

BC

Forest PROFESSIONAL

SPRING 2026

The Last Responders: Wildfire
Suppression Rehabilitation in BC

Rethinking **Knowledge Sharing**
in Forestry

Preparing the Land for
Cultural Burning

Spotlight on Forest Professionals
Working in the Kootenays

Profile: Makenzie Leine, RPF,
BC's Deputy Minister of Forests

Opinion: Modern Industrial
Forestry and Moose



**Walking the Land Together: Nation-to-Nation
Collaboration and Forestry Leadership**

*"When we learn from each other, we build on our collective
knowledge and discover innovative ways to work together."*

Turning the Page:

BC Forest Professional Goes Fully Digital

**Spring 2026
Marks Our Final Print Edition**

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BC FOREST
PROFESSIONAL

SPRING 2026



Donovan "Napalm" Bertrand leading ignition with rancher Larry Fossum of the Bare Mountain Community Pasture. **28**

Photo credit: Sonja Leverkus, PhD, RPF, RPBio, P.Ag.

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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.

TURNING THE PAGE: BC Forest Professional Goes Digital

"If it's not in print, I will never read BC Forest Professional again."

I stood at our annual conference in February, the words lingering longer than expected. It was a firm statement to make. Whether you're cracking open a book for the first time, each page tucked snugly into a crisp spine; reading a newspaper with its light rustle and brackish ink aroma; or flipping through the smooth, colour-popping pages of a glossy magazine — paper is emotional and nostalgic, a warmth that engages the senses.

Here's the thing that made my heart heavy as I reflected on that statement: to never read *BC Forest Professional* again is to discount the contributions of working professionals across British Columbia, Canada, and even further afield.

Cheryl Waddell is the communications manager with Forest Professionals BC. She leads the production of BC Forest Professional magazine, manages communications to FPBC registrants and stakeholders, collaborates in the planning and delivery of the webinar program, co-manages the development of the annual conference program, and leads the production of the annual report. Prior to joining FPBC, Cheryl worked in curriculum design, community dialogue and engagement, and publishing.

As editor of *BC Forest Professional* for the past 10 years, I've worked with approximately 440 authors — many of them repeat contributors. Together, across 48 editions, they produced 679 articles and columns. This year marks the magazine's 33rd anniversary. That represents thousands of stories, most written by forest professionals sharing research, scientific case studies, accounts from the land, and measured professional opinions. They poured their expertise onto the printed page for fellow professionals to learn from, reflect on, and use as a tool for professional development and dialogue.

Those who come after the printed page will do the same. The medium is simply changing and moving to the environment where most people get their information.

On July 2, we'll launch a dedicated *BC Forest Professional* website alongside the summer 2026 edition. Printing and mailing of the

magazine will cease. Future issues will be published directly on the new site, moving beyond PDFs to a total digital reading experience. For comparison, think about newspaper websites such as the *Vancouver Sun*, *Victoria Times Colonist*, or your local paper. Readers will gain easier access to articles, robust searchability of all content, and the ability to easily share articles to their socials or with colleagues. Because the format is truly digital and not a PDF, it can comfortably be read on any mobile device, tablet, or desk-top computer. Authors, meanwhile, can look forward to an expanded global reach, unrestricted word counts, and the ability to include videos, images, and links.

You will also see some internal changes. Dean Pelkey, director of communications, will become editor-in-chief, while I shift from editor to managing editor to create space for our new digital editor, Michael Hall, FPBC's senior online communications specialist. You may recognize Michael's name from his fall 2025 cover article, *Sounds of Sustainability*, or from his profile articles over the past few years featuring Shane Berg, RPF; Lennard Joe, RPF; Gerry Burch, RPF (Ret), Life Member; and the late William Dumont, RPF (Ret). Most recently, he authored this edition's profile of BC's deputy minister of forests, Makenzie Leine, RPF. A member of the communications department for five years, Michael brings an extensive journalism career to his work with Forest Professionals BC and will lead development of each digital edition alongside myself and the editorial advisory panel.

It has been an absolute pleasure working on the print version of *BC Forest Professional*. My respect for the important work forest professionals have done — and continue to do — grows with every edition we publish. Sharing your stories is a privilege. *BC Forest Professional* is the professional development resource it is because you have made it so.

For 33 years, we have held space on the pages of *BC Forest Professional* for a broad spectrum of professional dialogue and discourse. We will continue to hold that space — now in a digital landscape where those conversations can grow even further. ✕

BC Forest Professional welcomes diverse professional voices and storytelling approaches that reflect the evolving practice of forestry. To discuss contributing the magazine, contact editor@fpbc.ca.

A New Era for BC's Forest Professionals?

This year is starting with some profound ideas coming forward from the Provincial Forestry Advisory Council (PFAC). On February 2, the report *"From Crisis to Care: BC's Forest Future"* was released. Just days later, our annual conference opened with a plenary conversation featuring PFAC co-chairs Shannon Janzen, RPF, and Garry Merkel, RPF. Our conference closed with a keynote address from Minister of Forests Ravi Parmar and Deputy Minister Makenzie Leine, RPF. Taken together, the PFAC report and these conference conversations suggest we may be standing at the beginning of a new era for us as forest professionals.



The PFAC report is more than a policy roadmap — it is an invitation for all of us to consider how our collective work can evolve. The report reflects on what many of us have been observing in our day-to-day practice: the current systems guiding forest manage-

ment simply aren't built for the cumulative pressures we are facing. Climate change, biodiversity loss, wildfire risk, market volatility, evolving public expectations, and the ongoing need to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples are reshaping the landscape we work in. These cumulative pressures demand approaches that are better integrated, more transparent, and grounded in shared stewardship.

The recommendations put forward by PFAC outline a path toward a more stable, collaborative, and durable future. Several themes stand out:

- transparency and trusted information,
- regionalized land management,
- independent oversight and accountability, and
- alignment of programs and focus.

None of these themes will be surprising to forest professionals. Many of us have long recognized that reliable data, consistent decision-making frameworks, and regionally relevant governance are essential for good stewardship. What feels different now is the alignment and clarity in how these ideas are being discussed.

A central message throughout the PFAC report is a renewed focus on reconciliation, with emphasis on the importance of working in genuine partnership with Indigenous Nations — respecting rights, title, and the depth of local knowledge that comes from long-standing relationships with the land. Many forest professionals are already engaged in this work on the ground, and the report reinforces what we hear repeatedly: reconciliation is not separate from stewardship; it is part of how stewardship must be done.

This aligns closely with the *"Principles Respecting the Government of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples"* (2018), especially its appendix, which affirms the constitutional, legal, and moral obligations to uphold Indigenous rights and title. These principles remind us our work as professionals is not only technical, but also rela-

tional and legal. As we navigate new approaches to land management, we must ensure our actions are consistent with both provincial law and the evolving legal landscape shaped by Indigenous rights. The appendix provides clarity on the duty to consult, accommodate, and respect the inherent jurisdiction of Indigenous Nations — a responsibility that is increasingly central to our practice.

As forest professionals, we also have a clear regulatory framework guiding how we carry out our responsibilities. The *Professional Governance Act* (PGA) places the public interest at the heart of our mandate. It requires us to practise competently, ethically, and objectively — regardless of employer or geography. These obligations are not new, but the PFAC report makes it clear that BC's forest sector is shifting in ways that will require these principles to be applied in new contexts.

Similarly, Forest Professionals BC's Bylaws, standards of practice, and guidance documents give us an anchor as expectations evolve. They set out the principles of professional integrity, due diligence, independent judgment, and accountability. As approaches to land management become more regionally focused — and potentially more diverse — these foundational standards continue to define what good practice looks like.

Of course, not everyone is in favour of the PFAC report's proposals. Some members of the public have voiced concerns about the pace and scope of change, the potential impacts on jobs and communities, and the shift toward area-based management. These perspectives remind us that stewardship is not only about technical excellence, but also about listening, engaging, and building trust with those who depend on forests for their livelihoods and well-being.

The BC Government budget tabled on February 17, reflected these tensions. The Ministry of Forests saw a reduction in its budget, amid broader fiscal constraints, and the allowable annual cut (AAC) for the province is projected to be significantly lower than previous years.

Whatever the future direction of forest management is, it will be forest professionals who play a leadership role in ensuring change is managed responsibly and inclusively. We know the land, we understand the stakes, and we carry the responsibility of a regulated profession that must act first and foremost in the public interest. The PFAC report has the potential to contribute to a more stable and resilient future — one shaped by collaboration, shared knowledge, and a collective dedication to stewardship.

I am optimistic about what we can accomplish together. With a clear plan, strong professional values, and a community of skilled and thoughtful practitioners, we are well positioned to support the work ahead. And if this truly is the beginning of a new era for BC's forests, then it will be forest professionals — working alongside Indigenous Nations, communities, and government — who help shape what that future becomes. ✕

Leading When Change is Necessary and Disagreement is Inevitable

It would be easy to feel bleak right now. Forest professionals are working in a sector facing serious challenges and there are no simple fixes.

In times like these, it's easy to seek someone or something to blame; maybe those thought to have created the current pressures or those tasked with dealing with them. When the future feels uncertain and the stakes are high, fear and frustration are natural reactions.

With that in mind, I want to reflect on the tone of our annual Forest Professionals BC conference and AGM in Vancouver this past February. For those who participated in person, the atmosphere was neither pessimistic nor overly upbeat. It felt measured, thoughtful, and professional. Many others joined online, and their experience may have been different; engaging with challenging material

alone, without colleagues to debrief with, is often harder. But open conversation — even when we do not have all the answers — helps us face difficult realities.

Speakers and panelists addressed some of the most complex issues facing the sector. They shone a light on problems with no clear solutions. They brought forward evidence, experience, and perspectives that did not always align with one another. They offered professional opinions that some might disagree with but all were rooted in good faith, facts, and professional judgement.

