



**Forest
Practices
Board**

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

www.bcfpb.ca



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 encouraging practices and stewardship of forests and rangelands that support reconciliation.



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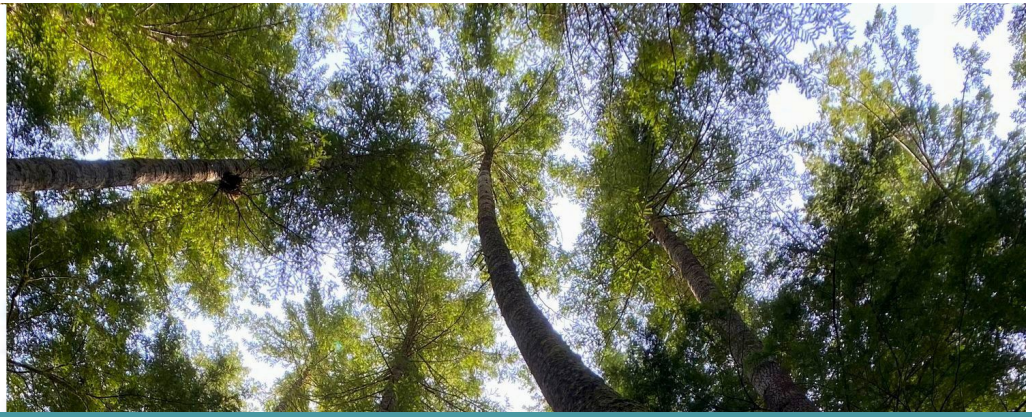
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CHAIR'S MESSAGE

The 2024-25 fiscal year signaled imminent change to the forest sector, presenting unprecedented challenges that demand urgent and decisive action. Global economic pressures, a pressing need to modernize land management practices, ongoing and increasing challenges with escalating wildfires all underscore the importance of a bold strategic response. Despite these hurdles, the provincial government's renewed commitment sets a clear trajectory: to support industry adaptation while steadfastly upholding the highest standards in forest stewardship and conservation.

On behalf of the public, the Forest Practices Board stands at the forefront of this mission, providing independent oversight that ensures compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Wildfire Act*. Our rigorous reviews not only hold government and licensees accountable, but also drive continuous improvement to enhance forest practices, strengthen environmental standards and build landscapes that are resilient to wildfire threats. Our recent team renewal efforts, supported by a strong business model and expert leadership, empowers us to better serve the public interest.

Our investigations into old forest management, water quality impacts, and non-compliance issues reveal the complexity of balancing timber harvesting with ecological integrity. These efforts are vital—public trust depends on transparent, responsible forest management. Our five-year audit summary highlights key areas for improvement, emphasizing the importance of fire hazard assessments, silviculture practices, and roads and bridge practices.

Reconciliation and collaboration with First Nations, Indigenous knowledge keepers, and sector stakeholders are essential for shaping a sustainable future. Our commitment to meaningful engagement is intended to respectfully reflect the interests of First Nations and Indigenous Peoples in ways that respects Indigenous rights and title.

Looking ahead, BC must pursue innovative land management reforms to enhance wildfire resilience, promote stewardship and sustain our wood product industry. The pillars of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*—objectives, practice requirements, and compliance and enforcement—must be supported by robust evaluation and accountability. As an independent voice, the Forest Practices Board is dedicated to scrutinizing and improving forest practices, ensuring our system remains strong and trusted.

Celebrating nearly 30 years of service, we have continuously evolved from the “War in the Woods” era to now leading awareness efforts in accountability, transparency, and environmental stewardship. Our work is more crucial than ever in a world where climate change, societal values, and reconciliation reshape the forest landscape.

This is the moment for unwavering dedication to professional, unbiased reviews that safeguard our forests for future generations. The time to act is now—support an ongoing system of excellence that benefits all.

