

**Report of the ABCPF/ASTTBC Joint Task Force**

**NEW APPROACHES TO THE REGULATION OF  
PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS &  
FOREST TECHNOLOGISTS/TECHNICIANS**

**May 1, 2002**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Late in 2001, the councils of the Association of BC Professional Foresters (ABCPF) and Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC (ASTTBC) formally agreed to establish a Joint Task Force (JTF) to bring forward recommendations regarding whether new approaches to the regulation of professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians<sup>1</sup> might enhance the function of the forestry team<sup>2</sup>. The JTF was asked to report to the two councils by the end of April 2002.

The JTF met seven times between mid-January and late April 2002. This report constitutes fulfillment of its mandate and is submitted to the ABCPF and ASTTBC councils for their consideration.

In summary, the JTF's recommendations are:

1. A new relationship should be established between professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians under one act and in one organization;
2. Relevant portions of the ASTTBC membership should be transferred to the ABCPF to be regulated under the *Foresters Act*;
3. The ABCPF should modify its current *Foresters Act* amendment proposals to facilitate the transfer and regulation of the members transferred;
4. All ASTTBC forest technologists should be transferred;
5. Whether forest technicians and related technical specialties should be regulated and by whom should be addressed by the ABCPF and other relevant parties over the coming year;
6. A new membership class for forest technologists and technicians should be established in the *Foresters Act*;
7. The legislation should continue to be called the *Foresters Act*;
8. The organization name should be changed to the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP);
9. Professional forester's title should continue to be Registered Professional Forester (RPF).
10. Forest technologist's title should be Registered Forest Technologist (RFT);
11. Forest technician's title should be Certified Forest Technician (CFTech);
12. The governance recommendations contained in the report should be reconsidered by the ABCPF council after five years;
13. The number of regular (non-executive) councillors on the ABCPF council should be increased by one to seven;
14. Forest technologists/technicians should be entitled to two regular council seats until their share of the membership exceeds 30 per cent, after which it will increase to three seats;
15. Forest technologists/technicians should be free to serve on the on the council executive but should not hold more than one executive position at any point in time;
16. The ABCPF nomination process should continue to function as at present;
17. The voting rights of professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians relative to council elections, fees and bylaws should be the same;

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<sup>1</sup> The term "forest technologist" refers to holders of two year diplomas in forest technology or its equivalent. The term "forest technician" refers to holders of one year diplomas or its equivalent. Professional foresters are required to have four or five year degrees or their equivalent.

<sup>2</sup> In this context, the term "forestry team" refers to the combination of professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians. At other times and in other contexts, the concept can include other resource professionals such as engineers, geoscientists, biologists and agrologists.

18. Practice rights for forest technologists (see page 12) should be substantially embedded in the *Foresters Act*;
19. Forest technologists' practice rights should be further delineated in the bylaws (see pages 12 & 13) and those bylaw provisions should be imposed as part of the initial legislative package;
20. The ABCPF council should adopt a guideline defining "technical functions" before the legislative changes take effect;
21. Forest technologists should be subject to the ABCPF Code of Ethics (Bylaw 14), the ABCPF Discipline Procedures (Bylaw 16), and the ABCPF Standards of Professional Practice (Bylaw 17);
22. The ABCPF should seek to have these legislative changes (except for forest technologists' practice definition) take effect in mid-2003;
23. The ABCPF should seek to have forest technologists' practice definition take effect on December 1, 2005;
24. The transfer of forest technologists from ASTTBC should be facilitated and expedited;
25. From mid-2003 till December 1, 2005, the ABCPF should give reasonable recognition to prior work experience when admitting non-ASTTBC forest technologists;
26. The annual fees for forest technologists should be increased to reflect the increased rights gained by those groups as well as the ABCPF's cost-of-service;
27. One-time service fees applicable to forest technologists should generally reflect the costs involved and the fees charged to the ABCPF's existing membership;
28. The ABCPF should pursue various strategies (see pages 16 & 17) designed to ensure the success of the new relationship between professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians.

Professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians will be operating in a new results-based environment. In this new environment, professional foresters will rely on the accuracy and integrity of measurements taken, data collected, technical analysis done and plans drawn by forest technologists/technicians. This new set of circumstances demands that all the members of the forestry team be professional and be given the appropriate responsibility and accountability. Thus, only demonstrably qualified and registered forest technologists/technicians should be allowed to practise independently, and as such these individuals should be held to the highest standards of professionalism and recognised accordingly.

The proposals contained in this report have the potential to transform the forestry team in terms of both its service to the public and its internal relationships. However, this potential will only be fully achieved if they are energetically and enthusiastically pursued.

## INTRODUCTION

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Late in 2001, the councils of the Association of BC Professional Foresters (ABCPF) and Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC (ASTTBC) formally agreed to establish a Joint Task Force (JTF) to bring forward recommendations, by the end of April 2002, regarding whether new approaches to the regulation of professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians might enhance the function of the forestry team. In particular, the JTF was asked to consider the need for:

- Greater clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- Increased public accountability; and
- New legislative and institutional models.

Appointed to the JTF for the ABCPF were: Mike Larock, RPF (immediate past president); Peter Marshall, RPF, PhD (vice-president); Phil Blanchard, RPF (councillor); Al Gorley, RPF (1992 ABCPF president); Van Scoffield, RPF (executive director); and Jerome Marburg, LLB (registrar & manager, professional practice).

Appointed for ASTTBC were: Norm Shaw, AScT, ATE (councillor); Geoff Tindale, AScT; John Gow, AScT; John Leech, AScT, CAE (executive director); and Ted Nodwell, CAE (deputy executive director).

The JTF met seven times between mid-January and late April 2002. This report constitutes fulfillment of its mandate and is submitted to the ABCPF and ASTTBC councils for their consideration.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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The profession of forestry has been regulated in BC since 1947 when the *Foresters Act* was passed by the provincial legislature, providing professional foresters with right-to-title and right-to-practice<sup>3</sup>, and establishing the Association of BC Foresters, now the ABCPF.

Forest technologists/technicians have been recognized as a group since the 1960s when the Forest Technologists Association of BC (FTABC) was formed. In the early 80s, FTABC joined with the Society of Engineering Technologists of BC. In 1985, the Applied Science Technologists & Technicians Act (*ASTT Act*) was passed, establishing the ASTTBC, providing forest technologists/technicians (and other groups within ASTTBC) with right-to-title status and authorizing ASTTBC to regulate standards of training and practice.

Throughout their histories, professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians have enjoyed a generally positive working relationship as members of the “forestry team”. This relationship reflects the complimentary roles of professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians in which, for the most part, the technical functions provided by the latter have effectively supported the planning, prescribing and oversight role of the former.

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<sup>3</sup> When a profession has a legislated “right-to-title”, it means nobody may use the title in question without being a member of that profession. When a profession has a legislated “right-to-practice”, it means that nobody can do the work reserved to the profession without being a member of that profession.

Relations between the ABCPF and ASTTBC have also been generally positive over the years, though tensions have existed at times as both associations sought to clarify the roles of the two groups and as ASTTBC sought to gain increased status and respect for its members. Efforts to address these matters led to the adoption by ABCPF and ASTTBC, in 1983, of a “Forestry Team Statement” and, in 1991, of a “Joint Statement of Principles”. Both initiatives were designed to clarify roles and to promote greater respect, and cooperation between the two groups. As well, the *Foresters Act* amendments of 1994 included provisions authorizing the issuance of special permits to allow qualified technologists/technicians (and others) to practice aspects of professional forestry as set out in the special permit.

The introduction of the *Forest Practices Code* in the early 90s elevated the need for professional management of BC’s forests for the full range of natural resource values. In consequence, during the mid to late 90s, the ABCPF focused much of its attention on strengthening its own regime and on its relationship with other natural resource professions. The relationship between professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians received only limited attention during this period.

## CURRENT CONTEXT

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Recently, the provincial government committed to substantially reduce the amount of red tape and, where regulation continues to be necessary to achieve important societal goals, to shift to results-based approaches. Consistent with this strategy, government is taking steps to introduce a less prescriptive, results-based forest practices code. They have also made it clear that “professional reliance” (i.e. increased reliance on the judgment and accountability of natural resource professionals) will be an important part of this results-based code strategy.

