



2005 - 2007

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S T R A T E G I C P L A N

# 2005 - 2007

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## Introduction

**This document describes the high level plans of the Association of BC Forest Professionals for the years 2005 through 2007. It was developed during the fall of 2004, beginning with a full day strategic planning workshop in September involving both council and senior staff. While this strategic plan speaks most directly to the work of the 58th council during 2005, it also clearly indicates the association's direction for the subsequent two years.**

During the past year, council adopted the "policy governance model"<sup>1</sup> as the basis for its approach to association governance. Under this model, council is primarily focused on defining the ends to be achieved by the organization and stipulating the policy limitations within which staff and volunteers must operate in pursuing the authorized ends. In the context of the policy governance model, this strategic plan constitutes council's "ends statement"—that is, a clear statement of what council wants the organization to achieve.

Consistent with the policy governance model, this strategic plan, unlike previous ones, does not delve into the detailed strategies and activities to be pursued in each activity area. Rather, it focuses on high level goals and objectives

leaving the detailed strategies and activities to annual work plans to be developed subsequently. Obviously, those work plans will be strongly guided by this strategic plan and will be used by council to gauge achievement of its goals and objectives.



As with most of the association's strategic plans developed over the past 10 to 15 years, no specific member consultations were undertaken during the development of this strategic plan. Member input has, however, influenced council's thinking relative to this plan through many processes, including: member meetings; annual meeting resolutions; comments on past strategic plans; member survey results; and myriad other communications with council and staff.

To facilitate member contributions to the ongoing, iterative refinement of the association's strategic plans, this plan will be posted on the association's web site early in 2005 along with an open invitation for members to comment on it at any time.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *Boards that Make a Difference* by John Carver, Jossey-Boss, San Francisco, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1997.

## The Association's Mandate

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Pursuant to the *Foresters Act*, the practice of professional forestry is a regulated activity in British Columbia. In simplest terms, the *Foresters Act* defines the practice of professional forestry, stipulates<sup>2</sup> that one must be a member of the Association of BC Forest Professionals to engage in the practice of professional forestry, establishes the association, charges it with the administration of the *Foresters Act* and vests<sup>3</sup> all authority to govern the association in its council.

Section 4 of the *Foresters Act* sets out the duties and objects of the association as follows:



- (1)** It is the duty of the association
- (a) to serve and protect the public interest,
  - (b) to exercise its powers and functions, and to perform its duties under this Act, and
  - (c) to enforce this Act.



- (2)** The objects of the association are the following:
- (a) to uphold the public interest respecting the practice of professional forestry by
    - (i) ensuring the competence, independence, professional conduct and integrity of its members, and

- (ii) ensuring that each person engaged in the practice of professional forestry is accountable to the association;
- (b) to advocate for and uphold principles of stewardship of forests, forest lands, forest resources and forest ecosystems;
- (c) to govern its members in accordance with this Act, the bylaws and the resolutions;
- (d) to establish, monitor and enforce standards of education and qualifications for enrolment, registration and continued membership in the association;
- (e) to establish, monitor and enforce codes of conduct and standards of practice for its members;
- (f) to create and administer voluntary certification schemes for technical occupations related to the practice of professional forestry.

Fulfillment of these duties and objects—the association's mandate—is the ultimate end toward which this strategic plan is directed.

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<sup>2</sup> Subject to certain exceptions, the principle one being the right of anyone to practice professional forestry provided they do so under the supervision of an ABCFP registered member or special permit holder.

<sup>3</sup> Subject to certain constraints, notably the right of members to elect council and the need for bylaw changes and certain fee changes to be approved by members.

