

Forest Mismangement and Failure to Protect the Public Interest

Two crises have been unfolding for nearly a decade both of which involve the Association of BC Forest Professionals.

The first crisis is forest mismangement. This may be variously defined by a precipitous decline in funding for key functions critical to any claim to sustainable forest management of public lands and to setting sustainable rates of cut: forest inventory, tree planting, silviculture, forest health and research.

Recently, ex-minister Bill Bennett revealed the lack of cabinet participation, thought and process behind Premier Campbell's unilateral order-in-council effectively nullifying the *Ministry of Forests and Range Act* and eviscerating the BC Forest Service after 98 years of service to British Columbians as their forest agent.

One of the many casualties of this act of madness is the disbandment of the Forest Research Branch. Since 1927, that branch has built an international reputation for BC forestry while providing the evolving science

for sustainable management of our publicly owned forests.

The goodwill derived from world-class renown cannot be bought. It is an asset of considerable worth that has been built up steadily over nearly a century. It is priceless. Indirectly, it supports the marketing of sustainably produced lumber to many export markets. To chuck it away is a reckless act of public vandalism.

The second and more serious crisis is institutional failure of those offices charged under statute, or by virtue of professional standing, to act in the public interest. While mismangement of publicly owned forests has been gathering momentum, what have the Office of the Auditor General, the Forest Practices Board, the Office of the Chief Forester, professional bodies, and, finally, the Association of BC Forest Professionals and its members had to say about it in the public interest?

It is time for a commissioner of forests and environment.

**ANTHONY
BRITNEFF, RPF
VICTORIA, BC**

Around the Clock:
Our Insurance is Your Advantage

HUB International
OUR INSURANCE.
YOUR ADVANTAGE.™

Now is a good time to evaluate your risk exposure. When you do, we think it makes sense to work with a professional who can fully serve your risk management needs.

Our Insurance works to Your Advantage on the strength of the best providers in the business. We're backed by vast global resources and solid local relationships.

That's why we're Canada's leading insurance broker for businesses and individuals who demand the best value, coverage and service.

Make sure you're protected around the clock. Make now the time to call us at HUB International.

HUB International | HUB TOS

Jordan Fellner T. 604.293.1481 tos.vanprof@hubinternational.com

www.hubtos.com

BC Forest Professional is published six times a year by the Association of BC Forest Professionals

330-321 Water St, Vancouver, BC V6B 1B8
Tel: 604.687.8027 Fax: 604.687.3264

E-mail: editor@abcfp.ca Website: www.abcfp.ca

MANAGING EDITOR: Brenda Jones

EDITOR: Brenda Martin

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Michelle Mentore

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Colin Buss, RPF; John Cathro, RPF; Frank DeGagne, RPF; Kylie Harrison, RPF; Trina Innes, RPF; Lindley Little, RPF;

Sandy McKellar, Honourary Member;

Lisa Perrault, RFT; Mike Pelchat, RPF (council rep.);

Alan Vyse, RPF (chair);

Brenda Jones (staff liaison)

and Brenda Martin (staff liaison)

DESIGN: Massyn Design

PRINTING: Mitchell Press

DISTRIBUTION: PDQ Post Group

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER: Brenda Martin

330-321 Water St, Vancouver, BC V6B 1B8

Tel: 604.639.8103 • Fax: 604.687.3264

E-mail: forest-ads@abcfp.ca

ISSN:1715-9164

Annual Subscriptions: Canada \$44.80 incl HST

U.S. and international \$80 Canadian funds

Publications mail agreement No: 40020895

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

ABCFP Circulation Department

330-321 Water St, Vancouver, BC V6B 1B8



PRESIDENT Rick Brouwer, RPF

VICE-PRESIDENT Ian Emery, RFT

PAST PRESIDENT Jonathan Lok, RFT

LAY COUNCILLORS

Herb Langin, RPBio (Ret); Gordon Prest

COUNCILLORS

Bev Atkins, RFT; Christina Gelowitz, RPF; Valerie LeMay, RPF; Steve Lorimer, RPF; Curt Nixon, RPF; Mike Pelchat, RPF; Kerry Rouck, RPF