A common theme ran through much of what we heard: the status quo is no longer serving the sector, yet there is deep conflict about how change should unfold.

The conference opened with a discussion of the Provincial Forestry Advisory Council report, which makes it clear that standing still is not an option. The 10 recommendations it provides are intended as a starting point for shifting forestry toward a more sustainable future. From there, sessions turned to economic sustainability, expectations beyond legal requirements, the BC Timber Sales review, and other difficult topics.

These discussions can quickly become sensitive. Naming what is not working can blur the line between critiquing systems and critiquing the people working within them.

This reflects a central tension in our profession: many acknowledge the need for change yet feel threatened or frustrated by the change being proposed.

Many would prefer change driven solely by technical or scientific solutions. Technical problems have clear answers. But much of what we are facing now is adaptive in nature. Adaptive problems require people to change how they work and how they relate to one another.

That kind of change is uncomfortable and often feels personal rather than procedural.

We cannot separate the work from the people doing it. The Ministry of Forests, BC Timber Sales, industry, consulting firms, advocacy groups, and the profession, are social systems. Decisions about policy or operations touch identity, values, pride, and livelihood.

As we work toward solutions, we need to hold respect for one another at the centre — even as we challenge long standing ideas, structures, and behaviours.

Moving forward depends on sensemaking: building shared understanding across conflicting perspectives rather than forcing consensus too early. When we rush past the problem toward a solution, disagreement can become personal. Too often, criticism of an idea is heard as criticism of the person who raised it.

This is why emotional discipline matters. One of the hardest leadership skills is managing our reactions during hard conversations. Being able to notice our own defensiveness, anxiety, or irritation is key. Three practices can help:

- **Assume meaning before motive.** When someone raises a tough issue, they are usually reacting to perceived risk, not trying to undermine others. Treating comments as information rather than attacks keeps discussion productive.
- **Regulate the heat, not the conflict.** Productive conflict is essential for innovation. Too little tension leads to avoidance, too much leads to personalizing issues.
- **Slow down interpretation.** Discomfort is often misread as disrespect. Feeling unsettled can be a sign that a real issue has surfaced.

Professional communication requires forest professionals to distinguish between disrespect and challenge. Not all difficult conversations are inappropriate ones.

Our Code, and conduct standards such as independence, integrity, stewardship, and professionalism support a culture where forest professionals can raise concerns, test ideas, and disagree openly. It helps forest professionals separate evidence based professional opinions from personal attacks. It creates space for disagreement while still inviting dialogue.

Now is not the time for silence from forest professionals. Silence, not disagreement, is the greater risk during periods of change. I am grateful to all forest professionals, and notably those who presented and participated at our conference, for their willingness to question the status quo with professionalism and respect. It is through this kind of principled dialogue that the forest profession will continue to lead, even in difficult times. ✕



THE LAST RESPONDERS

A Look at Wildfire Suppression Rehabilitation in British Columbia

When the noise of a wildfire finally fades away, the quiet that follows can feel almost surreal. The revving chainsaws are no longer heard. The thumping of helicopter rotors has stopped. Screeching radios are silent and pumps that once were heard at full throttle every day are back at warehouses undergoing year-end maintenance. What remains is a landscape marked by wildfire and by our actions taken to suppress them. Blackened hydrophobic soils, charred tree silhouettes on the skyline, and long winding scars from the freshly exposed soil of fireguards extend as far as you can see. When the wildfire is out, most responders go home. However, for a group of professionals, this marks the start of a race against time where the focus is no longer fighting wildfire but minimizing the impact of our actions.

Recovery is one of the four pillars of emergency management.¹ For wildfires, recovery starts with wildfire suppression rehabilitation (WSR); critical work addressing the impact of over 15,000 kilometres of control lines and access trails constructed in BC since 2021.

The Reality of Response

Fighting wildfires is intense, fast-paced, and decisions must be made in the heat of the moment with the tools and information you have available. Constructing a fireguard is loud, dirty work — feller bunchers crashing

Kyle Miller, RFT, is the provincial lead for wildfire suppression rehabilitation with the BC Wildfire Service. He combines over 19 years of wildfire and forest industry experience to provide oversight, guidance and training across the Ministry of Forests. His work bridges wildfire response with effective, sustainable rehabilitation and recovery.

Craig Morrison, RFT, is a land and resource coordinator with the wildfire land-based recovery group within the BC Wildfire Service and serves as a member of the FPBC/BC Wildfire Service Wildland Fire Joint Panel. He brings 25 years of both industry and government experience to his current role focusing on wildfire suppression rehabilitation.



Recontour treatment along a previously deactivated road that was activated to support suppression operations. Location: 33 Rd. aka Powder Puff Road, Nahatlatch River area, 2024. Photo credit: Craig Morrison, RFT.

trees to the ground, skidders roaring closely behind dragging the timber out of the way, dozers trailing in the distance clearing a swath of ground vegetation, stumps and soil. In challenging terrain or sensitive areas, the same construction process applies, but instead of heavy equipment, its hand crews, chainsaws, and pulaskis that complete the work. From a suppression perspective, fuels are being displaced to create defensible space and safe havens for first responders which are essential — sometimes life saving² actions to protect lives, property, infrastructure and the environment; however, these actions do exact a toll on environmental values. Suppression actions are not part of natural fire regimes and therefore ecosystems are not as well adapted to recover from suppression disturbances as they are to wildfire.





The Goal

In British Columbia, the first building block of the recovery pillar is typically suppression rehabilitation as it is often integrated with response. At the landscape level, WSR is intended to restore ecosystem function and initiate native tree and plant species recovery. To operationalize the intent, WSR has been divided into six objectives that can be assessed, implemented, and evaluated at the site (incident) level. These objectives provide clarity while still allowing professionals to consider external factors such as land jurisdictions or resource values³ to influence treatment decisions appropriately.

The Six Objectives

Restoring Natural Drainage. Heavy equipment can alter natural and artificial drainage patterns creating acute and chronic issues

such as channel disturbance, damaged stream profiles, drainage diversions, and increased sedimentation into sensitive aquatic habitats. Treatments are intended to reduce material adverse effects on water quality and fisheries sensitive watersheds.⁴

Stabilizing Soils. Constructing control lines removes surface vegetation, exposes soil, and can result in over-steepened cut and fill slopes. These actions destabilize soil structures, which can result in slope failures, landslides, washouts, and can be fatal. WSR applies treatments, where feasible, to reduce the risk of secondary impacts resulting from soil de-stabilization.

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Minimizing Surface Erosion. From small rills to deep gullies, erosion can quickly alter the land base. WSR prescribes treatments such as water diversion features, surface roughening, and lopping and scattering^{5,6} of displaced vegetative materials to minimize the potential impact of surface water by reducing the volume and velocity of water remaining on the surface. Re-vegetation is a long-term strategy, as achieving sufficient vegetative cover has proven effective in minimizing erosion risks.

Reducing Fire Hazards. Ironically, suppressing wildfires can increase fire hazards. Residual windrows, bunches, decks and piles can all contribute to increased fire behavior and suppression challenges.⁷ WSR implements treatments such as lop and scatter, pile and burn, or salvage to minimize the risk created by suppression actions.

Repairing Suppression-related Infrastructure Damage.

Infrastructure is not immune to damage from suppression activities. This may include crushed culverts, damaged bridge decks, blocked ditch lines, damaged or removed deactivations, damaged water intakes and cut fences.

Promoting Re-vegetation and Preventing Invasive Species.

Native vegetation establishment is a critical part of recovery. Restoring displaced soil and seed banks, seeding with appropriate mixes of grasses and legumes, and live staking are some of the treatment options that are carefully evaluated. The focus of these treatments is to rebuild soil health, create microsites for biodiversity, and help native plant communities establish while preventing the introduction or spread of invasive species.⁸

A Process Driven Product

The six-step process shown in the graphic provides a framework to support effective rehabilitation of suppression activities.

The strongest framework must be adaptable. One adaptation to the six-step approach is critical work. Critical work is suppression related damage that requires immediate intervention to reduce significant risk to public safety or the environment. Unstable slopes, damage to a major culvert, and blocked streams are just a few examples. Critical work is identified in steps 1 and 2 but often addressed immediately and in advance of a holistic wildfire suppression rehabilitation plan (WSRP); however, professional due diligence is still required to prescribe and implement treatments for that specific site. Early rehabilitation is cost-effective compared to repairing downstream damage or responding to subsequent emergencies. It reduces long-term maintenance, regulatory, and liability costs while protecting communities, habitats, water resources, and public infrastructure.

The Last Responder

Legislation^{9,10} provides rules of conduct for wildfire suppression rehabilitation, but success is only achieved via the skilled forest professionals implementing sound stewardship decisions. Forest professionals must apply a variety of skills, knowledge and ability to balance the complexity of sound stewardship with the dynamic nature and sensitivity of the post-wildfire environment. This challenge



is only amplified by time constraints as rehabilitation treatments are most effective when site conditions are receptive to treatment and effectiveness is often limited over time.

The complexity of this practice area prompted the work and recommendations of the Forest Professionals BC/BC Wildfire Service Wildland Fire Joint Panel to define it as a standalone area of practice. In November 2025, the Forest Professionals BC Board endorsed the establishment of competence standards for wildfire suppression rehabilitation¹¹. The standards define the skills, abilities, and knowledge required for forest professionals to ensure that they are well positioned for the responsibility of overseeing, planning, and coordinating all professional work associated with WSR. The competence standards also recognize that complex sites may require the engagement of other professionals of record.

Why it Matters

Forest stewardship is not just a choice; it is a responsibility. As suppression efforts increase, so in turn does the effort to mitigate the impacts left behind.

WSR is critical to protecting our environment as unaddressed disturbance creates a cascade of downstream impacts, increases the risk of secondary disasters, and increases the cumulative effects of human activity on the land base. By addressing damage to environmental values, rehabilitation treatments often support the recovery process of impacted cultural and social values as well. The identification and protection of archaeological sites and implementation of treatments that mitigate impacts to water quality are two examples.

