



**Forest  
Practices  
Board**

**2020/21 Annual Report**



## OUR MANDATE

To serve the public interest as the independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices in British Columbia.

## OUR PURPOSE

- Encourage sound forest and range practices that warrant public confidence.
- Encourage fair and equitable application of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*.
- Encourage continuing improvements in forest and range practices.

## OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

These values and corresponding behaviours guide us in all of our work.

### INDEPENDENCE

- Act on behalf of the public interest, not any single group
- Perform in a non-adversarial, unbiased, non-partisan and balanced manner

### INTEGRITY

- Be straightforward in approach—tell it like it is
- Base actions and decisions on knowledge, evidence, experience and common sense

### EXCELLENCE

- Produce high-quality work
- Seek continuous improvement—both in our work and in forest and range practices

### FAIRNESS

- Treat all people with respect, fairness and sensitivity
- Seek solutions rather than assigning blame

### TRANSPARENCY

- Provide clear and concise reports to the public
- Be accessible and accountable

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## TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The members and staff of the Forest Practices Board live and conduct our work throughout British Columbia and we respectfully acknowledge the traditional territories of the many Indigenous peoples who have lived on these lands since time immemorial. The Forest Practices Board is committed to supporting reconciliation through proactive and meaningful engagement with First Nations.



TRANSCRIPT

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Like many organizations, the Forest Practices Board had to modify its work considerably in the past year to meet safety requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic. We reduced the number of audits and focused our audit attention on government responsibilities, rather than industry and community tenures, to limit travel and minimize risks. We shifted away from face-to-face meetings for training and board meetings, expanded our use of virtual communications, and used virtual webinars to share some reports. The Board is fortunate to have a broad scope of work that allowed us to focus effort on other parts of our mandate and continue to serve the public interest.

One positive outcome from the shift in work was our ability to focus on some overdue internal projects, to continuously improve our work. That investment will pay off when we return to more normal routines, as we have greater clarity on our roles, policies, and processes.

We were also able to initiate several projects that will shape our work in the years to come. A major focus for the Board is increasing our understanding of climate change; how we can mitigate its impacts and adapt our forest practices to a changing climate. We have begun building a knowledge base that will allow the Board to inform how forest practices can address the risks that a changing climate creates.

We have also advanced our processes to support reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. We are now initiating engagement with First Nations early in our audits and investigations and are

ensuring our reports include a territorial acknowledgement. These are steps designed to create an opportunity for deeper engagement with First Nations where a local community has an interest in our work. Reconciliation is a journey and these are just the first steps we are taking to implement our Indigenous Engagement Strategy.

Despite the challenges of the past year, we expect to come out of the pandemic and return to our full operations with a clearer, stronger and more focused approach that will better serve the public, the individuals and the organizations we work with.

Kevin Kriese  
Chair, Forest Practices Board

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2019–2022

In July 2019, the Board approved a 3-year strategic plan. We have now completed almost two years of implementation. This Annual Report provides information on our progress meeting the priorities and goals identified in the strategic plan and reports key performance indicators (highlighted in  ).

The Strategic Plan identified four strategic priorities for the Board. Progress on the strategic priorities includes:

**1. Indigenous Relations:** Development of procedures to support the Indigenous Engagement Strategy. The procedures support the following actions identified in the Indigenous Engagement Strategy:

- A. Early Engagement with First Nations about projects initiated in their traditional territory.
- B. Incorporating territorial acknowledgements into Board reports.

These procedures will guide staff in appropriate engagement with First Nations and encourage mutual information sharing and learning opportunities. These are evolving procedures and we will modify and improve them as we gain experience working with them.

The Board is also developing procedures to engage Indigenous communities as partners in special projects. Candidate projects with prospective partner communities are being explored in the spring of 2021.

**2. Increase Impact and Influence Change:** In 2020, we presented three webinars on special investigations we published. This was partly due to pandemic limitations on presentations and speaking engagements, and partly to encourage deeper understanding and discussion of our findings and recommendations with forest professionals, licensees and other stakeholders. By engaging directly with people on these reports, we hope the impact and uptake of our work will be strengthened.

**3. Prepare for the Future:** Staff are working on incorporating a climate change lens into the work we do, as well as identifying potential special projects related to forestry-climate change issues. As part of the strategic plan, the Board is undertaking a review of the effects of climate change on forest management, the accepted adaptation and mitigation strategies, and the policies and

practices that support those options. Three bulletins are being written to summarize findings and inform candidate of special projects for 2021-2022. We are also continuing to monitor government's work in developing a modernized land use planning process. Where we see opportunities for this level of planning to help resolve issues that arise in our audits and investigations, we are identifying those opportunities in our reports.

**4. Continuous Improvement:** A number of continuous improvement initiatives were completed this past fiscal year.

1. The Board Governance Committee completed its review of the Board's governance model, including clarification of roles and responsibilities of staff and Board members. Following the committee's work, we undertook a major review and **update of all of the Board's governance and mandate policies.** We now have a clear and current set of policies and related procedures to guide Board members and staff in our work. Many of the policies will be shared on the Board's website in the coming year.
2. As part of our continuous improvement work, we undertook a major review of our complaint investigation process that led to some refinements, including earlier Board member involvement in complaint investigations.
3. We brought in outside auditors to examine and provide recommendations on the Board's enforcement audit program, which has been dormant for a number of years due to government restructuring of compliance and enforcement responsibilities. We will be undertaking an update to the enforcement audit program in 2021, based on the results of that review.

