

*ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS*

Sponsoring

Forester

Policy

Passed by Council: May 31, 2001
Effective Date: January 1, 2002

Please file this document in your Professional Manual under the tab “Sponsoring Forester” for future reference.

Table of Contents

1.0	Implementation	3
1.1	Background	3
1.2	Purposes	3
2.0	Obligations	4
2.1	The Enrolled Member	4
2.2	The Sponsoring Forester	4
2.3	Areas of Practice Exposure	5
3.0	Rules of Conduct	6
4.0	Changing the Sponsoring Forester or the Enrolled Member	6
4.1	Changes by the Enrolled Member	
4.2	Changes by the Sponsoring Forester	
4.3	Notifying the Association	
5.0	Professional Development Plan and Enrolled Member Practice Diary	7
6.0	Registration Exam	7
	APPENDIX I: Enrolled Member Professional Development Plan	8
	APPENDIX II: Enrolled Member Practice Diary (Sample)	9
	APPENDIX III: Sponsoring Forester Agreement	11

1.0 Implementation

This policy will apply to all new Enrolled Members as of January 1, 2002. The policy does not apply to members who have enrolled prior to January 1, 2002. They are, however, strongly encouraged to adopt the policy for their ongoing relationships with their Sponsoring Foresters.

1.1 Background

Forest resources¹ are important to people locally, nationally and internationally. Requirements aimed at protecting societal forest values are set out in legislation, policy and standards. However, these cannot cover every administrative and technical issue that arises in the practice of forestry. The public relies on the judgment and discretion of professionals—who have acquired specialized skills, education and training—to manage and conserve forest resources and the values they contribute to society.

The public has entrusted the practice of forestry to the profession as a self-regulating body and to the professional forester as an individual member engaging in professional forestry practice. Public confidence and trust is maintained through professional foresters' competence, independence and integrity (defined by the Code of Ethics) and their accountability for competence and conduct.

The Sponsoring Forester program is an important link between the active Registered Professional Forester (RPF) and the new developing Enrolled Member. The program is meant to contribute to the continuity and improvement of professional conduct. The Sponsoring Forester program serves as a means to provide Enrolled Members with professional guidance and rights to practice under supervision of an active RPF.

The Sponsoring Forester program has been an element of the enrolment period for many years. To enrol as a Forester in Training (FIT) or Forestry Pupil (FP), a candidate must find a suitable active RPF to act as their Sponsoring Forester. Traditionally, the primary functions of the Sponsoring Forester were to assist the Enrolled Member in: (a) acquiring an acceptable amount of experience; and (b) navigating through difficulties they may come across in their early years as members. The most common function of the Sponsoring Forester was to sign an annual evaluation of the Enrolled Member's progress towards registration and forward it to the Association's office. At the end of the enrolment period, the Sponsoring Forester would usually recommend their Enrolled Member as a potential candidate for registration.

The practice of professional forestry continues to increase in complexity, spurred on, in part, by changes to legislation and policy, key practice issues, and shifting public values, expressions

of interest and expectations. The evolution of the examination for registration has reflected these developments in professional forestry practice. Some Sponsoring Foresters have stepped up their efforts in mentoring Enrolled Members to meet these challenges of professional forestry practice. Others have not. Many members have stated that the Sponsoring Forester program requires more organization and effort from the professional forestry community. A degree of variation exists between Sponsoring Foresters as to how and what duties are or should be carried out. Variation arises from differences of interpretation by individual Sponsoring Foresters involved in the program and differences in the level of assistance required by each Enrolled Member.

The direction for the Sponsoring Forester program is contained in the Association's bylaws, more specifically bylaws 7 and 14. Bylaw 7.2.1.1 states that Enrolled Members may only engage in the practice of professional forestry under the supervision of an active RPF. Bylaw 14 (Code of Ethics) calls on all members to inspire confidence in the profession, sharing knowledge and experience with others.

This policy enhances the existing Sponsoring Forester program and provides the Sponsoring Forester and Enrolled Member with additional tools to strengthen the sponsoring relationship. The goal is to provide for a career-rewarding experience for both the Sponsoring Forester and the Enrolled Member.