Five Years Later

Fast forward five years and the story on the ground is a different one. Signs of the return of wildlife are more noticeable; and the presence of insects has increased. What were initially sharp-edged lines carved into the landscape are now muted — almost hard to distinguish, given that pull back or recontour treatments have had time to settle. Subtle reminders of the past fire exist with charred bark on mature trees, and an open canopy; however, a contrast now exists between that and the fresh green regrowth. This new vegetation has filled in what was once exposed soil and evidence of the tracked machines from five years ago have now faded. Early seral tree species saplings have even begun to peak up over this natural revegetation. Berms along the edge of machine guards that would have otherwise hindered wildlife movement have been breached, which has allowed wildlife to return to pre-wildland fire norms. Clean, clear water now flows in established stream beds and draws and water movement across the surface have returned to natural flow, drastically reducing the risk of erosion.



*Dozer and excavator building machine guard (fireguard).
Location: Pink Mountain, 2025. Photo credit: Kyle Miller, RFT.*



*Wildfire Suppression Rehabilitation Plan process.
Graphic credit: Kia Freeman.*

After the Flames

Wildfire suppression rehabilitation may not grab headlines, but it is a foundational building block of the recovery pillar. It is part of a broader network of last responders that work diligently in the wake of catastrophic wildfires.

Wildfire suppression rehabilitation ensures that the actions taken during today's emergency response do not become tomorrow's environmental crisis. ❌

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BRIDGING RESEARCH AND ACTION: Rethinking Knowledge Sharing in Forestry

As the environmental and social pressures on Canadian forestry continue to grow, it's increasingly important for research to equip forest professionals with practical tools and relevant knowledge that supports their work. However, while there has been an increasing amount of scientific information about forestry published, there has been a documented gap between research and practice, often referred to as the knowledge-action gap. This matters because incorporating scientific evidence into decision-making can strengthen outcomes, help navigate complexity, promote accountability and transparency, build trust, and improve program efficiency.

How knowledge moves between researchers and practitioners is a process known as knowledge exchange. However, how forest professionals engaged in knowledge exchange, the barriers they experienced, their preferences for receiving knowledge, and their trust in research were unknown until now.

Between September 2023 and August 2025, I tackled these questions using a mixed methods approach. Specifically, I conducted a nationwide survey of 139 Registered Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists (or Technicians as they are more often referred to on the east coast) and 10 follow-up interviews. The results from my research help to provide researchers and others working in knowledge-sharing positions with tangible advice about how to improve knowledge exchange practices.

What the Research Revealed

My research revealed clear patterns: forest professionals strongly prefer in-person events to engage with new knowledge and generally dislike academic journals — despite journals being one of the most traditional ways researchers share their work. There was also greater interest in collaborative forms of knowledge exchange (e.g. (1) collaborating with researchers in the creation of projects, and (2) participating in research). This suggests forest professionals are interested in greater engagement with research than they currently experience. Overall, while there was some overlap between current and preferred methods, the findings suggest room for improvement in how research is communicated.

See *Table 1* for more information.

*Samantha M. Chu is a recent graduate from Dalhousie University where she completed a master's in environmental studies. Her thesis is titled **Planting the Seeds for Knowledge Exchange in Canadian Forestry: Perspectives from Forest Professionals on Trust, Barriers, and Preferences**. While she works on a publishable version of her research, more information can be found at <https://hdl.handle.net/10222/85410>. Samantha can be contacted at sm.chu@dal.ca.*



Barriers to Knowledge Exchange

Forest professionals identified several major barriers to engaging in knowledge exchange. These included concerns about the relevance of research — such as work that feels “siloed” or lacks practical guidance — along with the overuse of academic jargon, a lack of established processes for connecting with researchers, and limited time. Time constraints often worsened other knowledge exchange barriers; for example, not having the time to interpret and translate research findings into on-the-ground applications.

HOW PROFESSIONALS CURRENTLY RECEIVE KNOWLEDGE	HOW PROFESSIONALS WOULD PREFER TO RECEIVE KNOWLEDGE
TOP THREE RANKED KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AVENUES:	
1. Online presentations and webinars.	1. Field visits/tours.
2. Forestry magazines.	2. On the job training.
3. On the job training.	3. In-person conferences/workshops.
RANKING OF ACADEMIC JOURNALS AS MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER:	
11. Academic journals.	19. Academic journals.
BOTTOM THREE RANKED KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AVENUES:	
20. Long learning course (more than four hours).	20. Social media.
21. Participate in research.	21. Long learning course (more than four hours).
22. Hiring an intern or third party.	22. Hiring an intern or third party.


TABLE 1.

The top three and bottom three ranked methods, along with results for academic journals (the most traditional form of knowledge sharing), based on survey responses comparing how forest professionals currently obtain knowledge and how they would prefer to.

Trust was found to be essential in making knowledge exchange effective. The status of trust that forest professionals have in research and researchers is moderately strong, even in cases where the forest professional had a negative experience with a researcher. Trust was not determined by a single factor, but rather shaped by a variety of influences that interact in complex ways. Some of these include perceptions of bias, expectations and processes, and apathy towards research.

Perceptions of researcher bias were perceived to either lean towards the environment or industry needs. Perceptions of bias can negatively affect forest professionals' willingness to engage with researchers, as well as a forest professional's perception of a researcher's credibility. As respondents explained, researchers who are perceived as biased are “less likely to be well received within the forestry community.” There was also a recognition by some of the respondents that forest professionals could also be perceived as biased, suggesting that their own beliefs and values can inform what research they believe to be credible and legitimate.

Trust in the research process, or procedural trust, was one of the strongest influencing variables. While trust is often associated with good interpersonal relationships, it can also stem from the belief in formal processes and established procedures. In this research,



Planting the Seeds for Knowledge Exchange in Canadian Forestry Perspectives from Forest Professionals on Trust, Barriers, and Preferences

By Samantha M. Chu
<https://hdl.handle.net/10222/85410>

A group of people walking along a trail in the Wabanaki forest in Nova Scotia.

Photo credit: Samantha M. Chu.

respondents emphasized the trust they have in the researcher's processes and systems, "I choose to believe [...] that scientists are held accountable for the quality and the soundness and the accuracy of their work and the results that they generate." This result suggests that while journal articles are not necessarily a preferred method for obtaining knowledge, peer review and maintaining transparent and rigorous academic standards continues to be essential.

Together, these findings also support the notion that knowledge exchange is not a linear process but a social and dynamic one, with knowledge often moving through social networks and relationships.

Recommendations for Researchers and Others in Knowledge-sharing Positions

I. Improve Knowledge Exchange

- Start early. Consider your target audience and plan for knowledge exchange from the very beginning — build it into your research design, budget, and timelines.
- Share regular updates throughout the project, not just at the end.
- Timing matters. Avoid the summer field season; winter and spring are often better for engagement.

- Use formats forest professionals prefer, such as field tours, in-person talks, newsletters.
- Avoid academic jargon and focus on clear, accessible, and plain communication.
- Make your findings accessible: avoid publishing them behind journal paywalls.

II. Make Research More Relevant and Actionable

- Involve forest professionals in the design phase. Learn what matters to their operations and co-develop questions that address real-world challenges.

III. Collaboration Across Communities

- Collaborate with users and stakeholders throughout the research process to ensure relevance and impact.
- Actively build relationships within your local, provincial, and national forest communities. For example, attending events or conferences even when they are not directly related to one's work.
- Work with diverse professionals across sectors, roles, and backgrounds. This approach can also help produce research that is perceived as more balanced. ✘



A LANDSCAPE READY TO BURN AGAIN: Preparing the Land for Cultural Burning

W

Juniper Heights, January 2025, work in progress.

Photo credit: Aaron Lee, RFT.

Wildfire risk reduction is an essential aspect of forest management in British Columbia. As average global temperatures continue to rise incrementally and frequency of catastrophic wildfire incidents intensify throughout the province, more than ever, community leaders and citizens recognize the benefits of proactive fuel management. Community wildfire resiliency plans are being implemented to help better protect homes, infrastructure and human life. Not only does preventative wildfire risk-reduction work help mitigate the risk of future

forest fires, and in turn, better safeguard communities, but it is also a necessary step for Indigenous Peoples to reassert their practice of cultural burning which has existed for thousands of years. These burns involve the controlled application of fire on the landscape to achieve specific cultural objectives and fuel mitigation, holding different meaning for different Indigenous communities.

As a result of previous forest management objectives, many forested areas throughout the province are not in a state conducive to implementing cultural burns. Throughout the province though, the forest is being prescriptively thinned, reducing excess layer 3 and layer 4 trees, and helping restore historical conditions to facilitate reintroducing fire back onto the land as a restorative tool, one that supports both ecosystem resilience and cultural practices. Equally important is the growing leadership and involvement of First Nations people in providing the expertise and guidance for this wildfire risk-reduction work. Their involvement provides significant local knowledge to the work, opportunities for community members to reconnect with the land and build on their valuable ancestral skills.

Aaron Lee, RFT, was raised on Canada's East Coast in the Maritimes and began his forestry career in Northwestern Ontario, where he developed a strong foundation in operational silviculture. He relocated to BC, working across forestry consulting and applied field projects, and later completed the Forestry Program at Selkirk College in Castlegar. Now based in the Columbia Valley, Aaron serves as Woodlands Manager with Kenpesq't Forestry.

Travis Emsland, RPF, is the operations manager with the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC), overseeing projects for the West Kootenays and 100 Mile House regions. Prior to joining FESBC, he spent 17 years in northern Alberta as a silviculture forester and later worked as a stewardship forester in the Rocky Mountain Resource District with the Crown Land Wildfire Risk Reduction program.

