

FACES OF FORESTRY

A Celebration of our Aboriginal Members





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As the Association of BC Forest Professionals works to build relationships with the Aboriginal Peoples of British Columbia, we want to take a moment to celebrate our current Aboriginal members. The depth of traditional knowledge and culture these members bring to the ABCFP enhances our association as a whole and we value their skills.

We also want to use this booklet to promote careers in forestry to Aboriginal youth. As you will see from the stories inside, forestry is a broad profession and the variety of work available is impressive. Also, forestry jobs are often in small towns, rural communities and on Aboriginal lands. This situation can be ideal for Aboriginal youth looking for meaningful, well-paid employment near home.





Terry Teegee, FIT
Sekani, Giixsan and Dakelh (Carrier)
Tribal Chief of Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
Prince George


Photo: Steph St Laurent

As Tribal Chief, Terry is the political representative for the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council which represents eight First Nations communities in north central BC. “As Tribal Chief, I’m an advocate for, and frequently represent the interests of, our member communities,” said Terry. “I also assist in technical and professional services to the member-nations in the areas of fisheries, education, economic development, community and infrastructure planning, forestry, financial management and treaty negotiations.

“The best thing about my job is that I’m the advocate and political voice for our people,” said Terry. “I am privileged in the fact that my people elected me as their spokesperson, especially in concerns with development such as forestry.”

Terry got into forestry because he was interested in working in the forest and doing technical forestry work. He also wanted to gain a better understanding in the science of forestry from the perspective of industry and governments. “I wanted to continue to work in the outdoors and give our people more of a voice in forestry development operations,” said Terry. “I believe that as First Nations we have to assert our inherent right to our land and have a voice in developments that can impede on our relationship to the land.”

Terry would recommend forestry to Aboriginal youth. “First Nations are a recognized government in our society,” said Terry. “Furthermore, First Nations in British Columbia have yet to settle on treaties, which means we still have the inherent responsibility to take care of the land that our ancestors gave to us as the true stewards. As we gain more responsibilities we will need more people in technical and political fields in management and care of our lands.”

A portrait of Andrea Lyall, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue ruffled top. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a gentle smile. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with warm tones.

Andrea Lyall, RPF
Kwicksutaineuk Nation

**First Nations Coordinator and
Sessional Lecturer**
North Vancouver

As First Nations coordinator at the University of British Columbia, Andrea is responsible for student recruitment, retention and community liaison. As a sessional lecturer, she'll teach *Conservation 370: Aboriginal Forestry*.

"One of my favourite aspects of the job is the leading edge developments in this field," said Andrea. "Forests are renewable and the forest industry is evolving. In addition to the era of industrial logging, ideas such as forest carbon management and bioenergy are being introduced and First Nations principles are being taken into account in tenure. It's exciting!"

Andrea got into forestry through tree planting in her traditional territory of Kingcome Inlet and Gilford Island. "These areas were heavily logged in the 1970s and 1980s and I wanted to learn how to make informed decisions that affect the forest ecology and natural resources," said Andrea. "After getting an education in natural resources, I feel like I am in a good position to give back to my community.

"I would definitely recommend forestry to First Nations youth," said Andrea. "It's a great way to influence land and forest policy and an opportunity to live a good lifestyle that allows you to be home each night. First Nations are the fastest growing population in Canada and 80% of First Nations communities are in forested areas.

"There is already a great need for First Nations with the technical expertise in natural resources management. First Nations forest tenures have increased from next-to-none, to First Nations being major participants in the forest sector," said Andrea. "And although the forest markets have been low over the last decade, the Forest Products Sector Council did a report stating that 1,000 jobs per year in British Columbia will need to be replaced over the next decade. Now is the time!"



Lheidli T'enneh

Wheni Lheidli T'enneh ts'inli

Jackie Brown, RFT
Gitksan First Nation, Anspayaxw(Kispiox)

Forestry Coordinator
Lheidli T'enneh Nation (Prince George)

There are no two days the same at Jackie's job. "A typical work day varies, depending if I'm in the office or out in the field or both. In the office, I might work on various forestry referrals or cutting and road permits for harvesting," said Jackie. "Out in the field, I review projects for forestry, maybe oil & gas, mining and hydro proposals.