Keith Atkinson
Chair, Forest Practices Board



Keith Atkinson



Bruce Larson



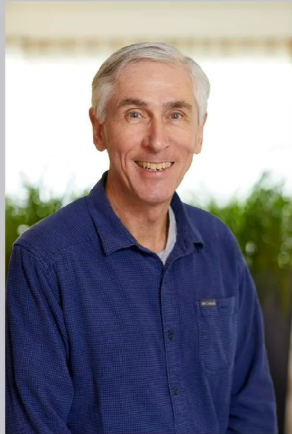
Phil Burton



Natasha Caverley



Gerry Grant



Rick Monchak



Cindy Stern



Gail Wallin

THE BOARD

The Board consists of a full-time Chair and five part-time members who live in communities across the province. This year, the Board welcomed two new part-time members, Dr. Natasha Caverley and Dr. Phil Burton. Both bring a wealth of experience in forest and range management, including expertise in Indigenous fire stewardship, integrated resource management and ecological restoration.

In April, long-serving Board member Dr. Bruce Larson retired after six years of dedicated service. Bruce was an exemplary leader whose knowledge and deep commitment to forest and range stewardship enriched the Board's work. We are grateful for his contributions and wish him all the best in his retirement.

The Board also mourned the loss of Board member Cindy Stern, who passed away in August following a battle with cancer. Appointed in 2020, Cindy brought strategic insight, thoughtful leadership and passion for responsible resource stewardship to her work with the Board. She was community-minded and known for her critical thinking and dedication to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Cindy was recognized posthumously by her peers as a distinguished forest professional. Her expertise, sharp wit and wisdom are deeply missed.

In June of 2024, the Board met in Campbell River with representatives from 'Namgis First Nation and Western Forest Products. Discussions centred around forest landscape and forest operations plans. Board members toured Tree Farm Licence 37 to see how cutblocks are being managed in anticipation of forest landscape plans coming into effect.

In September, the Board traveled to Fort St. John to meet with representatives from Doig River, Halfway River, Blueberry River and Prophet River First Nations, as well as Ministry of Forests regional staff and the public advisory group leading the Fort St. John Pilot Project. These in-person discussions provided valuable insight into local challenges, opportunities and collaborative approaches to forest and range management. Board members learned how the pilot project is testing a landscape-level planning framework that emphasizes adaptive management, flexible regulation, and meaningful public involvement in forest management decision-making.

BUDGET & FINANCIALS

FINANCIAL REPORT (FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024/25)	Board Members & Executive	Investigations	Audits	Legal	Communications	Administration & Overhead	TOTAL
Salaries & Benefits	\$501,321	\$935,646	\$703,309	\$251,714	\$187,851	\$326,670	\$2,906,111
Other Operating Costs	\$196,651	\$136,763	\$132,723	\$2,831	\$23,823	\$749,753	\$1,242,544
Total Operating Expenditures	\$697,972	\$1,072,409	\$836,032	\$254,545	\$211,674	\$1,076,023	\$4,148,655
Total Capital Expenditures	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$697,972	\$1,072,409	\$836,032	\$254,545	\$211,674	\$1,076,023	\$4,148,655
Budget							\$4,162,000

NOTES:

1. The FY2024/25 Budget includes a \$171,000 contingency amount to offset salary increases.
2. "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.
3. "Legal" expenditures covers legal advice on all files of the Board, including review and appeals.
4. "Administration and Overhead" includes building occupancy charges, software licensing, centralized support charges, and salaries associated with support for corporate services and information systems.

AUDITS

The Board audits how forests and rangelands are managed on public lands to assess compliance with the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA) and the *Wildfire Act*, and the appropriateness of government enforcement. Based on the audit findings, the Board can make recommendations to improve current practices or legislation.

Auditors conduct detailed and impartial assessments to determine whether forestry and range activities meet the requirements of FRPA, the *Wildfire Act*, associated regulations, and related operational plans. These evaluations ensure practices are consistent with government objectives for the sustainable management of forest resources.

Five audits were completed this fiscal year. Two focused on BC Timber Sales and three examined licensee operations. Work also continued to develop a manual and process to support future enforcement audits.

