BC Forest PROFESSIONAL

Summer 2025

Why Did the Western Toad Cross the Road?

The Impact of Roadside Ponds on Amphibian Populations in Northern BC


Forest Professionals BC
2026 Forestry Conference
Sheraton Wall Centre,
Vancouver
Save the Date
February 4-6,
2026
Registration Opens in October


FOREST PROFESSIONALS BC
RECOGNITION PROGRAM
NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS
Recognize a Forest Professional for Outstanding Work
Nomination Period Closes October 31
Learn more at fpbc.ca/recognition
Forest
Professionals
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Contents

Uneven-aged management application in drybelt Py-Fd in the southern Interior. **19**
Photo credit: Ken Zielke, RPF.

Cover Story

Features

Profiles

Columns

Departments

Cover Image: Western toad on a rock. Photo credit: Kippy Spilker.

Protecting you while practicing and in retirement

When you insure with HUB, you continue to be protected against claims for past work, at no cost to you. Find out how our coverage is designed specifically for FPBC registrants.

Contact us today!

Jordan Fellner Account Executive

T: 604-269-1888 | 1-800-606-9969
E: tos.vanprof@hubinternational.com
W: hubprofessional.com

HUB

Write us!

The *BC Forest Professional* letters section is for readers responding to recent articles and for brief statements about current professional forestry issues. The editor reserves the right to edit and condense letters. Letters must adhere to standards of fairness, accuracy, legality, and civility. Anonymous letters are not accepted. (Maximum word count: 300.)

For detailed submission guidelines, please visit *fpbc.ca* for more information. Email letters to: *editor@fpbc.ca*

BC Forest Professional

BC Forest Professional is published four times per year by Forest Professionals British Columbia.

The opinions expressed in *BC Forest Professional* are those of the article or letter author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of FPBC, board, or staff.

MANAGING EDITOR • DEAN PELKEY

EDITOR • CHERYL WADDELL

EDITORIAL ADVISORY PANEL
VICTORIA DIEDERICHS, RPF; CHRIS HOLLSTEDT, RPF(RET); MICHAEL HUEBERT, RPF; CLAIRE HUXTABLE, RPF; MADELYN MACDONALD, RPF; HEATHER POULSON, MFORSC, RPF

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION • MASSYN DESIGN

PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION • MET FINE PRINTERS

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER • CHERYL WADDELL

602–1281 W. Georgia St, Vancouver, BC V6E 3J7

Tel: 604.639.8103 • Email: *editor@fpbc.ca*

ISSN:1715-9164

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO: 40020895

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
FPBC Circulation Department
602–1281 W. Georgia St, Vancouver, BC V6E 3J7
Email: *editor@fpbc.ca* Website: *fpbc.ca*

Forest Professionals BRITISH COLUMBIA

BOARD CHAIR • KERRI SIMMONS, RPF

BOARD VICE-CHAIR • DAVE CLARKE, RPF

PAST BOARD CHAIR • KELLY KITSCH, RFT

GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED BOARD MEMBERS
ALISON DEMPSEY, LLB/JD, LLM, PHD; MARGARET LANTHIER, BA, B.ED, CIM; IAN MILES, MBA, C.DIR.; DAVID MOREL

BOARD MEMBERS
DEREK BURDIKIN, RPF; JULIET GOVEIA, RPF; MOLLY HUDSON, RPF, RPBIO; JOE KENNY, RPF, P.ENG; JANICE MATHERS, RPF

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER • CHRISTINE GELOWITZ, RPF

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION • AGA JENDO, CPA, CMA

REGISTRAR AND DIRECTOR OF ACT COMPLIANCE
CASEY MACAULAY, MA, RPF

DIRECTOR OF PRACTICE • GARNET MIERAU, RPF

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS • DEAN PELKEY

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, COMPETENCE AND PRACTICE • TARA BERGESON, MSC, RPF

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, REGISTRATION • CHI CEJALVO, RD

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, COMPLIANCE • CHARLOTTE MELLSTROM, RPF

BC Forest Professional is the professional magazine of Forest Professionals British Columbia (FPBC). Editorial submissions, comments, letters to the editor, articles, and photos should be sent to the editor, address above.

Reprinting and copying of *BC Forest Professional* articles is encouraged. Please include a credit to both the author and *BC Forest Professional*.

Forest Professionals British Columbia recognizes that our business and the work of our registrants occurs on lands that Indigenous People have occupied and been responsible for since time immemorial.

We are committed to supporting reconciliation through inclusion, awareness, and providing ongoing education and training opportunities to our registrants on the culture, history, and rights of Indigenous People.

Online Access Extended for 2025 FPBC Forestry Conference Sessions

If you participated in the 2025 Forest Professionals BC conference, either in-person in Victoria or virtually, we've extended access to recordings of all sessions until November 30.

All conference sessions, including the annual general meeting, total 24 hours of the required 30 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) for the year.

If you didn't participate in the conference, you can purchase access to all recordings for $200.

To access conference session recordings, login to the PheedLoop platform with the same credentials used to participate in the conference. To purchase access to the recordings, go to *fpbc.ca/conference*.

Former RFT Disciplined for Failing to Provide Objective and Independent Direction to Scalers

Anthony Nickel, a former practising RFT, consented to a disciplinary decision by the Forest Professionals BC (FPBC) Investigation Committee after admitting to a failure to uphold ethical and professional conduct standards under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA).

An investigation found that Nickel, in providing direction on scaling, grading, and waste surveying to scalers, failed to ensure his communications were objective and independent. Nickel also provided scalers with directions that were inconsistent with the scaling manual.

Nickel consented to the terms of the order, which includes the issuance of a written reprimand, as well as a requirement to complete the FPBC e-courses *Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct*, and *Assessing Your Interpersonal and Communication Skills*, and to pay a small fine.

Former Registrant Found Using Retired Title Without Authorization

A former Forest Professionals BC registrant has been issued an unlawful practice notice for unauthorized use of title.

FPBC received a complaint about potential unauthorized practice by a former RPF registrant. An investigation found the former registrant was using the designation "RPF retired" without authorization and was authoring reports for a local watershed group on Vancouver Island that included the reserved practice of professional forestry.

FPBC sent a letter outlining the concerns, as well as the requirement to refrain from conducting or publishing watershed reports unless supervised by a current registrant. The letter also explained the prohibition on using the title "Retired Professional Forester." The former registrant accepted the letter and confirmed their future compliance with the requirements.

FPBC reminds current and former registrants that, under the PGA, the practice of professional forestry is not limited to work done for a fee or other remuneration, and includes advice or services provided in a volunteer capacity.

If you have reason to believe a person is unlawfully engaged in the reserved practice of professional forestry or is unlawfully using a reserved title, please submit your concern to *complaints@fpbc.ca* or contact the compliance manager at 604.331.2329.

Change of Category Applications Available in Registrant Portal

Change of category applications are now available in the Forest Professionals BC registrant portal, along with renewal and CPD processes.

Access the change of category application by clicking the description in the main page navigation, then follow the prompts. You can save your work and return to the change of category page anytime to continue where you left off.

FPBC reviews all applications. Fees may apply for those approved. Once all change of category requirements are completed, a confirmation email will be sent to you, approving your change of category.

New Features Available in the Forest Professionals BC Registrant Portal

Check out the new resource library in the registrant portal.

The resource library is where you can find documents for change of sponsor, competence audits, professional development plans, and work history forms, as well as other resources.

Under affinity programs in the library, find FPBC-branded items, a link to professional liability insurance, and access to discounted group rates on home and tenant insurance. Board minutes are also available in the library, as is information on stamps, seals, and certificates.

Click on the resource library link in the main or side menus in the portal to access the resources.
Log in at *fpbc.in1touch.org*.

Reminder to Report CPD Hours for 2025

Forest Professionals BC registrants are reminded to record and submit their CPD hours through the registrant portal.

To date, approximately 475 registrants have completed their CPD reporting for 2025. Approximately 1,250 registrants have reported partial hours, while about 1,750 have not reported any hours, so far.

Practising RPF, RFT, AFP, and NRP registrants must undertake and report 30 hours of CPD to FPBC between December 1 and November 30 each year. This requirement stems from the PGA and FPBC Bylaw 10.

All CPD activities must be tracked and reported using the CPD reporting tool, now located in the registrant portal. The tool allows registrants to record CPD activities and document the effectiveness of each learning activity.

Collaboration in Practice

In early May, the 78th Forest Professionals British Columbia Board held its meeting in the East Kootenays. On the first day, in advance of the meeting, the board members and staff toured the Cranbrook and Kimberley area, led by Canadian Forest Products (Canfor) staff, Ministry of Forests representatives, and members from the Ktunaxa Nation. We first toured the St. Eugene Mission Resort, learning about its history as a residential school and its transformation into a resort. The remainder of the day was spent at different sites discussing forest practices, forest fire mitigation treatments, and the long-term partnership between the Ktunaxa Nation and Canfor.

One of the key highlights that stood out was the clear and effective collaboration efforts among the three parties. Using examples we observed during our board field trip, below is what we observed and heard about effective collaboration.

Defining Effective Collaboration

What defines effective collaboration? Some view it as people working and reaching a consensus on an idea or strategy, then implementing the plan. Others see it as cooperation, where team members work side-by-side towards a shared goal while dividing tasks among themselves with minimal effort.

However, collaboration requires active, joint problem solving where people engage with each others' ideas to create something new. It's dynamic, interactive, and requires shared decision-making. Collaboration thrives on co-creation, while cooperation allows for individual efforts to contribute to a common objective.

Observations from the East Kootenays Field Trip

During our field trip to the East Kootenays, we engaged in collaborative discussions on various topics, including Indigenous relations and partnerships, wildfire fuel reduction strategies, and old growth strategies. During the afternoon, our collaborative and diverse discussion illuminated the perspectives of the three parties, with each party articulating distinct concerns and expectations, all while sharing a common end goal. The conversation was constructive and positive, with each party-maintaining focus on their individual viewpoints, while still listening to the concerns from each other. In the end, all parties together identified options and actions to address, while being respectful to each other.

Effective collaboration is when individuals or groups work together in a way that maximizes productivity, fosters innovation, and ensures mutual respect. It's not just about working alongside others — it's about truly engaging in shared efforts toward a common goal.

Challenges to Collaboration

While collaboration is a powerful tool, it is not without its challenges. One of the primary obstacles is differing priorities and expectations among stakeholders. In the case of the East Kootenays, each party contributed distinct perspectives, including environmental conservation, economic interests, and cultural preservation, which sometimes led to differing viewpoints. Overcoming these differences requires empathy, active listening, and the willingness to compromise.

Another challenge lies in maintaining momentum. Collaboration often demands sustained engagement and long-term commitment, which can be difficult when faced with limited resources or competing demands. Success hinges on the ability to foster mutual trust and maintain open communication.

Benefits of Collaboration

Effective collaboration yields immense benefits. It encourages innovation by combining diverse viewpoints and expertise, resulting in more creative and sustainable solutions. Collaboration also fosters stronger relationships between stakeholders, creating a foundation of trust that can be leveraged for future partnerships and projects.

In the East Kootenays, the integration of Indigenous knowledge with forestry practices exemplified how collaboration can enrich decision-making and benefit all parties involved. An example was how best to address ongoing efforts to reduce fire hazards around the community of Kimberly. A member of the ʔaq'am community (situated within the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa Nation) provided input into the discussion on prescribed cultural burning opportunities as a best practice for the area. The discussion on management strategies was uplifting, as was having the opportunity to hear the dialogue between the parties on what are the best fire strategies, timelines to implement, and how to pursue approvals together.

Effective collaboration with Indigenous communities requires a commitment to ethical engagement, humility, and mutual respect. By prioritizing trust, Indigenous leadership, transparent communication, and long-term partnerships, meaningful relationships can be cultivated. At its core, collaboration is about honoring the wisdom, resilience, and rights of Indigenous Peoples while working together to create sustainable and just outcomes for all.

Lessons Learned

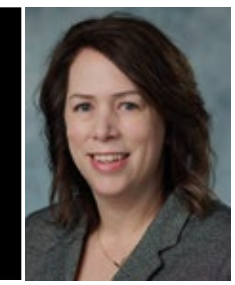
The East Kootenays field trip underscored the importance of embracing collaboration as a dynamic and iterative process. It is not enough to simply agree on a plan; true collaboration requires continuous dialogue, adaptability, and shared accountability. By valuing the perspectives of all stakeholders and working towards a common vision, the board witnessed firsthand how meaningful partnerships can drive impactful change.

Ultimately, collaboration is more than a strategy — it is an approach that emphasizes unity in diversity and the collective effort of progress. The experiences in the East Kootenays highlight the fact that collaborative efforts can lead to results that exceed individual contributions.

If I Could Choose the PGA — Would I?

I recently spoke in a webinar hosted by the Planning Institute of BC. They're considering whether their profession should be regulated under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA), and they wanted to hear what the forest profession has learned since making the switch.

As I spoke, I noticed a comment in the chat: someone said they'd heard enough and didn't want anything to do with the PGA. I get it — this kind of change can feel like a lot, and not always for the better.



So, it might have surprised some people when I said that *yes*, if I had the choice, I would still choose the PGA. But not without some caveats — and not without acknowledging just how hard the transition has been.

The Costs: Financial and Beyond

Let's be honest: the move to the PGA hasn't been cheap or easy. Since 2019, our profession has spent approximately $5.9 million more than we would've under the old *Foresters Act* model. That includes around $1.5 million in transition costs (legal fees, training, communications) getting to 2021, and increased operating costs every year since then. Today, the annual operating costs are 150 per cent higher versus pre-PGA.