We implemented a Workplace Engagement Survey in December 2020. This is the first time we have conducted this established and proven survey system and we were rated with excellent overall health. The key positive findings were; job suitability (85) and satisfaction (79), teamwork with colleagues (82), supervision (85) and workplace tools (85). For our two key performance indicators, **staff satisfaction with their role scored 79 and employee engagement 70.** We are reviewing the results and will be taking steps to further improve staff engagement. The survey will be repeated in 2022 so we can measure our progress.

Later in 2021, the Board will review our progress implementing the strategic plan and will decide if the current plan should be updated



Kevin Kriese  
Chair

## THE BOARD

2020 saw a number of changes to the membership of the Board. Tara Marsden did not stand for renewal of her term, which expired in April 2020, and decided to focus on other priorities. In June 2020, Marlene Machmer stepped down, after serving on the Board for nearly 6 years. Board members Rick Monchak and Gerry Grant had their terms extended, as did Vice-Chair Bruce Larson. In August, two new members were appointed to the Board: Cindy Stern and Gail Wallin.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all Board meetings were conducted virtually. The Board members did meet in Williams Lake for a field trip in September, when travel was permitted subject to public health orders. This provided an excellent opportunity for the Board members to get to know each other. The purpose of the field trip was to see emerging practices in fuel management, ecosystem restoration, and post-fire reforestation. The Board members met with forest researcher Ken Day, and staff from the Williams Lake Community Forest, Alkali Resource Management, West Fraser Timber, and the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. A highlight was seeing first hand a fuel management prescription where the work undertaken several years prior helped firefighters stop a 2018 wildfire that was threatening the Williams Lake Airport and the Caribou Fire Centre Office.



Bruce Larson  
PhD, Vice-Chair



Cindy Stern



Gerry Grant  
RFP



Rick Monchak  
RFP



Gail Wallin

## BUDGET AND FINANCIALS

FINANCIAL REPORT	Board Members and Executive	Investigations	Audits	Legal	Communications	Administration & Overhead	TOTAL
Salaries and Benefits	428,621	625,519	615,986	264,874	208,955	300,136	2,444,091
Other Operating Costs	112,917	102,764	165,895	-	35,907	859,478	1,276,961
Total Operating Expenditures	541,538	728,283	781,881	264,874	244,862	1,159,614	3,721,052
Total Capital Expenditures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditures	541,538	728,283	781,881	264,874	244,862	1,159,614	3,721,052
Budget							3,861,000

### NOTES:

1. "Board Members and Executive" expenditures cover those of the Chair of the Board, the part-time Board members, the office of the Executive Director, and staff providing direct support to the Board members.
2. "Legal" expenditures covers legal advice on all files of the Board, including review and appeals.
3. "Administration and Overhead" includes building occupancy charges, software licensing, centralized support charges, and salaries associated with support for corporate services and information systems.

# AUDITS

## GOAL

Maintain an audit program that uses Board audit standards, based on Canadian generally accepted audit standards, to provide assurance about the state of forest and range practices, and encourage continuous improvement.

Objective 1 Undertake regular audits of an array of forest and range tenures across the province.

Objective 2 Maintain audit practices, expertise and tools to reflect evolving audit practices, standards and policies.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed two BCTS audits and three audits of FSRs managed by Natural Resource Districts, while adhering to travel and health orders under the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Enforcement Audit program was reviewed and new tools will be developed to better audit government's current C&E organization.
- Compliance audits were completed using the CARM and following all provincial health guidelines.
- Standards for the FSR audit were reviewed with the FLNRORD Engineering Branch to ensure most current and complete information was used.

## AUDIT RESULTS – 2020/21

### 3 With No Issues

District Manager Obligations on FSRs – Campbell River Natural Resource District  
 District Manager Obligations on FSRs – Dawson Creek Timber Supply Area Portion of the Peace Natural Resource District  
 BCTS and Timber Sale Licence Holders – Seaward-tlasta Business Area – North Island-Central Coast and Campbell River Natural Resource District

### 7

#### Audit Reports Published

- 1 Forest licensee
- 2 District managers
- 4 BCTS programs, including 92 Timber Sale Licence holders

### 4

#### With Issues

Cooper Creek Cedar Ltd.  
 Forest Licence A30171 Selkirk Natural Resource District  
 BCTS and Timber Sale Licence Holders – Cariboo-Chilcotin Business Area – Quesnel Natural Resource District  
 BCTS and Timber Sale Licence Holders – Clearwater Field Unit Portion of the Kamloops Business Area – Thompson Rivers Natural Resource District  
 BCTS and Timber Sale Licence Holders – Burns Lake Field Unit Portion of the Babine Business Area – Nadina Natural Resource District

