



Strategic Plan 2023–2026

A photograph of a lush forest with tall trees and a mossy forest floor. A large, dark grey diamond shape is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge, with gratitude and respect, the territories of the Indigenous peoples across British Columbia.

We are committed to incorporating Indigenous views and values in our work and to encouraging practices and stewardship of forest and range lands that support reconciliation.

Table of Contents

Mission and Purpose	01
Values and Behaviours	02
Who We Are	04
What We Do	05
Current Environment	08
Strategic Priorities and Actions	10
Goals	12

A moose stands in a forest with vibrant autumn foliage. The scene is framed by a large, dark brown diamond shape that contains the mission statement. The background shows a dense forest with trees displaying red, orange, and yellow leaves, suggesting a late autumn setting. The moose is positioned in the center-right of the frame, looking towards the viewer.

Mission

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

Purpose

Our work encourages:

Sound forest and range practices that instill confidence with the public and Indigenous peoples;

Continuing improvements in forest and range stewardship; and

Fair and equitable application of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*.

Values and Behaviours



Independence

We act on behalf of the public interest, not any single group or individual

We perform in a non-adversarial, unbiased, non-partisan and balanced manner



Fairness

We treat all participants with fairness and sensitivity

We seek solutions rather than assigning blame



Integrity

We are straightforward in approach—we tell it like it is

We base actions and decisions on knowledge, evidence, and experience



Our Values and Behaviours

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



Respect

We treat all people with courtesy and value their opinions and perspectives

We recognize the value of a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives



Excellence

We produce high-quality work

We seek continuous improvement – both in our work and in forest and range practices



Transparency

We provide clear and concise reports to the public

We are accessible and accountable





Keith Atkinson
Chair



Bruce Larson
Vice Chair



Gerry Grant
Appointed Board
Member



Rick Monchak
Appointed Board
Member



Cindy Stern
Appointed Board
Member



Gail Wallin
Appointed Board
Member

Who We Are

The Forest Practices Board serves a key role in advancing the public interest in forest and range practices in the province. An arms-length, independent agency, we are an important part of the accountability framework for forest and range activity in BC.

The impact of our work, and the regard we have achieved, are based on high-quality work, maintaining independence and impartiality, and keeping the public interest at the forefront.

As we look to the future, we will seize the opportunity to build on the foundation that has been established, to evolve our focus to ensure we are addressing the public interests and concerns of today and tomorrow.

Our Organization and People

The organization consists of a Board, made up of a full-time Chair and part-time board members, and a staff of professionals who carry out the day-to-day work. The Board members are appointed by the BC government through a merit-based process, and have a background related to natural resource management and the forest sector. Appointments to the Board seek to achieve a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives on the issues facing the sector and the management of public forest and range resources.

Our staff are employed under the *Public Service Act*, also hired through a merit-based process. We currently have a staff of 18; primarily professional foresters, biologists, an agrologist and a geoscientist. We have our own in-house legal counsel, accounting, IT, and communications staff.

Our Budget

We have our own budget, separate from any ministry. The Chair is accountable for the budget and the Minister of Forests represents the Board during the annual estimates. Our 2023/24 budget is \$3.9 million.

What We Do

Audits

We audit forest and range practices on public lands and appropriateness of government enforcement. We can make recommendations for improvement to practices and legislation.

Auditors objectively collect and evaluate evidence to determine if forestry and range activities are consistent with forest and range practices legislation and operational plans. They also evaluate whether activities are consistent with government objectives for forest resources.

Complaint Investigations

We investigate public complaints about compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the *Wildfire Act*, and appropriateness of government enforcement of those Acts.

We act in the public interest, and are not an advocate for the complainant or a defender of government or licensees. We emphasize solutions over blame and encourage continuous improvements to reduce the likelihood of problems recurring in future.

Appeals

We can appeal decisions made by government officials under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* or the *Wildfire Act*, such as determinations of non-compliance, penalties or approvals of plans for forestry or range operations.

We can make an appeal to the independent Forest Appeals Commission, or join an appeal if we believe a decision was made in error and that there is a public interest that is affected by the decision.