A big chunk of the higher operating costs included upgrading our IT systems, especially the registrant management system. We needed tech that could keep up with the more complex policies and processes the PGA requires. IT alone cost approximately $1.5 million.

Policy-wise, we've gone from about 60 pages of guidance under the *Foresters Act* to 419 pages. This includes the addition of the *International Credentials Recognition Act* (2024) that was applied to all PGA regulatory bodies. That's about a seven-fold increase in regulatory load. No small thing.

The Culture Shift: From Member to Registrant

But it's not just about money or paperwork. The biggest change has been cultural. Back when we were 'members' of ABCFP (the 'association'), the regulator's presence felt lighter unless you were involved in a complaint. You studied hard to get in, passed your exams, and unless something went sideways, you mostly didn't feel the weight of the regulatory body.

That's changed. Now, as registrants under the PGA, expectations are more detailed and specific, and more enforced. Annual declarations must be paired with proof of 30 hours of CPD each year. Late with your annual dues or CPD? Late fees and possible suspension, or even cancellation, follow. The system is more structured and less forgiving.

Sure, it's heavier. But with that weight has come something else — a renewed sense of pride.

The Rebound: Purpose, Pride, and Professionalism

In many workplaces, the PGA sparked real conversations. Employers and supervisors started asking what it means to practice lawfully. There's more appreciation by supervisors, colleagues, government, and the public about the rigour of being a regulated professional — for the ethics we commit to, the professional conduct standards we follow, and the accountability we carry every single day.

More people started to see the value in having regulated professionals on staff, not just for the reserved practice areas, but for the trust the public places in us. Public trust surveys conducted by Forest Professionals BC consistently show the public trusts a registered forest professional for information about our forests — more than academics, environmentalists, forest industry management, government managers, community managers, and politicians. That trust matters.

And the numbers show the public trusts in our regulatory rigour: since the PGA came into effect, FPBC has seen triple the number of professional complaints. That sounds like a burden, but it also means we're being *seen* as a trusted, credible regulator that takes accountability seriously.

Despite that increase, fewer than half a per cent of registrants face a complaint allegation, and not all of those are found to have grounds. That's a solid track record.

So, Would I Still Choose the PGA?

Yes. *If* I had a say, I'd still make the jump to the PGA. But I'd want a slower transition, financial support, and a more manageable policy load.

Still, despite the weight, our profession has come out of this stronger. We're more focused. We've got a clearer sense of who we are and what we stand for. The support for practicing registrants and trainees is stronger than it's ever been. And we're here today because of the hard work of volunteers and forest professionals who've built this regulatory foundation over decades.

Most of us didn't choose this career path just to follow rules; we chose it because we love the forest. We care about seeing it managed well. We know that a healthy forest supports jobs, communities, biodiversity, and the places people love to explore. We know the importance of this work being done with integrity, skill, and accountability.

We're stronger now. The profession has adapted, and we're showing up every day with more clarity about our role, our responsibilities, and the value we bring.

And for that, despite the challenges, I'd choose the *Professional Governance Act* again.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE:
Growing Communities of Practice in BC

A field tour with the BC Community Forest Association in Mackenzie. Photo credit: Silviculture Innovation Program.

A community of practice describes a group of people who engage in collective learning around a common issue or topic with the purpose of growing their practice or craft.[1] Members of a community of practice gather to problem-solve, collaborate, and deepen their understanding in an area of interest — sharing knowledge, skills, new approaches, and insights gained from personal and professional experience.

Communities of practice can be found in many places, from the workplace to the everyday. They can be formal, like dedicated working groups that regularly meet to co-create a resource on an issue faced by practitioners, or informal, like meeting with the same group of colleagues at conferences and exchanging insights and brainstorming solutions over dinner.

The term was first coined in 1991[2] by anthropologists who were studying how people learn through apprenticeships. In fact, they found that apprentices learned more from their peers and more advanced apprentices than from their mentors.[2] They used the term "community of practice" to describe this particular social learning system — one that emphasized the role and impact of a strong social network in driving learning from the knowledge and experiences of peers to improve one's own skills and practice.

There are many communities of practice in BC that support forest stewardship with topics ranging from wildfire resilience to commercial thinning. Growing interest in innovative silviculture was accelerated by the Old Growth Strategic Review (2020), which called for a silviculture innovation program to develop harvesting alternatives. The Silviculture Innovation Program (SIP) was created three years later with the goal of enhancing knowledge of innovative silviculture through research and extension. Recognizing the urgent need for knowledge exchange, the SIP sought to better understand the role of communities of practice in supporting innovative silviculture. Here, we present key takeaways from a survey on the topic and provide general insight and recommendations for all forestry-centered communities of practice.

About Communities of Practice for Innovative Silviculture

In the summer of 2024, the SIP surveyed forest practitioners on how their existing communities of practice were supporting, or not supporting, the use of innovative silviculture. The SIP defines innovative silviculture, sometimes also called alternative silviculture, as systems for harvesting, growing, and tending of forests where the primary objective is to achieve holistic stewardship of the land base. Innovative silviculture systems are driven by an appreciation of ecological, social, cultural, and economic values of forests, where stewardship is focused on maintaining the continuity of dynamic ecosystem processes and functions. The online survey was distributed through forestry association networks with a total of 564 participants.

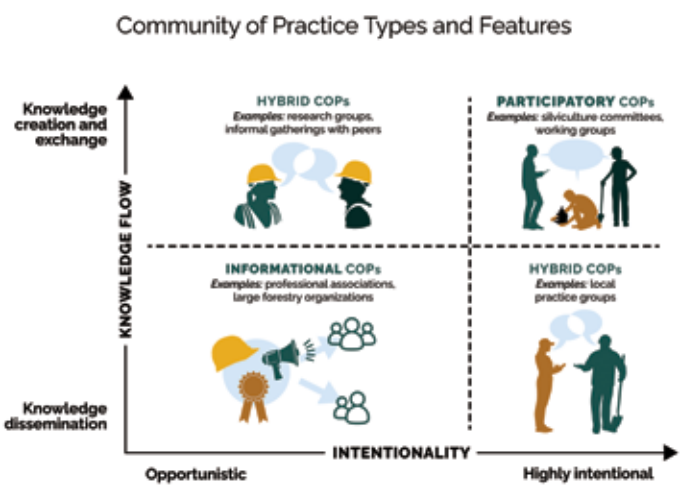
The survey found there was a broad network of communities of practice that were important to innovative silviculture. Some practitioners described regional silviculture committees or topic-specific working groups, while others described the impact of

Gillian Chow-Fraser, MSc (extension specialist), Tyreen Kapoor (data curation specialist), Kelsey Copes-Gerbitz, PhD (extension associate), and Kira Hoffman, PhD, AFP (extension lead), work for the Silviculture Innovation Program (SIP) based out of the Bulkley Valley Research Centre in Smithers, BC. The SIP mission is to improve the knowledge of innovative silviculture through research and extension. The core areas of focus for the SIP include identifying knowledge gaps, extending knowledge, co-creating knowledge, and building long-term commitment through community. The authors have backgrounds in knowledge exchange research, social dimensions of forestry, forest ecology, and fire ecology.

large province-wide professional associations, which afforded opportunities to learn about each other's experiences at a much broader scale than more grassroots communities of practice. We describe these communities of practice on a spectrum from "participatory" to "informational" *(Figure 1)*.

Participatory and informational communities of practice differ in two key ways: knowledge flow and intentionality. Knowledge flow describes the directions in which knowledge is transferred or exchanged, from two-way co-creation of knowledge by members (participatory), to one-way dissemination of knowledge to members (informational). Intentionality describes the purpose of the gathering by the members, whether it is intentionally designed to facilitate knowledge exchange on the subject (participatory), or if it is an incidental benefit of another activity (informational).

FIGURE 1. ***A framework for the different types of communities of practice (CoPs) that differ by their intentionality and knowledge flow. Communities of practice with high intentionality and two-way knowledge flow are "participatory," while those that are opportunistic and one-way knowledge dissemination are "informational." Those with a mixture of intentionality and knowledge flow are "hybrid" communities of practice.***



Looking for a community of practice that supports innovative silviculture? Try checking out:

- FPBC Wildland Fire and Fuel Community of Practice, *fpbc.ca/professional-development/communities-of-practice*
- Southern Interior Silviculture Committee, *siscobc.com*
- Northern Silviculture Committee, *www.nsc-bc.org*
- Coastal Silviculture Committee, *www.coastalsilviculturecommittee.com*

Find a full list at *sipexchangebc.com/find*.

What do Practitioners Want from their Communities of Practice?

Overall, the survey results found that practitioners are generally satisfied with their communities of practice. Roughly seven out of 10 practitioners felt supported by existing communities of practice to carry out innovative silviculture *(Figure 2)*. Practitioners described benefits such as knowledge sharing and exchange; learning about practical applications and real-world examples; and gaining access to in-field learnings, training, and workshops. Practitioners valued communities of practice for supporting opportunities to directly connect, socialize, and share knowledge at a peer-to-peer level.

FIGURE 2. ***Seven out of 10 practitioners feel supported by their communities of practice to implement innovative silviculture.***

There was also a clear desire for communities of practice that could provide more practical in-field learning opportunities. For example, field tours were the single most popular extension resource used by practitioners *(Figure 3)*. More than 70 per cent of respondents said they used a field tour in the last year to inform their work in innovative silviculture. Field tours present practical in-forest knowledge and allow for more participatory engagement, such as discussions with knowledge holders, knowledge exchange across sectors and backgrounds, and the ability to build on an issue or topic at the next workshop.

Concludes *page 10*

Continued *from page 9*

Furthermore, practitioners consulted a wide range of extension resources, demonstrating the importance of cultivating a variety of resources for learning and knowledge exchange. We suggest that the desire for more active engagement in problem-solving that is focused on applications of innovative silviculture describes the needs for more participatory communities of practice.

How Can I Build a Community of Practice?

While our survey focused on innovative silviculture, many of the learnings are applicable to all kinds of communities of practice. If you are interested in creating a community of practice or taking an existing one in a more participatory direction, you are not alone. Adams et al.[3] propose a five-step process for creating a community of practice, which we've adapted to the forestry context.

1) **Envision the Community:** Set your purpose and identify the resource(s) you'd like to collectively build. The purpose should be decided by the members through a needs assessment. The SIP survey[4] on communities of practice may be a helpful starting point, as it summarizes knowledge gaps, new areas of focus and topics of interest identified by forest practitioners.
2) **Design the Community:** Run the community of practice and focus on ways to foster peer-to-peer learning, supporting both knowledge sharing and creation. For example, collectively brainstorm and engage members in co-creation by asking members to share how a potential decision support tool might be applied in their situation and what might be missing or require important considerations.
3) **Build the Community:** Find ways to empower participation by all members — making space for diverse perspectives and identities. Consider multiple checkpoints during resource development where members can provide feedback. For example, a member might be responsible for bringing a draft resource to an organization and gathering feedback, while another member takes on working with an illustrator on an infographic, and a core team implements edits and refines the content of the resource with an expert.
4) **Check in with the Community:** Evaluate the structure and experience of the community of practice, as well as evaluate the impact of the work being created. Is the community of practice meeting the members' needs?
5) **Sustain the Community:** After checking in, identify if the community of practice will: a) continue its current work, b) shift focus to a new purpose or topic of focus, or c) disperse. Has the initial purpose of the community of practice been met and there are no new needs identified? Congratulations, your community of practice has fulfilled its purpose! It is perfectly reasonable for a community of practice to retire when it is no longer needed.

A Community of Practice Checklist

It can sometimes be challenging to know if a community of practice is operating effectively or not. Some signs a community of practice is functioning to its highest potential can include:

- A clear purpose that is agreed upon by its members.
- A membership that is diverse in perspectives, professional experience, and expertise.

FIGURE 3. ***Activities and resources that practitioners used in the past year to inform their innovative silviculture work, which may be features or outputs of communities of practice.***

- A thoughtful structure that maximizes engagement and finds roles for all members, including a focus on moving new members into more core roles.
- A meeting facilitator.
- A person or group of people that are accountable to guiding, maintaining, and sustaining the activities of the community of practice.
- Processes that enable self-evaluation of the community of practice to ensure needs are continually being met.
- An online "home" for members — like an inventory of resources that have been curated or created by the community of practice — that is available to all members.
- Opportunities for in-person gatherings and online engagement.
- A culture of flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness to shift activities, goals, and objectives as membership interests change or emergent ideas take shape.

Conclusion

Communities of practice are key to growing and deepening forest stewardship and innovative silviculture. Overall, practitioners feel generally supported by their communities of practice; however, practitioners are also hungry for more participatory opportunities that foster practical learnings and more direct connections with colleagues who can share experiences, insights, and recommendations. With an intentional design and thoughtful process, we are confident that forest practitioners can continue to build a powerful network of communities of practice to support innovative silviculture.

REFERENCES

1. Wenger-Trayner, E. and Wenger-Trayner, B. (2015) An introduction to communities of practice: a brief overview of the concept and its uses. Available from authors at https://www.wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice
2. Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355
3. Adams, S., Tesene, M., Gay, K., Brokos, M., McGuire, A., Rettler-Pagel, T., & Swindell, A. (2023). Communities of Practice in Higher Education: A Playbook for Centering Equity, Digital Learning, and Continuous Improvement. Every Learner Everywhere. https://www.everylearnereverywhere.org/resources/communities-of-practice-in-higher-education
4. Silviculture Innovation Program. 2025. How communities of practice can support innovative silviculture in British Columbia. Bulkley Valley Research Centre. https://sip.bvcentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/SIP-Survey-WhatWeHeard-Feb2025.pdf

How Do Forest Professionals Interpret the Public Interest?