1.2 Purposes

The purposes of the Sponsoring Forester program are:

- Upholding the public interest in the practice of professional forestry by ensuring that Enrolled Members only engage in professional forestry practice under supervision of an active RPF and by supporting a mentoring program that counsels new members in competence, independence, integrity and accountability of practice;
- Guiding Enrolled Members in their development towards professionalism;
- Providing advice, direction and diversity for the Enrolled Member's work experience period;
- Providing advice and direction for the development of the Enrolled Member and assuming accountability for that Enrolled Member;
- Assisting the Enrolled Member in preparing for the Registration Exam; and
- Confirming that the Enrolled Member has completed the content and term of the enrolment period.

¹ The words "forest resources" when used in relation to the practice and definition of professional forestry encompass the full range of biological organisms, physical structures, and values associated with forests and forest ecosystems.

2.0 Obligations

The Sponsoring Forester and Enrolled Member relationship is one of mutual obligation built on trust. Each party shares a joint obligation to ensure that the Enrolled Member only practices under supervision of an active RPF in good standing, consistent with bylaw 7.2.1.1. (see Interpretation #1 at the end of this section).

2.1 The Enrolled Member

Upon signing the Sponsoring Forester Agreement, the Enrolled Member undertakes to:

- Follow the contents of the Sponsoring Forester Policy;
- Provide the Sponsoring Forester and the Association with the name of the active RPF supervising their work (if it is someone different than the Sponsoring Forester);
- Utilize only the designation of FIT or FP as described in Bylaw 7.2.1.1 when signing documents and work;
- Work with the Sponsoring Forester to develop the Professional Development Plan as described in section 5 below;
- Keep and maintain an Enrolled Member Practice Diary which describes a schedule for the enrolment period and a record of practice;
- Obtain a broad exposure to the practice of professional forestry in preparation for registration, including (without limitation) exposure to each of the four broad practice areas identified in section 2.3 below;
- Meet with the Sponsoring Forester periodically and discuss progress of the Professional Development Plan; and
- Complete any outstanding requirements for registration and adequately prepare for the Registration Exam.

2.2 Sponsoring Forester

The Sponsoring Forester is accountable for overseeing the development of the Enrolled Member (see Interpretation #2 at the end of this section). To this end, when they sign the Sponsoring Forester Agreement, the Sponsoring Forester undertakes to:

- Agree to be the Sponsoring Forester and to follow the contents of the Sponsoring Forester Policy;
- Work with the Enrolled Member to develop the Professional Development Plan as described in section 5 below;
- Ensure the Enrolled Member is practicing consistent to the *Foresters Act* and the Association's bylaws;
- Ensure the Enrolled Member only takes on work appropriate

for that person's experience and stage of professional development;

- Ensure the Enrolled Member only engages in practice under the supervision of an active RPF in good standing;
- Meet with the Enrolled Member periodically to review the Enrolled Member Practice Diary, discuss the Professional Development Plan, and to satisfy themselves that the Enrolled Member is proceeding as planned (all as described more fully in section 5 below);
- Assess the Enrolled Member's exposure to and understanding in each of the four broad practice areas identified in section 2.3;
- Assist the Enrolled Member to broaden their experience and knowledge in the practice of professional forestry by guiding the Enrolled Member toward opportunities to work, accompany or observe professional forestry practice; and
- Submit annual assessments of the Enrolled Member's progress by the dates requested by the Association and provide a final evaluation of the Enrolled Member at the end of the enrolment period.

Interpretation #1:

Supervision is to direct or oversee the execution of work. Supervision can be of a controlling nature, a managing direction or in an overseeing capacity. The Sponsoring Forester and Enrolled Member relationship can be any of those mentioned. The results of accountability would be different in each relationship. For example:

(1) If the Sponsoring Forester is the Enrolled Member's immediate supervisor, then the Sponsoring Forester has control over the instructions to the Enrolled Member and therefore is accountable for the resultant actions.

(2) If the Sponsoring Forester works for another employer, then the active RPF supervising the Enrolled Member, rather than the Sponsoring Forester, is accountable for instructions or results. The Sponsoring Forester is accountable to see that the Enrolled Member is supervised by an active RPF in good standing.