Accordingly, the ABCPF decided in 2001 to pursue amendments to the *Foresters Act* that would, among other things, increase the profession’s ability to protect the public interest by enhancing its quality assurance, accountability and enforcement mechanisms. Other proposed amendments seek to enhance protection of the public interest by reducing the scope of exemptions to the unauthorized practice provisions in the *Foresters Act*.

Based on these recent developments, ASTTBC proposed to the ABCPF in the fall of 2001 that the two organizations should initiate a process to consider a new relationship. A primary motivation for ASTTBC was its recognition that the pending shift to a results-based, professionally-reliant policy regime made it more important than ever that the roles of forestry team members be clarified and that each member operate within a regulatory framework that allowed full professional accountability to be exacted. ASTTBC was also concerned that the ABCPF’s act amendment proposals might diminish the status and practice rights of forest technologists/technicians and increase uncertainty as to roles, leading to further tensions between the two groups.

ASTTBC was further motivated by the fact that, in late 2000, it had entered into discussions with the Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC) to explore whether a new relationship between the two groups might be beneficial. By the fall of 2001 it seemed likely that these talks would lead to a merger of ASTTBC and APEGBC, combining the former’s 8,000 engineering technologists/technicians with the latter’s 19,000 professional engineers and geoscientists under one act and in one organization. Given this, it made sense for ASTTBC to try to clarify the future status of its 400 forest technologists/technicians in relation to the ABCPF’s 4000 members. In fact, as of April 2002, both APEGBC and ASTTBC councils have formally

given approval in principle to the proposed merger and are developing a proposal for government consideration in the near future.

The ABCPF was motivated to enter these talks by the potential they offered in terms of clarity of roles, public interest benefits, and financial and member service benefits.

## **SHOULD A NEW RELATIONSHIP BE ESTABLISHED AND, IF SO, UNDER WHAT ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL?**

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The JTF concluded that the interest of the public as well as those of professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians would be better served if there were a closer relationship and greater clarity of roles between professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians. Further, the JTF concluded that this would be best achieved by bringing the two groups together under “one act and in one association” and by providing forest technologists/technicians with certain legislated practice rights under the *Foresters Act*.

Benefits to the public would likely include:

- Better protection of the public interest through increased assurance of professional accountability across the forestry team;
- Greater clarity of roles within the forestry team;
- A strengthened forestry team better able to provide leadership in the field and in the public policy arena.

Professional foresters would gain from:

- Greater clarity of roles and standards;
- Greater confidence that the technical contributions to their work have been provided by fully accountable individuals;
- Expanded member benefits and services.

Forest technologists/technicians would benefit from:

- The ability to practice independently in defined areas of practice;
- Increased public stature, respect and influence;
- Enhanced respect from the public and within the forestry team;
- Improved career laddering.

On a collective and organizational basis, the JTF foresees the following benefits for the forestry team:

- Economies of scale leading to expanded member benefits and services;
- An enhanced public image for the forestry team;
- Increased influence in the policy arena;
- More consistent approach to educational institutions;
- The opportunity to re-direct energies previously devoted to managing the stresses between professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians;
- Expanded pool of volunteers.

In reaching its conclusion in favour of the “one act – one association” model, the JTF considered and rejected several other models including:

- The status quo;

- Enhanced status quo;
- One act – multiple associations or colleges.

In each of these cases, the benefits (e.g. accountability, efficiency) were found to be less than those available from the “one act – one association” model.

In the end, the JTF concluded that relevant parts of the ASTTBC’s membership transfer to the ABCPF so they may be regulated under the Foresters Act as members of the ABCPF and that the ABCPF should modify its current Foresters Act amendment proposals to facilitate the transfer and regulation of the members transferred.