COMPLETED AUDITS

AUDITEES	
Started in Fiscal 2023-24	
1.	Nak'al Koh Timber Limited - Non-Replaceable Forest Licence (NRFL) A89836
2.	1175401 B.C. Ltd. - Forest Licence (FL) A77899 & A77900
3.	Valemount Community Forest Company Ltd. - FL A93987 and CFAs K5Q K2T
4.	BCTS & Timber Sale Licence Holders in the Boundary Timber Supply Area (TSA) Portion of the Kootenay Business Area
Started in Fiscal 2024-25	
1.	BCTS & TSLs - Haida Gwaii Natural Resource District portion of the Chinook Business Area

AUDITS IN PROGRESS (AS OF MARCH 31, 2025)

AUDITEES	
1.	Canadian Forest Products Ltd. - FL A19040 Rocky Mountain Natural Resource District
2.	Douglas Lake Cattle Company
3.	Tahltan Nation Development Corporation - First Nations Woodland Licence N3E
4.	Metlakatla Forestry Corporation First Nations Woodland Licence N3B

AUDIT SEASON STATISTICS

	POPULATION	SAMPLED
HARVESTING (# of cutblocks)	112	56
ROADS (km)		
• Construction	76	39
• Deactivation	49	9
• Maintenance	4916	969
SILVICULTURE (# of cutblocks*)	94	53
MAJOR STRUCTURES		
• Construction	3	3
• Maintenance	166	84
• Deactivation	4	2
FIRE PROTECTION (# of cutblocks**)	94	58

* The number represents blocks that were planted. Blocks with regeneration and fee-growing obligations are not included in this total.
** Blocks with fire assessment and abatement obligations.

AUDIT RESULTS

5 AUDIT REPORTS PUBLISHED		
5 WITH ISSUES	11 SIGNIFICANT NON-COMPLIANCES	10 AREAS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT
1. Nak'al Koh Timber Limited — NRFL A89836		• Silviculture — Seed Transfer • Silviculture — Reporting • Fire Hazard Assessment
2. 1175401 B.C. Ltd. — FLs A77899 and A77900	• Operational Planning — Forest Stewardship • Road Maintenance Tracking • Maintaining Fish Passage & Protecting Fish Habitat	• Visual Quality • Bridge Construction • Fire Hazard Assessment
3. Valemount Community Forest Company Ltd. — FL A93987 and CFAs K5Q and K2T	• Bridge Maintenance • Bridge Construction • Fire Hazard Assessment • Fire Hazard Abatement • Harvesting Reporting	• Wildfire Tree Retention • Site Plans for Roads
4. BCTS and TSLs — Boundary TSA portion of the Kootenay Business Area	• BCTS Road Inspection • Bridge Maintenance	• Fire Hazard Assessment
5. BCTS & TSLs — Haida Gwaii Natural Resource District portion of the Chinook Business Area	• Road Maintenance	• Fire Hazard Assessment



COMPLAINTS

The Board conducts investigations into public complaints concerning compliance with FRPA, the *Wildfire Act*, and the adequacy of government enforcement. Complaints within the Board's jurisdiction generally relate to activities occurring on public land, including forest stewardship plans, site plans, woodlot licence plans, forest and range practices, resource protection, and the enforcement actions undertaken by government agencies.

Of the five complaint investigation reports published this fiscal year, two addressed range practices. The remaining three focused on forest planning and practices—two in the Interior and one on the Coast.

During the fiscal year, we received nine new complaints. Five involved forest planning and practices that overlap with old forests, while three raised concerns related to water, as well as forest planning and practices. The table below provides a summary of these new complaints.

BC Timber Sales was the subject of four of the nine new complaints, with three involving operations in the Interior and one on the Coast.

COMPLAINTS & CONCERNS	COMPLAINTS	CONCERNS
Carried Over (from previous fiscal year)	11	1
Received in Fiscal 2024/25	9	46
TOTAL	20	47
Published	5	n/a
Resolved	1	45
Ongoing as of March 31, 2025	14	2

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

We received and began investigations into nine new complaints.