Forest professionals have exclusive rights to practise forestry in British Columbia and do so within an increasingly complex and extensive policy framework. Some policies are ambiguous, requiring interpretation by the individual professional. One such policy ambiguity is forest professionals must protect and uphold the public interest. The "public interest" is undefined in provincial law and regulatory policy; instead, forest professionals are expected to interpret it themselves. A recent survey in which 135 forest professionals responded and subsequent Masters thesis explored how forest professionals interpret public interest in BC.

Current Context

To practise professional forestry in BC, individuals must be registered with Forest Professionals British Columbia (FPBC). FPBC is authorized by the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA) to regulate the profession of forestry in BC. FPBC's mission statement, "to protect the public by ensuring BC has skilled, knowledgeable, and accountable forest professionals," echoes the particularly British Columbian social customs of public land being managed for the public.

The idea of protecting the public interest in forestry is long-standing. The 1945 Sloan Commission brought forward a public interest that forests be well managed. This created the impetus for a forest profession and better forestry practices. In 2002, in preparation for the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA), which placed even greater reliance on the professional judgement of forest professionals, the profession issued the practice guidance document *Interpreting the Publics' Interests*.[A] In December 2024, Forest Professionals BC released the practice guidance document, Foundations of Professional Forestry[1], part of which speaks to the public interest and updates the former 2002 document "Interpreting the Publics' Interests." The 2024 document was released after the research shown in this article was conducted.

By design, the 'public interest' is never defined in the PGA, FPBC Bylaws, or anywhere else in provincial legislation or FPBC policy. However, both the PGA and FPBC Bylaws underscore the 'public interest,' as a guiding principle. The bylaws provide specific direction in object (a) under *Standard 2 – Independence* to require forest professionals to "uphold the public interest and professional principles above the demands of employment or personal gain." This leaves forest professionals with the task of interpreting the public interest and upholding an undefined 'public interest' over their own interests and those of their employer, which may be more easily understood.

Research Objectives

The purpose of the thesis[2] was to examine how forest professionals interpret the public interest in BC and what factors, if any, influenced their interpretation. In this article, we review the three main areas of investigation/questions: 1) Whether or not forest professionals feel they can find what they need in forest policy to interpret the public interest; 2) how they think about who is the 'public' in the public interest; and 3) whether they need or expect more guidance as to what the 'public interest' actually is, and whether they believe the public interest should be interpreted by them, as forest professionals, or if it should be defined for them by a regulatory or government body.

Methods

A web-based survey (via *Qualtrics.com*) was shared with FPBC registrants between November 2023 and April 2024 via *The Increment*, FPBC's bi-weekly e-newsletter. This generated 135 responses. The survey was also distributed in person at the FPBC's 2024 Forestry Conference, held in Kelowna, February 7-9, 2024.

There was also pre-testing of the questions with selected individuals (forest professionals) who had long experience (two decades plus in forestry practice). The survey invited all respondents to participate in a short interview provided they reach out first. Several respondents requested interviews. The results reported are for the surveys, although the interviews inform the interpretation and discussion of those results.

Continues *on page 12*

Continued *from page 11*

Attribute	Survey	Registrants
% RPFs	68%	46%
% RFTs	11%	21%
Other (trainees)	21%	
Min. age (years)	23	N/A
Mean age (years)	46	50% are 41-60
Max. age (years)	80	N/A
Mean experience (years)	19	N/A
% Female	31%	24%
% Male	69%	76%

Table 1. ***Population comparisons between survey respondents and registrants from FPBC annual report 2023 (FPBC, 2024).***

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the survey respondents, relative to the registrant population.

Survey responses represented the diversity of regions within forester work (they were fairly evenly divided amongst the different regions) and by the main employer groups *(Figure 1)*.

Results

There was virtually unanimous agreement by survey respondents that forest professionals do consider the public interest in their day-to-day practice.

The survey asked about FRPA specifically and legislation more generally. While there was general agreement that FRPA did represent aspects of the public interest, there were mixed opinions as to whether legislation (either at the provincial or federal level) represented the public interest.

The survey also asked specifically about different types of public and how important they are in considering the public interest. While there was a consensus that local interests mattered more than non-local interests *(Figure 2)*, there was not an agreement as to what weight to give those non-local interests. The survey included an open-ended question asking respondents to define who is the public: "in your own words, please attempt to define the 'public' in the context of your professional practice." This format was used so as to not introduce bias into the responses, allowing forest professionals to answer however they saw fit. Asked this way, foresters fell into three groups, with some indicating only local and regional interests (27 per cent); others drew the line at the provincial boundaries (35 per cent); while a third group saw all public, regardless of location (38 per cent).

Despite this split, survey respondents appear to hold local interests in higher regard than non-local interests. Survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that "nearby communities and community members" and "residents of the region in which one practices" are important to consider when interpreting the public interest. Respondents were less likely to agree that residents of British Columbia or residents of Canada as a whole were important to consider when interpreting the public interest.

This sentiment to uphold local values, even when non-local values are considered part of the 'public interest' indicates that forest professionals generally hold local values in higher regard than non-local values, even when they consider non-local values as part of the public.

When asked if they should define the public interest, or if a governing body should define it for them, forest professionals were roughly split: 42 per cent of respondents indicated they, as individual professionals, should interpret the public interest, while 39 per cent of respondents said some governing body should define it, and 19 per cent provided a response calling for both an individual interpretation and a provided definition or was ambiguous. Forest professionals who reported feeling connected to their community and forest professionals employed in the private sector were more likely to think that the public interest should be interpreted by themselves, rather than defined for them by a government or regulatory body.

A key theme among the responses was that interpreting all the publics' wants and needs is asking too much of forest professionals, and instead doing so should be the role of elected officials. See the following response:

> *"No, there is already so much room for judgment in a forest professional's career as far as interpreting FRPA and translating legislation into appropriate action. I don't feel it's appropriate having individuals be responsible for understanding an entire provinces wants/needs. If not, a clear definition there should at least be more guidance from the government. They are elected to interpret and act upon the public interest, and they should act in that capacity in the forest sector."*

Those who believed interpreting the public interest to be an individual responsibility, often seemed to think so for two reasons. The participants believed forest professionals, with their experience and education are best suited to interpret the public interest as it relates to forestry. They also believed their local knowledge to be better suited to making context-dependent

Levi Robson is a Forester in Training (FIT) working with Lil'wat Forestry Ventures in Mount Currie, BC.

Sam Coggins, PhD, RPF, is the senior forestry manager for Silvicon Services in Smithers and an adjunct professor in the Faculty of Forestry, Department of Forest Resource Management at UBC Vancouver.

Harry Nelson, PhD, is an associate professor of economics and policy in the Faculty of Forestry at UBC. His research interests are in analyzing natural and environmental resource policy.

decisions in the public interest quicker and more effectively than a slow, government process, which might not be able to take local values into account as easily as a forest professional in touch with their region and community. The following responses capture these two views:

> *"Interpreting public interest should be the forest professional's responsibility because they have the ability to better contextualize the interests of the public in their region."*
>
> *"The forest professional's right to practice involves managing for public interest, if not an educated professional than who? Government is already incredibly slow with any guidance documentation, could wait a decade for that".*

Conclusion

This research sheds light on how high-level policy objectives are interpreted at the practitioner level and has implications for public policy makers in BC and abroad. Policy makers may consider whether the term 'public interest' is deemed worthy of defining, but a practical, workable, definition is elusive. Policy makers in other jurisdictions and professions have had trouble defining the 'public interest' in a way that is usable by practitioners.[3,4] While the current framework in BC provides high-level guidance for interpreting the public interest, survey responses indicated that there was still confusion among forest professionals about how they are to interpret the public interest and use this interpretation in their practice. Many respondents called for guidance that is operationally applicable.[B]

Despite the difficulties in interpreting the term 'public interest,' the flexibility inherent to the term is one of its greatest strengths, allowing forest professionals to better manage for local interests that would be otherwise invisible to a large bureaucracy. Survey responses, especially the open textbox responses, show that the ethos in the forestry profession to uphold local and under-represented values is alive and well.

The survey results indicate a diversity of perspectives among forest professionals on what is the public interest, unsurprisingly reflecting the complexity of forestry but also a desire for more communication and discussion around what that means, especially as the topic continues to maintain heightened importance in British Columbia.

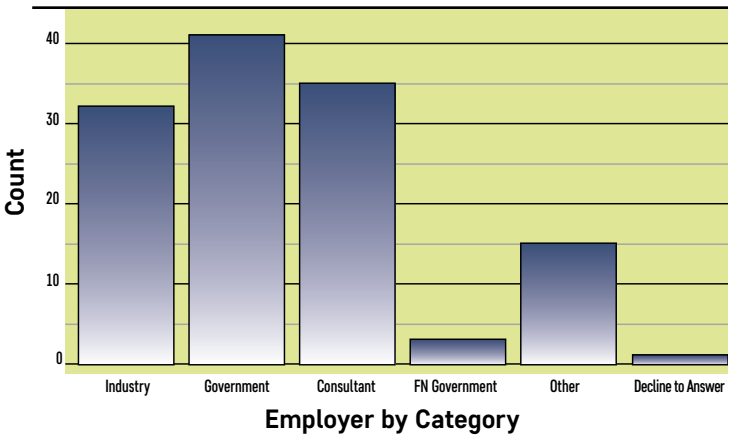


Figure 1. ***Survey responses represented the diversity of regions within forester work (they were fairly evenly divided amongst the different regions) and by the main employer groups.***

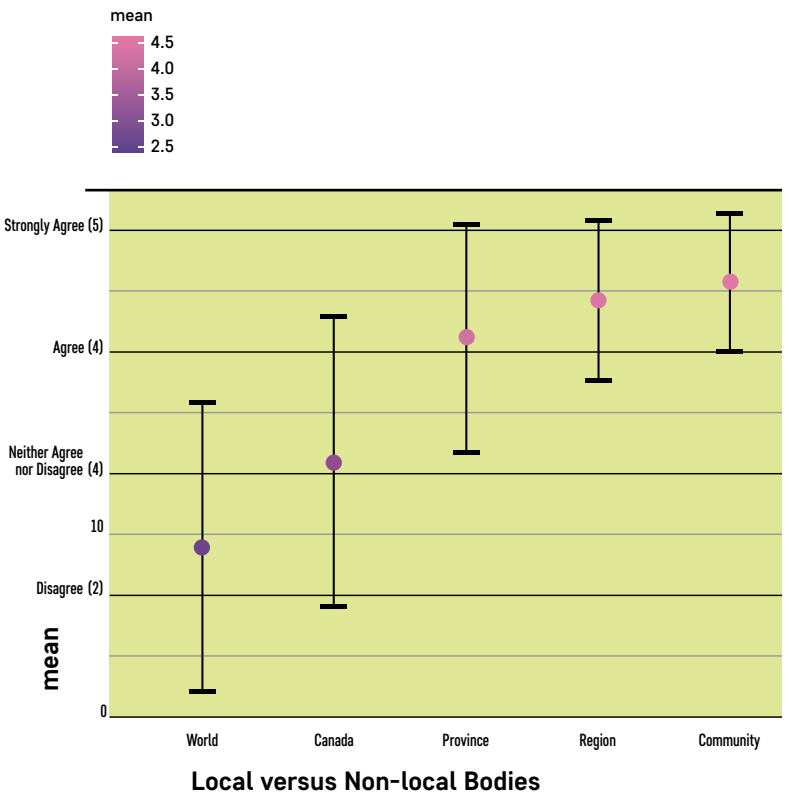


Figure 2. ***Responses to importance of 'interests' by locality with error bars.***

FOOTNOTES

A. Much of this document is spent classifying different types of publics, ranging from First Nations to local communities to the broader public, noting that their interests may differ, which can all feed into the 'public interest'.

B. See Appendix D in the original thesis (reference #2 below).

REFERENCES

1. Foundations of Professional Forestry; https://www.fpbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-12-FPBC-Foundations-of-Professional-Forestry-FINAL.pdf
2. https://open.library.ubc.ca/soa/clRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0445592
3. Baker, C. R. (2005). What is the meaning of "the public interest"?: Examining the ideology of the American public accounting profession. Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal, 18(5), 690–703. https://doi.org/10.1108/09513570510620510
4. Wheeler, C. (2006). The public interest we know it's important, but do we know what it means. AIAL Forum, 48, 12–25. https://doi.org/10.3316/ielapa.200605460

RESTORING GLOBAL LEADERSHIP:

A Path to Competitive and Sustainable Forestry in BC

The BC forest sector stands at a pivotal juncture. Long a cornerstone of the province's economy and a global leader in sustainable forest management, it now faces mounting challenges that threaten its competitiveness, resilience, and long-term viability.

Against a backdrop of shifting global markets, climate urgency, and growing domestic pressure, the BC Council of Forest Industries commissioned a comprehensive study — *Competitiveness & Sustainability in the BC Forest Sector* — to benchmark our province against leading forest jurisdictions worldwide. Conducted by O'Kelly Acumen and published in April 2025, the study offers a fresh and urgent look at where BC stands today — and where decisive action is most needed.

A Decade of Decline

The data paints a sobering picture. Between 2013-2023, BC experienced the steepest decline in forest sector GDP among all jurisdictions studied — an average annual drop of 3.6 per cent. Employment fell by 1.3 per cent annually, productivity declined by 2.3 per cent, and export revenues dropped by 2.9 per cent each year. BC is the only jurisdiction facing a 'double hit' of dropping employment and productivity.

The primary driver? Declining harvest volumes, which contracted at a staggering 6.5 per cent annually between 2013 and 2023. In contrast, peer regions such as Sweden, Finland, Brazil, and New Zealand either stabilized or grew their industrial harvests over the same period — strengthening their economies and reinforcing long-term confidence in the sector.