## Council's **Vision** for the Association

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Consistent with the above mandate and in consideration of the current context within which the association and its members operate, council has adopted the following vision statement<sup>4</sup> to guide association actions:

**The Association of BC Forest Professionals is committed to protecting the public interest in the practice of professional forestry and to advancing the stewardship of BC's forests. The association and its members are recognized locally, nationally and internationally as knowledgeable, trusted and accountable sources of information and expertise on the sustainable management of forest resources and for whom the public interest is paramount.**

**The association has a broad and inclusive membership of the best and brightest drawn from a variety of educational and experiential backgrounds encompassing the full scope of forest resources management. It is a dynamic, financially solvent organization which operates to high standards of governance and enjoys an informed and engaged membership.**

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<sup>4</sup> Although vision statements may need to be revised from time to time to reflect substantive changes in an organization's circumstances, they are intended to be unduring expressions of organizational values and purposes.

## The Current Context

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The circumstances within which the association operates continue to evolve rapidly and remain challenging. Driven by ongoing economic stresses, evolving public values and the provincial government's commitment to a diminished role for itself and to performance-based regulation, BC has lately experienced exceptionally high levels of legislative and regulatory change. While many provincial initiatives remain works in progress, the balance is now clearly shifting from conception and development to implementation.

Nowhere is this truer than in the forest sector where the province is on the cusp of full-fledged implementation of the results-based approach to forest resources management embodied in the *Forest and Range Practices Act*. Integral to this new approach is the concept of increased reliance on the judgment and accountability of natural resource professionals<sup>5</sup> ("professional reliance").

For several years now, the association has been pursuing a number of initiatives designed to prepare it and its members for this new era of professional reliance. Although those initiatives are not all complete, it is clear that the time to deliver is upon us.

Late in 2004, the association's council received and endorsed a report from its external communications task force, entitled "Recognition, Respect and Influence." The thrust of the report is to lay out a three-phase plan to elevate the association's performance in the area of external communications. While the association's ability to deliver on phases two and three remains to be seen due to their dependence on increased resources, council was clear in directing that phase one, involving few, if any, new resources should proceed. The task force's report is available on the association's web site.

In relation to the resources needed to meet these challenges, council has noted that the traditional source of most of the association's revenues—the professional forester side of the membership—is not growing as retirements and resignations slightly outpace new enrolments and registrations. Accordingly, the importance of expanding the membership on the forest technologist side is magnified.

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<sup>5</sup> The term "natural resource professionals" encompasses the members of the ABCFP plus those members of the Association of Engineers and Geoscientists of BC, the College of Applied Biology of BC and the BC Institute of Agrology who work in the natural resource management field.

## An Over-arching Priority

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As noted already, the dominant development of the past few years has been the provincial government's decision to proceed with results-based approaches to forest resources management and the associated commitment to the concept of professional reliance. Council believes increased professional reliance, effectively delivered, can tap the unachieved potential of the profession to materially improve the quality and efficiency of forest resources management in BC. Council also believes that failure to make a success of the concept could reflect badly on the profession, eroding its standing and influence.

As the province moves into the implementation phase of the results-based era, **council continues to believe that the association's top priority is to do whatever it can to ensure the success of professional reliance.** This over-arching priority manifests itself in many of the activity areas addressed in this strategic plan, including the ongoing development of the continuing competency program, the increased emphasis on *Foresters Act* enforcement and the development of practice guidance for members.



## Association Goals and Objectives

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**As clear and compelling as the association's vision statement may be, it does not speak to the association's plans in depth nor does it capture the full range of things the association must do to fulfil its mandate. The purpose of this section is therefore to lay out the goals and objectives for each of the association's main activity areas.**