"My favourite part of the job is helping manage forest licences and seeing the benefits that it brings to community members of Lheidli T'enneh." Jackie also likes the challenge in project management. "There are many projects that are proposed within Lheidli T'enneh traditional territory," said Jackie. "We, as administration, need to review those that are worthwhile—ones that will be beneficial to the community while maintaining ecological sustainability. That balance can be tricky to achieve."

How did Jackie get into forestry? "I stumbled upon it. I know family members and friends doing logging or silviculture jobs at different times over the years. So, I tried some of it and didn't mind the hard work it involved," said Jackie. He eventually enrolled in the two-and-a-half year program in Terrace and came away with a forest technologist diploma.

"I would definitely encourage First Nations youth to get into forestry because of the latest legislation or amendments put out by the federal and provincial governments involving any projects that need a consultation review," said Jackie. "It is imperative that young people be involved in the decision making process for their traditional territories. What better way to get involved than by getting into forestry? On any given day, you could be part of a team, in a boardroom negotiating agreements or working outdoors enjoying the great scenery."



Darren Loverin, RFT
Tahltan Nation
Engineering/Tenures Technician
Smithers

Darren's primary function is to ensure safe, sound resource roads within the Skeena Stikine Forest District, an area one-fifth the size of British Columbia. This includes determining the goals and objectives for each construction season, administering contracts, equipment hire agreements, coordinating response activities to washouts, landslides and other road maintenance issues. Darren also directs, supervises and inspects construction, repair and maintenance of resource roads within the Skeena Stikine District.

"My favourite thing about the job is actually getting out there in the back-forty where not many people get to go," said Darren. "I've had lots of bear encounters. Once, during a road inspection, I was riding my quad in the middle of four full-grown grizzlies, getting pelted with rocks from three of them running on the road right in front of me, with one behind! Of course, I also love the construction work! It's like playing in the sandbox and still making a difference out there.

"I would recommend forestry or any natural resource to Aboriginal youth and all youth!" said Darren. "It was doom and gloom a short time ago. Things are turning around now. The natural resource sector is going to be short a lot of skilled people in just a few years. Young people who further their education in the natural resource sector should be confident that there will be jobs for them now and into the future."



Bev Atkins, RFT
Chilcotin and Ojibwa
Fuel Management Specialist
Williams Lake

“I have been working in the forest industry for 34 years,” said Bev. “I’m currently one of six fuel management specialists within the province. I work with the Wildfire Management Branch in the Cariboo to deliver the Strategic Wildfire Prevention program. It supports communities to mitigate risk from wildfire in the wildland-urban interface.

“How did I get into forestry? I fell into it,” said Bev. “I was enrolled in my second year with the Native Indian Teachers Education program and was carrying out a teaching practicum at the Riske Creek elementary school. There was a knock on the door. When I opened the door this very crusty man said, ‘Are you Art’s daughter?’ When I said yes, he said, ‘Do you want a job?’ The rest is history!

“I recommend forestry to Aboriginal youth because I think Aboriginal people are naturally attracted to the land and a position in forestry can help them influence how the land is managed today,” said Bev. “There are several forestry related initiatives available to First Nation communities and it’s beneficial to the communities to have forest professionals on staff.”

Bev is also a firm believer in obtaining education. “Avoid the route I took,” she advises. “I worked for 29 years with no accreditation and when I became a registered member with the ABCFP it was a great feeling to know my knowledge and efforts were finally going to be acknowledged. The two years I put towards my degree in education have been beneficial and have been instrumental in helping me achieve what I wanted to do.”

Brian Moore, RFT
Laxgalt'sap Band, Nisga'a Nation
Assistant Engineering Technician
Merritt



Brian builds and maintains forest roads and bridges. He also oversees the hiring and supervision related to road and bridge contracts.

"My favourite things about this job are being out in nature and taking projects from planning through to completion," said Brian. "I got into forestry so I could work outside and also because there are a lot of possibilities and a wide variety of jobs in the sector.

"Would I recommend forestry to Aboriginal youth? Definitely," said Brian. "Currently, there are many different positions available in forestry and with the introduction of new technology—the sky is the limit for jobs. There are even options to create new positions within forestry as innovations are introduced."



Sally Sellars, RPF
Xat'sūll First Nation
Natural Resources Referral Worker
146 Mile House

Sally assists Tsilhqot'in communities and members bringing forth concerns and resource issues. "Through a unique referral process, I liaise to ensure direct communication," said Sally. "I make sure items are carried forward and addressed in current and revised strategies."