In BC, the ripple effects are clear: reduced production, falling investment, mill closures, and uncertainty for workers and communities.

Investment and Innovation: Falling Behind

While other jurisdictions ramp up capital investment and research and development (R&D), BC is slipping behind:

- Capital investment in BC accounts for just four per cent of forest sector revenues — half the rate of global leaders such as Sweden.
- R&D spending stands at a mere 0.3 per cent of revenue, limiting innovation and hindering modernization in a fast-evolving marketplace.

These trends reveal a troubling feedback loop: uncertainty in wood supply erodes investor confidence, which leads to reduced investment and innovation — further weakening the sector's performance and ability to compete.

Kurt Niquidet, PhD, C.Dir., is the president of the BC Lumber Trade Council and the vice president and chief economist at the BC Council of Forest Industries. He also is currently an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia, in the Faculty of Forestry and the Food and Resource Economics program.

How Industry Sees BC: A Global Perspective

To complement economic data, the study surveyed 66 global forest industry leaders on eight competitiveness factors, including wood supply security, taxation, and investment climate. BC consistently ranked at or near the bottom *(Figure 1)*:

- Lowest wood supply security among all jurisdictions surveyed.
- Similarly, lowest ratings for investment attractiveness and tax competitiveness.
- Environmental policy credibility — BC's strongest area, though still behind top jurisdictions, may be viewed less favorably due to negative biases.

Perceptions matter — as they shape real-world investment decisions. When global investors rank BC lowest in wood supply certainty, capital flows elsewhere.

The survey also found a strong correlation between perceived wood supply security and investment attractiveness *(Figure 2)*. Without improving tenure certainty and land access, BC will continue to struggle to attract the investment needed to modernize and grow.

Opportunities for Action

While the challenges are significant, the study identifies practical, achievable actions to reverse current trends — without compromising sustainability:

- Designate more "working forest" areas to enhance fibre certainty while meeting conservation goals.
- Accelerate Indigenous land transfers with clear tenure structures and integration into the working forest landscape.
- Reform BC Timber Sales (BCTS) to support efficient market pricing and achieve target harvest levels.
- Streamline permitting processes through a single-window system and establish performance metrics for accountability.
- Stabilize regulatory pace to give industry, First Nations, and communities time to adapt and advance projects, supporting predictability in forest management and manufacturing.
- Strengthen R&D collaboration between universities, industry, and government to drive innovation.
- Invest in workforce training and mobility, including vocational expansion and support for transitions to emerging roles and technologies.
- Advance science-based environmental policy with clear goals and targets to support sustainable forest management and build investor and buyer confidence.

Many of these actions align with current government priorities and are achievable within BC's strong sustainability framework. What's needed is coordination, urgency, and shared commitment.

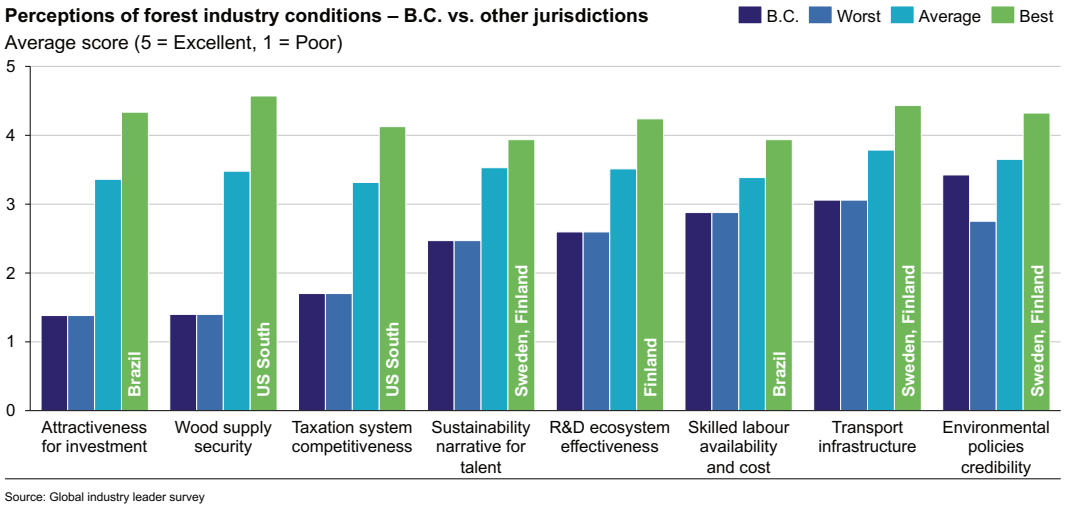


FIGURE 1. *A global survey assessed the perceptions of industry leaders on forest sector competitiveness in 10 different forestry regions across eight key factors, including wood supply security, investment attractiveness, taxation, and R&D effectiveness. The performance of different jurisdictions was ranked one to five (with five being the best). Conducted between December 2024 and March 2025, the survey was sent to 165 industry leaders, yielding 66 responses (40 per cent). Respondents rated only regions they were familiar with, ensuring informed comparisons between BC and the other forestry jurisdictions.*

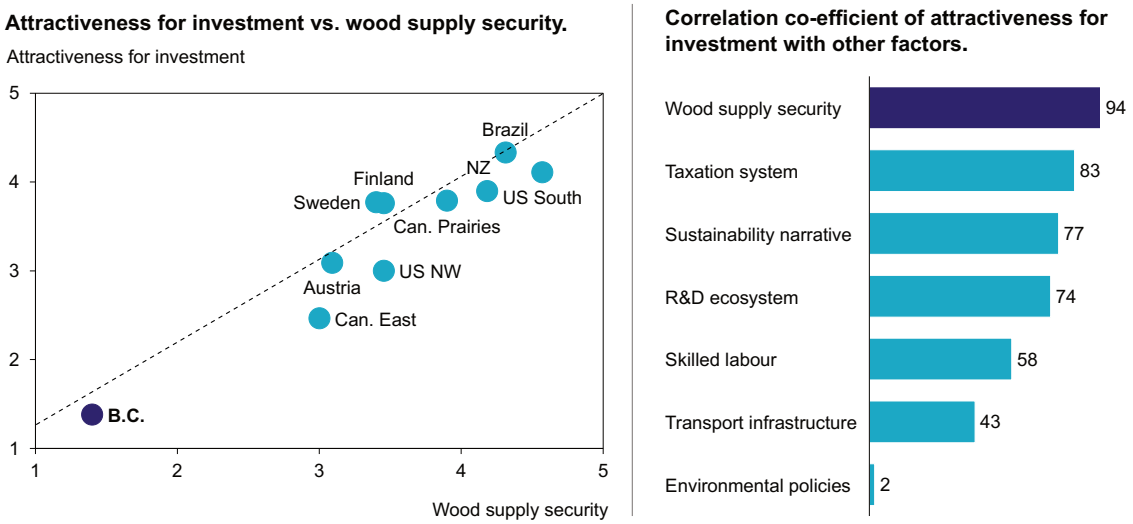


FIGURE 2. *Ratings for investment attractiveness were highly correlated with perceived wood supply security, more than any other factor. This suggests that as long as BC is seen as having low wood supply security, it will struggle to attract forest industry investment. Addressing uncertainty in the land base and wood supply is crucial to improving investor confidence and ensuring the sector's long-term viability. Action is needed to create stability and support future growth.*

A Sector Worth Investing In

Amid these challenges, BC retains powerful strengths:

- World-class biodiversity and ecosystem management.
- Low-carbon, renewable wood products that are in growing global demand.
- A professional forestry workforce committed to stewardship and sustainability.

BC doesn't need to choose between sustainability and competitiveness — it can and must lead on both fronts. But leadership demands certainty: in fibre supply, regulatory clarity, and a unified vision for the future.

The talent, values, and environmental credentials are already here. With bold, coordinated action, we can reignite investment, restore jobs, and secure forestry as a pillar of BC's economic and ecological future.

The Time is Now

Forest professionals, policy makers, Indigenous leaders, licensees, and workers across the sector all have a critical role to play. Whether planning harvests, shaping tenure, or implementing new technologies, forestry professionals are uniquely positioned to lead the transition.

Now is the time for decisive action — to stabilize the sector, strengthen our communities, and ensure that forestry remains a foundational part of BC's future.

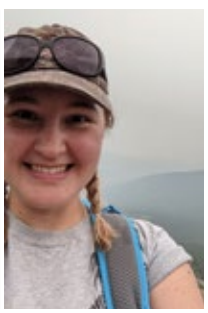
WHY DID THE WESTERN TOAD CROSS THE ROAD?

A Look at the Impact of Roadside Ponds on Amphibian Populations in Northern BC

Have you ever encountered a road that appears alive with toads and wondered what is happening? It's more than just a secret sun-bathing party that you weren't privy to. The western toad (*Anaxyrus boreas*), British Columbia's only true toad species, can be found occupying a variety of aquatic and terrestrial habitats, ranging from the Yukon to Colorado. During spring to early summer, this amphibian seeks aquatic habitats for breeding, then travels to terrestrial, upland habitats for the remainder of the year where it finds foraging opportunities and a hibernaculum site to overwinter. Considered a species of concern in Canada, these amphibians are sensitive to habitat degradation/destruction, road mortality during migration events, disease, predation, and the introduction of exotic species[1]. One of the few species of amphibians found occupying alpine habitat, its wide distribution and broad habitat occupancy has limited accurate population estimates throughout its natural range.

The Pitfall of Roadside Ponds

Breeding in a variety of natural habitats, including ponds, lakes, and streams, toads and other local amphibian species are observed utilizing human-created aquatic habitats, including those created by harvesting and road building — referred to as roadside ponds. Many amphibian species lay their eggs in the spring in the shallow, warm waters provided by roadside ponds, which are often readily available before natural habitat is ice free. This can leave the larval stages vulnerable to pond desiccation (drying), predation by birds, machine disturbance, and solar radiation[2], all of which can lead to mass mortality events. Roadside ponds often have a high presence of suitable substrate (high sediment loading), which is critical for tadpole survival, as they feed on small microorganisms embedded in the sediment[3]. These temporary habitats can either sustain amphibian larvae growth and survival until metamorphosis, providing a population source, or can result in the elimination of a vulnerable demographic, creating a population sink (death rate exceeds birth rate). As western toads often exhibit high breeding site fidelity, tadpole mortality can be quite detrimental over the lifespan of a roadside pond when adults continually return for breeding and egg deposition.



Vanessa Uschenko, BSc, RPBio, is a senior research assistant with the College of New Caledonia (CNC) Research Forest. Vanessa has led and supported a broad range of forestry-related research projects, primarily focused on wildlife monitoring in a forestry context, including investigations of fish inventory, amphibians, and spruce beetle.

Carl Pollard, BSc, RPF, is the director of the College of New Caledonia (CNC) Research Forest. Carl has over 35 years of operational experience, including technical and professional forestry consulting and various former professional roles with the Ministry of Forests and Northwood Pulp and Timber.

Being Toad-ally Aware: Research Findings

Through a multi-year monitoring project, the College of New Caledonia's (CNC) Research Forest has studied the benefits and impacts of roadside ponds to local amphibian populations to better inform decisions on trail and road construction, maintenance, and deactivation. The knowledge provided summarizes the findings of four years (2020-2023) of monitoring work, centralized around the village of Bear Lake in the Northern Interior of BC (approximately 70 kilometres north of Prince George).

Since establishment, an annual average of 28 (min=18, max=39) roadside ponds, located within an area spanning over 7,500 hectares, were examined along active forest roads. Of these, around 60 per cent had confirmed amphibian presence (western toad, long-toed salamander, Columbia spotted frog, and wood frog). Of the ponds with confirmed use, western toads were recorded in 66.7 per cent of ponds. During the study, successful metamorphosis of western toad and Columbia spotted frog tadpoles were only recorded in 2020. In 2021, complete desiccation occurred in 95 per cent of ponds, with no successful reproduction of amphibian species observed. Long-toed salamander was also notably impacted by roadside ponds, as larvae were observed in 15.8 per cent of studied sites. In 2021, pond desiccation was driven by abnormal temperature recordings, including air temperatures approaching 40°C, and water temperatures exceeding 30°C for upwards of five days. While water temperature has been identified as a key factor in the successful development of tadpoles,

Western toad on log. Photo credit: Vanessa Uschenko, BSc, RPBio.

Western toad. Photo credit: Shelby Roberts, BA.

through increased growth, high temperatures can decrease pH levels, which in turn can damage tadpoles, slowing down metamorphosis and decreasing survival. Solar radiation exposure also poses risk among larval development, as studies have shown that increased exposure to UV-B radiation can cause abnormalities and lower survival rates[4].

Over the study period, complete desiccation occurred in over 70 per cent of ponds in which amphibians were detected (adult, juvenile, and larvae). The desiccation rate is a concern for all amphibian life stages, as mortality to even highly mobile juveniles and adults may occur if no additional suitable pond habitat is readily available[5]. Pond desiccation was also recorded within the study area in 2020, despite the unprecedented wet, cool summer, suggesting these habitats are not reliable in supporting successful amphibian metamorphosis, especially with the current trend of increasing summer temperatures. In fact, previous studies have identified that ponds with shallow (less than 0.2 metres) waters occupying an area less than 0.02 hectares are to be considered population sinks, often experiencing significant dewatering from evaporation events[6].

