

March 30, 2010

Dear members,

If you've worked in forestry for more than a couple of years, you know that our sector is cyclical and change is always upon us. Once again we find our sector challenged by major changes and, once again, we must evaluate and manage the changes if we are to move forward.

With forest health issues, climate change, a strong Canadian dollar and a weak US economy, there are significant challenges going on in the forest sector. The ABCFP has received many calls and e-mails about the most recent challenge – budget cuts at the Ministry of Forests and Range. In addition to working with a smaller budget, the ministry is implementing an entirely new administrative structure. The calls and e-mails we have received range from members who worry for their jobs and the future of the forests in BC, to those supporting the cuts to the forestry budget and the changes happening at the Ministry.

While there are many changes happening at the Ministry, there are also many changes -- and new challenges -- happening on the forested land base. In the past, timber harvesting was the main activity on Crown land but now it is fair to say that timber harvesting forms part of the mosaic of what happens in the forest. Elements like independent power producers and power distribution, biofuels, non-timber forest products, new mining projects and issues around carbon sequestration are all now working, and in some cases competing, for the same piece of forested land.

Collectively, we have a new relationship with Aboriginal groups and understanding their positions and working with them is absolutely essential to building a thriving forest sector. In addition to these changes and new realities, we have serious forest health issues highlighted by the mountain pine beetle outbreak which may morph into other challenges given our changing climate.

So how are you as forest professionals supposed to respond to all these challenges?

The good news is that wherever there is a forested land base in BC and professional forestry is being practised, forest professionals are needed. For those whose jobs are threatened, this situation may be cold comfort, but we have seen this pattern before in times of low markets.

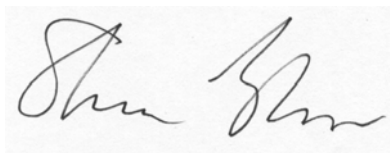
*Ensuring BC's Forests Are In Good Hands.*

However, the new activities on the land and the new relationship with Aboriginal groups now provide significant job opportunities for our members. It is important to evaluate the changes that are happening with respect to the management of forest land and to determine how your practice will be relevant and add value in today's challenging environment.

**Keep the long-term view of forestry in mind.** We are at a low point in terms of government funding and the industry and consulting businesses have taken a big hit due to the downturn in the economy. Markets are improving and with that will come an improving job market for forest professionals.

**Embrace professional reliance.** This doesn't mean complete deference but rather respect your fellow professionals and look for new and innovative ways of dealing with issues. And finally, for those who believe cutting staff is always a good thing in government – think again. As a wise forest professional once said: sometimes when you keep cutting staff and programs in the name of doing more with less -- you just get less. The government does have a very important asset in its Crown forest land that needs to be nurtured for future generations. Going forward, forests professionals will have an even more important role to play as competing interests continue to put more pressure on the land base.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Glover", is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

Sharon L. Glover, MBA  
Chief Executive Officer  
Association of BC Forest Professionals