Interpretation #2:

Accountability is not necessarily the same thing as professional liability. Accountability is being called to answer for specific conduct or circumstances and is always present in every aspect of a professional's practice. There are many results of accountability such as satisfactory clarification or in severe cases, professional liability. The degree to which professional liability is exacted will vary depending upon the diligence exercised by the professional in providing their services. The Association recognizes that while it is mandatory for an Enrolled Member to have a Sponsoring Forester, Sponsoring Foresters agree to take on these responsibilities voluntarily. The profession gratefully acknowledges the added accountability such responsibilities imply.

2.3 Areas of Practice Exposure

Professional forestry encompasses a broad range of activities and practices. While it is impossible to gain experience in all such activities and practices and while professional foresters tend to develop more narrow specialties over time, the Board of Examiners expects that a newly registered professional forester will have had some exposure across the range of practice during their enrolment period.

Exposure to activities within the following four categories of broad practice areas, identified by the Board of Examiners and Council, is required. In developing these four broad categories the intention was that any aspect of the practice of professional forestry could be described as falling into one or more of the broad categories. The categories, however, should not be taken as limiting the breadth and scope of professional forestry practice.

(1) Planning

The word “planning” refers to both strategic and operational organization of activities to achieve identified goals. Planning often requires partnerships in knowledge and practice with other resource professionals. In this regard professional foresters are often required to work in concert with technical staff and other professionals, both within the profession of forestry (other professional foresters) and outside it (other resource professionals).

Examples of strategic planning tools include (without limitation): regional and subregional land use plans; local resource use plans; landscape unit plans and higher level planning processes and documents; tree farm license management plans; and timber supply reviews. Examples of operational planning tools include (without limitation): forest development planning; management plans; prescriptions; forest health assessments; fire management plans; and riparian assessments.

(2) Inventory and Information Management

Practice under this category includes: the acquisition of data; analysis of data; understanding its availability, adequacy, limitations and reliability; and the appropriate use and display of data and information.

(3) Forest Resource Operations

Forest resource operations include a wide range of activities across the breadth of forest resources. For example, this term can include such things as (without limitation): recreation trail building; silviculture treatments and monitoring; habitat enhancement/rehabilitation; fire suppression; establishing wildlife tree reserves; harvesting; and development for harvest and/or transportation systems.

(4) Systems and Business Processes

This category includes such things as: finance; business; organizational structure and behavior; management theory and practice; auditing results of planned activities; certification and the valuation and appraisal of forest resources.

Achieving adequate exposure across the four practice areas is the joint responsibility of the Sponsoring Forester and the Enrolled Member. The Sponsoring Forester must be satisfied that the Enrolled Member has obtained adequate exposure to and understanding of each of the four areas before an Enrolled Member may write the Registration Examination. While it is impossible to prescribe how much exposure in any one area is “enough”, the Sponsoring Forester’s duty is to see that the Enrolled Member has gained sufficient experience in the profession to allow them to independently engage in professional forestry practice at a level commensurate with their experience and to the standards expected of the profession.

Over time, and as resources allow, the Association may require additional reporting obligations of the Sponsoring Forester and Enrolled Member. This said, the policy recognizes that members work throughout the province where opportunities for exposure will vary with job positions and geographic location. These are important factors when considering whether an Enrolled Member has met the exposure requirements.

There are a variety of ways to gain the required exposure, besides direct work experience. They include (without limitation) such things as: formal continuing education; research and publication (e.g. articles in *Forum*); field tours and seminars; attendance at public meetings and processes; accompanying other practitioners while they do their job; volunteer work; presentations; and reading materials and/or personal discussions with recognized experts as directed by the Sponsoring Forester or other mentors/experts and demonstrating that the materials have been read, understood and can be applied in practice.

It is the Enrolled Member’s responsibility to document achievement in the exposure areas in their Enrolled Member Practice Diary, as described in section 5.0 of this policy.

3.0 Rules of Conduct

The diversity of Sponsoring Foresters, Enrolled Members and places of work require that fundamental rules of conduct be established for the program to function effectively and achieve the stated purposes.

1. The Sponsoring Forester must be an active RPF in good standing.
2. A Sponsoring Forester and Enrolled Member relationship should not exist if any of the following circumstances are present:
 - The Enrolled Member is in an employment position of authority over the Sponsoring Forester;
 - The Enrolled Member and the Sponsoring Forester are related (see Interpretation #3 at the end of this section);
 - The Sponsoring Forester is unable to provide adequate time and direction for the Enrolled Member.