Special Investigations and Reports

We conduct special investigations to address forestry and range-related matters that are of interest to the public as a whole, or that deal with systemic issues, as opposed to audits and complaints, which are more targeted to a specific licensee, area, or issue. Special investigations focus on compliance with legislation, or appropriateness of enforcement, and may also raise policy issues.

The Board Chair can also issue a special report to comment publicly on issues with forest and range practices or policy to foster understanding and discussion and affect change in support of the public interest.

A Note About Independence

We describe ourselves as independent and we ensure we are always acting independently. But we are a creation of the provincial government, funded by the government. So how can we say we are independent? We are frequently asked this question.

While it is true that we are funded by government, our budget does not come from the Ministry of Forests or any other government ministry. We have a separate Vote, which means our money comes directly from Treasury Board. We are subject to all the same policies, procedures and internal audits as the rest of government when it comes to how we spend money. However, we decide our own staffing, projects, and resourcing. No one tells us what work to do and no one in government approves how we allocate our resources. We determine the audits and investigations we undertake, how we conduct them and what we conclude. Where government is the subject of an audit or investigation, they have the same rights as any other company or individual to be consulted, to see draft findings and to make representations to the Board if they may be adversely affected by those findings. Our reports are not reviewed or approved for release by anyone in government. So while we are a part of government, our work is conducted independent from government.

**That is
what we mean by
independence**

Current Environment

Government Priorities

Government is undergoing a transformation in its approach to forest management in BC. Government is actively responding to the recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review including a shift from a management approach focused on timber supply to managing for multiple values. This shift recognizes ecosystem health is necessary if forests are to continue to provide essential benefits, such as clean air, clean water, carbon storage, conservation of biodiversity, economic opportunities and sustainable timber, and includes a commitment to conserve 30 percent of provincial natural areas by 2030. All of this work is taking place in cooperation with Indigenous governments as part of the implementation of the *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People’s Act* (DRIPA). These changes will significantly affect how forest and range practices are undertaken in BC and, consequently, will have impacts to the Board’s programs and processes.

The *Forest and Range Practices Act*, which is the basis of our mandate and authority, has changed in significant ways. Forest stewardship plans will be replaced by forest landscape plans and forest operations plans, which will directly impact how the Board conducts its audits and investigations and what activities it has the authority to examine.

Over the term of this plan, we will respond to this changing environment while maintaining our fundamental role of encouraging sound forest and range practices.

Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

As BC implements DRIPA, major shifts in the role of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples in the stewardship of BC lands and resources are underway. Indigenous communities are increasing their share of ownership, tenures, and their stewardship responsibilities for the management of forest and range lands. While the Board does not approve or authorize resource developments or make decisions about land use or management, we recognize that we have an important role to play in supporting reconciliation. The Board is committed to incorporating Indigenous views and values in our work and to encouraging practices and stewardship of forest and range lands that support reconciliation.

Climate Change

BC’s forest and range lands are being affected by the changing climate. The frequency and severity of droughts, storms, floods, insect infestations, and wildfires are some of the obvious impacts the changing climate is having on our forests. Other less obvious impacts include the survival and growth of regenerating forests and the loss of wildlife habitats and biodiversity. Forests have an important role to play in mitigating and adapting to a changing climate. The role of forest practices in climate mitigation and adaptation has been of interest to the Board for more than a decade and climate change continues to be an important lens we apply to our work.

Forest and Range Sector Changes

The forest and range sectors in BC are facing multiple challenges including climate change, regulatory change, and changing societal values placed on our forests and their role in maintaining healthy, resilient ecosystems. In response, some companies are shifting to more collaboration with Indigenous communities on governance and stewardship, leading or participating in forest landscape planning pilot projects, and looking at ways industry can adapt to these new realities. The Board is continuing to engage with industry in finding ways to improve forest and range practices while ensuring strong healthy forest and range sectors that contribute to the economy and meet BC’s needs in the future.