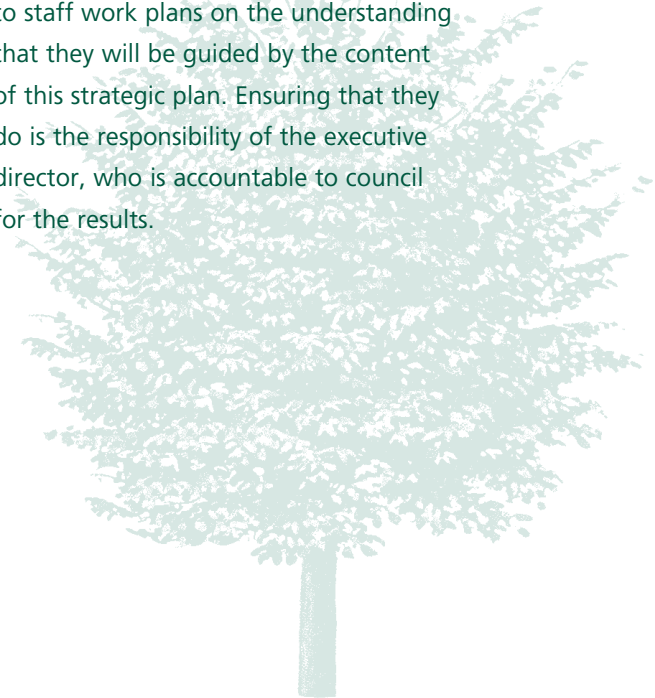


In this strategic plan, the goals encompass the full scope of the association's mandate and are intended to be fairly constant "end statements." As such, they are unlikely to change substantively, even over extended periods.

Objectives, on the other hand, are generally limited to current priority areas involving new directions or initiatives. As such, they are more responsive to the challenges and opportunities of the day and can be

expected to change with some regularity. Importantly, they are intended to be "accomplish-able" or "finish-able"—that is, council will know when an objective has been achieved, or not.

It also follows that many routine activities are not addressed at the objectives level, notwithstanding their importance to the functioning of the association and the profession (for example: maintain sound member database; conduct registration exams; provide fall professional development workshops; adequately deal with complaints). These activities are left to staff work plans on the understanding that they will be guided by the content of this strategic plan. Ensuring that they do is the responsibility of the executive director, who is accountable to council for the results.







### ONGOING GOALS:

- To be an association whose standards of admission are both rigorous and fair, reflect contemporary forestry practice and societal expectations, and do not unreasonably restrict access to the profession.

### CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- Overhaul the association's academic standards to ensure they clearly reflect contemporary forestry practice and societal expectations.
- Contribute to the revision of national academic standards to better reflect contemporary forestry practice and societal expectations.
- Revise the association's enrolment and membership policies to ensure they are clear, efficient and up-to-date.
- Ensure the timely integration of forest technologists into association membership.



## Professionalism

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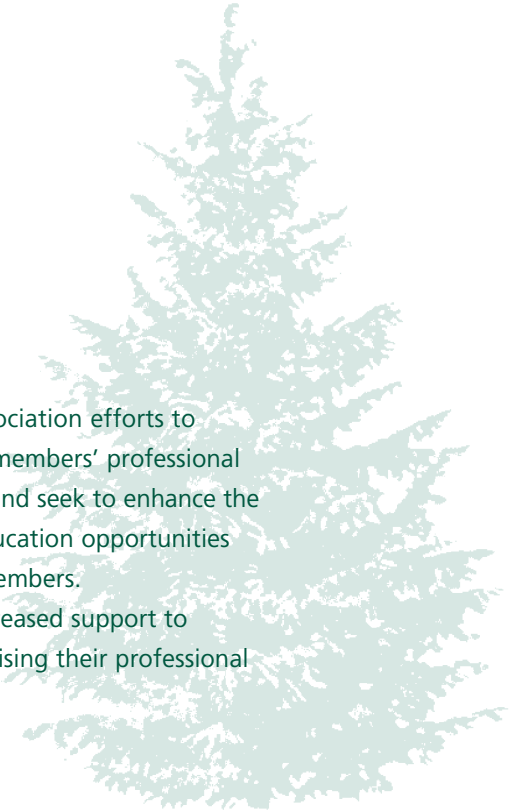


### ONGOING GOALS:

- To be an association whose membership is aware of, understands and adheres to the high standards of competence, independence, integrity (ethics) and conduct expected of professionals.

### CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- Achieve successful implementation of increased professional reliance.
- Ensure the association's code of ethics and standards of professional practice continue to provide clear contemporary guidance to members.
- Complete introduction of the association's continuing competency program.
- Expand association efforts to provide members with advice regarding ethical and practice matters.
- Expand association efforts to contribute to members' professional development and seek to enhance the continuing education opportunities available to members.
- Provide increased support to members exercising their professional independence.