**Recommendations:**

- 1. A new relationship should be established between professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians under one act and in one organization;**
- 2. Relevant portions of the ASTTBC membership should be transferred to the ABCPF to be regulated under the *Foresters Act*;**
- 3. The ABCPF should modify its current *Foresters Act* amendment proposals to facilitate the transfer and regulation of the members transferred;**

**WHO SHOULD BE PART OF THIS NEW RELATIONSHIP & WHAT MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS SHOULD BE CREATED FOR THEM?**

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In the forestry area, the current membership of ASTTBC is comprised of some 400 Applied Science Technologists and about 20 Certified Technicians registered in forest technology. ASTTBC also certifies some 250 timber cruisers as “technical specialists” in cooperation with the three regional timber cruiser societies.<sup>4</sup>

The JTF had little difficulty concluding that forest technologists should be part of the new legislative and organizational model. Indeed, this report is primarily concerned with whether and how forest technologists should be incorporated into the modified enterprise. Given this, the JTF considered the need to create a new membership class for forest technologists to be self-evident.

With respect to forest technicians and various categories of technical specialists, including timber cruisers, the issues were more complex. During the JTF discussions the proposition was advanced that the ABCPF should take on the administration of such certifications in the forestry area and, relative to the certified timber cruisers specifically, should assume the role ASTTBC has played heretofore. Some background is required to understand why this was suggested.

Over the years ASTTBC has sought to become a certifying body for a number of technical specialties, in the area of forestry and other fields. Their rationale was that there is valid public interest in ensuring that such practitioners perform to high standards because of: (a) their important public safety (e.g. fire inspectors, house and property inspectors) or economic (e.g. timber cruisers, log scalers) roles; or (b) because professionals like engineers and foresters rely on their efforts as important contributions to the results and quality standards of their own work.

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<sup>4</sup> As members of a technical specialist certification program administered by ASTTBC, timber cruisers are, strictly speaking, not members of ASTTBC. They are, however, subject to the ASTTBC Code of Ethics and disciplinary policies.

In the forestry area, these efforts by ASTTBC have enjoyed only limited success with the result that ASTTBC presently administers only the previously noted timber cruiser certification scheme. In the case of log scalers, ASTTBC proposals to relieve government of its current licensing role have been unsuccessful to date despite some indications that government may want to divest itself of that function. ASTTBC's efforts relative to other forest measurement specialists (e.g. waste & residue surveyors, silviculture surveyors) have similarly been unsuccessful despite some expressions of interest from government and others.

The JTF did not accept the proposition regarding technical specialists for a number of reasons including:

- The proposed role represented an extension of the ABCPF mandate that requires further consideration;
- Government's intentions are unclear regarding certification/licensing of timber cruisers, scalers and other forest measurement specialists;
- It would not be possible to adequately address the issues involved in the time available.

Nevertheless, the JTF concluded that, over the coming year, the ABCPF should explore with government and other relevant parties whether and in what manner such technical specialty certifications should be addressed and by whom. The cruisers currently under ASTTBC regulation should be treated as priorities in these efforts.

With respect to ASTTBC's existing forest technician membership, agreement was reached that they should not be transferred to the ABCPF as forest technicians per se, but that they be afforded every opportunity to achieve forest technologist status in the early years.

Notwithstanding the recommendations relative to forest technicians and technical specialties, the JTF concluded that the ABCPF membership classification to be established should be capable of accommodating either forest technicians or technical specialties or both, when and if the need arises.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 4. All ASTTBC forest technologists should be transferred;**
- 5. Whether forest technicians and related technical specialties should be regulated and by whom should be addressed by the ABCPF and other relevant parties over the coming year;**
- 6. A new membership class for forest technologists and technicians should be established in the *Foresters Act*;**

### **LABELS: LEGISLATIVE, ORGANIZATIONAL & MEMBERS' TITLES**

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Considerable debate occurred within the JTF as to what the legislation should be called once it encompassed both professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians, what the modified organization should be called and what the forest technologist and technician titles should be. Considerations included respecting tradition, maintaining "brand recognition", according due respect to all parties, achieving consistency with precedents elsewhere, maintaining appropriate distinctions, avoiding member and public confusion and minimizing the cost of change.

In the end, the JTF recommends that:

- The legislation continue to be called the *Foresters Act*;
- The organization name be changed to the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP);
- Professional forester's title continue to be Registered Professional Forester (RPF).
- Forest technologist's title be Registered Forest Technologist (RFT);
- Forest technician's title be Certified Forest Technician (CFTech).