The Juniper Heights Fuel Management Project

The Juniper Heights project near Invermere, BC, adjacent to the Shuswap Band Reserve, is a culmination of years of wildfire risk-reduction work to prepare the landscape for cultural burning. Although the area had undergone several treatments in previous years, the absence of regular burning practices resulted in significant coniferous encroachment in the stand. Without the controlled application of fire to the landscape, young conifers gradually filled open areas and



grasslands, increasing stand density and allowing a significant increase of ladder fuels. Over time, these changes in vegetation elevated the risk of a high-intensity wildfire, which, if it occurred, could negatively impact homes and infrastructure in the area. Recognizing the need to mitigate wildfire risk and enhance the safety of the surrounding community, a new fuel mitigation project was proposed.

The project area was initially highlighted for consideration by Andy McCuaig, RPF, fibre procurement manager at the Skookumchuck Pulp Mill, located in the East Kootenay region of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. McCuaig identified a 117.5-hectare area of interest (AOI), which was ultimately refined to 76.4 hectares in the fuel management prescriptions (FMP). Initial fuel management reduction plans included a combination of mechanical and manual treatments, with the mechanical portion of the fibre from the project intended for hog fuel utilization. At the onset of the project, warmer than expected temperatures increased the risk of ground disturbance, making it unsuitable for crews to use heavy equipment. As a result, the project shifted entirely to manual hand treatments and subsequent piling and burning.

Kenpesq't Forestry LP, a division of Kenpesq't, the economic development entity of the Shuswap Band, served as the primary contractor, overseeing the development of the prescription and plan, project management, crew organization, and supervision. To undertake a project of this magnitude, Kenpesq't applied for funding through the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC). The overall investment from FESBC covered several components of the project, including the preliminary field reconnaissance, FMP development, hand cutting, piling, and burning, as well as grass seeding the burn pile locations to help minimize the proliferation of invasive plants in the exposed soil.

Upon receiving project approval in October 2022, field work began in April 2024 and was completed a year later. Crews manually cut all coniferous species under 15 cm diameter at breast height (DBH), with the exception of five-needle pine. The material was bucked into smaller pieces and piled and burned in accordance with the FMP specifications. A total of four units were treated, including one re-treatment unit, which was initially completed seven years earlier. This unit was identified as a maintenance treatment and the work completed within the unit ensured the initial investment of resources to reduce the high fuel load, would not be lost.

Outcomes, Lessons Learned, and the Path Forward

Incorporating local First Nations knowledge into the fuel-reduction work, including local knowledge of the area, historical species, and stand structure, was essential for success. Throughout the project, Jamie Thomas, a local Band member, trained and mentored his two children to impart both practical forestry skills and traditional knowledge. For the Shuswap Band, the work has contributed to



Post-treatment area after the clearing, piling, and burning were completed. Photo credits: Aaron Lee, RFT.

long-term capacity building and helped create more opportunities for Band members to work closer to home and within their traditional territory.

To date, the completed treatment has created a more resilient landscape within the wildland urban interface (WUI) by significantly reducing the density of conifer trees and fuel loads, providing additional suppression options for wildland firefighters. While further results and specific successes may not be apparent for some time, the more open stand structure will allow better access and visibility for both ground and aerial resources in the event of a wildfire. From a wildlife habitat benefit perspective, the work done has enhanced the area for several species, including bighorn sheep, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and elk.

For all involved, a key lesson learned throughout the project was the importance of adaptability. Although harvesting

fibre would have been economically beneficial, that work was not worth the significant soil degradation risk. Instead, the project was adapted to consist entirely of hand treatments while still ensuring wildfire risk-reduction goals were met without compromising the long-term resilience of the landscape.

Perhaps the most important outcome, from a long-term perspective, is that by implementing the FMP and reducing the number of stems of small conifers, the treatment has reduced the fuel load in the stand adjacent to a community. BC Wildfire Service considers this a fundamental first step towards undertaking a cultural burn. More data will likely have to be gathered prior to ignition of a cultural burn, and the objectives will be determined by the Nation at a time deemed appropriate by them. Given the new current state of these treatment units, fire will be an essential part of the maintenance process. The reintroduction of fire onto the landscape will help maintain a lower fuel load and mimic the natural disturbance type (NDT4) for this geographic region, which is characterized by frequent, low-intensity, stand-maintaining fires. Kenpesq't is currently working with the Ministry of Forests to identify opportunities for future partnerships and to align efforts toward achieving shared objectives. Moving forward, honest and meaningful collaboration will be fundamental to this process.

The relationships created and the understanding built over the duration of this project among forestry professionals, community members, and partnering organizations were as valuable as the work itself. The connections, grounded in openness, shared learning, and a commitment to stewardship will support the success of future wildfire risk reduction projects across the region. The Juniper Heights project is a valuable example for other practitioners to incorporate thoughtful planning, flexibility, and Indigenous leadership into their work. That, along with a willingness to co-create solutions to achieve meaningful, effective and long-term improvements for forests and communities, will benefit us all for generations to come. ☘

WALKING THE LAND TOGETHER: Nation-to-Nation Collaboration and



Teams of forest professionals from Central Chilcotin Rehabilitation and Nk'Mip Forestry hosted one another on field tours in their respective territories this past fall to build relationships, share experiences, and learn together on the land.

Central Chilcotin Rehabilitation (CCR) is a joint venture of T̓sid̓del First Nation, Tl'etinqox Government, and Yunesit'in Government. Nk'Mip Forestry operates as a division of the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB).

As the 2026 field season approaches, the connections formed

during those visits remain top of mind. Through the tours, CCR and OIB shared how they are advancing wildfire resilience, post-wildfire recovery, and sustainable forestry practices aimed at creating healthier, more resilient forests.

"When we learn from each other, we build on our collective knowledge and discover innovative ways to work together," says Percy Guichon, CCR CEO.

By walking each other's territories, the groups also explored ways to strengthen First Nations leadership within the BC forestry sector.

Together, Percy Guichon; Dan Macmaster, RPF; Peter Flett, RPF; Daniel Persson, RPF; and Aleece Laird

represent a collaborative team amplifying the relationship between Central Chilcotin Rehabilitation Ltd. and Nk'Mip Forestry. Through field tours, shared learning, communications, and time spent on the land, they are advancing Indigenous-led approaches to wildfire resilience, forest rehabilitation, and sustainable management. Their work reflects a shared commitment to healthier forests, stronger communities, and long-term stewardship grounded in the values and priorities of the Nations they serve.



Forestry Leadership

A view of the 2025 Chilcotin slide. Image still from the video "First Nations Deepen Collaboration Through Forestry Field Tours" by Kiwi Man Creative.

Insights from the T̓silhqot'in Territory

The first tour took place in the Cariboo Chilcotin region, within T̓silhqot'in territory. CCR welcomed the Nk'Mip team to view a large-scale forest rehabilitation operation in an area called the Palmer Lake area. They looked at the challenges there following a devastating wildfire in 2017. The CCR team showed how it has been able to utilize more than 100,000 cubic metres of wood fibre from fire-killed trees for green energy and pulp, reducing future wildfire risk in the area and to communities.

Peter Flett, RPF, operations manager with Nk'Mip, was impressed by CCR's forward-thinking stewardship on a large scale.

"CCR's focus on maximum utilization of sub-merchantable fire-killed stands is an excellent example of responsible forest management that our industry should be implementing on a larger scale," says Flett. "Their efforts to increase stand resiliency prioritized a multi-generational vision over short-term economic gains, which is something we also aspire to do at Nk'Mip."

The teams also visited a road rehabilitation project, a wildfire risk reduction project, and Nen gwetlad, or 'the land that slides' — an area overlooking the 2024 Chilcotin landslide. The slide site was a stark reminder of post-wildfire landscape instability, reinforcing why

proactive management and diverse replanting are top priorities for CCR and its three partner nations.

"We believe that the foundation of success in forestry is finding a way to work in a synergistic manner with others, all while navigating complex regulations," Flett says. "We also believe that this is done more effectively when we learn together."

Innovation in Southern Okanagan

Two weeks later, the CCR team travelled south to start its tour at the OIB office in Oliver. The focus of the tour started with the seed-to-seedling lifecycle at the K&C Silviculture nursery, a partner in OIB's new Osoyoos Forest Nursery project, opening this summer.

The tour showcased the science and purpose behind growing a diverse range of tree species, including western larch and ponderosa pine, from seeds collected on OIB's traditional territory.

Daniel Persson, RPF, forestry superintendent for CCR, noted immediate value in the cross-Nation learning opportunity.

"Collaborating with Nk'Mip allowed us to focus on what delivers real results rather than spending resources on unproven

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Forestry tour at the Grizzly commercial thinning project site with Nk'Mip Forestry.

Image still from the video "First Nations Deepen Collaboration Through Forestry Field Tours" by Kiwi Man Creative.

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approaches," Persson says. "Nk'Mip's experience of developing a nursery is something we are very interested in and the insight gained by being in-person and having detailed conversations, we believe, will save significant time, money, and effort for work we would like to explore in the future. Plus, sharing knowledge on the land and directly with the people doing the work provides practical details that reports alone can't quite offer."

The teams also visited the Anah Lake fuel break project site, where some understory and ladder fuels have been removed.

"So when a fire does come through, it will slow down and creep along the ground. These areas are strategically placed around our communities to help protect them and mitigate future wildfire risk," Guichon says.

The teams then travelled into the backcountry to visit the Grizzly Retention site, where they observed specialized silviculture systems designed to support wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Comparing what has and hasn't worked, they found similarities in their pursuits of innovative harvesting that respects both Indigenous and ecological values.

"The goal of this is to thin out the forest with highly specialized equipment and create more growing space for the remaining stand," Flett says.