### 4

#### Areas of Improvement

### 2

#### Unsound Practices

### 6

#### Significant Non-Compliance

### 3

#### Fire Hazard Assessments

### 1

#### Road Site Plan

### 1

#### Bridge Record Drawings

### 1

#### Terrain Stability Assessment Report

### 3

#### Bridge Maintenance

### 1

#### Road Safety

### 1

#### Water Delivery System

### 1

#### Silviculture Record Keeping

## AUDIT IN PROGRESS (NOT COMPLETED AT MARCH 31, 2021)

Audit of District Manager Obligations on Forest Service Roads – Okanagan Shuswap Natural Resource District (to be reported in Spring 2021)

## ACTIVITIES AUDITED IN THE FIELD IN 2020/21

ACTIVITY	POPULATION	SAMPLED
Harvesting (# of blocks)	288	136
Road Construction (km)	385	225
Road Deactivation (km)	160	72
Road Maintenance (km)	3,866	1,786
Bridge Construction (# of bridges)	20	17
Bridge Maintenance (# of bridges)	494	262
Silviculture – Free Growing (# of blocks)	460	182
Silviculture – Regeneration Due (# of blocks)	336	78
Silviculture – Planting (# of blocks)	229	93
Silviculture – Site Preparation (# of blocks)	183	45
Fire Protection (# of active sites)	12	9

# COMPLAINT INVESTIGATIONS

## GOAL

Maintain a complaint function that is accessible, fair, transparent, and encourages resolution of issues.

- Objective 1 Respond to public complaints about forest and range practices in a timely manner.
- Objective 2 Develop and maintain investigation processes that support issue resolution.
- Objective 3 Promote awareness of the complaint investigation process.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Staff and Board members clarified roles and responsibilities and developed tools to support a streamlining of the complaint investigation process.
- Completed and published five complaint investigation reports.
- Made two recommendations.

One of the Board's strategic priorities is to continuously improve existing work. In late 2020, the Board began a review of its complaint investigation process with three goals in mind:

1. Improve the timeliness of the investigation process.
2. Involve the Chair and Board members earlier and more frequently in the complaint investigation process. (This need was identified through a separate review of Board governance.)
3. Incorporate the concept of continuous improvement into the complaint investigation process.

Over the course of three months, a design team of staff and Board members worked together to clarify roles and responsibilities and to develop tools to support a streamlining of the process. The next step is implementation, and the most recent complaints are already progressing through the new process. We plan to review the results and refine our approach as we gain experience with it.

In the longer term, the redesign should support a stronger, team approach to investigations, simplify on-boarding for new staff and Board members, and lead to more efficient complaint investigations while reflecting the Board's values and behaviours.

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS	COMPLAINTS	CONCERNS
CARRIED OVER FROM 2019–20	8	7
RECEIVED	9	51
TOTAL	17	58
PUBLISHED	5	n/a
RESOLVED	0	43
CLOSED	2*	43
ONGOING AT MARCH 31	10	8

\*One complaint investigation from 2019 (Smithers VQO) was stopped because government's ongoing compliance and enforcement process is an existing remedy adequate in the circumstances to address the complainant's concerns. One complaint from 2020 (Prince George Spruce Harvest) was withdrawn.

## COMPLAINTS RECEIVED PRIOR TO FISCAL 2020–21 AND STILL UNDERWAY AT MARCH 31, 2021

	COMPLAINT	LOCATION	REGION	START DATE	STATUS
1	<b>COMPLIANCE WITH BIODIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS IN THE NAHMINT WATERSHED</b> BC Timber Sales forest stewardship plan is not consistent with government objectives for biodiversity, harvesting may be occurring within rare and underrepresented ecosystems, and government enforcement has not been appropriate.	Port Alberni	West Coast	2018-07-04	To be reported in Spring 2021
2	<b>LOGGING IN FISHER HABITAT NEAR PRINCE GEORGE, BC</b> There has been no planning for wildlife and no retention of habitat while clearcut salvage logging has occurred within a trapline.	Prince George	Omineca	2019-05-27	To be reported in Spring 2021
3	<b>MOTORIZED AND INDUSTRIAL USE OF THE COLUMBIA AND WESTERN RAIL TRAIL</b> Motorized and industrial use of an established recreation trail is changing its character, preventing tourists and the public from enjoying the recreational experience, and increasing the risk to safety.	Castlegar to Christina Lake	Kootenay Boundary	2019-12-11	To be reported in Spring 2021

**NEW COMPLAINTS RECEIVED 2020-21**

	COMPLAINT	LOCATION	REGION	START DATE	STATUS
1	<b>SILVER HILLS HARVESTING AND WATER INTAKE DAMAGE</b> Harvesting has damaged range drift fences, increased sedimentation into streams used for domestic consumption, increased peak flows, and contributed to four debris slides.	Lumby	Thompson Okanagan	2020-07-24	Under investigation
2	<b>WINDY MOUNTAIN</b> Planned harvesting by BC Timber Sales will impact fisher habitat and new road construction caused sediment to be deposited into a fish-stream.	Bridge Lake	Cariboo	2020-08-21	Under investigation
3	<b>SOUTH OKANAGAN GRASSLANDS</b> Range developments were made inside a protected area without advising BC Parks, range use plans are not being complied with, and government enforcement has not been appropriate.	Oliver	Thompson Okanagan	2021-01-27	Under investigation
4	<b>MT. ROSE SWANSON</b> BC Timber Sales' forest stewardship plan results and strategies are not consistent with government objectives for the Mt. Rose Swanson sensitive area.	Armstrong	Thompson Okanagan	2021-03-09	Under investigation
5	<b>KETTLE RIVER WATERSHED HARVESTING</b> The number and size of cutblocks in the watershed is negatively impacting biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and esthetics. Harvesting has also caused devastating hydrological impacts and has increased both the risk of flooding in spring and low flows in summer and fall.	Grand Forks	Kootenay Boundary	2021-03-23	Under investigation