The above circumstances may not immediately be present or apparent; however, once encountered, the Sponsoring Forester will assist the Enrolled Member in finding a new Sponsoring Forester.

It is recommended that each Enrolled Member seek a Sponsoring Forester they work with or are in direct contact with on a regular basis. Such a relationship has the potential for greater communication and gives the Sponsoring Forester more opportunity to ensure the obligations are met.

Interpretation #3:

“Related” generally refers to a relative by birth or marriage. More specifically, it describes the terms on which one person has dealings with another person to the extent that professional principles may be, or may be perceived to be, compromised.

4.0 Changing the Sponsoring Forester or the Enrolled Member

In some cases, the Sponsoring Forester may have difficulty with the progress of an Enrolled Member or the Enrolled Member may feel that they cannot receive sufficient guidance from the Sponsoring Forester. Altering the Sponsoring Forester/Enrolled Member relationship in some way will often have positive outcomes for both participants. Neither participant should feel the pressure to continue in a mentorship that is not working.

4.1 Changes by the Enrolled Member

An Enrolled Member will likely rely on the mentorship of several Registered Professional Foresters during the enrolment period. The Sponsoring Forester is a mentor to the Enrolled Member. In addition, other respected individuals contacted by the Enrolled Member or introduced by the Sponsoring Forester will also serve as mentors.

The enrolment period provides the Enrolled Member with the opportunity to explore various elements of the profession prior to the Registration Exam and final evaluation by the Sponsoring Forester. During this period, the Enrolled Member may wish or need to change his or her Sponsoring Forester. Common reasons for a change of Sponsoring Forester are as follows:

- Enrolled Member moves from the area;
- Enrolled Member has an employment change;
- Enrolled Member requires a differing perspective;
- Enrolled Member and Sponsoring Forester incompatibility.

In any case, the Enrolled Member will contact the current Sponsoring Forester to inform him or her of the intended change and to discuss the reasons why.

4.2 Changes by the Sponsoring Forester

The Sponsoring Forester may also find it necessary to change their Enrolled Member commitment. Common reasons for changing this commitment are as follows:

- Sponsoring Forester moves from the area;
- Sponsoring Forester is unavailable to continue the mentor commitment;
- Sponsoring Forester and Enrolled Member incompatibility;
- Sponsoring Forester ceases to be an active RPF in good standing of the Association.

The Sponsoring Forester will contact the Enrolled Member, discuss the intended change and assist the Enrolled Member to find a new Sponsoring Forester.

4.3 Notifying the Association

The Association must be notified of any changes to Sponsoring Forester/Enrolled Member relationships.

- The Enrolled Member will notify the Association’s Registration Department of the change and the name of the new Sponsoring Forester.

- The current Sponsoring Forester will submit a letter acknowledging the change in sponsorship.
- The new Sponsoring Forester and the Enrolled Member must complete and sign a new Sponsoring Forester Agreement (see section 2.0 and appendix III).
- The Association's Registration Department staff will record the change and forward any information to the new Sponsoring Forester.

5.0 Professional Development Plan and Enrolled Member Practice Diary

A Professional Development Plan (Plan) and the Enrolled Member Practice Diary (Diary) are required for all Enrolled Members. The Plan and Diary provide the Enrolled Member, the Sponsoring Forester, and, if required, the Association, with a chronological, written record of professional development. Over time, the Association may develop means by which it will review the Plan and Diary.

The Enrolled Member will draft the Plan with the assistance of the Sponsoring Forester and mentors. An example of the format the Plan may take is included as Appendix I. The Plan must contain the strategy for gaining adequate exposure to the four practice areas described in section 2 above. The Plan may need to be modified from time-to-time. This will be done by the Enrolled Member in consultation with, and with the approval of, the Sponsoring Forester.

The Enrolled Member will keep and maintain a Diary which will document activities and demonstrate the Enrolled Member's exposure in the four practice areas described in section 2 above. An example of the format the Diary may take is included as Appendix II.