The Power of Collective Leadership

For Dan Macmaster, RPF, forestry manager for Nk'Mip, these collaborative exchanges are vital for building capacity and unity. He believes that when Indigenous forestry companies engage in such exchanges, they learn from each other's experiences in managing forests sustainably and economically. Macmaster pointed out that sustainability is not just ecological, but also cultural and social.

"Much of our province's forest land lies within unceded territories, making relationships foundational to the ability to proactively find solutions to do the work. Relationship-building allows foresters to understand these values and adapt their practices

accordingly, and although sometimes it may take more time, effort, and communication, it's the right thing to do. It's a model to ensure that forest management aligns with a long-term vision rather than solely short-term objectives."

Guichon echoed Macmaster's sentiment, noting that nations are working to build greater resilience amid climate change, catastrophic wildfires, and shifting regulatory conditions.

"Like Dan, Peter, and other leaders from Nk'Mip, we believe that establishing relationships today allows nations to be more proactive and thoughtful rather than reactive. Meaningful relationship-building takes time, in-person connection, and a willingness to learn. But it leads to better outcomes for everyone."

A Roadmap for the Future

For Guichon, the most enduring takeaway from the tours was the importance of leaving the boardroom and getting onto the land together.

"For me, our forestry team, and Otis Guichon, Chief of T'sideldel First Nation and Tribal Chief of the T'silhqot'in National Government who made the trip, seeing forestry practices first-hand being conducted by another nation and having good conversations builds a level of understanding not as easily achieved through online meetings or emails. Stronger, healthier, and more resilient forests depend on strong relationships, and those relationships start with listening, learning, and showing up together."

The collaborative model demonstrated by CCR and Nk'Mip shows how shared learning and nation-to-nation networking can build a more resilient landscape.

For the leaders involved, the exchange left them with a renewed sense of purpose.

Flett felt emboldened.

"Try incorporating new or novel elements into planning and operations," he advises, "and have the courage to step out of your comfort zone to make a difference." ❌



Aerial view of Grizzly commercial thinning site operations. Image still from the video "First Nations Deepen Collaboration Through Forestry Field Tours" by Kiwi Man Creative.

Spotlight on Forest Professionals

This spotlight highlights the unique journeys of Patrick Finder, RPF, who immigrated to Canada from Germany, and Chris Leitch, RPF, who moved to BC from Ontario. These professionals are passionate about being in the forest, improving forest practices, life-long learning, and sharing knowledge.

Patrick Finder, RPF

Patrick Finder, RPF, works for Monticola Management Ltd. in Fruitvale, managing privately owned forests through a European-style approach adapted to BC's regulatory framework. This full-phase forest management includes development planning, assessments, road building, logging supervision, and silviculture.

What makes you passionate about working in forestry?

"I grew up in rural Germany surrounded by huge spruce forests. As a kid, I loved hanging out in the forest building little houses with sticks and branches and watching birds and wildlife. Later, internships with the local forestry department showed me I wanted to work in the forest — I've never regretted it. I love every aspect of full-scope forestry. It's more than cutting down trees. I enjoy road building, silviculture, caring for wildlife, protecting watersheds, and more. I'm happiest in the forest and driven to manage it for future generations to enjoy."

What sparked your interest in moving to BC?

"Although I'd never been here, I always wanted to live in BC since I was a teenager. After a decade of forestry work in Germany, I wasn't satisfied with my job, so moving felt like 'now or never.' Then, I randomly saw a job ad hanging in our Bavarian forestry department — my current boss still doesn't know how it got there. He's German, so that connection helped me get my job in BC."

What solidified your decision to keep working in BC?

"Compared to Germany, BC is a gigantic, diverse playground where one-size-fits-all solutions don't apply. I like challenges that motivate me to use my education and critical thinking for the niche areas

Heather Poulson, MForSc, RPF, is a member of the BC Forest Professional magazine Editorial Advisory Panel. She is interested in forest professionals' stories: 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.



Professional forestry is serious business, but you have to have some fun too. Patrick kicks back in a woody tub.
Photo credit: Douglas Thorburn, RPF.

I'm working in. Sustainability is a hot topic of public discussion, and there's momentum for change. Europe has gone through similar transitions, so I'd like to contribute my experience here."

What forestry experiences from Germany are you applying in BC?

"Selective logging is a big one. In Germany, I managed every detail holistically — protecting soil, minimizing machine impact, utilizing modern equipment, integrating forest health and recreation and balancing finances. In the Kootenays, machinery is not always modernized or fuel efficient and it's incredible how modernized machinery has far better logging outcomes. For example, one contractor invested in a modern harvester-forwarder system, resulting in successful ground-based thinning, seed tree cuts and uneven aged management practices on up to 35% slopes, with winch techniques applied on 35 to 45 per cent slopes."

What keeps you inspired in your work?

"The forest makes me happy. An hour of recce or tree marking improves my mood. I love working in a living system that benefits society — not every career is like that. I'm deeply connected to the forest. In Germany we call it a generational contract: managing forests responsibly for future generations. That mindset motivates me here too."

How was your experience going through the ASFIT program to obtain your RPF?

"I felt genuinely welcomed. My degrees were recognized and certified early on, so I progressed through the road map without





Working in the Kootenays

needing to take additional courses. Surprisingly, the content focused on legislation, regulation, Forest Professionals BC's role and due diligence, with little emphasis on forestry, or forest-specific knowledge. Learning law in a second language was exhausting, but I did it. My boss was my sponsor, which worked well and enabled me to get boots on the ground experience straight away.

The credential assessment process was a huge workload and the most time-consuming part. I addressed and proved my knowledge on about 95 demonstrable competencies with detailed write-ups. I'm grateful for receiving outstanding guidance from FPBC throughout."

What advice would you share with other immigrants beginning the ASFIT program?

"Be patient and do the work. That's my best advice. It can feel overwhelming but pushing past frustrations and steadily progressing makes a big difference. Forest Professionals BC provides plenty of time and support to complete the process. If you have few commitments outside your job, it's easily doable. With consistent effort, you could complete it in half the allowable time. Finally, don't be afraid to make mistakes!"

What do you believe is essential for successful forestry?

"A mindset focusing on full-scope forestry. Understand the forest as an ecosystem—water, soil, species, timber, recreation, etc. Earning money is crucial, but we can't focus on economics and ignore the rest. Future success depends on having a full-scope mindset."

Any final thoughts?

"I feel closer to home here than one might think. My favourite tree species is the Douglas-fir, which happens to be the same tree species of the tallest tree in Germany (67 metres), located near Freiburg. I enjoy seeing the many Douglas-firs in BC's forests.

In Germany we say that foresters are unique individuals. A saying goes, 'if you enter the woods with 10 foresters, you'll leave the woods with 12 opinions about how to do good forestry.'"

Chris Leitch, RPF

Chris Leitch, RPF, is the manager of Forsite's Kootenay division. He specializes in operational forestry services and manages a team who completes operational planning, GIS, analytics, full phase timber development, appraisals, wildfire risk reduction and silviculture.

What first drew you towards working in forestry?

"I grew up in a small rural town in Ontario and was always outside — in the woods building forts or exploring the marsh. In high school, I loved both science and art but wondered what to do career-wise. My uncle encouraged me to try forestry at Lakehead University, so I went for it. I became increasingly invested and realized forestry is the perfect mix of science and art. I think I was passionate about forestry my entire life but didn't realize until later. After graduation, I moved to Williams Lake for my first job in timber development and never looked back."

Why did you move to BC to start your forestry career?

"At 12 years old, I visited Vancouver and Whistler on a snowboarding trip and immediately knew I wanted to live in BC. Upon receiving the Williams Lake job offer, I packed my things and left without hesitation. I'd never been there, so it was a shock compared to the lower mainland, but the move was one of best decisions I've made. My boss, John Walker, RPF, became a pivotal mentor who shaped me both professionally and personally."

What experience solidified your decision to stay in the profession?

"I'll never forget my first day in the bush: completely unprepared, soaked, freezing, wondering what I'd gotten myself into. Suddenly the weather shifted and the clouds lifted, revealing beautiful snowcapped mountains. I instantly went from 'What am I doing here?' to 'I want to do this for the rest of my life.'"

But it wasn't just that first day — forestry culture solidified my decision. Forestry is full of passionate people who love the forest, love the outdoors and have a blast at work. Over time, I've transitioned to

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Chris, hiking Monica Meadows in the Kootenays, on a day off. Photo credit: Megan Phipps, RPF.

mentoring people. It's incredible watching people build skills and step into leadership roles themselves."

Tell me more about your mentor, John Walker, RPF.

How did he help you succeed?

"John had an incredible work ethic. The most impactful thing he taught me was how to provide good service to clients — produce quality products, manage time and effectively communicate. He showed me what it means to be a true professional. Every cutblock matters, because those stand-level decisions represent the future landscape. John cared, led by example, went above and beyond and treated everyone equally. He had a huge impact on my leadership style."

How do you think early career mentorship could be improved?

"Mentorship is a two-way street. Both mentor and mentee should equally participate or it won't work. I've seen early career folks who want opportunities without any struggle. Learning happens through the struggle. I recommend staying just outside your comfort zone and pushing your threshold. Find a mentor who can match your energy. A great mentor takes time to build the relationship and genuinely cares about the mentee."

How has your perspective on forestry evolved since you began your career?

"I started with strong opinions and little experience. At university, I wrote a paper on whitebark pine, then challenged John because

I didn't feel good about our fieldwork. After days of listening to my rants, he mentioned he participated in developing BC's real-world management strategy for whitebark pine. I was immediately humbled. Over time, I've learned there's always someone more knowledgeable, so I slow down, ask questions and consider all angles."

What keeps you inspired in your work?

"The people. I helped expand our Nelson team from three to 25 people in three years. Seeing people develop and utilize new technology keeps me excited for the future. At Forsite, I work with amazing professionals and mentors who help me think bigger, make better decisions and improve forest landscape management. It's hugely motivating to see ideas go from dreams to reality, helping our clients and staff every day."