Hop to Action: Practice Recommendations

- Plan for more temporary roads and rehabilitate as soon as possible post-harvest.
- If there are water pooling concerns post-harvest, consider rehabilitation or full deactivation of non-critical road sections to re-establish natural drainage patterns.
- For permanent roads where regular vehicle access is not required, as soon as possible post-harvest, properly contour road surfaces, construct adequate catchment for surface drainage (e.g. water bars and cross-ditches), and construct adequate ditch run-outs to prevent pooling within ditches.
- Consider deactivation barriers to prevent unintended effects from repeated vehicle use (e.g. rutting and compaction) that may cause drainage issues.
- Where continual vehicle access is required and road maintenance is feasible, regularly maintain the road surface and ditch line to prevent pooling of water on roads and within ditches.
- Where continual vehicle access is required, but regular maintenance is not feasible, install adequate water bars, cross-ditches, and ditch run-outs to prevent the unnecessary pooling of water. These roads may require regular monitoring and potential follow-up treatments to prevent future issues.
- Watch for areas where water may or is currently pooling along roadside processing areas and divert drainage as necessary during site preparation or debris clean-up.
- Avoid road construction in wetter areas with natural seepage that may accumulate standing water.
- If pooling of water adjacent to roadside is unavoidable, maintain or promote vegetation along the immediate pond edge and add coarse woody debris to provide cover from solar radiation and minimize desiccation.

Bufo boreas or *Anaxyrus boreas*

The western toad technically has two Latin names. *Bufo boreas* was the original Latin name, but in June 2010 it was changed to *Anaxyrus boreas*[7].

Concludes *on page 18*

Overview of temporary roadside pond. Photo credit: Melissa Mjolsness, RFT.

Continued *from page 17*

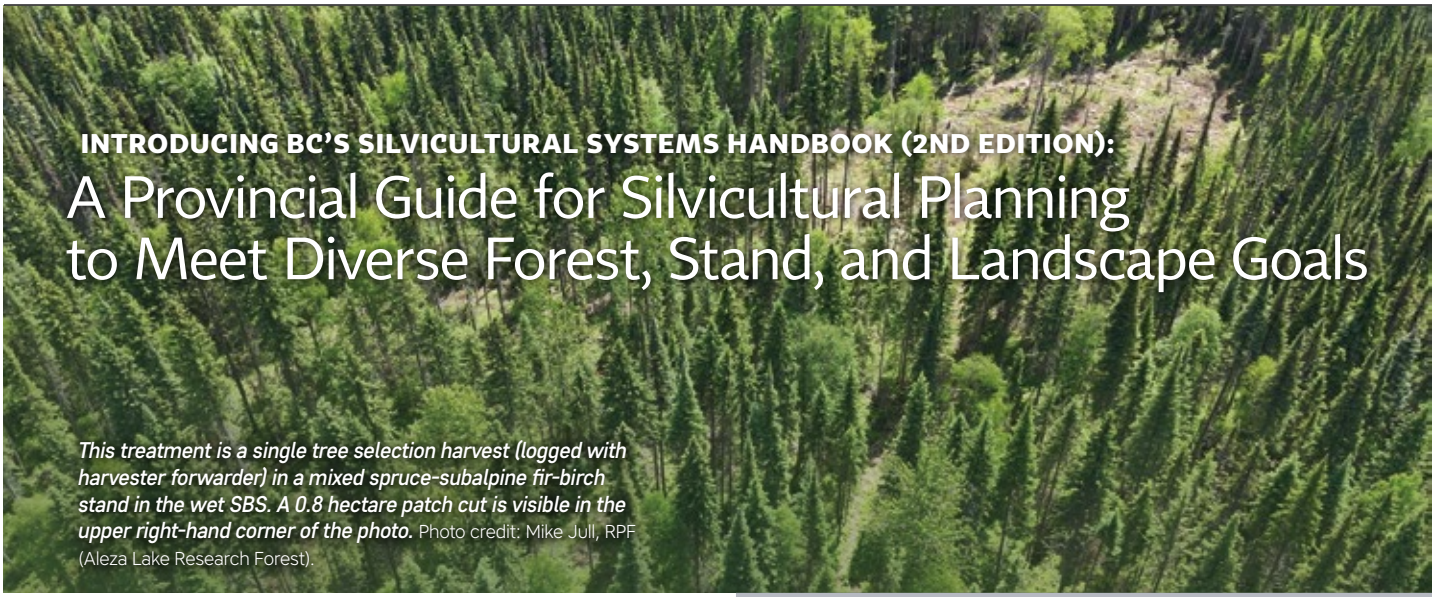
The Final Chorus

The results from this study suggest that many roadside ponds — which are selected by amphibians — are not reliable habitats for the development and survival of the larval stages, particularly during warmer, drier summers which have become increasingly common under current climate trends. While there are hazards to breeding in any aquatic system, it is arguably greater in fully exposed habitats along roads and within recent cutblocks due to the potential for extreme fluctuations in water levels, water temperatures, and water quality, along with insufficient protection from solar radiation, predators, and disturbances (human and natural). These hazards — which are easily overlooked and often unnoticed — can significantly decrease survival among larval and juvenile amphibians, leading to increased negative pressure on local amphibian populations. However, mitigating these unintended effects from harvesting and roads is highly feasible by increasing awareness and appropriately applying familiar forestry practices.

Western toad. Photo credit: Vanessa Uschenko, BSc, RPBio

REFERENCES

1. Wind, E. and L.A. Dupuis. 2002. COSEWIC status report on the western toad *Bufo boreas* in Canada, in COSEWIC assessment and status report on the western toad *Bufo boreas* in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. 1-31pp.
2. COSEWIC. 2012. COSEWIC assessment and status report on the Western Toad *Anaxyrus boreas* in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. Ottawa. xiv + 71 pp. (www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/default_e.cfm)
3. Wood, S.L.R., and J.S. Richardson. 2010. Evidence for ecosystem engineering in a lentic habitat by tadpoles of the western toad. Journ. Of Aquat. Sci. 72:499-508
4. Blaustein, A.R., Kiesecker, J.M., Chivers, D.P., and R.G. Anthony. 1997. Ambient UV-B radiation causes deformities in amphibian embryos. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 94(25) pp13735:13737.
5. Randall, L., N. Lloyd, and A. Moehrenschlager. 2018. Guidelines for Mitigation Translocations of Amphibians: Applications for Canada's Prairie Provinces. Version 1.0. Centre for Conservation Research, Calgary Zoological Society. Calgary, Alberta, Canada. 94 pp.
6. Gyug, L.W. 2000. Timber-harvesting Effects on Riparian Wildlife and Vegetation in the Okanagan Highlands of British Columbia. Wildlife Bulletin no. B-97
7. BC Conservation Data Center. 2010. Species Summary: *Anaxyrus boreas*. BC Ministry of Environment.



INTRODUCING BC'S SILVICULTURAL SYSTEMS HANDBOOK (2ND EDITION):

A Provincial Guide for Silvicultural Planning to Meet Diverse Forest, Stand, and Landscape Goals

This treatment is a single tree selection harvest (logged with harvester forwarder) in a mixed spruce-subalpine fir-birch stand in the wet SBS. A 0.8 hectare patch cut is visible in the upper right-hand corner of the photo. Photo credit: Mike Jull, RPF (Aleza Lake Research Forest).

Forest management and silvicultural practices in British Columbia are evolving quickly, driven by changing climates and climatic extremes; natural disturbances; cumulative effects of past forest management practices; a need to improve forest diversity and resilience; and a desire for landscape-level forest ecosystem management to sustain ecosystems, economies, and cultures. Recent government policy initiatives that address these issues include the Old Growth Strategic Review recommendations; the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, which acknowledges the rights, roles, and goals of First Nations; and the recent *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA) improvement initiative to support the development of forest landscape plans.

In spring 2025, the Ministry of Forests released the *British Columbia Silvicultural Systems Handbook* (2nd edition) as *Land Management Handbook 79* (LMH 79/the handbook). It is a forestry practice guide for the design and application of silvicultural systems in BC to meet diverse forest stand and landscape goals informed by First Nations values and those emerging from local forest landscape planning processes. In this way, LMH 79 can support and enhance professional silvicultural planning at both the stand and landscape levels.

LMH 79 provides a provincially applicable silvicultural planning framework with flexibility to incorporate a wide range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge to meet defined forest land management goals, as well as updated operational forestry advice and experience, and recommended best practices for developing, applying, and naming the range of different silvicultural systems used in BC's forested landscapes.

The handbook was developed by a diverse team of experienced natural resource professionals, including silvicultural systems subject-matter experts and Indigenous Knowledge Holders. Feedback from an extensive peer review process was also integrated into the final publication.

Why a New Silvicultural Systems Handbook for BC?

The Ministry of Forest's 2003 *Silvicultural Systems Handbook for British Columbia* was developed from late 1990s silvicultural systems training materials in the context of the legislation and management environment at that time. Since that original edition, forestry in BC has evolved in response to more complex forest management challenges; recognition of, and emphasis on, Indigenous rights and values; and greater experience in the application of innovative silvicultural practices.

The new edition of the handbook builds on the understanding, knowledge, and experience gained during the past two decades of silviculture and forest management, and provides information to help apply that learning to current and future silvicultural planning and practices. It also:

- responds and adapts to a changing forest management environment in BC (including social, ecological, cultural, and policy/regulatory dimensions);
- incorporates more than 35 years of experience and science from silvicultural systems operations and research, and related ecological knowledge;
- integrates Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives into forest practices at both the practical and technical levels; and
- supports the development of innovative silvicultural practices at the site level to better fit with landscape-level objectives.

WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

The main audience of LMH79 includes:

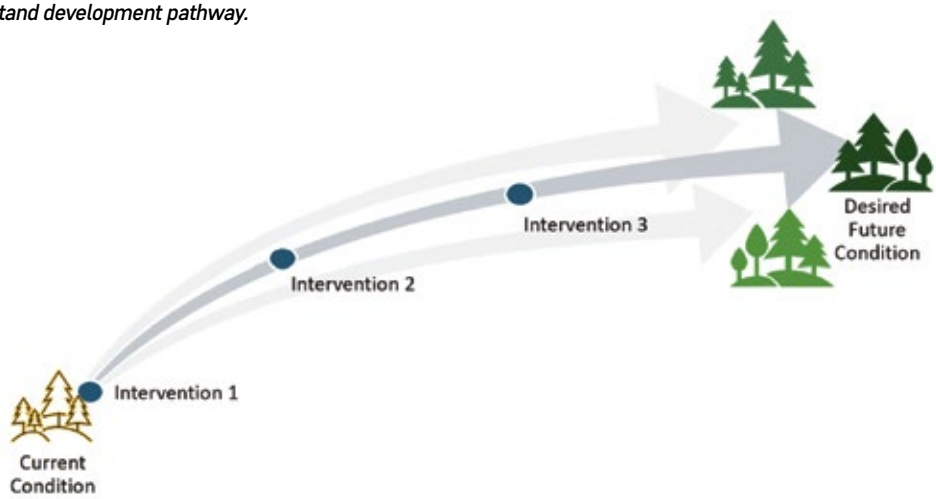
- Forest professionals who may be planning or implementing forest- or stand-level plans that include or focus on silvicultural systems;
- forest landscape planning teams and technical working groups;
- individuals who are providing technical guidance to provincial and First Nations governments, land and resource managers, forest license holders, and related organizations;
- allied professional and technical organizations; and
- policy and practice assessors.

Others who may find the handbook to be a useful resource on forest management and silvicultural practices in BC include:

- community and stakeholder groups;
- interested members of the public;
- the scientific and research community; and
- and higher-learning institutions (such as colleges and universities) and their students.

Continues *on page 20*

Stand development pathway.



Continued *from page 19*

Purpose and Scope of LMH 79

The core purpose of LMH 79 is to provide a central reference, conceptual framework, and set of best practices for planning and applying a diverse range of silvicultural systems in forested landscapes across BC. At the site level, the handbook will help forest professionals hone the design and use of well-crafted silvicultural plans and stand interventions or treatments, both singly and in combination (such as harvesting, regeneration, stand tending) to successfully address stand- and landscape-level objectives.

In support of these goals, LMH 79 provides the following:

- First Nations principles and perspectives as a foundation for silvicultural plans and practices.
- Guidance on identifying and developing stand-level silvicultural objectives and practices that are consistent with higher-level plans, including landscape objectives.
- Best practices for the design, planning, and application of successful stand interventions (silvicultural treatments).
- The introduction of new core concepts, including "stand development pathways" that form the building blocks of silvicultural systems in BC.
- Consistent terminology and definitions that have provincial application, to allow clear communication on the use of different silvicultural systems.
- Principles and tools to guide stand-level planning, prescription development, and implementation of different silvicultural systems and stand interventions.

What the Silvicultural Systems Handbook is and is Not

LMH 79 is a guide for forest professionals and practitioners that enables and encourages innovative and thoughtful silvicultural decisions and solutions. It does not dictate those decisions. It allows the flexibility to use a wide range of western and Indigenous Knowledge within a silvicultural planning framework. The handbook is not a policy document, nor is it a textbook of standardized silvicultural practices or procedures.

"Plain Language" Approaches and Ease of Use

LMH 79 incorporates a consistent silvicultural planning framework that promotes, not limits, silvicultural innovation. It emphasizes clear communication and plain language. As the handbook moves

Shannon Pearce, RPF, is a forest policy specialist with the Office of the Chief Forester. She has been with the Ministry in various roles since 2016. Currently, her primary focus is policy pertaining to alternative silvicultural systems. Prior to coming to government, Shannon worked for over 20 years as a consulting silviculture forester.

For over four decades, Mike Jull, RPF, has worked to promote the well-informed and appropriate use of diverse silvicultural systems in BC, and to extend related knowledge and training to forest practitioners. He has also helped to establish several long-term BC Interior silvicultural systems research trials. Mike is the manager of the UNBC Aleza Lake Research Forest near Prince George.

