



CEO's Report

By Sharon L. Glover, MBA

How the ABCFP Protects the Public's Interests in BC's Forests

The ABCFP has a duty in the *Foresters Act* to serve and protect the public interest. We do this by ensuring the competence, independence, professional conduct and integrity of our members and by ensuring that each person engaged in the practice of professional forestry is accountable to the association. I thought I would spend some time explaining the range of things we do to carry out this duty.

At the core of our discipline system is a team of dedicated volunteers who work on the Complaints Resolution Committee, the Discipline Committee and the Standing Investigations Committee who assess the validity of complaints, assist the ABCFP's registrar in his determinations and decide upon penalties and costs.

We have worked over the years to ensure our discipline system is transparent, efficient and fair to all those involved.

In addition to relying on our members and the public to bring forward complaints, we also work with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to examine all DDM (delegated decision maker) decisions that involve members to determine if a complaint should be launched. We look at the decision from all sides and examine what roles the members involved had. In the past year, the executive has reviewed 35 decisions and have requested a 'close review' of three. One of the close reviews resulted in the ABCFP following up with the involved members to discuss our concerns about their work and scheduling practice reviews to ensure that these members are practising to a professional standard.

There are a number of things that we do proactively to ensure that members comply with the *Foresters Act* and that we enforce the Act.

- We meet with our members both in their offices and in member meetings to remind them that they have professional obligations that must be met.
- We contact the Forest Practices Board and the Compliance and Enforcement Branch when we have concerns about the practices of tenure holders.
- We meet with unions, government employees, tenure holders and others to ensure that professional forestry is being practised or supervised solely by ABCFP members.
- We maintain a confidential practice advisory service which our members can call into to get assistance with practice issues.

Members have been asking for some way of holding each other accountable that falls between an informal conversation and the formal Complaints Resolution Process, so we've created a member accountability process that is open and fair for all parties involved. The idea behind the accountability process is that it strengthens professional reliance by giving members several options which fall outside the disciplinary process. However, if the result of the process is a finding of more serious problems, a complaint may still be launched. The new accountability process has five options:

- Informal agreement between members
- Formal agreement between members — the resolution is filed with the ABCFP
- Voluntary Peer Review
- ABCFP works with members to reach a consensus
- ABCFP coordinates a work review

We are confident that members will find the accountability process valuable. You can find more information on the website.

The protection of the public interest with regards to the practice of professional forestry is a shared responsibility. The ABCFP must enforce the *Foresters Act* and ensure the competence, independence, professional conduct and integrity of the members. The members are charged with following the bylaws and in particular the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Practice. This includes reporting poor practice, holding each other accountable for protecting the public interest and lodging complaints when warranted. 🌱