**Recommendations:**

- 7. The legislation should continue to be called the *Foresters Act*;**
- 8. The organization name should be changed to the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP);**
- 9. Professional forester's title should continue to be Registered Professional Forester (RPF).**
- 10. Forest technologist's title should be Registered Forest Technologist (RFT);**
- 11. Forest technician's title should be Certified Forest Technician (CFTech);**

## **HOW SHOULD THE MODIFIED ORGANIZATION BE GOVERNED?**

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The JTF's consideration of governance issues was guided by two general principles that it believes are vital considerations. First, the JTF strongly believes an inclusive approach must be taken to governance and membership rights to assure equity and hasten the development of a more unified culture that is focused on the future of the forestry team. Second, because the composition of the ABCPF membership is likely to undergo substantial change over the next few years if these proposals proceed, it is difficult to design a governance structure that will work for the present and a substantially altered future. Accordingly, the JTF strongly urges that any governance rules adopted at the outset be reconsidered by the ABCPF council after five years.

In the interest of equity and inclusiveness, the JTF recommends that forest technologists/technicians be able serve on the council. Although they might initially comprise only 5-10 per cent of the membership, that share will almost certainly grow over time and could eventually reach one-third or more. If they are to be members, it follows that they should have a voice in association affairs that reflects their numbers. Acceptance of this requires that the current ABCPF governance paradigm, based on professional foresters exclusively, be let go and a new paradigm based on the forestry team, be embraced.

The ABCPF council is currently comprised of eleven councillors. Of these, two are lay councillors (non-members) appointed by the provincial cabinet to help council consider the public interest. These lay positions are not a factor relative to forest technologist/technician representation. The other nine councillors are all ABCPF members elected by the voting members in mail ballot elections. The composition and determination of these nine is highly germane to the issue of equitable representation for forest technologists/technicians.

Six of the nine are regular (non-executive) councillors. A nominating committee puts forward sufficient candidates (at a minimum) to fill all vacancies among the six regular councillor positions. The membership at large then has an opportunity to nominate additional candidates. This process almost invariably leads to competitive elections with more candidates running than there are vacancies.

The council executive (president, immediate past president and vice-president) is formed through a separate electoral process in which the nominating committee puts forward one candidate for the office of vice-president who is normally, but not necessarily, a current regular councillor. The membership at large has an opportunity to nominate additional candidates but does so very rarely. The individual so elected is required, pursuant to the bylaws, to serve as president and immediate past president in succeeding years.

To accommodate forest technologist/technician representation on council, the JTF concluded that the number of regular councillor positions should be increased by one (i.e. from six to seven). It is further recommended that forest technologists/technicians be allocated a minimum of two of these seats, increasing to three if their share of the membership exceeds 30 per cent<sup>5</sup>.

The JTF concluded that the size of the council executive and the manner in which it is formed should remain as is and that the nominating committee and the membership should be free to nominate either professional foresters or forest technologists/technicians as vice-presidential candidates. The result of this is that a forest technologist/technician could be elected as vice-president and if so elected would serve as president. However, the JTF further recommends that there be no more than one forest technologist/technician on the executive at any one time<sup>6</sup>.

On this basis, during the first five years of the new relationship, professional foresters would at all times occupy no less than two of the three executive positions and four to five of the seven regular council seats. Forest technologists/technicians, on the other hand, might occupy one executive position and would be assured of two to three regular council positions.

In terms of voting in council elections, the JTF concluded that both professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians should be able to vote on all council candidates. The forest technologist/technician seat(s) would be awarded to the forest technologist(s)/technician(s) with the highest vote(s). Likewise, the professional forester(s) with the highest vote(s) would be awarded the professional forester seat(s).

With respect to voting on bylaw ballots, the JTF conclusion was that, for reasons of equity, no distinctions should be made between forest technologists/technicians and professional foresters.

