



NEWS RELEASE

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ABC FP to develop new training program and guidelines for forest professionals to improve BC's fire resilience

Vancouver—The Association of BC Forest Professionals will develop a suite of new training options and guidelines in conjunction with BC Wildfire Service to improve the knowledge and use of fire in managing BC's forests.

The program will be funded through a \$400,000 grant from the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and builds on a series of recommendations the ABCFP submitted to the 2017 flood and wildfire review chaired by George Abbott and Maureen Chapman.

“With more than 90 per cent of BC's forested land base publicly owned, we're pleased to see the Ministry recognizing the vital role forest professionals play in looking after this resource by supporting additional training and development of fire knowledge among forest professionals,” said Christine Gelowitz, RPF and CEO of the ABCFP.

Among the 25 recommendations in the ABCFP submission to the Abbott/Chapman flood and fire review, the ABCFP called for:

- Making wildfire a specialized area of practice complete with specific operational professional practice standards. These standards would focus on planning, prevention, and rehabilitation of burned forest ecosystems.
- The ABCFP, forest industry, and BC Wildfire Service to work with government to develop professional standards and science-based guidelines for prescribed burn planning, approvals, and how to apply them during wildfire response.
- Government, industry, First Nations, and municipalities to collaborate to fund positions for additional wildfire professionals.
- Work with academia to offer education opportunities and training in on-the-ground wildfire management.

“Over the years, our society has come to believe that we need to control and extinguish wild fires as quickly as possible. But fire has long been a vital part of forest ecology and plays a critical role in managing forests. The funding provided by the Ministry will help build that knowledge and competence into the everyday skillset of forest professionals, both those working for government, Aboriginal Peoples, communities, and industry,” Gelowitz said.

*The **Association of BC Forest Professionals** is responsible for regulating BC's 5,400 forest professionals. It is the largest professional forestry association in Canada.*

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