## Complaint Resolution and Act Enforcement

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### ONGOING GOALS:

- To be an association that is:
  - Effective in holding members accountable for their practice and conduct in a fair and effective manner;
  - Effective in ensuring that the practice of professional forestry is only carried out by those entitled to do so.

### CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- Maintain the effectiveness of the complaint resolution process.
- Engender a climate of *Foresters Act* compliance among employers.
- Undertake increased strategic *Foresters Act* enforcement activity.

## Forest Resources **Stewardship**

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### ONGOING GOALS:

- To be an association:
  - Whose membership understands the meaning of good forest stewardship and is committed to delivering it;
  - That is effective in fostering public understanding and support for policies that advance good forest stewardship.

### CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- Increase association efforts to ensure members understand and practice good forest stewardship.
- Implement phase one and lay the groundwork for the implementation of phase two of the external communications task force report relative to advocating for the principles of forest stewardship.
- Increase association efforts that contribute to the development of provincial policies in support of good forest stewardship and the public awareness thereof.

## Member Relations

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### ONGOING GOALS:

- To be an association:
  - That is aware of and sensitive to member views and circumstances;
  - Whose membership is aware of and supports association goals and is engaged in association affairs.

### CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure forest technologists feel like full and equal members of the forestry team.
- Maintain a high level of member satisfaction and engagement with association activities.

# External Relations and Communications

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## ONGOING GOALS:

- To be an association that is effective in:
  - Contributing to relevant public policy matters, particularly as they relate to protection of the public interest;
  - Promoting among employers (including government) understanding and acceptance of the role, duties and obligations of members; respect for their independence; and active support for their professionalism;
- Fostering relationships among the natural resource professions that contribute positively to improved resource management, better protection of the public interest and greater confidence in the professions;
- Fostering public trust and respect for the profession based on its leadership on public policy matters related to forest resource stewardship.

## CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- Increase association efforts to achieve sustained awareness and support for the forestry profession and the association within the provincial government in general and relevant ministries in particular.
- Achieve increased association awareness of emerging public policy issues enabling the association to respond effectively, and if possible proactively, to policy issues that constitute material threats or opportunities.
- Significantly increase the level of dialogue with employers at the senior management level, promoting the value of the profession, increasing support for the profession and seeking to reduce the perceived tension between employer interests and professional duties and obligations.
- Continue to proactively address inter-profession issues seeking clarity regarding rights and jurisdictions, promoting good relations and pursuing opportunities to assist, learn from and achieve synergies with them.
- Implement phase one and lay the groundwork for the implementation of phase two of the external communications task force report relative to raising public awareness, understanding and support for the role of the profession.
- Enhance the association's ability to communicate effectively with key external audiences.
- Ensure the association makes a credible contribution to relevant issues and processes on the provincial and national scenes.

## Evolution of the Profession

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### ONGOING GOALS:

- To be an association whose ability to serve the public interest and fulfill its mandate is optimized by capturing within the membership everyone practicing aspects of professional forestry.

### CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- Bring the majority of forest technologists practicing aspects of professional forestry into the membership by the end of 2005.
- Continue exploration of voluntary certifications with a view to early implementation under association auspices.

## Governance

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### ONGOING GOALS:

- To be an association:
  - That is governed according to high standards of policy governance;
  - Whose current objectives are achieved in a timely, effective manner.

### CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- Maintain decision-making processes that are sound, timely, policy-based and representative.
- Develop clear council policies and plans to guide staff and committees.
- Conduct timely, effective monitoring of compliance with council policy and direction.

## Finance

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### ONGOING GOALS:

- To be an association that is a solvent, responsible steward of its financial resources, managing them prudently according to generally accepted accounting principles such that it can effectively achieve its goals, withstand shocks and pursue opportunities.

### CURRENT OBJECTIVES:

- Continue to pursue innovation that will enhance service efficiency, convenience and quality for members and the association.



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*Ensuring BC's Forests are in Good Hands.*