### **Recommendations:**

- 12. The governance recommendations contained in the report should be reconsidered by the ABCPF council after five years;**
- 13. The number of regular (non-executive) councillors on the ABCPF council should be increased by one to seven;**
- 14. Forest technologists/technicians should be entitled to two regular council seats until their share of the membership exceeds 30 per cent, after which it will increase to three seats;**
- 15. Forest technologists/technicians should be free to serve on the council executive but should not hold more than one executive position at any point in time;**
- 16. The ABCPF nomination process should continue to function as at present;**
- 17. The voting rights of professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians relative to council elections, fees and bylaws should be the same;**

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<sup>5</sup> Based on the official year-end membership data for the prior year.

<sup>6</sup> For this purpose, professional foresters who are also forest technologists/technicians would be considered professional foresters.

## PRACTICE RIGHTS<sup>7</sup>

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Practice rights are central to the search for greater clarity of roles and increased accountability. The JTF therefore concluded that it is essential that forest technologists/technicians be granted certain practice rights and that those rights be embedded in the *Foresters Act*. However, such rights should not be separate from the practice of professional forestry as defined in Section 1 of the *Foresters Act*. Rather, they should be established as practice rights **within** that overarching definition.

Due to the complexity of forest technologists' practice rights and the need for those rights to evolve over time, however, it is proposed that the activities forest technologists would be permitted to carry out be set out in a bylaw under the *Foresters Act* and in guidelines established by the ABCPF council from time to time. It is further recommended that, contrary to the normal bylaw amendment procedure, this bylaw amendment be included as part of the "legislative package" approved by the legislature.

The following forest technologist practice definition is proposed for inclusion in the *Foresters Act*:

*A Registered Forest Technologist may engage in the practice of professional forestry consistent with his or her education, training and experience either:*

- (1) Independently, when carrying out functions described in the Bylaws;*
- (2) When executing, supervising the execution of, or inspecting work designed by an appropriately qualified RPF or Special Permit holder acting within the scope of their permit; or*
- (3) Under the supervision of an appropriately qualified RPF or Special Permit holder acting within the scope of their permit.*

Various other consequential amendments will be required in the *Foresters Act*. The JTF is confident that these are sufficiently well understood that they can proceed without close scrutiny by the JTF.

The JTF recommends that practice rights be further defined in the bylaws and, over time, through council guidelines. At the very least, bylaws 6 and 7 setting out categories of membership and the rights and obligations within categories of membership respectively, would need to be amended to add language recognizing forest technologists and technicians as categories of membership and setting out the practice rights and membership obligations of these membership categories. These bylaw sections would also have to provide for the enrolment of such members as technologists-in-training, working under the supervision of a sponsor during a work experience period.

If this approach is adopted, there will be a need for staff, in consultation with the JTF and others, to undertake the specifics of such drafting. In terms of delineating independent practice rights for forest technologists, wording along the following lines is contemplated:

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<sup>7</sup> The reader is reminded that this section relates exclusively to forest technologists' practice rights. As noted in the section "Who Should be Part of This New Relationship?" the decision to include forest technicians and technical specialists is deferred. Accordingly, no attempt is made here to address their practice rights.

*Registered Forest Technologists may, within guidelines established by council from time to time, independently perform technical functions in the following areas of practice:*

- (1) supervising and conducting forest resource inventory surveys;*
- (2) developing and preparing forest management and harvest plans;*
- (3) supervising and implementing silvicultural operations;*
- (4) planning and implementing forest measurements, protection photogrammetric interpretation and mapping operations;*
- (5) supervising and implementing forest harvesting operations;*
- (6) monitoring and reporting on activities of licenses and contractors to enforce regulations and standards;*
- (7) supervising and performing technical functions forest tree nursery operations;*
- (8) providing technical functions in forestry research programs;*
- (9) preparing timber valuation assessments (e.g appraisal information, timber cruises);*
- (10) planning, locating, constructing and de-activating forest roads; and*
- (11) other related forest management practice areas that council may prescribe from time to time.*

Along with this bylaw wording, the JTF envisions an interpretation bulletin or council guideline on the meaning of the words “technical functions”. The JTF view is that the guideline should reflect an expectation that all members will practice in a professional manner, the reality that different classes and categories of membership will have different membership and practice rights/obligations and the important distinctions between professional forester and forest technologist/technician roles. Unfortunately, time did not permit the JTF to adequately address these distinctions.

