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

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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:

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More Professional Reliance, Less Education

With the current cuts to government positions there has been an increase in professional reliance in the forest industry in British Columbia. Moreover, there has been a decrease in educational opportunities for forest professionals whom are relied upon to manage BC's forests. The article "Forest Management Institute of BC: What it Accomplished and the Gap it Left," (July/August 2010) highlighted this trend throughout not only BC, but Alberta and Ontario as well.

As educational prospects dwindle, how can a high level of professional reliance be expected if professionals have fewer opportunities to expand their knowledge base? History has shown that the best way to learn is through past knowledge and experience; how can it be justified that sources of knowledge keep getting lost due to economic downturn? As managers of a public resource, forest professionals are relied upon to manage forest resources in the public interest. Without current and up-to-date education it is possible that forest resources will not be managed in the most effective manner.

There needs to be more opportunities provided to professionals, such as those spearheaded by the regional silviculture committees. It is these types of initiatives that can function as a basis for growth of education. Educational opportunities do not need to be exhaustive feats requiring vast amounts of time, they could be as simple as providing easy access to information and information sharing; the Internet has proven to be an economical solution that is underutilized.

A collective effort is required between government, industry and professionals to increase education for forest professionals. By working together these organizations will be able to share and distribute information to a wide spectrum of forest professionals. This province is a large, diverse ecosystem that needs to be well managed in order to provide opportunity for the future.

JANA TRAPPL
UNBC STUDENT

The ABCFP has Failed in its Mandate

I am dismayed and disappointed by the ABCFP's failure to formally comment on, and indeed rebuke, the Campbell government's decision to dismantle the BC Forest Service and to eliminate its Research Branch. The Research Branch was conducting world-class research on forest ecology, forest genetics, and forest growth and yield. In addition, Research Branch played a leading role in the areas of forest nutrition, regeneration technologies and site rehabilitation. All of these programs were providing the long-term information required to improve our understanding of sustainable forest management and the impacts of climate change on BC's forests. Who will assume responsibility for providing this information in the future? Certainly not the private sector and, for a variety of reasons, probably not our universities.

I feel that the ABCFP has failed in its stated mandate to "advocate for and uphold principles of forest stewardship."

WAYNE JOHNSTONE, PHD, RPF (LIFE MEMBER)
VERNON

The CIF Needs Your Support

For almost 35 years the Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF) has presented silver rings to graduates of CIF-recognized programs. Many university and (since 2002) technical program graduates have experienced the CIF ring ceremony and have received a ring. Although the ring has no official professional affiliation, many foresters across Canada wear it on the little finger of their 'signing' hand while they work, an acknowledged symbol that their actions and words are those of an educated professional.

Currently, the CIF is experiencing a significant drop in membership. I suspect that many forest professionals across Canada have declined to renew their membership due to financial concerns. Perhaps many foresters also feel that the CIF must become more relevant and effective to justify their involvement. However, the CIF represents a national community of practice which can only be made stronger through the contribution of opposing views. There are also precious few internationally recognized Canadian forestry organizations left to provide professional development and advocate for science-based forestry. If you are one who has stepped back from the CIF, or who has yet to step forward to join the CIF, if you wear their ring on your finger, then the CIF needs your support.

STEVE BAUMBER, MSc, RPF, CIF
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