**NEW COMPLAINTS RECEIVED 2020-21**

	COMPLAINT	LOCATION	REGION	START DATE	STATUS
6	<b>PRINCE GEORGE SPRUCE BEETLE HARVEST</b> The complainant prepared an extensive analysis of harvest plans and history in the Prince George timber supply area and compared it to stands infested with spruce bark beetle. The complainant believes that harvesting stands with low levels of spruce beetle incidence will jeopardize the maintenance of timber supply and is resulting in large contiguous clearcuts. Finally, government monitoring of the situation is insufficient.	Prince George Timber Supply Area	Omineca	2021-03-23	Under investigation
7	<b>CO-LOCATION OF WTRAs AND WHAS ON VANCOUVER ISLAND</b> The complaint is about the practice of co-locating, or overlapping, wildlife tree retention areas for cutblocks with wildlife habitat areas where harvesting is not permitted. The complainant believes that this practice will result in a net loss of old growth and biodiversity on the landscape.	Port Alberni	West Coast	2021-03-30	Under investigation
8	<b>WILDLIFE TREE QUALITY</b> Several good candidates for wildlife trees in a timber sale licence were cut down and the wildlife trees that were retained were poorer quality.	Sunshine Coast	South Coast	2020-06-03	Reported
9	<b>PRINCE GEORGE SPRUCE HARVEST</b> The maintenance of timber supply has been severely jeopardized by harvesting unattacked stands of spruce in the Prince George Natural Resource District.	Prince George Timber Supply Area	Omineca	2020-04-27	Withdrawn. Complainant to try and resolve concerns with licensee and government



**Watershed Assessment in the Glade Community Watershed**

In October 2018, the Forest Practices Board received a complaint from the Glade Watershed Protection Society about planned logging in the Glade community watershed. The Society was concerned that Atco Wood Products and Kalesnikoff Lumber Co. Ltd. (the licensees) were not meeting government’s community watershed objectives and not achieving the strategies in their forest stewardship plans (FSP). The Society believed that the watershed assessment completed by the licensees was incomplete, outdated, and did not meet the objectives of a watershed assessment and was therefore inconsistent with the FSP strategies.

The Board found the watershed assessment was consistent with professional standards, based on a comparison with the Association of BC Forest Professionals and the Engineers and Geoscientists BC’s *Joint Professional Practice Guidelines for Watershed Assessment and Management of Hydrologic and Geomorphic Risk in the Forest Industry*. The steps taken by the licensees in assessing and analyzing risk in the Glade community watershed are consistent with both the Kalesnikoff and Atco FSP strategies for community watersheds. The watershed assessment is not outdated as the watershed has not experienced appreciable change since the assessment was completed.

**Road Maintenance and Landslides at Bernard Creek, on Kootenay Lake**

In November 2019, the Forest Practices Board received a complaint from a resident of a private campground, acting on behalf of the owner of the campground who holds two licences to take water from Bernard Creek. The complainant alleged that road maintenance work completed by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) caused landslides that damaged the owner’s licensed waterworks and caused slope instability. The complainant was also concerned about the potential impacts to the licensed waterworks from future landslides and wanted the area returned to the condition it was in prior to the road maintenance work.

The Board found that FLNRORD complied with relevant legislation and took reasonable steps to ensure that the road maintenance work would not cause landslides or damage the licensed waterworks. The assessment report prepared by the professional engineer used commonly accepted methods and the conclusions were supported with reasonable and sound rationales. The assessment report concluded that the drainage work conducted by FLNRORD did not cause the landslides.

**Management of Biodiversity in the Prince George Timber Supply Area**

The Board received a complaint from a Prince George resident about the management of biodiversity in the Prince George Timber Supply Area (PG TSA). The complainant was concerned that biodiversity values were not being appropriately addressed due to the high levels of mountain pine beetle (MPB) salvage harvesting in the TSA.

The complainant identified two main issues: 1. Forestry activities may not be meeting the legal requirements of the *Order Establishing Landscape Biodiversity Objectives for the Prince George Timber Supply Area* (the Order). 2. The high level of MPB harvesting that has taken place in the PG TSA may mean that biodiversity is not being appropriately managed.

This investigation found that the legal obligations of the Order were met. However, the Board identified several concerns with how government and licensees are managing biodiversity in the TSA, and made two recommendations:

1. Promptly spatialize old growth management areas where the immediate risks to old forest are the greatest; and
2. Review and update the requirements for biodiversity in the PG TSA. This should be consistent with emerging partnerships with First Nations, follow a transparent process for public involvement, and consider the potential implications of climate change on forest management.