### **Recommendations:**

- 18. Practice rights for forest technologists should be substantially embedded in the *Foresters Act*;**
- 19. Forest technologists’ practice rights should be further delineated in the bylaws and those bylaw provisions should be imposed as part of the initial legislative package;**
- 20. The ABCPF council should adopt a guideline defining “technical functions” before the legislative changes take effect;**

## **CODES, STANDARDS & PROCEDURES**

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The JTF considered whether forest technologists/technicians who become members of the ABCPF should be subject to different codes, standard and procedures than professional foresters. Quick agreement was achieved that the ABCPF’s key existing standards, policies and procedures should apply. These include:

- The ABCPF Code of Ethics (Bylaw 14)
- The ABCPF Discipline Procedures (Bylaw 16)
- The ABCPF Standards of Professional Practice (Bylaw 17)

**Recommendation:**

- 21. Forest technologists should be subject to the ABCPF Code of Ethics (Bylaw 14), the ABCPF Discipline Procedures (Bylaw 16), and the ABCPF Standards of Professional Practice (Bylaw 17);**

## **TIMING & PHASE-IN/TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS**

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Because the *Foresters Act* amendments are expected to be passed by the legislature in the fall of 2002 and proclaimed shortly thereafter, the JTF has assumed the transfer would take effect on July 1, 2003. Also assumed is a two-and-a-half-year transition period during which forest technologists' practice rights would not be legally enforceable. It is further assumed that they would become enforceable on December 1, 2005.<sup>8</sup> Based on these assumptions, the JTF envisages that transition to the new regime would entail three phases.

The first phase would involve the immediate transfer of existing ASTTBC forest technologists/technicians effective July 1, 2003. The JTF urges that such transfers should be subject to minimal hurdles. The ABCPF should, however, retain the right to veto clearly unacceptable transferees (e.g. those convicted of indictable offences).

The second (transition) phase would involve currently practicing forest technologists/technicians who were not ASTTBC members but chose to join the ABCPF after the initial effective date of the legislative changes but before the right to practice provisions took legal effect. The JTF recommends that admission requirements for these individuals be designed to encourage them to join the ABCPF sooner rather than later in particular by recognizing their prior work experience.

The third (post-transition) phase would involve practicing forest technologists/technicians who chose to apply after the forest technologists' right-to-practice provisions took legal effect making it illegal to practice forest technology without belonging to and meeting the requirements of the ABCPF. Admission requirements would apply in full and entry would not be expedited.

Newly graduated forest technologists/technicians wishing to join the ABCPF would be subject to the same rules as the post-transition (phase three) applicants regardless of when they apply.

**Recommendations:**

- 22. The ABCPF should seek to have these legislative changes (except for forest technologists' practice definition) take effect in mid-2003;**
- 23. The ABCPF should seek to have forest technologists' practice definition take effect on December 1, 2005;**
- 24. The transfer of forest technologists from ASTTBC should be facilitated and expedited;**
- 25. From mid-2003 till December 1, 2005, the ABCPF should give reasonable recognition to prior work experience when admitting non-ASTTBC forest technologists;**

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<sup>8</sup> This timing is predicated on the ABCPF's fiscal year end of November 30.

## FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

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The JTF considered the financial and administrative aspects of this proposal and concluded that, while there are many, many tasks to be completed and a few challenges to overcome, there are no insurmountable obstacles. The assumption is that 300-400 ASTTBC members will transfer to the ABCPF when the new arrangements take effect. Although there are no hard data on the number of forest technologists outside the ASTTBC membership, the JTF estimates that another 2,000 to 3,000 of them will follow over the subsequent five-year period. The potential may be as high as 5,000.

Such growth will impose substantial new demands on the ABCPF, first in the area of admissions, and subsequently in the areas of communications and member relations, practice advice, complaints, and general administration. Inevitably, new staff will be required in these areas to cope with the increased workloads. Nevertheless, it is clear that, after fiscal 2003, the revenue generated from new memberships will more than cover the ABCPF's incremental costs. During fiscal 2003, however, the costs will almost certainly exceed revenues by \$50,000 to \$100,000. While responsible efforts should be made to limit this initial negative cash flow, the JTF recommends that the ABCPF view this as a necessary initial investment that must be made to ensure the success of the venture and will generate substantial benefits, financial and otherwise, in due course.