The Sponsoring Forester and Enrolled Member will meet periodically so that the Sponsoring Forester can:

- Review the Professional Development Plan and the Enrolled Member Practice Diary;
- Verify the content of the Diary and applicability of work experience to meet the requirements of section 2.3 and the Plan;
- Discuss the work and any questions the Enrolled Member may have;
- Ensure the work being undertaken by the Enrolled Member is being supervised by an active RPF in good standing and is appropriate given the experience of the Enrolled Member; and
- Sign off on the Diary.

The Sponsoring Forester and Enrolled Member should meet as frequently as is necessary to fulfill these obligations. By signing the Diary, the Sponsoring Forester is acknowledging that he or she has met with the Enrolled Member, reviewed the document and confirmed that the progress of the Enrolled Member appears to be consistent with the Professional Development Plan, or by accompanying comments, given guidance to the Enrolled Member.

The Plan maps out the course of knowledge and practice. The Diary will document the Enrolled Member's diligence in following the Plan. A checklist (see appendix I) can be used as a guide for the Plan and the Diary can be used as documentation of what has occurred. These tools of enrolment practice will encourage the Enrolled Member to expand his or her horizons and think at a professional level.

6.0 Registration Exam

The final test of the enrolment period is the professional Registration Exam. The exam is a test of the candidate's knowledge, application and communication of principles and issues of importance to the profession.

Registration Exam success begins long before the examination date. Preparation is important to gain the necessary knowledge as well as to develop a level of confidence to allow the Enrolled Member to relax and effectively communicate during the examination process.

While it may have been many years since the Sponsoring Forester has been involved in the exam, the Sponsoring Forester can assist the Enrolled Member in acquiring the necessary resources, providing contacts to other Enrolled Members and Sponsoring Foresters, etc.

APPENDIX I:

Enrolled Member Professional Development Plan

A Professional Development Plan is a document that sets out the intended course of action that an Enrolled Member will take to develop and improve professional attributes for the duration of the enrolment period. The Sponsoring Forester and Enrolled Member will periodically review the Professional Development Plan and Enrolled Member progress to determine if adjustments are necessary.

The primary steps in constructing the Professional Development Plan are:

1. Reflect on the Enrolled Member's experience,
2. Identify the recognized core knowledge defining the practice of professional forestry,
3. Design a strategy to achieve a broad contact with the practice of professional forestry,
4. Document a program that includes courses, seminars, field trips, contacts/interviews, work schedule, etc.

The *Foresters Act* defines the practice of professional forestry as:

The performing or directing works, services or undertakings which, because of their scope and forest management implications, require specialized knowledge, training and experience equivalent to that required for a Professional Forester and includes the following:

- (a) *Managing forests or forest land for the integration and optimum realization of their total forest resource values;*
- (b) *Assessing the impact of planned activities on forests and forest land;*
- (c) *Designing, specifying or approving methods for or directing the undertaking of*
 - (i) *the classification and inventory of trees and forest land,*
 - (ii) *silvicultural prescriptions and treatments of forest stands and forest land including timber harvesting,*
 - (iii) *the protection of forest resources,*
 - (iv) *the valuation of forest land, and,*
 - (v) *research pertaining to the management of forests and forest land.*
- (d) *Planning, locating and approving forest transportation systems, including forest roads;*
- (e) *Examining and verifying forest management performance.*

While the above definition covers a broad range, it cannot provide a complete list of activities and functions that professional foresters are required to do. However, there may be value for an Enrolled Member to develop a list of professional practice service or works. The task alone will help Enrolled Members identify the shape and boundaries of their own professional expertise. The Practice List will bring into focus what specific functions that a forester does not know, understands generally, or within which they have a specific expertise. The act of reflecting on the various elements will illuminate the areas requiring professional development.

Steps for Completing the Enrolled Member Professional Development Plan:

1. Review the definition of the practice of professional forestry (*Foresters Act*).
2. Draft a list of what the practice of professional forestry includes, with the help of your Sponsoring Forester, other foresters and Enrolled Members.
3. Summarize your experience including work position, projects, educational participation, skills, etc.
4. Identify the areas of practice, from your practice list in item 2 above, where you need to acquire knowledge, experience or skills. Prioritize the areas of needed improvement.
5. Identify and develop strategies for gaining adequate experience in each of the four practice areas identified in section 2.3 of the policy.
6. Update your Enrolled Member Practice Diary as you complete components of your Professional Development Plan.
7. Increase your awareness of practice gaps by talking to your Sponsoring Forester and other foresters in your area.