Ken Zielke, RPF, has worked as a forestry consultant across BC, Canada, and abroad since 1990. He also spent five years as investigations director at the Forest Practices Board. Throughout his career, Ken has worked with industry, government, and First Nations on planning, prescriptions, monitoring, and training for silvicultural systems and retention.

FIGURE 1: ***An example of a stand development pathway built around a commercial thinning intervention (i.e. the commercial thinning invention now opens up multiple stand development possibilities in the future).***
Photo credit: Mike Jull, RPF (Aleza Lake Research Forest).

The *Silvicultural Systems Handbook for British Columbia: Developing Silvicultural Pathways for Diverse Forest Stand and Landscape Goals*, written by M.J. Jull, K. Zielke, J.K. Day, B. Bancroft, G. Merkel, C. Elkin, and T. Denton, is online at:

http://library.nrs.gov.bc.ca/digipub/LMH79.pdf

into deeper technical detail, consistent terminology is used and clearly defined. It contains numerous photos, maps, and graphics; and highlights clear definitions and examples, all built around key foundational concepts.

Core Concepts and Principles for Silvicultural Systems Design: Examples

The handbook uses a central organizing concept for silvicultural systems that emphasizes the importance of what is left behind or "retained" in the forest, not what is taken out. Attention is placed on important retention elements, including individual leave trees and groups of trees, biological legacies, and future crop trees. These concepts expand on traditional European silvicultural concepts that are focused on regeneration and timber management by incorporating greater emphasis on biodiversity management, ecosystem functioning, and where appropriate, cultural and social values.

Two related core principles in the design of silvicultural systems and associated forest practices are promoted in LMH 79:

1) Improve stand and site conditions over time for key values. That is, do not degrade or "high-grade" stands or sites to gain maximum value in the short term to the detriment of the long term. Aligned with this principle is the setting of well-defined, measurable/verifiable long-term target stand structural conditions.
2) Keep options open for the future. This includes considering the landscape and stand neighbourhood and local ecology, identifying and addressing uncertainty, and managing silvicultural risks.

The handbook introduces the concept of the "stand development pathway" for the design and planning of a silvicultural system. It is a conceptual approach for envisioning how a stand will develop over time based on the management interventions used to achieve a desired future condition. Stand development pathways can be simple or complex, as required to meet management goals.

The commercial thinning of a 40-year-old stand *(Figure 1)* is one example of a stand intervention or treatment on a proposed stand development pathway. Such a prescription works with the results of past stand management actions to design a current treatment that results in a thinned stand composed of preferred leave trees of desired composition and density, and in doing so, sets a course for envisioned future stand development and management.

Conclusion

LMH 79 will support the shift to increased application of alternative silvicultural systems. There is an emerging need to diversify practices and increase the silvicultural options available to the forest professional. With BC's historically robust silviculture program, there are already many tools in the toolbox. Practices can be diversified by taking the existing base information and starting to improve understanding of alternative silvicultural systems within an adaptive management framework. The updated handbook is a key part of this process.

THE BC CUMULATIVE EFFECTS FRAMEWORK:

Forest Biodiversity and Old Growth Forests

In the spring 2025 edition of *BC Forest Professional* magazine, an overview of the BC Cumulative Effects Framework (CEF) was provided that explained how cumulative effects are being assessed and managed across British Columbia. Forest professionals in BC are increasingly expected to integrate cumulative effects considerations into their work, ensuring that decisions are made to effectively manage identified values within their scope of practice. Key guidance and direction from the provincial government, such as forest stewardship plan guidance[1] and amendments to the *Forest and Range Practices Act*[2], as well as legal direction such as the Yahey decision[3], all highlight the importance and responsibility to consider cumulative effects in overall resource stewardship. This article explores the CEF forest biodiversity and old growth forest values and where forest professionals can access the latest available CEF information to consider cumulative effects in their forest management decisions.

Old Growth and Forest Biodiversity Management in BC

The variety of life within forests (i.e. forest biodiversity) is necessary for ecosystem health and the well-being of people in BC. Late successional forests (e.g. mature, old growth, and ancient forests) are critical elements of BC's biodiversity that have cultural and economic importance. Decades to centuries are required to develop the ecological characteristics of old growth and ancient forests featuring complex structures that provide critical habitat, store carbon, moderate landscape temperatures, and protect watersheds by regulating water flow. Landscape change has the greatest effects on wildlife and plant species that depend on these old forest habitats, as these ecosystems require natural ecological processes to occur over long time periods to establish these structures.

BC has recognized the importance of conserving biodiversity and old growth forests through the establishment of a regulatory and policy framework guiding forest management in BC. This framework includes a protected areas strategy, regional and sub-regional planning processes, legislation (i.e. *Forest and Range Practices Act, Land Act*), regulations (i.e. *Forest Planning and Practices Regulations*), and forest policy (i.e. *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Biodiversity Guidebook*[4]).

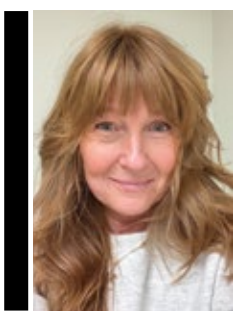
The scientific foundation for this framework is based in concepts outlined in the Biodiversity Guidebook. The underlying premise of the Biodiversity Guidebook is that the more forest management resembles the patterns created by natural disturbance processes, the more likely biodiversity will be maintained and forest management will be compatible with biodiversity conservation. The approach relies on coarse-filter management tools to meet the habitat needs for most species, such as targets for seral stages (e.g. early, mid, mature, and old forests), forest patch size distribution, interior forest area, and stand structure retention based on broad natural disturbance types. Fine-filter approaches are then used to manage specific habitat requirements (e.g. wildlife habitat areas or ungulate winter ranges).

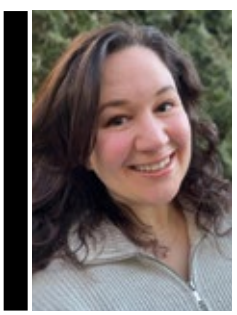
Cumulative Effects on Forest Values

While BC's forested ecosystems have historically been shaped by natural disturbances, the pace and extent of landscape change due to various land uses, natural disturbance events, and changing climate pose challenges to conserving forest biodiversity and old growth forests under the existing regulatory and policy framework. Forest biodiversity and old growth forest conservation policy and regulation involves trade-offs to integrate socio-economic interests with the risk of losing elements of natural biodiversity. Early policy prioritized legal implementation of only a subset of biodiversity elements (e.g. stand-level wildlife tree retention and old growth management areas) to minimize impacts on timber harvest. It also utilized biodiversity emphasis options (BEO) to distribute risk to biodiversity while emphasizing timber production in different parts of the landscape (e.g. a high BEO emphasizes higher biodiversity conservation and lower risk to biodiversity, while low BEO focuses on timber production and higher risk to biodiversity).

The variable implementation of legal orders in BC, particularly for old growth forests *(Figure 1)*, with ongoing natural disturbance events and other resource sector activities may result in unintended consequences to these values. These factors may require forest professionals to consider additional measures to manage for forest biodiversity and old growth in their practices.

To support forest professionals in managing forest biodiversity and old growth forests, the CEF produces current condition assess-





The Cumulative Effects Framework (CEF) team at the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship provides cumulative effects assessments and guidance to support the management of cumulative effects across the province. This interdisciplinary team consists of professional foresters, agrologists, and biologists, as well as geospatial analysts and policy experts. The team members contributing to this article are Doug Lewis, RPF, landscape ecologist and forest biodiversity value lead; Traci Van Spengen, P.Ag, regional resource specialist and old growth forest value lead; Darcie Fodor, RPF, MSFM, old growth assessment coordinator and policy analyst; and Melissa Lucchetta, MRM, strategic projects coordinator and policy analyst.

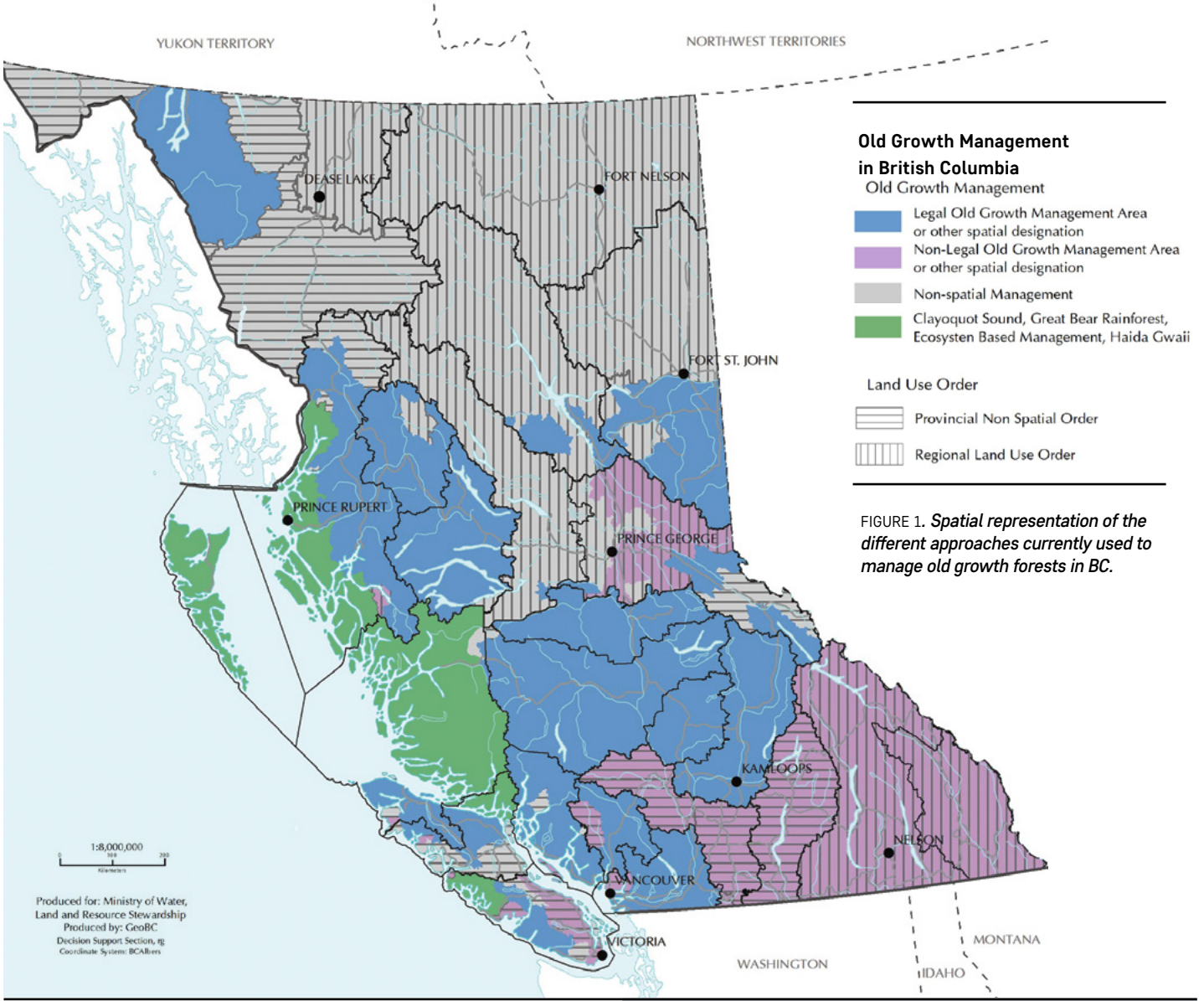


FIGURE 1. *Spatial representation of the different approaches currently used to manage old growth forests in BC.*

ments that consider the cumulative effects of human activities and natural disturbances on these values. When considered together, CEF assessments help identify ecosystems that are at high or near-term risk of irreversible biodiversity loss and where mitigation measures should be considered to address cumulative effects.

Assessing Forest Biodiversity

The CEF Forest Biodiversity assessment[5] looks at three categories associated with landscape change that are considered hazards to forest biodiversity (habitat change, habitat connectivity loss, and species disturbance) and estimates the likelihood that current 'observed' conditions have departed from the natural 'expected' conditions that native species have adapted to *(Figure 2)*. An overall Forest Biodiversity Risk rating, based on the combined hazard ratings of those three categories, identifies ecosystems highly modified by human land use and natural disturbances where forest species reliant on late successional forests are more likely to be lost (e.g. habitats are more fragmented and isolated, loss of primary intact mature and old forest).

Assessing Old Growth Forests

The current regulatory and policy framework has defined objectives for old growth forests, and it is important to understand how the current condition of the remaining old growth forests relates to these objectives. The CEF Old Growth Forest assessment[6] uses a combination of indicators to assess the current condition of old growth and mature-plus-old forests across the province relative to legal and policy targets *(Figure 2)*.

HELPFUL CUMULATIVE EFFECTS FRAMEWORK RESOURCES

Cumulative Effects Framework Website
www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/cumulative-effects-framework

CEF Forest Biodiversity Value
www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/cumulative-effects-framework/value-assessments-protocols/forest-biodiversity

CEF Old Growth Forest Value
www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/cumulative-effects-framework/value-assessments-protocols/old-growth-forest

BC Data Catalogue
https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/

Continues *on page 24*

Continued *from page 23*

FIGURE 2.

