



## Advocacy and Governance: How They Work Together

I believe advocating for principles of good forest stewardship is something every forest professional in BC supports. It is part of the ABCFP's mandate and dear to many members' hearts. However, ABCFP members hold a wide variety of opinions about good forest stewardship. This means there will often, if not always, be debate as to how, when and why advocacy work is undertaken.

There was some dismay that Sharon Glover, MBA, our Chief Executive Officer, signed the OpEd that was published in The Vancouver Sun on April 26, 2011. One main concern, I think, was that Sharon is not a forest professional but spoke on behalf of the association and its members.

Sharon is the ABCFP spokesperson. She remains CEO of the ABCFP while presidents change each year. She provides continuity for media and the public. Year after year, the ABCFP has one voice that speaks out on behalf of the ABCFP and forestry in BC. Past councils recognized this benefit and instructed our CEO to take on this role.

However, Sharon is not alone in her role as

spokesperson. She is supported by a team of forest professionals. These men and women ensure Sharon has the information she needs when developing public statements.

The fact that Sharon holds this spokesperson role comes out of our governance model, called the Carver Model. Back in 2007, council chose to adopt the Carver governance model to create an organization that was efficient and effective.

The way the Carver model works, council is responsible for providing the association's direction by defining the mission, vision and strategic goals and setting its conditions and constraints for these. The CEO is responsible for realizing the mission, vision and strategic goals and for the daily operations of the association within these boundaries. Being the ABCFP spokesperson fits within these tasks.

I think the model can best be described by Vince Battistelli in his paper, *Leadership-Focused Governance*: "Leadership focused governance centers of the idea that organizational governance consists of two necessary and complementary dimensions, governing and managing, and that for an organization to function effectively the council and CEO must work as leadership partners in these areas."

I've spoken with past presidents who experienced the old operational model and they tell some scary stories of long meetings and considerable time and resources spent weighing in on operational issues. This prevents a council from governing well and slows down the operations. A council of 12 managing operational issues often ends up with council members redoing work already done by the staff. People who, in most cases, are better qualified to do the job in the first place.

In my short time on council, I've been able to see us evolve out of the operations and focus more on strategic issues and leadership-based governance. I believe this simple change will result in an efficient and effective organization. It's been a bit of a paradigm shift learning how to stay out of the kitchen yet remain in control of the menu. I'm lucky to have 11 hard working council members to help me along this journey.

Returning now to the general idea of advocacy for good forest stewardship, Council heard loud and clear that members wanted the ABCFP to speak up on issues and not be silent. As part of council's yearly work plan and in light of the recent developments, we are reviewing our communications policy. Very soon we will have a new communications strategy that is up-to-date and meets our members' needs.

If you would like to get more involved in advocating for good forest stewardship in your community but aren't sure what your role should be, try reading the *Code of Ethics: Guidelines for Interpretation* on the ABCFP website. I revisited them recently and they helped me get a better handle on my role in advocating for good forest stewardship, especially on Bylaws 11.3.4 to 11.3.6.

Members expressing their opinions and taking on advocacy work is a good thing. It highlights the issues of importance that we, as forest professionals, need to debate and address. I value the positive energy these people bring with them and their momentum that gets the ball rolling on important issues.

If you have any questions about this President's Report, please email me at [president@abcfp.ca](mailto:president@abcfp.ca). ☺