



Your Take on Safety

First Woss forestry fundamentals program successfully completed

The 12-week Vancouver Island University program, based on curriculum competencies developed by industry through the BC Forest Safety Council, was attended by 12 students and ran from April 16 to July 6 at the old Woss School.

Dazy Weymer was the key instructor. Program content was designed to provide new forestry workers with the foundational skills and knowledge required to work safely, productively and sustainably in a harvesting environment.

The project was sponsored and supported by the Vancouver Island North Training and Attraction Society (VINTAS), whose founding members include the Town of Port McNeill, the Woss Residents Association, 'Namgis First Nation, Regional District of Mount Waddington, North Island College, School District #85, Community Futures of Mount Waddington, Western Forest Products, North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society and North Island Employment Foundation Society.

Students participating in the first Fundamentals of Forestry course run by VIU in Woss.



"The program was a great success," said Paul Mottershead, Associate Dean, Trades and Applied Technology, Vancouver Island University (VIU), after the well-attended graduation on July 6, 2018.

He said that VIU plans on meeting with all the parties involved over the next few weeks to learn what worked well, and what can be improved. "Our plan is to make the needed changes and then formally put the program proposal through a process of approval at VIU. This will include taking the proposal through to Curriculum Committee and then Senate approval at VIU," explained Paul.

"We are hoping this is completed in the fall of 2018, and are then able to offer two more classes in 2019 in Woss." In an initial survey of the students, Woss was one thing they did not want changed as they felt it was an ideal location to learn and be part of the culture in the logging industry.

VIU has also received funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (AEST) to work with three other institutions in the province in developing a similar forestry program that can be adapted to the other regions of the province. "We plan

to start working with these institutions over the next few months. The key to success will be adapting this program into a similar program that meets industry's needs in those regions. As we know, forest harvesting operations may look different in different regions and it is important that the program has this flexibility built into it. It is also important that we can tie in the standards and guidelines that the BC Forest Safety Council has built along with industry. This will provide a standardized approach and consistency with assessment

which I feel is important to have the credibility and recognition of the industry," said Paul.

Dazy Weymer, industry veteran and trainer who instructed the students for the duration of their three-month course, said he was encouraged by what came out of the course. "Most of the students have jobs and industry has some up and coming employees that look like they'll be good loggers."

As a pilot course, "we have learned a few things and should be able to make further improvements as we do more of them. For one thing, it would be good to see more involvement from logging contractors," said Dazy.

From a content perspective, students learn about the hazards they could encounter and how to mitigate them, along with some of the skills that will make them useful in industry. "More importantly, it gives us the opportunity to instill a sense of how important it has become to industry to do things the proper and safe way," he said.

Till now, the only industry occupation with standardized training has been falling. Truck driving is moving that way. "This course is a good start on standardizing basic training for all of logging," said Dazy.

"The industry needs new, young workers. This course will get them in there, safely, efficiently and cost effectively," said Dazy.

"At Western, we have a longstanding commitment towards attracting and training the next generation for rewarding employment opportunities in the forestry industry. We are pleased to extend this commitment by supporting the Fundamentals of Forestry program. Our support included fully funding tuition for half of the participants as well as providing hands-on experience for students at our logging camps," said Jennifer Foster, Vice President, Human Resources, Western Forest Products. "To date, 10 of the 12 program participants have already embarked on their careers including seven who have joined Western and three who have been hired by our contractors. Programs such as these are essential to ensure those entering the industry have a well-rounded skillset that enables them to operate safely."

For a video on the program, please see: <https://www.facebook.com/ForestryFriendlyCommunities/videos/455056341635703/UzpfST10Njc1OTA5NTgyMDY0Mjo0MDM2ODA4ODAxMjg0NjI/>

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