What do you believe is essential for successful forestry?

"Attitude is the only thing that matters. Show up like you want to be there, even through tough times. A good attitude helps you learn and accomplish anything. Being open to different opinions also improves your success."

Any final thoughts?

"Forestry is changing and we should embrace it. Keep an open mind despite negative news about the sector. Remember, foresters make daily decisions that matter. No one loves the forest more than someone who works in it." ✕

Makenzie's Roots and the Values of Forestry in British Columbia

Makenzie Leine's views on forestry in

BC were formed at a remote logging camp on the Cypre River, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, within Nuu-chah-nulth territory and the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.

The camp, no longer active, was a half-hour boat ride northeast of Tofino, nestled in Clayoquot Sound's network of coastal inlets, islands, rivers, and estuaries. It sat in a coastal temperate rainforest, where western red cedar and western hemlock still tower overhead. Sitka spruce rises along the banks, while red alder fills gaps in the canopy. Salal, huckleberry, devil's club, thimbleberry, and ferns crowd the understory, along with carpets of mosses and draping lichens. Logging roads still weave through the forest, linking cutblocks.

This was Makenzie's playground.

"When you're a kid and you grow up in a logging camp, you spend a lot of time in the woods," says Makenzie, MBA, RPF, appointed BC's deputy minister of forests in April 2025, amid much turbulence in the sector.

That turbulence is characterized by reduced harvest levels, regulatory changes and challenges, fluctuating US softwood lumber tariffs, mill closures, job losses, climate change, wildfires, and beetle infestations.

Makenzie is equipped for these challenges, having spent more than 30 years in the forestry sector, in a range of roles — from forest stewardship to policy development. She is an advocate for managing the forest land base for all values — forest health and sustainability while protecting jobs and communities.

Makenzie has spent much of her first year in the ministry learning the government landscape, focussing on land

Mike Hall is the senior online communications specialist with Forest Professionals BC and is a former journalist and editor.



Makenzie as an adult back at Cypre.

management reviews, identifying ways to unlock fibre supply, expediting cutting permits, and implementing a mandate review of BC Timber Sales. In November 2025, she took part in a seven-day trade mission to Japan and South Korea that secured new trade agreements to strengthen export markets and technical collaborations.

Now the real work begins, as the ministry charts a path to economic sustainability and aims to raise the annual harvest to 45 million cubic metres. BC's annual allowable cut (AAC) stands at 60 million cubic metres, although harvest levels have been about half of that in each of the past two years, according to a provincial review.

As she grows further in her role, Makenzie will draw on her roots and rely on her experience to help guide the sector toward that goal, and into the future.

At Camp

Makenzie was born in Nanaimo. When she was just two weeks old, her family moved to the logging camp, where her father, was an equipment operator for a logging contractor. Makenzie, her parents, and sister lived in the "married quarters" with four to six other families at any one time.

"It was just an amazing childhood, a great way to grow up," Makenzie recalls. "We had the kind of childhood where you just had to come in before it got dark and don't get water in your boots. It was a fairly substantial camp, with all phases, from road construction through to the sort."

Makenzie and the other camp kids spent a lot of time playing in the timbered areas,

the beaches, and amenities around the married quarters.

"There was an airstrip at the camp. Planes would be coming in and out of camp with crews and supplies and so on. And there was a pond at the end of the airstrip, which we all believed was actually quicksand. We'd play down there and catch frogs and be exactly the way kids should be."

The kids would make their rounds of the camp, visiting "Mr. Block," the timekeeper.

"We would jump on the sofas in the rec hall and peer in at the mechanics in the shop. They fixed me up a bike, my first bike," she says.

"Sometimes I'd have the chance to ride around in the machine with my father, which was always exciting. I think it's why I love dry sorts now."

Makenzie has many fond memories of the camp.

"It rained a lot there. I lived in my puddle suit," she says, laughing. "It was a normal childhood, until we got to other places and realized that other kids had childhoods different from ours."

Forestry is Family

The camp shaped Makenzie in many ways and led her to a career in forestry.

"It wasn't by happenstance," she says. "I learned through living it, what forestry is, how it contributes to community, and the value of the type of work that we bring to people, their health and their families. The people who were in that camp, I still

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know many of them today and they are like family.”

The camp showed her a part of the sector not all get to see.

“It gave me an insight into not just the economic value of forestry from a household and community perspective, but also a view into the social value of the network of people who are in forestry and how they contribute socially to the broader community, how we support each other through challenging times.”

To her, it’s a hard-working, caring, and dedicated community, one that values what the forest provides.

“It is a healthy way of life that supports healthy communities and ecosystems,” she says.

Makenzie’s family left the married quarters later in her camp years and moved on to a 70-foot wooden boat her parents had bought and wanted to restore. Her family lived on the boat for several years, then relocated back to Nanaimo before moving on to Duncan, where Makenzie went to junior high.

Duncan is a forestry town, and her Grade 8 science teacher — “a passionate environmentalist” — talked a lot about forestry in the classroom. But the information he was presenting contradicted what Makenzie knew.

“He was characterizing forestry as being something that was ‘bad and destructive’ and something that needed to be stopped. I took issue with it, and we used to get in these arguments in the classroom about forestry and what it is and what they do,” she says. “If there is anything that really tied my passion to communicating about the value of the forestry sector to British Columbia, it probably started then.”

Makenzie would explain to her teacher how important forestry was to the economy and to families and communities.

“I would explain the measures that the companies had to go to, to ensure they protect the environment,” she adds. “My classmates used to be like, ‘Oh boy, here they go,’ every time the teacher would bring up forestry.”

Makenzie defended her family’s work. “They were good people who worked hard and they understood the environment. My family are people who love the outdoors and nature just as much as anybody else.”

Forestry is ingrained in her family. Her mom’s dad was a logger. Generations of her



Makenzie and her shiny bike.

dad’s family, from Norway, were sawmillers and loggers.

“It’s in my family and in my blood,” Makenzie says. “It was sort of inescapable. I kind of tried to decide not to go into forestry a few times because it just seemed too obvious.”

Graduating to Forestry

At the time of her high school graduation, Makenzie was interested in biology. During her first year at Red Deer College, she studied invertebrate zoology with her eye on getting into fisheries. The previous year, she worked at a fish hatchery.

“I just loved it. I loved it because I was outside and it was hands-on.”

Forestry offered the same kind of experience, and familiarity.

Makenzie took a year off school and, through friends, ended up working at Alberta Pacific, a northern pulp mill. She enjoyed the work, and with some colleagues started a small consulting firm doing work for the mill, mostly related to management and operations involving boreal forests.

“I was happy to be back with my forestry family.”

Forestry was similar to biology in both its science and the hands-on, outdoor work it offered. She chose that path, despite uncertainty in the sector at that time.

“The War in the Woods was ongoing. The sector was really being challenged. And it’s not that I had any less confidence in the sector, but there was a lot of us that were wondering what was going to happen with it,” she says. “You get a different perspective when you’re wondering if your dad is going to have a job the next day.”

That reinforced for her how important forestry is to the economy and community well-being.

Makenzie applied to the forestry program at the University of Alberta, and graduated with a forestry business management degree.

“Something I tell young people who are contemplating careers and thinking about forestry is when you get your forestry degree, not only are you a scientist, but you have an occupation: you are a forester. It’s academic, but it’s very applied. You get your RPF designation or you become a forest technologist and get your RFT designation, you have an occupation.”

Applied Science

Early in her career in Alberta, she worked in operations as well as setting up research plots for innovative mix-wood management trials at Alberta Pacific, then later continued with Timberline doing ecology surveys, classification, and photo interpretation.

After university, she moved back to the island and started working for Hayes Forest Services and did operational planning and co-ordination for road construction and logging, helping meet fibre flow needs, as well as meeting environmental standards.

That was an important learning experience. She would start with the initial forest development planning, mapping, and approval processes, then lining up consultation, followed by road design and layout, then harvesting layout, and more assessments, whether geotechnical or wildlife.

The planning was years in advance of the work.

“All of that work must be co-ordinated and carefully timed and sequenced. You need the systems to be able to do that efficiently.”

Makenzie went from Hayes to Island Timberlands, then worked on-site in Columbia for Prima Columbia Hardwood.

She moved on to Western Forest Products, then spent time consulting and working throughout the sector. She later joined A&A Trading, where she became vice-president of business development and Indigenous partnerships until leaving for her current role. Recently, she earned an Executive Master's Degree of Business Administration from the BI Norwegian Business School in Oslo.

At Island Timberlands, Makenzie was able to engage in watershed assessments and management, including restoration and risk-mitigation work, as well as with communities, local government, and specialized professionals.

At A&A Trading, she managed partnerships with First Nations, helped market their tenures, and supported strategic and economic planning and treaty processes. She also developed resource management plans. First Nations were taking a broader role in land management, she adds.

Makenzie's eight years at A&A gave her a great understanding of how policy lands in practice. But now she's on the policy development side.



Makenzie Leine, MBA, RPF, BC's deputy minister of forests with Ravi Parmar, BC's minister of forests, presenting at Forest Professionals BC's 2026 forestry conference in Vancouver in February.

"Every single job I've ever done," Makenzie says, "was understanding the people dynamics in forestry and the importance of communication, whether it's with the public or whether it's with teams, or how we engage in the not-so-easy conversations, how we can create value together and be problem-solvers together in a productive way."

Creating Value

The problem with increasing the annual harvest is about access to fibre. The reasons for its scarcity are myriad and knotty.

As a first step in finding a solution, the Ministry of Forests is planning to increase fibre supply by improving access to under-utilized timber, accelerating wildfire salvage, and strengthening predictability for manufacturers. The work includes investments in recovering residual and damaged fibre and setting clearer permitting standards and targets.

Meanwhile, the ministry is looking to create value through increased international competitiveness.