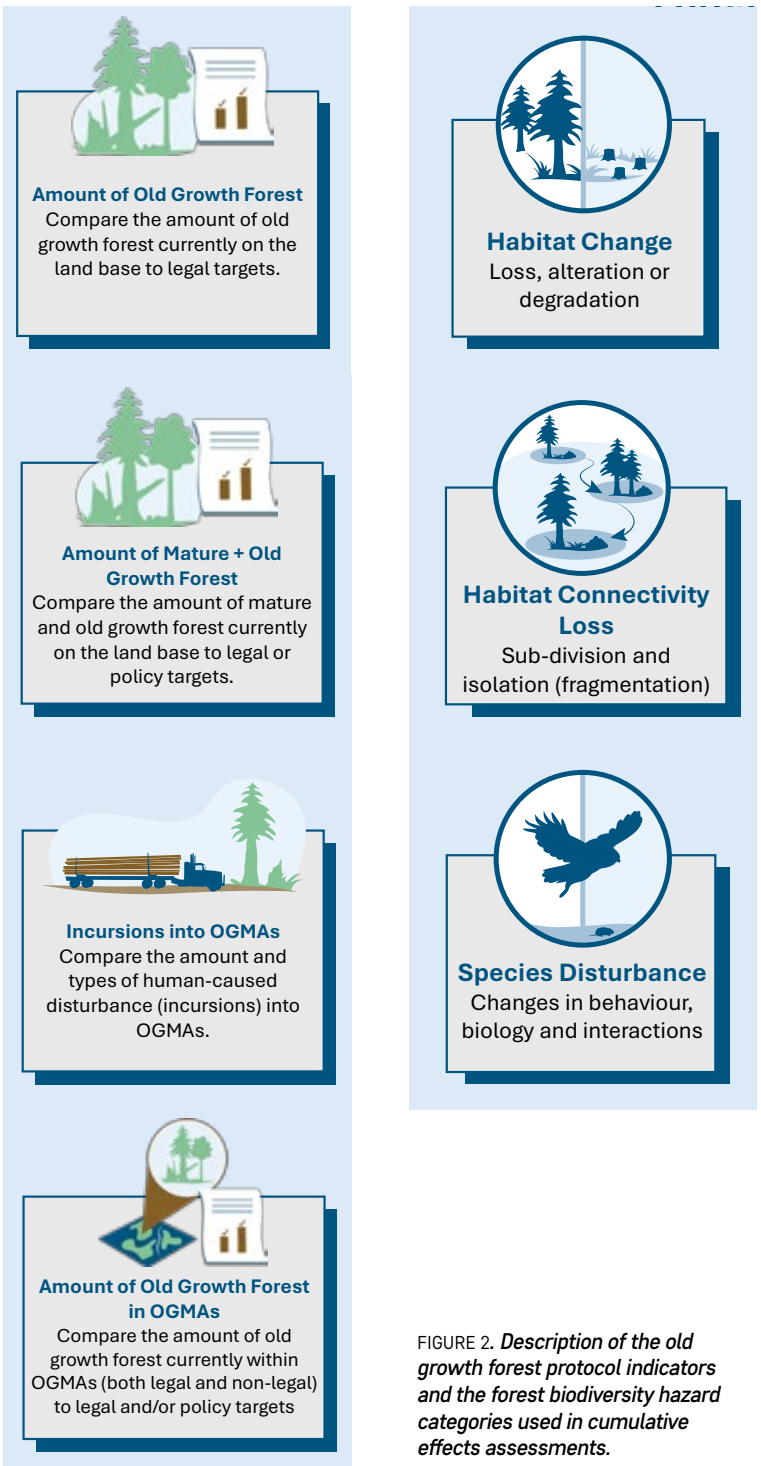


FIGURE 2. ***Description of the old growth forest protocol indicators and the forest biodiversity hazard categories used in cumulative effects assessments.***

What CEF Information is Available?

The CEF has publicly available data and information to support your work. The data and reports for forest biodiversity and old growth forests can be used as the starting point for understanding the current condition of these values to support operational and management decisions. For example, in high-risk areas you may consider measures to mitigate cumulative effects by increasing stand level retention or changing cutblock design to avoid removing important stand attributes when harvesting.

To date, current condition reports for old growth forests have been completed for Vancouver Island, the Robson Valley Timber Supply Area (TSA), and the Thompson Okanagan Region. Additionally, current condition reports for Forest Biodiversity have been completed for the Lakes and Morice TSAs, and the Cariboo Region. These reports and accompanying assessment result datasets can be accessed through the CEF website[7] and the datasets can also be accessed directly from the Data BC website[8]. Looking ahead, the CEF is planning to release a province-wide forest biodiversity assessment in the summer of 2025 accompanied by a user guide to assist in understanding and using that data, and an online map application to view results.

Conclusion

The CEF provides information on the current condition of the old growth forest and forest biodiversity values to support the consideration of cumulative effects in natural resource management. Forest professionals are encouraged to use this information in their work to make more informed decisions and help guide the management of BC's forests for the future.

For more details about these values and the Cumulative Effects Framework, check out the CEF website[7] and stay tuned for future CEF articles in *BC Forest Professional*.

REFERENCES

1. Forest Stewardship Plans, www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/forest-stewardship-plans
2. Recent changes to the Forest and Range Practices Act and associated regulations; Last updated on July 30, 2024. www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/laws-policies-standards-guidance/legislation-regulation/forest-range-practices-act/frpa-improvement-initiative
3. Yahey v British Columbia, 2021 BCSC 1287 (CanLII), www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2021/2021bcsc1287/2021bcsc1287.html
4. Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Biodiversity Guidebook https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/library/documents/bib19715.pdf
5. CEF Forest Biodiversity assessments, www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/cumulative-effects-framework/value-assessments-protocols/forest-biodiversity
6. CEF Old Growth Forest assessments, www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/cumulative-effects-framework/value-assessments-protocols/old-growth-forest
7. CEF Website, www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/cumulative-effects-framework
8. BC Data Catalogue, https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/

Spotlight on Early Career Forest Professionals

What are everyday foresters and trainees routinely doing in the profession? Here we spotlight two early career professionals who are passionate about their daily work. Whether it's enjoying being outside in the wilderness or working on special projects, these colleagues are engaged with others to navigate the challenges they face, all while continuing to learn and appreciate the complexities of forest resource management.

Meet Laura Bradford, FIT, and Aiden Stephens, RPF.
Both work in coastal British Columbia for the consulting company Little River Resources (2021) Ltd. (LRR).

Laura Bradford, FIT

Laura Bradford, FIT, is a planning lead who has been working for LRR for just over two years. She spends most of her time laying out cutblocks, designing roads, and preparing site plans.

What inspired you to pursue a career in forestry?

"I originally didn't know that I wanted to go into forestry. I grew up in Richmond and there is not much in the way of forests there, so honestly, I never really considered forestry as an option. I was in nursing originally. I wanted to study nursing so I could live anywhere and explore in my free time, but it wasn't really working out for me. I was trying to deep-dive into my personality, asking myself what I really wanted to be doing every day? My parents were both geologists at one point — my dad still is. I was always inspired by his job because he got to go see and explore all these cool places. When I was a kid, he would show me lots of photos from his work. I thought 'this seems like the type of job I am drawn to, but I am not necessarily interested in rocks.'

So, I was looking through the UBC degree programs in natural resources, and forestry immediately caught my attention. Forests are something I value personally, a lot. So, I made the decision to enrol, and never looked back."

Laura's summer student experience was focused on asset management for BC Parks and gathering research data for permanent sample plots and regenerated lodgepole pine trials. Since graduating from UBC, her knowledge of forest operations has increased exponentially. Laura began her current job with traversing boundary, roads, and streams and has now moved into planning cutblock and road designs.

She enjoys a 50/50 split between field and office work. In the field, she conducts work based on her foundational draft that pre-identifies limitations and other considerations, building out the physical details over time. In the office, there is data correcting, mapping, and block packaging, which includes applicable assessments, harvest and road instructions, safety considerations, site plans, and silviculture instructions.

What are you passionate about in your current role?

"One thing that's really cool about my job is I'm learning new things every day. It never gets boring. I'm always seeing new places, and there's always something new to manage. I'm also passionate about the forest in general, which is why I went into forestry in the first place. Being able to have a say in what happens to the forest, and designing blocks in the best way I can — to consider multiple values — is really important to me. So, that's definitely motivating in my daily job."

Laura finds it interesting to work through layout challenges as if they're a puzzle to be solved. She's currently navigating visual polygon and adjacent cutblock constraints in an area with tougher terrain, all while adhering to a variable retention silviculture regime. "I have lots of help from people around the office, which I really appreciate. I feel like I'd never ask a question that would be seen as a 'dumb question'. It's great to get lots of support as an FIT."

What's evolving or innovative in your work?

"We are doing coastal experimental watershed surveys for a multiscale research project in the Great Bear Rainforest (GBR). The project is led by Nanwakolas member First Nations and the Ministry of Forests through a formal partnership, working collaboratively with licensees. The project partners are looking at streams and whether the current stream buffers, under the GBR Land Use Order, are effective. The forest data collection I was involved in was similar to what you might collect for a site plan but focuses on the existing characteristics of the stand. These forest survey plots are done at various distances from the stream, and stream survey plots are done along the length of the stream. [The research] is looking at downstream effects of logging, comparing streams before and after

Continues *on page 26*

Heather Poulson, MForSc, RPF is a member of the BC Forest Professional magazine Editorial Advisory Panel. She is interested in forest professional registrants: why forestry, where's the passion, and what's evolving? Heather is excited to share stories about forestry workers and how they are making a difference.

Continued *from page 25*

a block is logged, and aims to determine if there are changes in the years after. It is an interesting project to have been involved in."

▶ ***What was your experience like in finding a mentor as a new entrant to the profession?***

"I know a lot of people face struggles if they are in camp, or their sponsor is in camp, or their sponsor lives somewhere else and they have to set up Zoom calls. It can be a barrier to communicate with their sponsor when they need to. I got pretty lucky with my situation."

A couple months after graduating from UBC, Laura registered as an FIT, with encouragement from her coworkers at LRR to get started as soon as possible. To help her find the right sponsor, she obtained advice from a fellow FIT who spoke highly of their sponsor. This sponsor provides thorough explanations to questions, and ensures the trainee properly understands the concepts.

Laura started working through the material pretty quickly, but the curriculum changed as she proceeded. Two of the module tests were removed and became part of the diary instead. "Now, you answer questions that require you to read, and then to think about the legislation and how it applies. Then you send it over to your sponsor, and they review it and discuss it with you. So, it's more collaborative now than when it was test-based."

▶ ***Do you have any advice to share with new entrants?***

"I think it's really beneficial to go through [the pathway to registration] with other trainees. That's one thing that's helped me — just being able to talk about the content and share our experiences. We have a number of trainees at the company and having that community support is great. It's motivating to know we're all working toward the same goal, rather than working through it alone."

Aiden Stephens, RPF

Aiden Stephens, RPF, is an engineering crew lead and project manager at LRR, with five years' experience working in the forest industry. He specializes in developing cutblocks, coordinating projects, and bringing people together. Aiden enjoys his leadership responsibilities equally as much as focusing on complex cutblocks and mentoring early career registrants.

▶ ***What inspired you to pursue a career in forestry?***

"I grew up hiking, hunting, and camping, so I've always had a passion for the outdoors. What inspired me back in high school was the number of different and unique jobs in the industry, and the ability to work outdoors. My family has been connected to forestry for as long as I can remember, and I've seen and heard stories of the job opportunities the industry has to offer. I've been at the dinner table with hand fallers, heli loggers, professional foresters, and district managers. It was inspiring to hear how much they enjoyed their jobs and the people they worked with."

In his professional routine, Aiden balances his time between the office and the field. He coordinates multiple crews consisting of leads and juniors with varying levels of experience. Many of the crew members are currently articling, so Aiden often provides mentorship and support, drawing on his own experience going through the process a few years ago.

Currently, Aiden is leading complex projects that are pushing some of the limits of typical road construction. The projects involve many layers and professionals. Think big trees and bear dens nestled among steep, rocky terrain. In addition, Aiden must consider potential archeological concerns, terrain stability, and constraints posed by visual quality objectives.

"I really enjoy the challenge of the engineering we're doing right now. A lot of the different blocks and projects we're working on have difficult access and need to have a variety of professionals involved. I find it really interesting managing multiple values, trying to find a solution, and working hard to figure out the puzzle. But also, I just really enjoy spending my time outdoors, and being able to find a solution at the end of the day."

Aiden doesn't mind the dynamic nature of project planning.

"More often than not, you think you have a solid plan together until you go check it out in the field. You must be open to change, and be willing to adapt, because there is an endless number of variables at play."

▶ ***What are you passionate about in your current role?***

"A big passion of mine is problem solving, but I also get a lot of satisfaction from people managing and mentorship. When I first started in forestry, I really struggled to find mentorship. It was even difficult to find an RPF to sponsor me where I worked at the time. So being in the position I am in now, I enjoy mentoring and helping others navigate the same struggles I had when I was first learning."

▶ ***What's evolving or innovative in your work?***

"There are more complexities we need to manage and consider, including more people at the decision-making table. That's adding new layers to our engineering and development."

Aiden is intrigued by the innovations AI can potentially provide for the sector. He works with LiDAR models and utilizes them as tools to help him in his engineering and he's intrigued by the idea of working with AI optimization for RoadEng. However, he's mindful of not being fully reliant on AI; the skills and knowledge professionals bring to the table shouldn't be replaced.

▶ ***Do you have any advice to share with new entrants?***

"Try out multiple positions at an entry level. What are the responsibilities? What does the trajectory in that position look like? It's important for a new registrant to be informed and understand what the job is and where it could go. When I first started, I wasn't even sure what the job was, let alone what kind of different routes there were. After you graduate, it can be intimidating to try and figure out where to start in this industry. You've got maybe five or six options: silviculture, operations, engineering, stewardship, biology, or some unicorn type research role. Do a bit of research and talk to people. Find out what you're really interested in, or at least what you think you might be interested in. Once you start, you may be surprised how your interests shift, because I know mine have."

