



The Practice of Forestry: Defining and Enforcing the *Foresters Act*

The ABCFP is working hard to better understand who is practising professional forestry in BC and to ensure that those people are members of the association. We're doing this because the ABCFP was created by the *Foresters Act* with three duties:

- to serve and protect the public interest;
- to exercise its powers and functions, and to perform its duties, under the *Act*; and,
- to enforce the *Foresters Act*.

One of the ways that the association upholds the public interest with respect to the practice of professional forestry is by ensuring that each person engaged in the practice of professional forestry is accountable to the association.

So, how do we define what the practice of professional forestry is? We don't. The definition of the practice of professional forestry is defined in the *Foresters Act*.

Recently, we've had a number of members come to us and tell us that they are not practising professional forestry and don't need to be registered with the ABCFP. On further examination, we find a few dominant themes in these conversations:

- Members tell us that our definition is wrong.
- Members tell us that their employer has told them that they are not practising professional forestry.
- Members tell us that only a small part of their job is the practice so they don't really need to be members.
- Members tell us that their employer has determined that they are not practising because they don't want to pay the member's fees to the association.

I would like take a moment to address these lines of thought:

Our definition is wrong. The definition of the practice of professional forestry is found in the *Foresters Act*. Our council and committees use the definition of the practice of professional forestry when performing their duties in the *Foresters Act*. The Professional Practice Committee has been delegated the task of addressing concerns relative to the practice of professional forestry. So we are not at liberty to change the definition or adjust it.

Your employer has told you that you are not practising. It is the association that determines who is practising and who is not. If you think you are practising and

your employer has said you are not, use our Professional Practice Committee to decide.

Only a small part of your job is the practice. If the practice of professional forestry is contained in any part of an employment position then the individual undertaking that work must be a registered member of the ABCFP. It doesn't matter how small a portion it is. Only members of the association are permitted to practise professional forestry. The *Foresters Act* also provides for some exceptions to the exclusivity of practice and one such instance is where an individual is supervised by a registered member. In this case the supervising registered member accepts the accountability for the individual.

Your employer doesn't want to pay the member's fees. The association governs registered members who practise professional forestry. And if any part of a task falls within the definition, then the person is practising professional forestry and we expect them to be members. It is not appropriate for employers to determine who is practising based on the amount of money they might have to pay the association.

If you are a member and aren't sure if you are practising forestry, the association can determine whether or not registered membership is required. The Professional Practice Committee can help assess whether activities and actions fit within the practice of professional forestry. We also work with employers to help them determine which functions within their organization are the practice of professional forestry.

If you have any questions about this CEO's Report, please email me at sglover@abcfp.ca. 🍌