A new agreement between Canada Wood and the Japan 2x4 Home Builders Association, signed during the trade mission, positions BC forestry companies to supply high-quality lumber for Japan's growing mid-rise and non-residential wood construction market.

Canada Wood also signed an agreement with Forestry Innovation Investment and the Korea Land and Housing Research Institute to promote wood-based construction in South Korea, supporting the country's carbon-neutrality goals and expanding demand for BC wood products.

Makenzie, speaking as part of a panel on economic sustainability at the Forest Professionals BC conference in February, said the trade mission reinforced the importance of cost competitiveness.

"BC is a very high-cost jurisdiction. There are many who have accountability for this challenge and the ministry has a role to play," she told the audience.

"We're at a very important point of inflection in the sector," she said. "I chose this job knowing the crisis that we're in. A lot of people have asked me since I started, 'Oh, how's it going so far?' And I say, 'I knew what was going on when I took this job. I wouldn't be able to be in the wings, watching the challenges that we're facing, and not doing as much as I could to be a part of shaping the future.'"

For her, it starts in the forest.

"In 2025, we saw rapid and dramatic, unprecedented pressures and changes to the forest sector, coupled with decades of change. We expect this is going to continue through 2026 and we're hearing calls from all voices; a call to achieve a harvestable

land base that can sustain 45 million cubic meters; a call to resolve the status of BC's highest value old-growth; a call to suspend and simplify policy for short-term relief."

The common thread among all the calls is for stability, starting with the land base.

"The reality is, we can't pretend to achieve a target, an objective, or an outcome in a system as complex as ours. There are far too many factors beyond our direct control. But we can, collectively, set directionality and commit to seeing it through."

Makenzie says the ministry has completed management unit reviews across the province and is developing a new public platform providing real-time, interactive forest analytics.

The province will also continue to manage forest lands in partnership with First Nations, she adds.

But challenges in the sector, Makenzie says, cannot be solved through incremental fixes. The province is looking at expediting permitting systems and making the process of salvaging timber more efficient.

"Exploration of area-based management reflects a shift towards stewardship of the land base, rather than a volume-driven sector, an acknowledgement of the regional diversity in BC."

Makenzie recognizes that forest professionals are always thinking about all the values on the land base, whether cultural, social, economic, or environmental.

"And I think that connection to a deep understanding of the work that we do and its impact on those values is what makes a forestry community very strong," she says.

"When the chips are down, we look after each other and we're always trying to problem-solve together. That's something I learned right from my science class in Grade 8 all the way through. Almost everywhere that I've been involved in anything that is a success or a failure, it has come down to trust. And trust is really about relationships ..."

"One of the things in forestry right now is we're really challenged economically. We know that. And there is an economic efficiency to trust as well. And that's not to say that you build trusting relationships just to make money. It's just that, for our system to function at its very best, and for us to be as competitive as we possibly can be, and as efficient as we possibly can be, there needs to be a strong degree of trust in all parts of the system." ❖

Is Modern Industrial Forestry Creating Too Much of a Good Thing for Moose?

You've all heard it before: "Moose love clearcuts." "Clearcuts produce tons of moose browse." "Whenever I see a moose it's in a clearcut."

Let's question these folk tales. Do we know what moose love any more than you know what your spouse or children really love? Do clearcuts always produce browse that is accessible and of good nutritional value?

We see moose in clearcuts because they are easy to see; however, for every moose you can see in a clearcut, how many do you think are standing in the forest that you can't see? As with everything in life, it's a good idea to question assumptions. So, what's the deal with moose and clearcuts? What's my point?

For the past few years, I have been diving deep into literature on the impacts of industrialized forestry on moose. From studies I've read, moose capitalize on clearcuts — small clearcuts interspersed in a matrix of old forest with a lot of heterogeneity in stand structure (species mixes and age classes^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7}). Moose do even better in these kinds of cuts when forests are allowed to regenerate more naturally and contain a lot of brush.^{8,9} They also do even better when roads used for harvesting are rehabilitated, thus restricting access for predators and hunters.^{10,11,12} When forest professionals manage forests in these ways, especially in areas with high predator densities and where snows get deep in winter, moose populations are more likely to grow and thrive.

It is harder to find moose in landscapes where primary, complex forests have been converted into large, continuous clearcuts with little to no retention. It can be said that this type of large-scale forest harvesting is too much of a good thing (Figure 1). If these industrial clearcuts are planted primarily to pine and spruce and managed for growth and yield using intensive brushing and weeding methods, the landscape is even less ideal for moose.¹³ Let me be clear here. I am not talking about small, land-based tenures where forest professionals managing these are harvesting smaller patches and seeking to balance multiple values. Lately and encouragingly, even some of the larger forestry companies are making great gains in doing this kind of forestry.

What many advocates of "clearcuts are good for moose" don't say is that cover is just as important for moose as is food. This is where the idea of a dash distance has developed, where it has been suggested that a moose should not be within more than 200 m of substantive cover from any place in any opening.² It has been well established that if little to no cover is

Roy V. Rea, PhD, AFP, RPBio, is an assistant professor of forestry at the University of Northern BC where he teaches courses in biology and forestry. He has been formally studying various aspects of moose ecology for 29 years. He is the submissions editor for Journal Alces, a journal devoted to the biology and management of moose.

FIGURE 1. Part of a several hundred-hectare clearcut in a mix of similarly-sized clearcuts, in north central BC. Clearcuts were separated, if at all, with small patches of older forest that contain cover types that moose need for their populations to grow and thrive. Photo taken November 2025. Photo credit: Roy Rea, PhD, RPBio, AFP.



left in a clearcut, it will be a rare occasion that a moose would be driven to wander out in the middle of this in regions where snows are deep and wolves are plentiful.⁵ It's just not a smart survival strategy for any sized animal. Moose seek cover as much as mice. Cover is needed for thermal protection, concealment from predators, and snow interception. Additionally, a certain amount of cover may also influence the nutritional value of browse.¹⁴

So, where cuts can be made small (on the order of tens of hectares) with lots of retention (or a bit larger with even more and patchy retention) and brush fostered and roads rehabbed, moose can thrive. As the BC government seeks to address recommendations from the Old Growth Strategic Review Process¹⁵ in their draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework and is coming to recognize the urgent need for improved biodiversity conservation and better ecosystem management and protection policies, lets ensure our forest professionals that are working in moose country, regardless of their employer, are pushing hard for "keeping the forest in forestry" and leaving more behind for moose and all the other values outlined in the draft framework. As the forestry professor, Jerry Franklin of the University of Washington once said, "After all, what matters is not just what we take but also what we leave behind." ✕





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THE WILDLAND FIRE JOINT PANEL:

An Introduction



Who We Are

In late 2022, on the heels of several significant wildfire seasons, Forest Professionals BC (FPBC) and the BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) convened the Wildland Fire Joint Panel (WFJP) to respond to the need for improved guidance for professionals working in the wildland fire space. Both FPBC and the BCWS of the Ministry of Forests (FOR) have a shared interest and responsibility to the public to care for and manage BC's forests. Forest Professionals BC protects the public interest by regulating the practice of professional forestry. Only those registered with FPBC are legally permitted to practise professional forestry in BC. BC Wildfire Service is mandated to deliver effective wildland fire management and emergency response support, protect lives and values at risk and encourage sustainable, healthy and resilient ecosystems.

The WFJP is supported by a grant from BCWS (FOR), administered by FPBC, and is made up of eight voting panel members. Co-chaired by liaisons from both FPBC and BCWS, the panel reports to executive leadership for both organisations. With a broad objective to enhance and grow the expertise of forest professionals in wildland fire, the panel provides strategic guidance and recommendations at the request of, and directly provided to, FPBC and BCWS. At its outset, recommendations revolved around identifying key projects for the term of funding. The work of these projects is undertaken by both members of the panel and supporting consultants to ensure both timely and thorough guidance. Communication about the work or products of the panel is released through the regulatory bodies, largely to inform registrants about important developments, but also to advise other organizations and the public at large.

Key Projects

Seven project areas were identified, sequenced to build upon foundational work of Project 1, which focused on clearly defining the reserved and regulated work of each organization and developing professional practice areas for Forest Professionals BC. This work cemented a strong partnership and working relationship, demonstrating regulatory collaboration at a high level.

The importance of this work cannot be understated, and the professionalism of those at the table to navigate complex and sometimes contentious dialogue should be celebrated. The result was

The Wildland Fire Joint Panel members are:

(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Tara Bergeson, MSc, RPF (FPBC co-chair)

John Davies, RPF (FPBC appointee)

Shannon Irvine, RPF (BCWS appointee)

Francis Johnson, RPF, BIT (FPBC appointee)

Pete Laing, RFT (BCWS co-chair)

Sonja Leverkus, PhD, RPF, RPBio, P.Ag (FPBC appointee)

Brent Lipinski, RFT (FPBC appointee)

Josh Macy, RFT (BCWS appointee)

Craig Morrison, RFT (BCWS appointee)

Darren Wilkinson, RFT (BCWS appointee)

THE PANEL IS SUPPORTED BY FACILITATOR

Mike Simpson, RPF.

the definition and development of the practice areas themselves — wildland fire resiliency and risk reduction, prescribed fire, and wildfire suppression rehabilitation, as well as competence standards that identify the core knowledge and skills that one should possess to confidently declare these practice areas. This work is available on the FPBC website, under Practice Resources.

Growing and expanding wildland fire management knowledge and expertise of forestry professionals requires these standards of practice and competence to be set. They are used at all levels within FPBC and by forest professionals to inform training and education of professionals, and on the ground forestry practices, as well as to identify where reserved practice is not being observed. These are living documents, meant to be continually reviewed and revised in response to the changing environment. Setting practice standards in wildland fire professional forestry practice areas and ensuring the continued expertise and professional competence of regulated professionals working in wildland fire reduces risk to the safety of the public and increases the protection of the forest and environment.

