



Creating Partnerships to Better Protect Species at Risk

The theme of this issue of **BC Forest Professional** is species at risk and I wanted to continue that theme with my column by talking about the recently released species at risk guideline. This guideline, *Managing Species at Risk in British Columbia* was a joint project between the ABCFP and the College of Applied Biologists of BC (CAB). Our two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in 2007. In October 2008, our two professions wrote *Developing Professional Advice: Guidance Communications and the Joint ABCFP/CAB Committee* and the paper is the second project of a joint task force that emerged from the MoU.

The ABCFP produced guidelines for members on managing species at risk (SAR) in 2003; however, these guidelines needed updating due to new legislation and knowledge. CAB and the ABCFP formed a SAR task force with the express purpose of updating the guidelines. The task force hired Ben van Drimmelen, RPF, RPBio, LLB, to facilitate the process and author the report.

It took a year of hard work but the resulting paper is an excellent example of cooperation among the professions. Managing species at risk is an area where practices overlap between forest professionals and biologist professionals. This paper offers guidance to the members of both organizations and is similar to other efforts we have made with other professions with which we share the landscape.

The guidelines give a background on the species at risk issue in BC and review the legislation that relates to species at risk as well as reviewing the expectations on both professions. These expectations are:

Keeping informed of species at risk in your area.

- It is your responsibility to be aware of any species at risk in the area being managed and of those species' habitat requirements in which you are working. Identify any legislative direction for the species and consulting with a professional as needed.

Keeping informed of new knowledge.

- Information on species at risk is in a state of flux. New information is made available and current information may become out of date. You need to keep on top of this information and you can make your job easier by building relationships with local knowledge experts such as First Nations, university researchers and/or field naturalists.

Assessing practices to meet legislated direction.

- You should make sure your management plans adhere to all laws. In addition, you should be aware of legislative direction

(i.e. not legally binding documents) such as recovery strategies. Ongoing monitoring of an area should be recommended to clients or employers to ensure satisfactory results.

Evaluating the risk when there is no direction.

- You should be able to rely on professional judgment when there is no law or legislative direction about a particular species at risk. If operational plans have a high risk of damaging a species at risk or its habitat, it is up to the professional to suggest lower risk options.

Supporting effective monitoring and adaptive management.

- When a recommended strategy or resource use affects a portion of the range for a species at risk, an ongoing monitoring plan should be put in place by the prescribing professional.

Advocating sound resource stewardship.

- It is up to professionals to recommend changes if monitoring indicates alternative practices are necessary. Resource professionals are also responsible for advocating for sound land and resource stewardship.

The report concludes with five examples of situations where the information in the report can be applied on-the-ground. You can read it on our website: www.abcfp.ca.

While the SAR guidelines are the latest product of joint task forces, members should also know that the ABCFP works closely with other organizations such as the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC). The joint practices board of the ABCFP and APEGBC has been working on projects since early 2006. This group has completed several guidelines and papers such as *Guidelines for Professionals in the Forest Sector – Crossings* and has worked together to address changes to WorkSafeBC occupational health and safety regulations. 🐾