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Abstract

Lessons Learned from the Quesnel Hardwood Co-operative: Case Study

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A group of independent small businesses in the area of Quesnel, British Columbia—including logging contractors, sawmillers, and forest industry members—formed the Quesnel Hardwood Co-operative in 1999. The Co-operative's objectives were to utilize the region's neglected birch hardwood resource to create and sustain jobs in the forest industry, provide work for under-employed local people, and help stabilize the area's economy.

On behalf of its members, the Quesnel Hardwood Co-operative integrated wood supply and sales to create a larger forest enterprise, thereby making members' products more competitive in the marketplace. The Quesnel Hardwood Co-operative developed an action plan to add value to the hardwood lumber by doing more local processing.

While not ultimately successful, the Quesnel Hardwood Co-operative did stimulate individual members to develop or expand businesses, and it stimulated the valuation and utilization of birch. Small birch mills are now operating throughout the region, and birch is being utilized more than it was prior to the formation of the Co-operative.

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