# APPEALS

## GOAL

Participate in appeals to the Forest Appeals Commission where the Board can bring a public interest perspective that may not otherwise be heard.

Objective 1 Join or initiate appeals where there are important issues of precedent in the interpretation of FRPA or the *Wildfire Act*.

Objective 2 Join or initiate appeals where there are important issues of administrative justice in the application of FRPA or the *Wildfire Act*, such as the appropriateness of administrative penalties, or procedural fairness.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 22 determinations reviewed
- One appeal joined – issue of due diligence.

## APPEALS STATUS

### Unauthorized Trail Building

In 2019, the Board joined an appeal of a determination that found the Blueberry River First Nations and Blueberry River Enterprises Ltd. in contravention of FRPA for building trails and establishing clearings on Crown land without authorization. The specific contraventions were for causing damage to the environment, causing damage to Crown timber and building trails on Crown land, all without authorization. The determination levied an administrative penalty and issued an order to remediate the trails and clearings. In 2020, the Board withdrew its participation from the appeal after persuading the government that the remediation order was not consistent with section 74 of the FRPA on the basis that the contraveners were not the holder of an agreement, which is a requirement of section 74. The appeal is ongoing for the other parties.

### Declared Areas

In 2019, the Board joined Tolko Industries Inc.'s appeal related to Tolko declaring areas for the purposes of its forest stewardship plan. In 2020, Tolko resolved the issues with the ministry and withdrew its appeal. Tolko's withdrawal of the appeal ended the Board's involvement in the matter.

### Due Diligence

The Board joined Interfor's appeal of a contravention determination relating to change of circumstance under the *Forest Act*, which raised issues concerning standing waste, due diligence, officially induced error and deterrence. Circumstances changed and the Board withdrew from the appeal.

# SPECIAL PROJECTS

## GOAL

Undertake special projects to examine issues of public interest that cannot be addressed through the Board's other work and trends identified in audits or investigations.

Objective 1 Annually prepare a Special Project Plan that identifies the priorities for special projects, while maintaining flexibility to address unanticipated issues.

Objective 2 Complete special projects in a timely manner.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Special Projects Plan approved.
- Three older projects completed, two new projects started and two projects ongoing.
- Made seven recommendations.

## PUBLISHED REPORTS

### Bridge Planning, Design and Construction Special Investigation

This is a follow-up to the Board's 2014 special investigation of bridge planning, design and construction. The purpose of the report was to assess if practices have improved since 2014. In 5 natural resource districts, a total of 269 forestry bridges and 59 wood box culverts were assessed for compliance with the *Forest Planning and Practices Regulation*, as well as conformance with version 2 of the *Guidelines for Professional Services in the Forest Sector—Crossings*.

The Board found improvements in safety in 2020 with 5 percent of bridges having safety concerns compared to 15 percent in 2014. Having looked at fish passage, channel and bank protection and drainage patterns, the Board concluded that environmental protection has improved overall in 2020, with particular improvements towards maintaining natural surface drainage patterns and better designs for considering peak flows. Two concerns were highlighted by the investigation: the first concerned forest professionals incorrectly declaring a crossing as 'simple' when it was 'complex'; the other was recognizing that forest professionals assume the accountability for crossings when they sign and seal a record drawing, even if a professional engineer designs the crossing.

Other opportunities for improvement included: the need for reused structures to be inspected and certified as safe and signed off by a qualified registered professional (QRP) before industrial use; a need to improve sediment control in areas with highly erodible soils to minimize impacts to water quality and fish habitat, and; the need for professional documentation to improve, such as record drawings being signed off by a "Professional of Record" or signing Construction Assurance Statements. The Board made three recommendations directed at the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD), Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP), the Engineers and Geoscientists BC (EGBC), and the Joint Practices Board.



## WORK IN PROGRESS (NOT COMPLETED AT MARCH 31, 2021)

### SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS

#### WILDFIRE ACT DETERMINATIONS

Assessing whether *Wildfire Act* determinations are appropriate (consistent, fair, and timely). The review will also identify policy issues, such as how the regime addresses the public interest in hazard abatement.

#### PROTECTION OF SPECIES AT RISK UNDER FRPA—NORTHERN GOSHAWK

Assessing if the mechanisms available under FRPA and associated IWMS guidance are adequate for maintaining species at risk habitat. Northern Goshawk is being used as a case study to evaluate both legal and voluntary measures to maintain suitable habitat for Northern Goshawk and their prey on the coast and in the interior.

### SPECIAL REPORTS

#### FORESTRY AND WATER USERS FOLLOW-UP

Reviewing previous Board work to see what was found about compliance with FRPA and the potential impacts to water, and any opportunities for improvement to practices to better protect water.

#### FOREST RECREATION MANAGEMENT

Assessing how forestry planning and practices are addressing forest recreation values under FRPA, including how the FRPA framework addresses management of forest recreation values, the strengths and weaknesses of the FRPA framework, and opportunities to improve management of forest recreation values.

