

Real Vote Needed

Recently our membership received notification that extra funding was needed for the association and that their budget needed at least \$800,000 more annually, which is a 40% boost. There are two glaring problems with this ballooning budget. First, we are given almost no details of the planned expenditures other than some feel-good rhetoric about improving safety and professional reliance. Second, we are not given any option to reject this huge spending increase. Adding salt to the wound is a lame vote that offers us to volunteer the money (for expenditures that have not been disclosed) in the form of an increase to membership fees or have the money taken in the form of a special levy. I am not sure of the history, but I suspect that the purpose of providing discretion to council for applying levies was not to provide for massive budget expansion against the wishes of the membership majority. The way this budget increase has been presented to the general membership could be, and should be, improved rather easily. I urge the council and staff to please give us the details, consider the feedback, adjust your plans accordingly, and finally, allow us to vote on the budget itself rather than on how we would like to pay for it.

On another note, I take issue with the CEO's presentation of the options in the upcoming vote since it discourages voting against the fee increase by stating that "Special levies may not be paid by an employer..." This crosses the line from informative to intrusive. Which professional expenses are reimbursable is specific to each individual's employment agreement. Suggesting that it may be less out of pocket money if you vote yes is speculative and extremely biased. Equally troubling, is the implied concept that if you get your employer to pay the fee increase, it does not cost you anything. This is flawed logic. Any professional expenses paid by an employer come out of the same budget category (payroll cost) as our pay cheques, therefore, increased expenses means less money available for wages. Eventually the money is coming out of your pocket, but it is true that if you do not write the cheque personally, you may not notice it.

ROD POIRIER, RPF
COMOX VALLEY, BC

Put in Your Two Cents

The **BC Forest Professional** letters' section is intended primarily for feedback on recent articles and for brief statements about current association, professional or forestry issues. The editor reserves the right to edit and condense letters and encourages readers to keep letters to 300 words. Anonymous letters are not accepted. Please refer to our website for guidelines to help make sure your submission gets published in **BC Forest Professional**.



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What are our priorities?

Rick Brouwer's message in the **BC Forest Professional** discusses the age-old challenge, often a dilemma, that face forest professionals nearly every day of their working lives—that of professionally fulfilling their highest obligation of serving the public interest by managing the province's natural resources in a manner that best meets their environmental, social and economic objectives.

Every decision a resource professional makes, both inherently and practically, is a recognition of and an influence on all of these areas (e.g. locating a cutblock boundary involves hundreds of small decisions including—which trees will be cut, where the boundary will be located relative to water courses, species mix, aesthetics etc.). These decisions indicate the 'professional's' interpretation of the public's interests influenced by his/her employer's or client's objectives influenced by monetary considerations.

In this process the professional weighs all three components and each decision reflects a priority of one over the other(s). Cumulatively they reflect the professional's behaviour relative to which of the three took precedence most often. The professional creates a picture which is a reflection on the landscape of their professional values.

The cumulative result for all resource professionals should always favor the environmental values as humanity cannot survive without a healthy, functioning ecosystem.

What are Rick Brouwer's priorities? At a February meeting of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine & the Terrace and District Chamber of Commerce, Rick, as Executive Director of the Skeena-Nass Centre for Innovation in Resource Economics outlined their priority as: "Firstly, there needs to be a sustainable working economy that will support the social and cultural and physical infrastructure."

Thad Box in the April issue of *Rangelands* commented about the 'Worth of Our Work.' He said that—"A prosperous tomorrow depends on good land health. It is essential for us to keep options open for future generations. Finding a way to help land stewards live the good life while maintaining sustainability is a job that fits the principle of Granddad's recipe for curing ham. It reminds us that quality is seldom determined by a single act. It is the outcome of a process. The worth of our work is in the effect on people who husband the land we serve".

FRED MARSHALL, RPF, P.AG, CERT. ARB.
MIDWAY, BC

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