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Sharon Glover, MBA

REGISTRAR Randy Trerise, RPF

DIRECTOR, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND FOREST STEWARDSHIP

Mike Larock, RPF

DIRECTOR, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Lance Nose

MANAGER, COMMUNICATIONS

Brenda Jones

MANAGER, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AND MEMBER RELATIONS

Brian Robinson, RPF

BC Forest Professional is the professional magazine of the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP). Editorial submissions, comments, letters to the editor, articles and photos should be sent to the editor, address above. The opinions expressed in **BC Forest Professional** do not necessarily represent those of the ABCFP, its council or other members. Reprinting and copying of **BC Forest Professional** articles is encouraged. Please include a credit to both the author and **BC Forest Professional**.

Developing Professional Development Locally

After ten years of being stripped down, the BC Forest Service now stands cold and shivering. Foresters and associations are finally saying 'enough is enough' and standing up to the relentless attacks.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives outlined it perfectly in its report titled "Axed," showing that 25% (1000 jobs) of the Ministry have been cut. Mounting workloads and an irresponsible re-organization has created an environment where our forests are no longer managed for the greater health of this province. Targeted personnel in the cuts were chiefly those that had the responsibility to contribute towards forest policy and best practices. Those positions have been hydrologists, biologists and forest ecologists. The report hits a key issue, "...we are losing our collective eyes and ears in the forest..." There simply aren't enough personnel to staff key operations such as growth and yield, inventory plots and research stations, which are important for determinations looking at future allowable harvests and forest modeling. One forester affirmed, "...the lack of baseline information means the public can have no confidence that their forests are sustainably managed."

UNBC forestry professors as well as the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of BC made a plea to both the Liberals and New Democrats, hoping that whoever becomes their next leader, understands the need for research and long term investments.

Pat Bell's response, "...focus in forestry research has shifted to increasing growth and forest yield." The minister's response may bear merit in some circles, but I feel that the shift of the Ministry's focus will have undue consequences in the long term.

A holistic and integrated field of science and management, forest managers consider all aspects of forest ecosystems and values. With cuts to the forest service over the last ten years, and the near abolition of the forest research branch, I feel that we are going to short change our province's future as the paradigm shifts from 'forest management' to 'timber management'. A healthy forestry sector cannot exist without a healthy forest.

JONATHAN VAN BARNEVELD
HOUSTON, BC
FOREST ECOLOGY & MANAGEMENT STUDENT, UNBC

On Predicting Wildland Fire Behaviour and Fire Effects

There are several points made in Gray and Blackwell's article in the November/December 2010 issue of **BC Forest Professional** that require comment (the unabridged version of this letter is posted on the magazine's Discussion Forum).

They claim that I have argued against the use of models or modelling systems developed in the US for near-real time prediction of crown fire behaviour. This is not true. I never said that. The authors further state that certain US fire modelling systems are rarely used by BC personnel to predict fire behaviour on active wildfires but instead are used in fuels management planning and prescribed burning. One wonders, why is that? Should it even matter? Furthermore, I would expect US fire personnel exported to Canada to use their decision aids and accordingly make adjustments based on their training, experience, and judgement. Predicting wildland fire behaviour is after all an art and a science.

The authors indicate that standards for wildfire hazard assessment have been previously published and reported on. I am not aware of any such literature written or cited by the authors in this magazine. Modelling systems are indeed an integral part of modern-day fire and fuel management decision-making. Nevertheless, one needs to be cautious that modelled results are not unduly emphasized at the expense of other considerations, including experienced judgement, case studies, and common sense. All the US modelling systems that they mention are known to be seriously underpredicting both surface and crown fire behaviour potential.

Gray and Blackwell state that the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System is inadequate for certain fire and fuel management applications, yet one can easily list several examples that have appeared in the peer-reviewed and "grey" literature.

Finally, attendance at US training courses is a fine idea but they may not be accessible to Canadians.

MARTIN E. ALEXANDER, PhD, RPF
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF WILDLAND FIRE SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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**.



Send letters to:

Editor, BC Forest Professional
Association of BC Forest Professionals
330 – 321 Water Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 1B8

E-mail: editor@bcfp.ca
Fax: 604.687.3264