"My favourite part of my job is learning and appreciating our culture and tradition and, within these bounds, working with natural resources referral requests," said Sally. "It gives me a sense of accomplishment and gratitude."

"I joined the field of forestry because I grew up near and within the forests. We entertained ourselves, harvested, trapped, fished and lived in the forest," said Sally. "Forests are the roots from which people mature; these intrinsic family values contributed to my goals and provided me with purpose and direction."

Sally would recommend forestry to Aboriginal youth. "The forests and natural resources are something to be protected and to be proud of," said Sally. "The resource values inclusive all piece together important roles within our traditional and modern lifestyles. BC is a province that has so much to offer and we as people have so much to give back, I am thankful for this privilege."



Johnson Ginger, RFT
Huu-ay-aht First Nation
Natural Resource Manager
Anacla/Pachena Bay, near Bamfield

Johnson's job is to help to ensure the Huu-ay-aht First Nations' treaty settlement lands are managed such that the water, soil and cultural heritage values are not unduly affected. Any referrals pertaining to forestry are reviewed, the director of lands and natural resources is updated and field crew surveys are organized.

The best part of his job is the field work. "I enjoy being out in the field and enjoying the flora and fauna. Sometimes I find myself on a bluff where I can see out to the Pacific Ocean; it is a great place to take a break. I have always felt that being in the field has kept me fit."

Johnson had many reasons for getting into forestry. But he feels if he hadn't had a chance to work with Fred Philpot, RPF, another forest professional in northern BC, he may have not realized his goal to become a forest professional. "Fred challenged me with many tasks as a forest technician and was always there to help me when it was required," said Johnson. "I truly believe that having a forester mentor helped me to want to learn the discipline."

Johnson would recommend forestry to another Aboriginal youth. "It's always put bread and butter on my table. And it's a needed profession in BC. With treaties and agreements being developed with First Nations, Aboriginal youth would help their nations by educating themselves in forestry. They would lead by example to future generations and be professional stewards of their respective lands and territories."

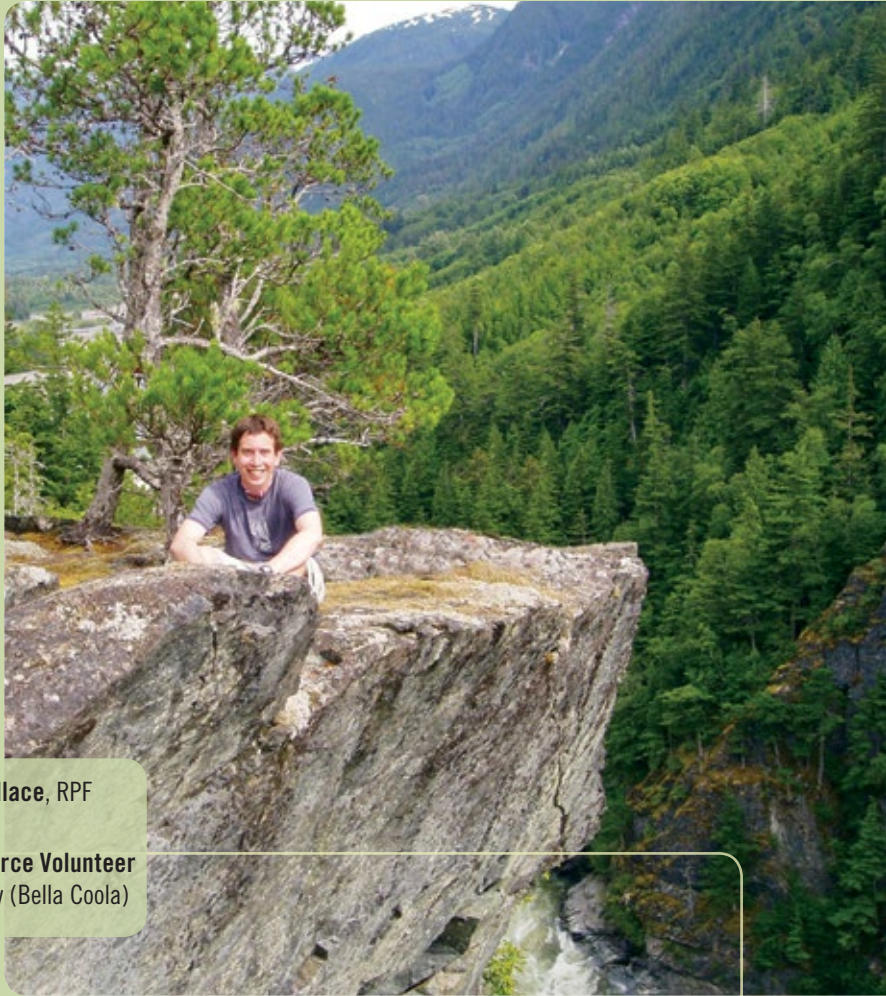


Kenneth J. Price, RFT
K'ómoks First Nation
Partnerships Coordinator and Land Use Planning
Comox Valley