### Conserving Fish Habitat under FRPA Special Investigation

This is a follow-up investigation into the protection of fish habitat under the FRPA. Part 1 was a special report published in 2018, which assessed whether practice requirements adequately conserved fish habitat, whether FRPA tools were being used, and whether effectiveness monitoring was sufficient. Three key concerns were raised by Part 1, including consequences of cumulative effects in the absence of watershed-level legal objectives, and opportunities to improve riparian management for small streams and minimizing sediment input into streams from roads.

For Part 2, five watersheds across the province were visited, evaluating the practices of both forest licencees and ranchers and reviewing what monitoring is in place to encourage continuous improvement. The case-study looked at existing or potential risk of harm to fish passage, riparian buffers, channel conditions, the effect of range use, and sediment input from roads into streams. The results found a strong culture of maintaining fish passage, generally low levels of risk from riparian activities on main fish bearing stream reaches, room to improve range practices that impact the functioning condition of streams, as well as moderate risks of harm to stream channels at a watershed level. The most consequential findings were that road location, inadequate cross drains and the lack of erosion control were major contributors to high levels of risk to fish habitat from sediment input from roads into streams. The findings led to two recommendations by the Board to FLNRORD.



### Reforestation in the Interior Douglas-fir Subzone Special Investigation

Reforestation following logging is a legal obligation for licencees under FRPA. Ensuring the successful establishment of ecologically appropriate trees is important for ensuring environmental values are maintained and forests contribute to a sustainable timber supply. The interior Douglas-fir forests of BC's southern interior are sometimes dominated by Douglas-fir trees of mixed ages and sizes with grassy understories. This investigation was initiated based on the Board's concern that the extensive reforestation of logged areas with pine trees may lead to a shift in species composition with consequences to timber supply and an array of non-timber values.

The Board evaluated regeneration efforts within the Cariboo and Thompson-Okanagan Natural Resource Districts over a 10-year period (2008-2017) and across a multitude of forest tenure types. The results found that site-level practices were meeting legal requirements for reforestation, and that there was a shift away from pine monoculture in favour of the more resilient practice of mixed species planting. However, more than 60 percent of the regenerating cutblocks examined were in poor and marginal conditions. The Board found an over-reliance on clearcut silviculture, which is not a suitable silviculture system for dry-belt-fir stands as young trees become susceptible to drought or heat stress. Furthermore, investigators found a significant gap in knowledge by resource professionals towards planning and implementing alternative silvicultural and logging systems that are more appropriate for successful regeneration of these dry forest types. Two recommendations for improving reforestation practices were made by the Board to FLNRORD.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

One of the main ways the Board influences continuous improvement is through the recommendations it makes. This year, a number of recommendations made in 2019 and 2020 were addressed by the parties the recommendations were directed at.

9

New Recommendations Made

15

Recommendations Responded To

12

Recommendations Implemented

## RECOMMENDATION RESPONSES

### Follow-up Investigation of Bridge Planning, Design and Construction

In this 2020 report, the Board made the following recommendations:

1. The Joint Practices Board of ABCFP and EGBC should review the professional practice guidelines for crossings with an eye towards improving clarity to help their members understand their responsibilities for bridge planning and design.
2. The ABCFP should subsequently review its guidance for forest professionals to ensure it is clear and consistent with professional practice guidelines for bridge planning and design.
3. FLNRORD should confirm how it intends to undertake ongoing compliance monitoring and, if necessary, enforcement, of bridge planning, design and construction.

FLNRORD and the Joint Practices Board of ABCFP and EGBC accepted the recommendations. The Engineering Branch and BCTS worked with the two associations to help fund the development of a professional reliance guide to highlight the responsibilities related to the lifecycle of forest bridges. This work was extended towards developing a matrices of professional reliance roles and responsibilities for forest roads.

Compliance and Enforcement Branch (CEB) identified high-risk roads as a priority for targeted inspections for industrial safety and protection of environmental values. The Engineering Branch, CEB and BCTS initiated a joint management approach to increase communication and to action priority resource road issues.

The Joint Practices Board undertook a revision of professional practice guidelines for crossings, with expansion of considerations for channel stability, requirements of site surveys and clarifications of the roles of professionals of record.

### Special Investigation: Conserving Fish Habitat under FRPA – Part 2: An Evaluation of Forest and Range Practices on the Ground

In this 2020 report the Board makes the following recommendations under section 131(2) of FRPA:

1. Government should amend FRPA and/or its regulations to ensure that there is a clear and enforceable requirement to minimize sediment entering streams during road construction, maintenance and deactivation.
2. Government should update guidance and standards for road construction and maintenance to clearly identify practices needed to minimize sediment entering streams during road construction, deactivation, and on an ongoing basis during road maintenance.

Government concurred with the Board's findings and recommendations. There was a commitment to review language within legislation for possible improvements to minimize impacts from sediment delivery from roads into streams. FLNRORD also committed to undertake a process to review and recommend improvements to monitoring criteria used to determine whether or not fish habitat is being unreasonably impacted, as well as prioritizing water and fish habitat for enforcement by the CEB. FLNRORD is also working to update guidance within the Engineering Manual to improve the inspection and maintenance of forest service roads.