Aiden's enthusiasm for the connections and friendships he's made with foresters is evident. His face lights up talking about how interesting his career is, even when it comes to embracing challenges. "The job is changing a lot, and you have to be able to move with the change. I think it's exciting."

Early career professionals in the spotlight: Aiden Stephens, RPF and Laura Bradford, FIT, in the field doing what they love — professional forestry. Photo credit: Colton Knight.

It is very important to many registrants to receive word of the passing of a colleague. Obituary submission guidelines and due dates can be found at ***fpbc.ca/contribute***. Forest Professionals British Columbia sends condolences to the family and friends of the following persons:

Tom Alexander Walker

August 5, 1939 – March 7, 2025

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: ***The late Bill Dumont, RPF; Steve Lorimer, RPF; and Tom Walker.***

Tom Walker had a life-long passion for forestry. A 35-year career with the BC Forest Service took Tom to many parts of British Columbia where, in 1980, he became the District Manager of the Duncan District until he retired. The district covered Southern Vancouver Island and the Southern Gulf Islands — areas which were often under the microscope as forest management and environmental issues were rising in prominence at the time.

Tom was very involved in his community. Over a span of 17 years, he was both a Councillor and Mayor for the Municipality of North Cowichan and during that time served as Chair of the Cowichan Valley Regional District for three terms. He was a member of many community organizations, including the Duncan Rotary Club, Cowichan Valley Probus Club, Cowichan Valley Crime Stoppers, the Cowichan Valley Basket Society, and others.

Tom was also a volunteer and an active member on the Board of Directors at the BC Forest Discovery Centre, actively participating in functions and board meetings into 2025, and was amongst the longest serving members on the board. He took pride in the historical information and artifacts from the BC Forest Service and ensured they were well-documented and displayed.

Tom loved to show people around the BC Forest Discovery site and on one occasion had the honour of guiding Justin Trudeau, Canada's Prime Minister at the time, through the site.

In the early 1980s, Tom was one of the founding members of North Cowichan's forestry committee which revisited operations on the 5,000 hectare municipally owned forest. Their management approach was based on principles of good stewardship of the forest lands, including trail systems throughout, an education component, and revenues from harvesting.

When a position for Lay Councillor with Forest Professionals British Columbia (known as Association of BC Forest Professionals at the time) came available, Tom readily agreed to participate. Tom served for two terms from 2014-2019. His passion for good forest management, his career with the British Columbia Forest Service, serving in local government positions, and as a volunteer in the community provided him with the background to be a valuable asset on council (now known as the board). His contributions were always well thought out and relevant.

Tom is survived by Pat, his wife of 63 years. He will be greatly missed by friends and colleagues.

Submitted by Steve Lorimer, RPF.

Kevin Horsnell, RPF(Ret)
#2750
September 4, 1964 – February 3, 2025

With his family at his side, Kevin Horsnell passed away on February 3, 2025, in Prince George. Kevin is survived by his wife of 36 years, Lisa (nee Norris), and their children Kelsey (Tyler) and Austin (Amanda), and will be forever cherished and remembered by Brooks and Haisley, his grandchildren. He leaves behind his parents, Warren and Mavis, his sisters Loretta and Jennifer, and his many nieces, nephews, and extended family members.

Kevin was born in Prince George and later moved with his parents to Port Edward and then to Vanderhoof. Kevin started his family with Lisa on Vancouver Island in Woss and together they lived in Campbell River, Houston, Cranbrook, and Prince George.

Kevin attended Malaspina College (now Vancouver Island University) in Nanaimo, where he played basketball and was enrolled in the forestry technician program. While at Malaspina, Kevin became good friends with Tony, his future brother-in-law. Upon graduation from college, Kevin worked for a year but decided to continue his education and pursue his forestry degree. He returned to Nanaimo to upgrade some classes and rented a room with Tony's family. This is where his loving relationship with Lisa began. Kevin and Lisa moved to Vancouver, where he attended UBC and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry in 1991. Kevin successfully received his RPF designation in 1993. He returned to school in 2005 to complete his MBA at Royal Roads.

Kevin first began working for Canfor as a summer student in Harrison Hot Springs, while attending UBC. He started his first full-time position in Woss in 1992, where he held forestry and operations management roles before moving to Houston in 2005 to become the Woodlands Manager and later General Manager. It was in Houston where he was exposed to manufacturing. After a brief break from Canfor to work for Conifex, Kevin returned to Canfor in Mackenzie. In 2014, he moved to Cranbrook and in 2015 he became the General Manager for all of the Forest Management Group, Canadian Operations. In 2018, he was promoted to VP Woodlands in Prince George and led all Canfor woodlands operations in Canada. Kevin was appointed VP Canadian Operations in 2019 (responsible for both woodlands and manufacturing in Canada) and retired as Senior Vice President in 2024. Kevin had a remarkable career recognized by then President & CEO, Don Kayne: *"Over the course of his career, Kevin has made a tremendous positive impact on professional forestry and Canfor. He leads with integrity every day and isn't afraid to challenge the status quo. Kevin is a vocal champion of BC's forests, Professional Foresters, and the sector. I value his honest advice and the meaningful contributions he has made to our company and the industry."*

Kevin was an unselfish leader and enjoyed celebrating the successes of others more than his own. He once wrote when reflecting on his career: *"I love leading a team and rallying them around a common goal and them achieving the goal. Nothing better."*

Kevin was a proud Registered Professional Forester for 30 years; always striving for excellence in forestry practices and maintaining and promoting professionalism. Kevin was a strong supporter and advocate for forestry in BC. He always maintained his small-town values and recognized the significant contributions forestry-dependent communities make for BC and the role and positive impacts the forestry profession contributes to supporting these communities. Kevin received the Distinguished Forest Professional Award in 2024; the highest honour for a registrant of Forest Professionals BC.

To many who knew Kevin personally, or even when his name came up in conversation, one always thought of Kevin with a fishing rod. His ultimate personal pastime was fishing, whether it was flyfishing on the Morice River, tackling the challenge of a sturgeon on the Fraser, or patiently waiting to hook a lake trout through the ice. Growing up in the Interior of BC made Kevin appreciate the beauty of nature and all its opportunities. Hunting was another pastime Kevin loved, especially spending time with his son, daughter, and son-in-law, in the early fall mornings staking out elk, moose, or deer.

Although dedicated to his career and profession, Kevin was most proud of his family. He cherished spending time with them and sharing their achievements and adventures, whether at the cabin, fishing, or hunting. Kevin always had numerous stories to tell. Throughout his life, both professionally and personally, Kevin greatly valued relationships. He consistently took the time to listen, converse, advise, mentor, and provide support.

A *'gentle giant'* with a larger-than-life persona, Kevin cared deeply about people and had a positive influence on the lives of many. A loving husband. A supportive dad. A caring grandfather. A wonderful son. A supportive brother. An accomplished businessperson. An empathetic leader. An ardent professional. An industry advocate. A great friend. Kevin will be deeply missed.

Submitted by Ken Kaps, RPF; Kerri Simmons, RPF; and Mike Grimm.

Five Professional Skills Street Hockey Taught Me

Growing up in small-town Saskatchewan, I would hover by the living room window looking out across the street at my buddy's house for any sign of movement. Once I saw he was putting on his gear, I'd race out to the street, and we had the beginnings of another day of street hockey. It wouldn't take long before the rest of the neighbourhood kids jumped in too and together we'd be playing our own Game 7 of the Stanley Cup final. We were a community at practice and although we were practicing the game of hockey, what none of us realized is that we were developing essential life and professional skills too.

As a regulator, Forest Professionals BC is "leaning in" on the communities of practice model for meaningful knowledge sharing, professional development, and adaptive management.[1] Reflecting on the complexity of challenges before us, as forest professionals, I think about what I learned during those days playing street hockey — the value of teamwork, failure, creativity, hard work, and collaboration.

1. Teamwork

Teamwork makes dreamwork. Getting everyone on the same page is powerful and it takes structure. Knowing the position you are playing (your role) and how to read and make plays (your responsibilities) gives your team the best chance of success. How success is defined is up to the entire team. Are you winning the next shift, period, game, season, or playoff? Who is going to lead you? Forest professionals are naturally within communities of practice and stepping into leadership roles. Sometimes it's as the captain on the ice leading by example and demonstrating what partial harvest can look like at a landscape level, and sometimes it's "behind the bench," coaching by guiding forest landscape planning tables.

2. Failure

I know I shot at the net and missed more times that I hit it because our version of the game allowed you to continue to play down the street and we put on a lot of extra miles chasing that darn biscuit. Nobody thought of it as failure, rather an opportunity to turn over possession and keep going. And just as in professional forestry, the game goes on regardless of whether you hit the net or not — the key is how you respond to failure. Do you embrace the learning opportunity, or do you give up and quit? Or even more insidiously, do you grab your net and go home, leaving everyone else playing a compromised game?

Our communities of practice are taking a lot of shots at the net. Not all will tickle the twine. Failure is part of the DNA for collective success. A community of practice decides together on how to play the game. Will you have each other's backs in the tough moments?

Garnet Mierau, RPF, is the director of practice for FPBC. He is responsible for ensuring standards of practice and competence. He also leads professional practice and conduct advice. Garnet has more than 30 years of experience in forest management. He has a science degree in forestry from the University of Alberta, and a diploma in forestry from Selkirk College.

3. Creativity

Being creative is essential, whether it's street hockey or communities of practice. How else do you learn to dangle and go bar-downsie? A perfect example of this are the projects being funded through the Bulkley Valley Research Centre, Silviculture Investment Program. Here, the focus is on the ecological, social, cultural, and economic values of forests, where stewardship is focused on maintaining dynamic ecosystem processes and functions.[2] Creative forest professionals, with many partners, are leading this work and paving a way for future success. I'm excited to see the high level of knowledge sharing in this community of practice already.

4. Hard Work

How you do anything is how you do everything. We didn't have a Zamboni clearing our street. Clearing the snow was the hard work we got to do. It built character and resilience, and we got to play our game because we put in the work (we were accountable). It's no different in your professional practice. Embrace doing the hard work.

Pay attention in your community of practice and the hard work that everyone is bringing to the table. What galvanizing factor or moment is going to allow you to make the next step? I believe forest professionals are well-poised for this work.

5. Collaboration

Collaboration is the sister to teamwork. Can you imagine if everyone showed up wearing goalie gear and wanting to play net? Hard to generate any offense when everyone is playing defence.

This spring I had the privilege to participate, present, and facilitate at several events that brought together forest professionals from all over BC. Often, this included many who are not registrants of our profession, but professionals in their own regard. There is a ground swell of collaboration inside of communities of practice and just like my street hockey days, folks are coming to the game with a diverse range of education, experience, and abilities. What I am very proud to see is that forest professionals are often leading the conversations and playing pivotal roles in the necessary dialogue. I love that forest professionals are calling people into the conversation, not out.

Today, I am excited to be in rooms full of talented, energetic, and diverse practitioners, many from outside of our profession and no less passionate about the change they would like to see in forests. Our communities of practice are finding purpose buoyed by teamwork, failure, creativity, hard work, and collaboration. There exists a strong sense of agency and our time is now as forest professionals to score a few stewardship goals.

REFERENCES

1. Strength in Collaboration: The Value of Communities of Practice in Professional Forestry by Christine Gelowitz, RPF; www.fpbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-BCFP-Spring.pdf
2. Purpose of the Silviculture Innovation Program; sip.bvcentre.ca

SPOTLIGHT:
Continuing Professional Development

Forest Professionals
BRITISH COLUMBIA

1 2025 FPBC Forestry Conference Sessions

Online access to all session recordings from the 2025 conference has been extended until November 30. If you didn't participate in the conference, you can purchase access to all recordings for $200.

fpbc.ca/conference

2 Standards of Ethical & Professional Conduct

Learn about the core elements of professional practice under the *Professional Governance Act* and FPBC Bylaws in *Foundations of Professional Forestry*.

fpbc.ca/foundations

3 Professional Standards e-Courses

These short e-courses cover standards forest professionals need to apply at all times:

- *Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct*
- *Foundations of Professional Forestry*
- *Practice Rights Fundamentals in Professional Forestry*
- *Principles of Forest Stewardship*
- *Reserved Practice of Professional Forestry: Case Studies*

fpbc.ca/proD

4 Report your CPD hours for 2025 here:

Practising RPF, RFT, AFP, and NRP registrants must undertake and report 30 hours of CPD between December 1 and November 30 each year.

fpbc.in1touch.org

TD Insurance

Feel confident with preferred rates on Home, Condo, and Tenant's Insurance.

The TD Insurance Meloche Monnex Program is dedicated to helping Forest Professionals British Columbia registrants get access to preferred insurance rates.

Get a quote and see how much you could save!

Go to tdinsurance.com/affinity/fpbc

The TD Insurance Meloche Monnex program is underwritten by Security National INSURANCE COMPANY. It is distributed by Meloche Monnex Insurance and Financial Service, Inc. in Quebec, by Meloche Monnex Financial Services Inc. in Ontario and by TD Insurance Direct Agency Inc. in the rest of Canada. Our address: 50 Place Crémazie, 12th Floor, Montréal, Québec H2P 1B6. Due to provincial legislation, this Car and Recreational Insurance program is not offered in British Columbia, Manitoba or Saskatchewan. All trade-marks are property of their respective owners. ® The TD logo and other TD trade-marks are the property of The Toronto-Dominion Bank.

960-23307-3534_National