COMPLAINT	DESCRIPTION
Logging in Mule Deer Winter Range and Old Growth Management Areas at Alkali	A First Nation has concerns about logging in mule deer winter range and old growth management areas in its territory.
Mt. Remo Logging	A resident has concerns about terrain stability and visual quality management related to active logging on the slopes above the New Remo community.
Oscar Creek Species at Risk and Old Growth	Three professional biologists have concerns that BCTS is planning logging of two cutblocks at Oscar Creek, which they believe will cause harm to breeding goshawks. They also believe there is a systematic failure to manage old growth in the region by legal requirements and the <i>Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan</i> .
Middle Lake Salvage Harvesting	Ranchers are concerned about the impact of wildfire salvage harvesting.
Middle Lake Road Construction	Ranchers are concerned about the impact of road construction.
Horsefly Fisheries Sensitive Watershed	The complainants are concerned that BCTS and two licensees are not complying with a fisheries-sensitive watershed order.
Extension of Forest Stewardship Plan 681	The complainants are concerned that a district manager should not have approved an extension to the term of a Forest Stewardship Plan because the result and strategy for biodiversity at the landscape level are not consistent with section 19 of the <i>Forest Planning and Practices Regulation</i> .
Cai Creek	The complainant is concerned that BCTS did not consider their comments about proposed logging in the Cai Creek watershed.
Claydon Bay Watercourses	The complainant is concerned that BCTS changed the classification of several watercourses in a cutblock after harvesting was completed.

PUBLISHED REPORTS

1. Management of Old Forests on Quadra Island
2. Did Licensees Meet Cutblock Size Rules in the Kettle River Watershed?
3. Range Practices and Government Enforcement on the Overton-Moody Range Unit
4. Managing Whitebark Pine in BC’s High-elevation Forests
5. Range Practices and Government Enforcement in the Halfway River Watershed



SPECIAL PROJECTS

The Board undertakes special projects to examine trends identified in audits or investigations and issues of public interest.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS

Special investigations are undertaken to assess compliance with legislative requirements and the appropriateness of enforcement actions. These investigations may also identify broader policy issues that warrant further consideration.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Special reports summarize key trends and findings arising from Board audits and investigations. They examine relevant forest and range policies and legislation, and highlight stewardship concerns. Special reports are intended to enhance public understanding, encourage informed dialogue, and support transparency around critical issues affecting forest and range management.

In the 2024/25 fiscal year, the Board tracked government follow-through on recent special investigations. In response to the Board's *Management of Habitat for Species at Risk under the Forest and Range Practices Act* report, government committed to:

- updating the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy to address habitat supply,
- applying forest landscape planning (FLP) and modernized land use planning to set objectives for species at risk,
- updating the Categories of Species at Risk and Regionally Important Wildlife, and
- developing guidance for applying socio-economic cost-benefit analysis when balancing timber supply with habitat protection.

The *Forest and Fire Management in BC: Toward Landscape Resilience* (2023) special report also contributed to tangible changes in 2024, influencing the creation of a Cultural and Prescribed Fire Program within BC Wildfire Service and legislative amendments to support cultural burning.

SPECIAL PROJECTS IN PROGRESS (AS OF MARCH 31, 2025)

An Evaluation of BC's Wildfire Rehabilitation Practices

The *Wildfire Act* and *Wildfire Regulation* enable rehabilitation from damage associated with wildfire suppression. This Special Investigation is examining how well government is meeting its legal obligations for post-wildfire rehabilitation under the *Wildfire Act* and *Wildfire Regulation*. Triggered by the scale of recent fire seasons and growing impacts of suppression activities, the investigation focuses on compliance and effectiveness of rehabilitation plans in the Thompson River and Stuart Nechako natural resource districts. The investigation looks at how wildfire rehabilitation has managed erosion, supported regeneration, mitigated damage to public resources, and reduced safety risks.