### Reforestation in the interior Douglas-fir Subzone: Are Reforestation Choices Meeting Objectives?

In this 2020 report, the Board recommended:

1. FLNRORD should promptly re-assess the long-term reforestation objectives for the dry IDF, and update them based on the likely consequences of climate change.
2. FLNRORD should update reforestation standards to reflect the updated objectives, using a combination of legally required direction and best management practices (guidance) so that the public can be confident that the objectives will be achieved.

FLNRORD acknowledged the Board's findings and accepted the broad direction of the recommendations. The response stressed the importance of reforestation objectives being incorporated into silviculture plans and indicated that a variety of initiatives were underway to resolve the issues highlighted by the investigation. Some of these included the use of *Government Action Regulation* to direct harvest practices within ungulate winter ranges, the development of community wildfire protection plans, ecosystem restoration work undertaken in the dry-belt IDF, ongoing modernized land use planning to inform future desired forest conditions, and the anticipated Forest Landscape Planning framework under the new FRPA being piloted in two dry-belt IDF districts. Regional operations have collaborated with licensees to update stocking standards to encourage resiliency and careful consideration of different silviculture systems. In addition, the Climate-based Seed Transfer policy and the development of a Climate Change Informed Species Selection tool will further assist foresters in appropriate reforestation strategies in the dry-belt.

### Planning for Old Forest on TFL 47, East Thurlow Island

In this report from 2020, the Board recommended that the FLNRORD communicate expectations to licensees that their operations be consistent with the guidance provided in the *Land Management Handbook (#72), Guidelines to Support Implementation of the Great Bear Rainforest Order with Respect to Old Forest and Listed Plant Communities* (2019).

In May 2020, district managers within the three districts that overlap the Great Bear Rainforest addressed this recommendation by delivering correspondence to all relevant licensees confirming government policy expectations.

The report also recommended that the licensee amend its forest stewardship plan, which it did in September 2020.

### Timber Salvage Harvesting and Fisher Management in the Nazko Area

This report from 2019 included two recommendations:

1. As previously recommended by the Board, government must take leadership on landscape level decisions. Given the type of large scale salvage that is continuing to occur in this area, government should ensure that harvesting and retention planning in such salvage scenarios is coordinated between multiple licensees with spatially-explicit legal direction for species at risk and monitoring to ensure that planning is implemented and effective.
2. Government should use the legal tools under sections 9, 10, and 11 of the *Government Actions Regulation* or section 7 of the *Forest Planning and Practices Regulation* for species-at-risk to protect remaining important fisher habitats in the Nazko area and manage to restore the local population over time.

Government initially responded to the recommendations in 2019 and the Board requested further information. A follow up response was provided in 2020. While government accepted recommendation 1, it did not implement recommendation 2, but pointed to other actions it

was taking. The update raises some concerns that conservation measures are being implemented at levels below that needed to support sustainable populations. This reinforces the importance of the Board's recommendation #2 to apply FRPA's legal measures in concert with voluntary stewardship actions. The Board has examined the results and strategies in one FSP and sees this as a positive step forward for protection of fisher habitat. The Board encourages government to ensure a system of monitoring is in place to assess the effectiveness of this approach. Monitoring should include an assessment of how well qualified professionals are identifying critical stand-level features, such as fisher denning sites, as referred to in the results and strategies.

The update also refers to FLNRORD's forest landscape planning initiative and that fisher habitat could conceptually be included in forest landscape planning and implemented through forest operations planning. Although these planning measures will take several years to develop after FRPA amendments are made, the Board views landscape-level planning as an effective means of protecting wildlife habitat, particularly for wide-ranging species such as fisher.

The Board will continue to monitor government actions with regard to fisher habitat.

### Appropriateness of Government's Compliance and Enforcement Framework for FRPA and the Wildfire Act

This report from 2019 included four recommendations:

1. Develop an annual compliance and enforcement plan with measurable objectives and specific targets for proactive compliance monitoring as well as for investigating public complaints regarding FRPA and WA. Overall, the levels of compliance monitoring should provide a basis to inform the public about licensees' compliance with legislation. As part of this process:
  - a. Develop clear policy and procedures for implementation of the plan and ensure it is communicated to, and understood by, field staff.
  - b. Develop stronger relationships with clients, stakeholders and partners that focus on identifying mutual needs and ensuring compliance and enforcement is delivered consistently across the province.
  - c. Take an adaptive approach to reviewing priorities to ensure that emerging issues are not being missed.
2. Develop performance measures that align with the annual plan's objectives and targets and enable compliance and enforcement to measure achievement of actions aimed at promoting compliance.
3. Report to the public annually on the results of compliance and enforcement efforts, including defensible information on compliance rates, enforcement actions and outcomes.
4. Develop human resources plans and strategies that ensure recruitment, development and support programs result in CEB employing staff with the capability to understand, interpret and enforce the requirements of FRPA and the *Wildfire Act*.


