

President's Report

By Ian Emery, RFT



Planting the Forest Setting Out My Plans for the 64th Presidency

I joined the ABCFP in 2003 and first started volunteering by sitting on the Joint Practices Board and then the Professional Practice Committee.

The experience whetted my appetite for contributing to the profession and I decided to run for council so I could learn and contribute more. Now, eight years since I became a member, I'm writing my first President's Report for **BC Forest Professional**. A few past presidents have assured me that I'll be learning and contributing more than I ever dreamed this year!

I'd like to use these President's Reports to share with members what I achieve during my term as president. So, in this first one, I am going to outline my general vision. Then, over the coming issues, I'll update and take a deeper look at each part of that vision.

Recruiting Forest Professionals

We need to make sure high school students and educators understand how diverse and rewarding careers in forestry can be. If we don't promote forestry to today's youth, who will follow in our footsteps and be the forest professionals of 2050? We need to sit down and decide how the ABCFP is going to work to ensure there are enough forest professionals to meet current and projected future demand.

We hear about the recruitment issue from many different organizations. What we need is a consolidated approach. The more I talk with people on this issue, the more I hear that each organization has dipped one oar into the water on this. If we can consolidate even a few of these efforts and get some of those tentative oars in one boat, we would have a much larger and effective recruitment drive.

That said, I don't want to undermine the grassroots efforts these individuals make. I commend them for their hard work. Even when you just have the one tentative oar, each of us can do a small part within our sphere of influence and make a broader difference. Take the time to talk to that teenager in grade 10 who is wrestling with what sciences they will take for university or tech school entrance. Let's make sure that they know what a fun and satisfying job we do in forestry and what a rich and rewarding career it can be.

Promoting Professional Reliance

We must make sure all our members know how they are responsible for professional reliance. We've made a lot of head way over the last year and a half. The ABCFP, with its industry and government partners, has hosted professional reliance workshops across the province for over 2,000 members. We also had 1,400 members respond to the professional reliance survey the ABCFP sent out on behalf of government last fall.

But more work is still required. Some of that effort is already underway with increased operational capacity. Council has also included professional reliance in its strategic plan. This shows that council has recognized the importance of professional reliance and wants to ensure that it is part of the ABCFP's broader multi-year outlook. Looking ahead, we're already projecting and budgeting funds for further project work in 2012.

Taking a different angle of professional reliance, we need to remember that it's the team approach that is so critical to forestry. It's not a turf war. We're a team of professionals that each brings a particular skill set, working towards a common goal. If we truly want to protect the public interest, we need to embrace this team approach and the ability to ensure the right professional is put in the right place at the right time. The

inclusion of associate members is a good thing. They are part of the forestry team and will be held accountable for the work they do.

Valuing and Encouraging Volunteers

In my incoming speech, I offered up a challenge to the inductees. Get involved in a committee and rub shoulders with forest professionals that are at the top of their practice. They passionately believe in what they are doing and volunteering with them can only improve you professionally and personally.

I told them that it is not what the ABCFP can do for them. It's what they can do for the ABCFP. It is you and me and all the hardworking volunteers that shape our association. It frustrates me when I hear members complain, asking what has the association done for them. They pay their dues and wait for things to change. If you are passionate about change in forestry and the ABCFP, step up and volunteer. Make a difference.

There are many ABCFP members already making this commitment. Over the past eight years, I've met many committees filled with bright people who want to contribute to their profession. These people ensure the ABCFP is a highly effective, efficient and professionally relevant organization. Council, as a group of committed volunteers, has initiated a review of its effectiveness in governance and started to implement actions to improve our performance. Through this review, we will be able to set the path for the association and not get mired in the day-to-day operations.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. I hope it gives you a sense of where I plan to focus my efforts during my presidency. Over the next few reports, I'll let you know how things unfold. If, after reading this, you have any thoughts you'd like to share, please feel free to contact me at president@abcfp.ca 🍌