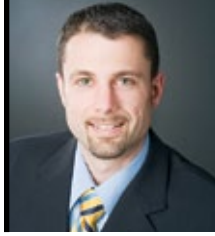


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The Private Land Life of a Forest Professional

A FORESTRY CAREER IN BC WITH A LOT OF TIME spent in private is common. For instance, walking through the woods alone, thinking of where your brilliant management activities fit into the landscape that surrounds you.

Ahhhh yes... just like in the forestry school recruitment websites. Queue bird chirp and brook babble.

But a forestry career in this part of the world with a lot of time spent on private land is much less common. It's also much more like what those websites imply.

We all know the statistics by now. Only about five percent of the forested land base in this province is private land. However, it produces significantly more than five percent of the economic activity in this (still) massive industry. Part of that economic activity is the employment of RPFs and RFTs.

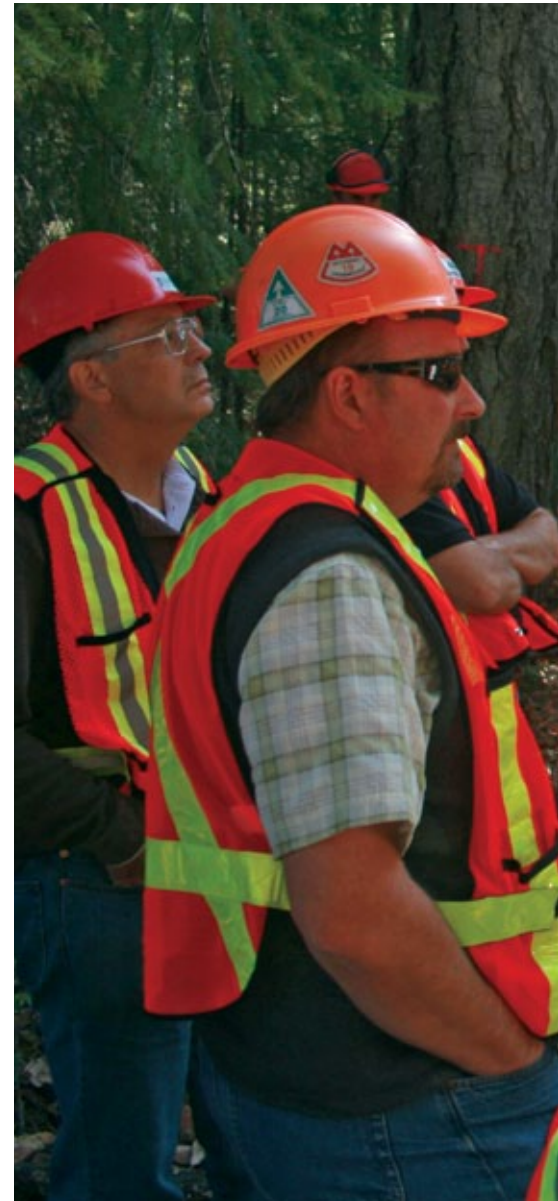
Most private land forestry occurs on private managed forest land, a land classification similar to farmland. In this classification, the owner adheres to the *Private Managed Forest Land Act* in exchange for lower tax rates. Managed forest sizes range from many thousands of hectares to 25 hectares or less. Operating under an approved management commitment, an owner follows specific, results-based regulations. Government wins by increasing forests that are managed while keeping accountability and program costs with the landowner. Because of its inherent flexibility, the Managed Forest Program

makes forest professionals depend heavily on their obligations in the *Foresters Act*.

Focusing on results and being confident in stewardship investments are standard fare in private managed forests. Some landowners have completed terrestrial ecosystem mapping of their entire land base and this helps silviculture planning and predicting species at risk. Others use high gain seed from private or regional orchards to increase the likelihood of a reliable next crop. Still others distill the results expected from numerous regulations into internal best management policies to help communicate the diligence that goes into forest management.

Independent third-party auditors stop by every year to confirm that, for instance, a riparian planning area policy is appropriate, that the feller-buncher operator understands this aspect of a harvest plan and that the plan is followed. As the government appointed body to oversee the program, the Private Managed Forest Land Council also conducts regular audits of landowners. Moreover, the Council will also inspect public complaints; all in pursuit of confirming that key public environmental values are met as the result of sustainable forest management.

People often want to know private land forestry delivers its excellent results. The truth is, there isn't one recipe that everyone follows. Working for a large private land forest company includes regular interactions with



a variety of provincial and federal agencies, local governments, environmental groups, neighbourhoods and neighbours. Each has an opportunity to learn how we support research activities, manage our watersheds, train our contractors and market our products.

Fisheries & Oceans Canada, the Ministry of Environment, WorkSafeBC and local governments are just a few examples of ingredients necessary to manage operations that may include gravel pits, tourism, wind power and real estate in addition to our typical suite of timber products. Environmental management systems and



Photo: Jonathan Lok, RFT

Timberwest and Island Timberlands toured the ABCFP council through a managed forest last autumn.

forest certification schemes further help agencies and customers understand the pathway of accountability and ‘freedom to manage’ that comes with private forest land.

How this all looks in the field was the theme last autumn when TimberWest and Island Timberlands toured most of the ABCFP council and staff through a managed forest on southeastern Vancouver Island. One of the discussion topics was how private forest land is often near urban centres and generates a lot of attention from the public. Large managed forest lands are often near beaches, park access, hiking trails and other

public interests that command attention over and above the basics of water quality and critical wildlife. As large landowners, we work with those communities to explain our plans and occasionally even rent somebody’s driveway for a few weeks.

People will hear logging equipment or see a viewscape changed by harvesting because of this urban interface. However, listening to forest professionals explain how a cutblock that was designed a decade ago has regenerated to plan, while standing in that cutblock, is comforting. Everyone can see the result. Any good forest professional will know that

the unspoken ingredient for success is the spice of authenticity. Always seek out the increasing opportunities to season your professional work product to your taste, regardless of the tenure type. Be proud of the results whether you work on private or public land. Why should they be any different? 🌲

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