Government first responded to these recommendations in December 2019. The Board requested further details and government provided additional information in March and September 2020. Government is not going to develop an annual plan for proactive compliance and enforcement, and will not meet recommendations 1, 1(a) and 2. Further, as government does not intend to report compliance rates to the public, it will not meet recommendation 3. The government has produced the *Compliance Management Framework, Natural Resource Agencies' Approach to Ensuring Compliance, 2020*, that describes the approach it is taking to enforcement. While government did not accept some of the Board's recommendations, it is moving forward on other elements that show promise in addressing some of the gaps observed in the Board's report. The Board will continue to examine the appropriateness of government's enforcement through our audit program and investigations, consistent with our mandate.

# COMMUNICATIONS


The COVID-19 pandemic led to a shutdown of all in-person events as of March 2020 and had a significant impact on the Board's communications program and our ability to meet with people and share the results of our work. A number of conferences we were planning to attend or present at were cancelled. Like everyone else, we adapted and found new ways of communicating with people and sharing the results of our work. We began meeting virtually and were invited to give virtual presentations to a


variety of groups and organizations. We also hosted some Webinars as a way to share significant reports and discuss our findings with interested people. After a year under the pandemic, we have fully adapted to a virtual communication world and even though we expect to go back to in-person meetings and events at some point, we will continue to use the virtual communication approaches that work well for us.


**27**   
MEETINGS WITH  
KEY STAKEHOLDERS


**21**   
SPEAKING  
ENGAGEMENTS


**3**   
WEBINARS ON  
BOARD REPORTS


  
**81,346**  
 IMPRESSIONS  
 ↑ FOLLOWERS  
 8%


  
**14,385**  
 REACH  
 ↑ FOLLOWERS  
 48%

  
**28,362**  
 WEBSITE VISITS  
 ↑ VISIT INCREASE  
 8%

  
**2**  
 NEWSLETTERS


  
**16**  
 NEWS RELEASES

  
**97**  
 MEDIA STORIES  
 COVERING BOARD  
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**8**  
 VIRTUAL  
 CONFERENCES

## MOST POPULAR REPORTS

1. Special Investigation: Conserving Fish Habitat under FRPA – Part 2: An Evaluation of Forest and Range Practices on the Ground
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3. Management of Biodiversity in the Prince George Timber Supply Area
4. Reforestation in the Douglas-fir Subzone: Are Reforestation Choices Meeting Objectives?
5. Tactical Forest Planning: The Missing Link Between Strategic Planning and Operational Planning in BC

**7,535**   
REPORT DOWNLOADS

## WEBINARS ON BOARD REPORTS

Month	Topic	Attended live	Viewed the recording on our website
JUNE 2020	FOREST PRACTICES AND FISH HABITAT	312	452
JULY 2020	Q&A: PROTECTION OF FISH HABITAT UNDER FRPA	45	125
NOVEMBER 2020	REFORESTATION IN THE DRY INTERIOR DOUGLAS-FIR SUBZONE	143	125

## REPORTS PUBLISHED

1. Harvesting in Caribou Migration Corridor in the Anzac Drainage; Closing Letter
2. Follow-up Investigation of Bridge Planning, Design and Construction; Special Investigation
3. Cooper Creek Cedar Ltd. – FL A30171; Audit of Forest Planning and Practices
4. Special Investigation: Conserving Fish Habitat under FRPA – Part 2: An Evaluation of Forest and Range Practices on the Ground
5. Watershed Assessment in the Glade Community Watershed; Complaint Investigation
6. Forestry Audit: BCTS and TSLs – Quesnel Natural Resource District Portion of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Business Area
7. Wildlife Tree Retention; Closing Letter
8. Reforestation in the Douglas-fir Subzone: Are Reforestation Choices Meeting Objectives?; Special Investigation
9. Road Maintenance and Landslides at Bernard Creek, on Kootenay Lake; Complaint Investigation
10. Audit of District Manager Obligations on Forest Service Roads – Campbell River Natural Resource District
11. Management of Biodiversity in the Prince George Timber Supply Area; Complaint Investigation
12. Audit of District Manager Obligations on Forest Service Roads – Dawson Creek Timber Supply Area Portion of the Peace Natural Resource District
13. Forestry Audit: BCTS and Timber Sale Licence Holders – Seaward-tlasta Area in the North Island-Central Coast and Campbell River Natural Resource Districts
14. Forestry Audit: BCTS and TSL Holders – Clearwater Field Unit Portion of the Kamloops Business Area – Thompson Rivers Natural Resource District
15. Forestry Audit: BCTS and Timber Sale Licence Holders – Burns Lake Field Unit of the Babine Business Area
16. Annual Report 2019–2020

**16**   
REPORTS  
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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data  
British Columbia. Forest Practices Board.

Annual report. -- 1995 -  
Annual.

ISBN 1203-9071 = Annual report - British Columbia.  
Forest Practices Board

1. British Columbia. Forest Practices Board - Periodicals.
  2. British Columbia. *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* - Periodicals.
  3. British Columbia. *Forest and Range Practices Act* - Periodicals.
  4. Forest policy - British Columbia - Periodicals.
  5. Forest management - British Columbia - Periodicals.
  6. Forestry law and legislation - British Columbia - Periodicals. I. Title.
- SD14.B7.B74 354.7110082'338'06 C96-960058-5 (Rev. July 19, 2005)