catalyst: What sparked action or change?
- Journey: Methods, challenges, and learning process.
- Climax: Key insight or breakthrough.
- Outcome: Results, adaptation, and next steps.
- Take-home Message: The key lesson for the audience.
- Scientific papers and technical reports can be strengthened by intentionally incorporating storytelling principles.

3. Developing a Storytelling Strategy

- Key questions to consider:
 - Who is the audience?
 - What are the key takeaways?
 - How do you want people to feel?
- Importance of establishing context early and intentionally shaping the narrative.
- Storytelling can be used to inspire, challenge, educate, or motivate action.

4. Sharing Learning Through Vulnerability

- Value of sharing work before it is fully complete.
- Innovation is often iterative rather than linear.
- Challenges of discussing setbacks within a regulated profession.
- Reframing “failure” as learning, adaptation, and continuous improvement.



- Incomplete stories can still provide valuable insights for others.

5. Learning Styles and Knowledge Extension

- Five primary learning channels:
 - Visual
 - Verbal (written and spoken)
 - Experiential
 - Logical
 - Social/Emotional
- Effective storytelling incorporates multiple learning channels to reach broader audiences.
- Infographics, field tours, videos, demonstrations, and technical papers each engage different learning styles.
- Teams should leverage individual strengths and preferred communication styles.

6. Knowledge Mobilization and Extension Resources

- SIP was developed through a needs assessment and Knowledge Summit process to identify priorities and barriers.
- Emphasis on creating tools and resources that support practitioners in sharing knowledge.
- Discussion of extension products including:
 - Infographics



- Technical papers
 - Videos
 - Operator quick reference cards
 - Field demonstrations
- Introduction to SIPex as a platform for connecting people, practices, and expertise.

Key Takeaways

- Storytelling is essential for scaling innovation and accelerating learning across the forestry sector.
- Effective stories create trust, inspire action, and help practitioners understand what is possible.
- Technical information becomes more impactful when framed within a clear narrative structure.
- Sharing ongoing learning and adaptation can be as valuable as sharing final results.
- Different audiences learn in different ways, requiring a variety of communication approaches.
- Authenticity and vulnerability strengthen credibility and connection.
- Knowledge extension should focus on connecting people to practice, not simply sharing information.

Action Items

- Consider how to incorporate storytelling principles into reports, presentations, and extension materials.



- Identify opportunities to share wildfire resilience and community forestry successes through multiple communication formats.
- Explore SIP extension resources and SIPex for potential knowledge-sharing opportunities.
- Develop communications that engage multiple learning styles, including visual and experiential approaches.
- Encourage project teams to share lessons learned earlier in the process rather than waiting for final outcomes.

Questions & Follow-Ups

- How can community forests better document and share operational innovations?
- What storytelling formats are most effective for reaching local governments, community members, and funding partners?
- How can vulnerability and adaptive learning be incorporated into professional communications while managing organizational risk?
- Add yourself in the Expert Directory on SIPex.

Important Details/Quotes

"For people to know what's possible."

"Storytellers are the way to get that done."

"Don't use the word failure—it's iterative and adapting."

"Seeing is believing."

"Many forms of knowledge aren't documented in writing, and shouldn't be."



"Tell stories, be authentic, and know when you don't know."

Notetaker's Reflections

This session highlighted that storytelling is not separate from technical forestry work—it is a critical part of knowledge transfer, innovation, and building public trust. I appreciated the emphasis on sharing learning journeys rather than only polished outcomes, particularly in fields like wildfire resilience and community forestry where adaptation and experimentation are essential. The discussion reinforced the importance of tailoring communication to different audiences and using multiple formats to make information more accessible and impactful.

Resources Mentioned

- SIP (Silviculture Innovation Program)
- SIP Knowledge Summit
- SIPex knowledge-sharing platform
- Out on a Limb video series
- Operator Quick Reference Card series
- SIP-funded innovation and operational trial projects
- Communities of Practice and Expert Directory through SIPex