Opportunities to Advance Adaptive Management

This special report will outline opportunities to strengthen monitoring and adaptive management under FRPA, especially as BC transitions to forest landscape planning. It will highlight the need to embed adaptive management—learning from outcomes and adjusting practices—into planning processes, and emphasize collaboration with First Nations, climate resilience, and managing cumulative effects. Drawing on past Board findings, expert input, and case studies, the report will examine a coordinated, outcomes-based system that supports continuous improvement in forest management.

Special Investigation: Are Regulated Activities Helping or Hindering Wildfire Risk Reduction?

This project evaluates how activities authorized under FRPA and the *Wildfire Act* help or hinder wildfire risk reduction efforts within the wildland urban interface and how those activities align with wildfire risk reduction plans. Board staff have completed field assessments throughout the Sea to Sky, Cariboo-Chilcotin and Peace natural resource districts, evaluating post-harvest hazard abatement and post-treatment wildfire risk reduction activities.

SPECIAL PROJECTS PUBLISHED

Special Report: A Summary of Audit Findings From 2018-2022

This report summarizes trends in compliance with FRPA and the *Wildfire Act* and other findings from 43 audits completed by the Board between 2018 and 2022. Covering activities such as harvesting, silviculture, roads and bridges, wildfire preparedness, and range use, the audits found 86% of practices in compliance with FRPA and *Wildfire Act*. However, recurring issues with fire hazard assessments, silviculture reporting, and bridge and road construction indicate systemic gaps in some areas.





APPEALS

The Board can initiate appeals to the Forest Appeals Commission of certain determinations made under FRPA and the *Wildfire Act* and participate in appeals initiated by others. The Board initiates or joins appeals where there are important public interest issues regarding statutory interpretation or concerns related to administrative justice, such as the fairness of penalties or the application of statutory defences.

During the fiscal year, the Board met its goal of analyzing every determination and notice of appeal it received. In each case, it took part in Forest Appeals Commission (FAC) proceedings to provide a public interest perspective and to promote fair, consistent application of FRPA and the *Wildfire Act*. The Board:

- reviewed 21 FRPA and *Wildfire Act* determinations
- continued to participate in two appeals
- did not initiate or join any new appeals

APPEAL CASES

Compliance with Forest Stewardship Plan

The Board participated in an appeal about the interpretation and application of the appellant's commitments in its forest stewardship plan relating to biodiversity and the maintenance of old forests. The FAC published its decision in February 2025. The FAC agreed with the Board's submissions on the meaning of the gravity and magnitude of a contravention and whether a contravention was repeated or continuous, both of which are mandatory penalty considerations under FRPA.

Category 2 Open Burning

The Board continues to participate in an appeal involving a lessee of private land and its contractor, both found in contravention of the *Wildfire Act* for failing to comply with the requirements for category 2 open burning. The hearing is scheduled for February 2026 when the Board intends to focus its participation on the statutory defence of due diligence.

Forestry Road Drainage and Landslide

The Board withdrew its participation in an appeal about forestry road design and a subsequent landslide. The Board withdrew its participation after the appellant narrowed the scope of issues in the appeal.



COMMUNICATIONS

The Board shares the results of its work through a variety of channels, including news releases, publications of audit findings and investigations, and regular updates on social media.

THIS YEAR'S PUBLICATIONS

This fiscal year, the Board published 11 reports, 1 annual report, 1 information bulletin, and 16 news releases.

Our top 5 most viewed reports were:

1. Forest and Fire Management in BC: Toward Landscape Resilience
2. Management of Old Forests on Quadra Island
3. Practicing Landscape Fire Management — Technical Bulletin
4. Did Licensees Meet Cutblock Size Rules in the Kettle River Watershed?
5. Management of Habitat for Species at Risk under the Forest and Range Practices Act

CONTACT US


EMAIL US

Do you have a concern about forest and range practices in BC? Email the Board at FPBoard@bcfpb.ca

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