

Appraisal Practice: #2 Use of Signature/Seal (July 2008)

Once an individual has hand signed a document or electronically signed a file document as defined by Bylaw 10.2 [*“Registered Professional Foresters must affix their signature and seal or stamp to all: estimates; specific actions; reports; letter reports; letters; memoranda; documents; plans; and all such other professional papers and things containing professional opinion or work product (collectively referred to as a “professional document” or “professional documents” that he/she prepares or are prepared under his/her supervision”*)] it is not necessary to request an additional letter stating that the professional stands behind the work submitted. A signature of a forest professional carries the same weight as a sign and seal of a forest professional.

Example

Forest Professional A submits a cruise plan and letter to a district office consistent with provincial standard and the Cruise Manual. After the field work for the cruise is complete, Forest Professional A sends a signed and sealed letter with changes to the original cruise plan to the MFR district office. Attached to the letter and plan documents is a detailed rationale for the changes. The reviewing official, who is also a forest professional, asks Forest Professional A to send an additional sign and sealed letter confirming that this is his professional opinion and that his rationale is backed by the obligations of a forest professional. Forest Professional A refuses as he has already signed the amended cruise plan letter.

Conclusion

Forest Professional A is correct in that he is not required to produce another document. Bylaw 10.8 states: *“Notwithstanding any other provision in these bylaws, a member shall be held accountable for any and all professional documents he or she signs, seals or stamps, whether the professional document is delivered in original hard copy, electronic, magnetic, or any other format, or in the expectation that the document has been prepared and delivered in his/her professional capacity whether or not it is signed, stamped, and/or sealed by that member.”*

The example presents a situation and conclusion about what is intended when relying on a professional’s judgment and not about who is right and who is wrong.

Additionally, it is important to understand that professional reliance in the cruise plan amendment request is also a mechanism for the professional exchange as much as it is for the technical exchange. One of the resources that the professional will draw upon is skills in developing dialogue and commitment. The dialogue advanced by either (or both) of the forest professionals will be centered on what is a sound, efficient and effective action.