Societal Changes

BC’s population is changing. Nearly a third of BC residents are recent immigrants from elsewhere in Canada and the world. More than ever, BC’s population lives in an urban setting with less direct connection to the forest sector, how forests are managed, and who and what the Forest Practices Board is. At the same time, there is a growing awareness that healthy ecosystems, forests, and watersheds are at the forefront of climate resiliency and are foundational to all social, environmental, and economic systems.

It is within this incredibly complex and evolving environment that the Forest Practices Board must decide how to best serve the needs of British Columbians for independent, unbiased information on how well forest and range practices are conducted and legislation is followed and enforced. This strategic plan is our guide for carrying out that work in the coming years.



Strategic Priorities and Actions



Priorities



Actions

Focus resources on special projects that can influence forest and range practices and promote the resilience of ecosystems to the impacts of climate change, cumulative effects and biodiversity loss

Prepare for audit of forest landscape/forest operations plans under FRPA

Increase the impact of the audit program through approaches that will touch more licensees and influence more operators

Conduct proactive outreach with stakeholder organizations to increase awareness and impact of the Board and its work

Explore and develop partnerships with other organizations that can enhance the impact of our work

Enhance communications to increase impact and reach a more diverse audience

Strengthen engagement with Indigenous communities to increase the awareness of our work and foster an understanding of Indigenous perspectives

Seek Indigenous representation in staff and Board

Support staff retention and recruitment, and capture knowledge of departing staff

Foster a culture of continuous learning that grows internal capacity through professional development and training

Explore and promote the use of existing and emerging technology to enhance the quality and efficiency of Board work

As part of the strategic plan renewal, the Board undertook a public survey and met with stakeholder representatives, government, and Indigenous peoples to hear and learn about their views and concerns. This feedback was instructive and helpful in determining where to focus our priorities over the next several years.

These strategic priorities will guide and focus our work in the coming three to five years. While there are many areas of forest and range management that deserve attention, the Board will focus our efforts where we can have the greatest impact. In doing so, the Board will continue to investigate and assess stewardship and management practices

that take place on the ground. We will harness the results of our work to provide compelling advice to licence holders, natural resource professionals and government on ways to improve practices on the ground. However, we recognize there is also an important role for the Board to assess and influence the policy that drives what happens

on the ground, especially during this period of sector transformation and climate change. We will continue to direct efforts to look forward and drive changes that will adapt future forestry practices. For the coming few years, these are the strategic priorities where we will focus our efforts.

Goals

The Board’s six goals describe the outcomes we wish to achieve within the program areas that support our legislated mandate and the corporate functions required to support them. These are our long-term goals that will guide our day-to-day work and annual business plans.

Audits

An audit program that provides assurance about the state of forest and range practices and encourages continuous improvement.



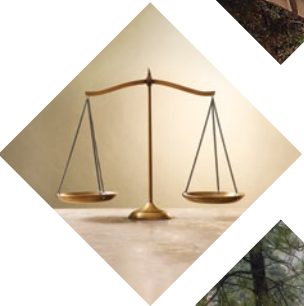
Complaint Investigations

A complaint program that encourages resolution of issues and is accessible, fair and transparent.



Appeals

A program that encourages fair and equitable application of FRPA and WA and brings a public interest perspective at the Forest Appeals Commission.



Special Investigations and Reports

A program that proactively examines issues of public interest and contributes to improvement of forest and range stewardship.



Our People and Organization

An innovative organization with professional and knowledgeable staff that embody the principles of diversity, inclusiveness and collaboration.



Communications

A communications program that maximizes the impact, influence and awareness of Board work.



How Are We Doing?

This strategic plan sets our priorities for the coming years, but we recognize we are living and working in a rapidly evolving world. We will review these priorities annually and may adjust course if necessary. We welcome your feedback on how we are doing as we carry out our work over the period of this plan.

We welcome you to contact us at **Fpboard@bcfpb.ca** to share your thoughts on how we are doing and your suggestions for how we can do better, or where we ought to shift some of our focus. This feedback will be considered in our annual plan reviews. We will also report on our progress in meeting these priorities in our Annual Reports, which are published following March 31 each year and posted on our website at **www.bcfpb.ca**.





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