The work of Project 1 is now complete and Project 2 and 3 are in progress, focusing on identifying gaps in knowledge and competency of current forest professionals working in this space and using these identified gaps to develop additional training and other supports to meet the needs of professionals. The assessment



PAGE LEFT:

Members of the Wildland Fire Joint Panel were joined by Assistant Deputy Minister Rob Schweitzer, RFT, and Marina Irwin, deputy manager of prevention of BC Wildfire Service, at their panel meeting before the 2026 Forest Professionals BC conference. Photo credit: Sonja Leverkus, PhD, RPF, RPBio, P.Ag.

Alexis Stowards, BIT, Nenqay (Lands) stewardship manager of Xenii Gwet' in First Nations Government, with Byron Gagne, crew leader of Northern Fire WoRx, safely and responsibly putting good fire out on the land in the Declared Title Area within the caretaker area of Xenii Gwet' in (Spring 2025). Photo credit: Nolan Guichon.



Sonja Leverkus, PhD, RPF, RPBio, P.Ag., of Northern Fire WoRx putting good fire out on the land using her red dragon (plastic sphere dispenser) with dragon eggs (ping pong balls) in May 2022 as part of the Blueberry River First Nation Prescribed Fire Program in collaboration with Northern Fire WoRx, Shifting Mosaics Corporation, and BC Wildfire Service.

Photo credit: Sonja Leverkus, PhD, RPF, RPBio, P.Ag.

On The Horizon

Where past and current work have focused on defining professional work and increasing our understanding of where the competency of practice is at, upcoming projects will focus on actioning these tools. These projects include building three new pathways into wildland fire practice for existing forest professionals to laterally move into these practice areas, and for non-forest professionals to enter into the profession, either through holding significant demonstrable competency (e.g. currently working within BCWS but not as a forest professional) or through an accumulation of knowledge and skills via non-institutional platforms (e.g. knowledge sharing, singular courses, etc.). These will support the professional practice and protection of the public interest by bringing competent and skilled people into the profession, providing them means to grow and learn as professionals, and ensure continued oversight of their professional work in the wildland fire space.

Last, the panel identified early on that the fire landscape would inevitably shift over the course of the initial grant. As such, there was a portion of the grant set aside to provide opportunity to address these emerging priorities, which are now being evaluated. Watch for updates in coming months as the panel continues to deliver on the projects we have shared here, as well as new projects that continue to inform, guide, and support forest professionals in the wildland fire space.

We encourage you to reach out to us at practice@fpbc.ca for further information, and to watch for future postings if you are interested in applying to the panel. ☒

will be achieved via a comprehensive survey of all practising forest professionals. While there is particular interest in understanding the perspectives of those who declare wildland fire practice areas as a main part of their professional practice, there are many more professionals whose work touches on, or is influenced by, wildland fire in a more nuanced way. As we see prevention work extend or grow in organizational mandates, it is important to understand the knowledge and competencies of the broader registrant base.

To complement the understanding of existing competencies, there is also work underway to identify the existing supports (via trainings, courses, communities of practice, etc.) that are available in the province. This will inform where gaps in opportunity align with gaps in competency and therefore highlight areas that require new supports.

Celebrating Forest Professionals British Columbia's 2025 Recognition Recipients



2025 Distinguished Forest Professional, John Walker, RPF, with FPBC 78th Board Chair Kerri Simmons, RPF. Artwork: Eagle, a redcedar panel created by Coast Salish artist Doug Horne.



2025 Distinguished Forest Professional, Jeff Fisher, BSF, RPF, with his award. Artwork: Eagle, a redcedar panel created by Coast Salish artist Doug Horne.



2025 Jim Rodney Memorial Volunteer of the Year recipient, Margaret Symon, RPF, PCP, with her live-edge salvaged maple award.



2025 Forest Professional of the Year, Peter Flett, MSFM, RPF.



2025 Distinguished Forest Professional, Christopher Vukovic, HBScF, RPF(Ret), delivering his acceptance speech.



Carl Pollard, BSc, RPF, one of two authors awarded the 2025 BC Forest Professional Magazine Best Article.

Forest Professionals British Columbia (FPBC) honoured seven individuals as part of its recognition program in Vancouver in February.

Jeff Fisher, BSF, RPF; Christopher Vukovic, HBScF, RPF(Ret); and John Walker, RPF, were honoured as Distinguished Forest Professionals for 2025. This category recognizes significant accomplishments over a career, for providing outstanding service to the profession of forestry and for furthering the principles of Forest Professionals BC. It is the profession's highest honour for a registrant.

Peter Flett, MSFM, RPF, is the 2025 Forest Professional of the Year, recognizing an RPF, RFT, or AFP for recent, outstanding service to the profession of forestry and furthering the principles of Forest Professionals BC.

Margaret Symon, RPF, PCP, is the 2025 Jim Rodney Memorial Volunteer of the Year, issued

since 1997 and recognizing a registered forest professional for providing outstanding volunteer service to FPBC.

Vanessa Fetterly, BSc, RPBio, and Carl Pollard, BSc, RPF, collaborated on the 2025 BC Forest Professional Magazine Best Article. This category recognizes individuals who have written outstanding articles for publication in the magazine. They collaborated on "Why Did the Western Toad Cross the Road? A Look at the Impact of Roadside Ponds on Amphibian Populations in Northern BC," which ran in the summer 2025 edition of *BC Forest Professional*.

Over 400 forest professionals and guests gathered in Vancouver to celebrate these individuals at the recognition banquet during the 78th annual forestry conference.



Vanessa Fetterly, BSc, RPBio, one of two authors awarded the 2025 BC Forest Professional Magazine Best Article.

Congratulations and best wishes to all of our 2025 award winners.

To learn more about FPBC's recognition program and the criteria for nomination, visit www.fpbc.ca/public-interest/recognition.

Nominations are accepted each year until October 31.

It is very important to many registrants to receive word of the passing of a colleague. Forest Professionals British Columbia sends condolences to the family and friends of the following persons:

Bruce Larson, PhD, FPBC Honorary Member (2006)

May 21, 1952 – December 9, 2025



JBruce Larson, PhD, Forest Professionals BC Honorary Member (2006), passed away peacefully in hospice on December 9, 2025, in Squamish, BC.

Born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Bruce lived a life deeply rooted in both the natural world and the human spirit. After saying goodbye to family, including reading Forestry A-Z with his young grandson, Bruce

died as he lived: with intention, making sure his loved ones were taken care of, with dignity, and a sense of peace.

Bruce's academic journey reflected his passion for forestry and ecology. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Biology (Magna cum laude) from Harvard University, followed by a Master's of Forest Science from Yale University, and ultimately a PhD in Forestry from the University of Washington. His scholarly achievements were matched by his dedication to teaching and mentoring future generations of foresters.

A true visionary in silviculture, Bruce quite literally "wrote the book" on the subject. He devoted his career to helping students and professionals visualize how forests grow and evolve, teaching them to appreciate not only what a forest is today but what it can become tomorrow. His favourite saying, "*Remember, even an ugly tree leaves a good-looking stump,*" captured his humour and his deep understanding of nature's resilience.

Bruce's influence extended far beyond academia. When devastating storms struck Stanley Park in 2006, his leadership and wisdom guided the restoration of a beloved forest; balancing ecological integrity with social purpose. His ability to bring people together and find common ground was as remarkable as his technical expertise.

From his time teaching at the Yale School of Forestry through to Washington College of Forest Resources to the UBC Faculty of Forestry, Bruce shaped countless lives through hands-on learning. He believed forestry was as much about people as it was about trees, famously saying:

"Forest management is 95 per cent about managing people. If you know how trees grow, that comes in handy for the other five per cent."

His field trips across the Americas and Europe, his emphasis on professional skills, and his genuine care for his students made him an extraordinary teacher and mentor.

Retiring from academia in 2018, Bruce's legacy for the betterment of forest management continued as the Vice-Chair of the Forest Practices Board of BC (2018-2024).

Bruce is remembered as a respected academic, a thoughtful advisor, and a cherished friend. His legacy lives on in the forests he studied, the students he inspired, and the communities he strengthened.

Submitted by Dave Clarke, RPF; Alex Finkral; Paul Lawson; and Ken Day, RPF.

Jason Richard Parker, RFT #0223

August 30, 1973 – January 26, 2026



It is with deep sorrow that we announce the unexpected passing of Jason Richard Parker on January 26, 2026. A husband, father, son, brother, and friend.

Jason was raised in Oliver, BC, where his love of the outdoors began. As a child, he joined the Scouts and went on to Air-cadets, honing his

skills as an outdoorsman at a young age.

Jason was an entrepreneur at heart. He studied forestry at Selkirk College and went on to operate a successful forestry consulting business, Sidley Mountain Forestry Consultants Ltd., for over 25 years, which mostly focused on cut permit development and for a few years, harvesting supervision/post-harvest obligations. Sidley Mountain Forestry Consultants provided employment for many locals, Jason, and his family.

Jason was always enjoying outdoor activities with friends and family, regardless of the season — snowmobiling and snowshoeing in the winter; and camping, hunting, quadding, fishing, visiting historic sites and more during the spring, summer, and fall. He participated in trap shooting, black powder shoots, and logger games, in which he won many awards. He loved observing wildlife, especially moose and chickadees. He would visit Vancouver Island annually for salmon fishing.

Most recently, his hobby was making delicious gourmet sausages using the wild game he acquired from his hunts. Jason was generous and shared with others. His children Emily and Wyatt grew up enjoying the various family outdoor activities and have a profound appreciation for nature.

Above all, Jason knew how to enjoy life. He had a sharp sense of humour, an easy laugh, and a genuine love of a good time. Forever in our hearts and memories, he will be greatly missed by many and remembered as a hardworking man who was always willing to help others, and who provided for and protected the ones he loved.

Submitted by Emily Parker.



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