“During my 19 years within the forest industry, the majority of my skills have been centered on geographic information systems (GIS),” said Ken. “However, in the past seven years, I have had the pleasure of being involved in log marketing and learning how to apply the cost structure to logging operations.” Log marketing, mainly from a log purchase role, really tied together the different aspects of forestry Ken used to map and analyze in the field. “I’ve learned first-hand how the economics play a large role in every operation—no matter how small or large.

“In my current role as partnerships coordinator at TimberWest, I have been able to utilize not only my forestry skills, but also my perspective as a First Nations person and the ongoing challenges we face day-by-day,” said Ken. “I have also had the opportunity to help my own Nation in developing a land use plan which will help our people today and for generations to come.”

Ken can’t list just one reason why he would recommend forestry to First Nation youth. “Forestry is not just the ability to look at a tree and identify the species, where it grows and how this becomes a log with value,” said Ken. “It’s about all of the opportunities that forestry provides. This opportunity may be employment. But it may also be learning the value of an operation in a small town, seeing the bright eyes of my daughters in our woodlot walks, learning the value of a truck load of logs to a family clearing a lot or being blessed in the presence of an ancient culturally modified tree. I have seen and met some amazing places and met amazing people in my career so far and I have so much farther to go.”



Spencer Siwallace, RPF
Nuxalk Nation

Natural Resource Volunteer
Nuxalk Territory (Bella Coola)

“I provide any assistance that is asked of me by my people,” said Spencer. “I use my education and experience to improve the lives of my people to the best of my ability.” The Nuxalk have a vast territory, including their own community forest. Spencer’s experience as an RPF is a major asset to help convey information to the Nuxalk people.

“How did I get into forestry? I grew up hunting, fishing and living with the land, which forever set within me that love of the outdoors. So, a year into UBC science with the intent of transferring into engineering, I was flipping through the academic calendar and the natural resource related courses caught my attention,” said Spencer. “I transferred to the forestry program and ended up with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry.”

Spencer took his BSF and spent several years in the forest industry, working his way through becoming an RPF before returning home to share his education and experience with his people. He now volunteers his time to help his Nation’s natural resource office.



Leona Marie Antoine, RFT
Lower Nicola Indian Band
Contractor
Merritt

Leona works as an independent First Nations contractor for bands, industry and the Ministry of Forestry, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. “As a Registered Forest Technologist, I wear many hats,” said Leona. “Throughout my career, I have assisted with research, data field collection, fall and burn of beetle-killed trees, firefighting across the country, supervision of tree planters, stream assessments and layout of cut blocks.”

Leona enjoys being part of the team that oversees how our resources are managed. She also likes harvesting native medicinal plants as she sees them, sharing them with the elders and teaching her own children. As a fire fighter, she was also able to carry out traditional practices of burning for plant restoration and fuel management.

“I got into forestry because I was raised in a family that worked in the forest industry. I had a natural curiosity about the outdoors and wondered how our resources were being managed,” said Leona. “I saw a great demand for First Nations input and strived in my education and career towards my passion.”

“I would recommend forestry to youth because it enhances our existing First Nations knowledge and the present development that the landscape is undergoing,” said Leona.

Resources

For more information about the post-secondary forestry programs available in British Columbia, visit our website (www.abcfp.ca/students).





What is Forestry?

Forestry is using ecological principles to manage all forest resources including trees, wildlife, water, soils, fish and biodiversity. Forestry professionals manage all these resources in a manner that balances ecological, economic and social values.

Is a Career in Professional Forestry Right for You?

With a career in forestry, you could make a real difference in environmental management. It's a great choice for those who love the outdoors, excel in the sciences, are interested in the environment and are team players.

Find out more at our website, www.abcfp.ca/students

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