The prospect of an initial period of negative cash flow arises from the considerable front-end loading of the work involved combined with the fact that the numbers of forest technologists/technicians joining in the first year will still be relatively small. Front-end tasks include the transfer of a portion of ASTTBC's financial and membership records, database re-programming, implementing "identity" changes (stationary costs, etc.), establishment of new admission policies and procedures, conducting extra exams, as well as taking over ASTTBC's current provincial and national accreditation roles.

In general, the JTF recommends that the annual fees for forest technologists/technicians be increased to reflect the increased rights gained by those groups as well as the ABCPF's cost of service. Other one-time service fees (admission fees, exam fees, etc.) should generally reflect the costs involved and the fees charged to the ABCPF's existing membership.

### **Recommendations:**

- 26. The annual fees for forest technologists should be increased to reflect the increased rights gained by those groups as well as the ABCPF's cost-of-service;**
- 27. One-time service fees applicable to forest technologists should generally reflect the costs involved and the fees charged to the ABCPF's existing membership;**

## NEXT STEPS & FURTHER WORK REQUIRED

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If the ABCPF and ASTTBC councils accept the JTF's recommendations, a number of steps must be taken over the next year.

Short-term tasks (in the next six months) include:

- Immediately modifying the ABCPF's *Foresters Act* amendments to incorporate the few substantive and many consequential amendments arising from these proposals;

- Communication with government and other stakeholders to gain their support;
- Initiating a substantial marketing effort to inform prospective forest technologist/technician members of the pending changes and the benefits thereof.

Medium-term tasks (within one year) include:

- Developing the administrative capacity, policies, procedures and systems required to take on substantial numbers of forest technologists/technicians;
- Completing development of a guideline re. “technical functions” for ABCPF council consideration;
- Continuing a major marketing effort to promote membership among forest technologists/technicians who are not ASTTBC members;
- Initiating discussions with government and other relevant parties regarding whether forest technicians and related technical specialties warrant regulation and, if so, by whom.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

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Professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians will be operating in a new environment. Government has upped the ante in our social contract by reducing reliance on process, prescription, and step-by-step scrutiny of forestry practices, and will rely more on professional judgment and attainment of defined results. This means both more responsibility for forestry professionals, and much more accountability.

In the new, results-based environment, even more so than currently, professional foresters will rely on the accuracy and integrity of measurements taken, data collected, technical analysis done and plans drawn by forest technologists/technicians. As stated above, this work will be done with minimal if any “checking” by government and with less prescriptive guidelines. This new set of circumstances demands that all the members of the forestry team be professional and be given the appropriate responsibility and accountability. Thus, only demonstrably qualified and registered forest technologists/technicians should be allowed to practise independently, and as such these individuals should be held to the highest standards of professionalism and recognised accordingly. (A professional forester’s due diligence defence may rest on whether he or she relied on qualified forest technologists for the information used in a decision).

The proposals contained in this report have the potential to transform the forestry team in terms of both its service to the public and its internal relationships. However, this potential will only be fully achieved if they are energetically and enthusiastically pursued. Accordingly, the JTF urges the ABCPF to:

- Give every consideration to being as non-restrictive and enabling as possible relative to forest technologists;
- Make every effort to enhance, reinforce and enable special permits and to include forest technologists as part of the special permit application/approval process;
- Actively promote the pupil program as an avenue for forest technologists to achieve professional forester status.
- Actively promote the new relationship between professional foresters and forest technologists by speaking positively about a “new era for forest professionals” and the “new vision for the forestry team”;
- Extend every courtesy and respect to forest technologists by referring to them as “professional”;

- Move expeditiously to create a “forest technologists practice committee” reporting to council and enjoying full administrative support;
- Give serious consideration to eventually changing forest technologists title to Registered Professional Forest Technologist;
- Take full advantage of ASTTBC staff availability to ensure effective implementation of the changes.

**Recommendation:**

**28. The ABCPF should pursue various strategies designed to ensure the success of the new relationship between professional foresters and forest technologists/technicians;**