

Board Bulletin, Volume 5 - The Forest Practices Board and FRPA

This bulletin is the fifth in a series of Forest Practices Board bulletins describing new aspects of forest legislation, practices and trends, and their implications for forest stewardship. These bulletins are intended to foster discussion and to improve understanding of forest practices. This bulletin addresses the transition from the Forest Practices Code (the Code) to the new Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) and the Forest Practices Board's role under FRPA.

The British Columbia legislature passed FRPA in November 2002 and the legislation came into effect on January 31, 2004. FRPA is intended to introduce a more results-based approach to forest practices legislation than the former Code.

The new legislation will eventually replace the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* after a transition period ending December 31, 2006 (with government authorized to extend the period until December 31, 2007). During the transition period, forest companies can choose to continue operating under the Code, or they can move to the new FRPA framework by preparing a forest stewardship plan and having it approved by the Minister of Forests.

Under FRPA, the Board continues to audit and investigate forest practices, and participate in administrative appeals. The Board will continue to report to the public about forest practices under the new Act. While the essential mandate of the Board remains unchanged, the legislative context in which the Board operates is changing significantly and is already transforming how the Board operates.

The Board has always tried to focus on results, not just on process. Under FRPA, the Board will focus its attention on results even more. For example, FRPA requires the holders of forest stewardship plans to ensure that the results specified in the plan are achieved. The Board will be examining—in audits and investigations—whether results have indeed been achieved on the ground and whether government's objectives for forest values under FRPA have been met. These findings will be reported to the public and government as the Board continues to promote sound forest management in British Columbia.