You have completed a blueprint for professional practice improvement. Update and modify your Professional Development Plan on a regular basis.

You should feel confident that you have a realistic framework for reaching important stages in your professional development.

APPENDIX II: Enrolled Member Practice Diary (Sample)

The purpose of the Enrolled Member Practice Diary is to provide a chronological, written record of professional development.

The Enrolled Member, with the assistance of their Sponsoring Forester, will identify a Professional Development Plan for the enrolment period. The Professional Development Plan outlines the knowledge and experience to be covered by the Enrolled Member. The Enrolled Member Practice Diary entries will document the progress and action that the Enrolled Member has undertaken in completion of the Professional Development Plan. Entries should be made as often as required to capture the work done and experience gained.

The Sponsoring Forester will review the Enrolled Member Practice Diary periodically and sign at the end of the last page entry. The Sponsoring Forester, by their signature, is acknowledging that they have reviewed the document and confirming that the progress of the Enrolled Member appears to be consistent with the Professional Development Plan, or by an accompanying comment, giving guidance to the Enrolled Member.

Besides the work experience, all professional development activities such as courses, seminars, involvement with related organizations (e.g. PFNs or group study, field trips, meetings, reading reports and tours) should be recorded.

Steps for Completing the Enrolled Member Practice Diary

1. Make entries as often as professional development activities are completed.
2. Use action verbs in your entries.
3. Your entries will be descriptive and specific.
4. Make entries in chronological order.
5. Ensure you include all professional development activities such as undertaking, assisting or observing the services and works stated in the definition of the practice of professional forestry. Other activities in your Professional Development Plan such as seminars, training courses, community involvement, working groups, presentations, etc., all related to the practice of professional forestry, should also be included in the Enrolled Member Practice Diary.
6. Print the entries in a dark pen (if you decide to record entries by hand).
7. Indicate (clearly) the start and finish of each project and write a short summary of the project after your work on it is completed.
8. Ask your Sponsoring Forester to sign the Diary at least once every three (3) months.
9. Use headings to group similar activities, if applicable.
10. Do not PROCRASTINATE!!!
11. Please keep your signed Diary pages in a binder.
12. You are accountable for your signed Diary.

Sample Verbs:

Analyzed	Attended	Calculated	Checked
Collected	Compiled	Completed	Conducted
Coordinated	Designed	Determined	Developed
Devised	Estimated	Inspected	Installed
Investigated	Managed	Monitored	Observed
Planned	Plotted	Prepared	Provided
Researched	Reviewed	Scheduled	Sized
Specified	Studied	Supervised	Tested
Visited			

Note: This is a selection of verbs *only*. You must use verbs that describe what you actually did.

APPENDIX III: Sponsoring Forester Agreement

The following form of agreement will be entered into by the Sponsoring Forester and Enrolled Member at the beginning of the Sponsoring Forester relationship and each time an Enrolled Member changes Sponsoring Foresters.

ASSOCIATION OF BC PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS SPONSORING FORESTER AGREEMENT

I, _____, agree to act as the Sponsoring Forester for
_____, FIT/FP.

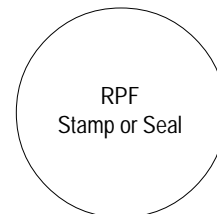
By affixing our signatures to this agreement we confirm that:

- (1) I, _____, as the Enrolled Member assume primary responsibility to ensure that I maintain a strong relationship and frequent contact with my Sponsoring Forester and gain the necessary exposure to the practice areas outlined in the Sponsoring Forester Policy (dated for reference May 31, 2001);
- (2) I, _____, as the Sponsoring Forester assume responsibility for overseeing the growth and development of the Enrolled Member towards registration and the work that the Enrolled Member does during their enrolment period;
- (3) We have read and understood the ABCPF Sponsoring Forester Policy (dated for reference May 31, 2001); and
- (4) We agree to be bound by the mutual obligations and duties outlined in the Sponsoring Forester Policy (dated for reference May 31, 2001).

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2_____.

Sponsoring Forester

FIT/FP





*ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
PROFESSIONAL FORESTERS*

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