

Terms of Reference

Follow-up Special Investigation of Bridge and Wood Box Culvert Planning, Design and Construction

Introduction

In March 2014, the Board published the [Bridge Planning, Design and Construction Special Investigation Report](#), which identified some significant issues with the planning, design and construction of bridges. In response, the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development requested the two professional associations and forest industry associations to come up with an action plan to respond to the issues within 60 days. The associations and industry responded appropriately.

The Joint Practices Board (JPB) of the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABC FP) and the Engineers and Geoscientists BC (EGBC), also updated their Guidelines¹ for professional practice for crossing² projects. The guidelines establish standards of practice that members should meet to fulfill professional obligations, including the duty to protect the safety, health and welfare of the public and the environment. Although these guidelines are not legal requirements, they do set out general standards of professional practice that members of the EGBC and ABCFP must meet. In addition, in the fall of 2014, the ABCFP amended its bylaws to require that every member providing services in relation to a crossing project must comply with these guidelines. Failure to meet the intent of the guidelines could be evidence of unprofessional conduct.

It has been six years since the field work for the bridge special investigation was done and although there has been renewed focus on crossings by the Associations and many licensees have showed good bridge construction results in some recent Board audits, other recent Board audits are still identifying significant compliance problems. The Forest Practices Board is concerned with the inconsistency of audit results when stream crossings have explicit legislation, good practice guidance and clear bylaws for practicing professionals to follow. Therefore, the Board has made it a priority to follow-up on our previous work and see if the changes that have been made in response to our recommendations from the 2014 report have resulted in the necessary improvements to compliance.

¹ A PDF of these guidelines can be found at:

https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/TSN/external/!publish/Contract_Opportunities/EN18TJE013/15_EN18TJE013%20Appendix%203%20APEGBC%20Crossing%20Guidelines.pdf

² A crossing is defined as a forest road bridge or engineered culvert.

Section 122 of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA) permits the Board to conduct special investigations to determine compliance by parties with certain parts of FRPA. These are the terms of reference for a follow-up special investigation of bridge and wood box culvert planning, design and construction.

Objective

The investigation will determine whether the parties who plan, design and construct bridges and/or wood box culverts are meeting the legislated requirements of FRPA as well as conforming to the standards of professional practice and the related practice guidelines of the professional regulatory bodies. In other words, are new bridges and wood box culverts safe for industrial use and are forest resources being protected?

Scope

The investigation will include bridges and wood box culverts constructed since January 1, 2017, by government and agreement holders in the following five natural resource districts – Mackenzie, North Island – Central Coast, Sea to Sky, Selkirk and Skeena Stikine (see map on page 3). These districts were not included in the previous special investigation and were selected to ensure geographic distribution across BC.

Approach

The investigation will include office and field components. In winter / spring 2019, Board staff will contact all parties in the selected districts to compile a population of all bridges and wood box culverts built within the past two years and to request applicable documentation. The cooperation of ministry engineering staff and district staff will be key to confirming the population. During the 2019 field season, Board staff and contractors will visit the selected districts to confirm that the structures (or a sample of structures) were built in accordance with legislated requirements and conform to standards of professional practice. Relevant bridge information compiled from recent audits in the selected districts will also be included in the summary of results.

Reporting

The results of this special investigation will be reported to the public.

Findings will be grouped rather than reported by individual licensee, possibly by class such as tenure type. The report may also make recommendations and/or comment on the effectiveness of bridge and wood box culvert planning, design and construction practices.

Map of Selected Districts

