

# Professional Reliance Isn't Free

**THE ABCFP'S CODE OF ETHICS REQUIRES THAT** forest professionals do the following:

- Practice only in those fields where training and ability make you professionally competent (3.7);
- Express a professional opinion only when it is founded on adequate knowledge and experience (3.9);
- Accept only those assignments for which you are qualified or seek assistance from knowledgeable peers or specialists whenever a field of practice is outside your competence (5.4).

The *Forest and Range Practices Act* is based on the premise of professional reliance. Where appropriate, professionals apply good judgment and act in the interest of the public and the environment. Professional regulatory bodies hold their members accountable for matters of conduct and competency to serve and protect the public interest. One way members ensure they are competent is through professional development.

In this issue, we look at how the number of professional development opportunities for forest professionals has shrunk over the years. Candace Parsons, RPF, and Gordon Weetman, RPF (Ret), discuss what the Forest Management Institute of BC achieved and the gap it has left in the sector. Chris Hollstedt, RPF, looks at how a comprehensive system for maintaining competency could be developed and what we are currently working with. Mike Larock, RPF, talks about the learning cycle forest professionals depend on and how they can work to strengthen it. It turns out that while professional development opportunities are fairly lean at the moment, there is a vision being developed.

As a separate part of this topic, we also looked at professional development outside



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of a BC forestry standpoint. The College of Dental Surgeons of BC kindly wrote an article about their professional competency standards. Even though dentistry is very different from forestry, we thought it would be interesting to learn how another regulatory body works. Then, for a viewpoint closer to home, the Ontario Professional Foresters Association talk about their new competency assessment and professional development program. Finally, Iain MacDonald, managing

director of the UBC Centre for Advanced Wood Processing, outlines how they are developing the skills and building the capacity needed for tomorrow's forest product industry.

Professional reliance and professional development are two important topics shaping BC forestry right now. We hope this issue shows readers the broader issues at play and helps them decide how they are going to access professional development in the coming years. 🍷