

Woodlot Licence and Community Forest Agreement Safety Committee to address unique needs of its members

by Dustin Meierhofer

Following several months of industry input and feedback, the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations and BC Community Forest Association are working to improve safety on woodlot licences and community forests by establishing a Woodlot Licence/Community Forest Agreement Safety Committee.

The committee will focus on matters that further support improved safety performance within woodlot and community forest operations. It will look at developing new and expand existing actions that target the specific needs and challenges of the small to medium sized tenure holders. The BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) will support the committee in achieving its objectives.

BCFSC Director of Transportation and Northern Safety, Dustin Meierhofer, said the development and implementation of safety management processes, initiatives and resources are always most effective when built and owned by those directly involved in and responsible for activities that have the potential to harm workers and/or the public.

“The formation of this committee is a positive step in that direction and compliments the good work both the community forests and woodlot owners have completed in addressing safety to date,” Meierhofer said. “We know that some of the safety issues that woodlot license and community forest agreement holders face are unique. Activities such as securing services, general forest operations, and supervising contract fallers, are often done on an infrequent basis, which creates some significant challenges.”

“This is about the people directly responsible for operations driving the best, most practical safety initiatives forward,” he added.

The first meeting of the committee was held in January with a second meeting in Feb of this year and topics of discussion included:

- * responsibility for safety
- * options and processes for hiring qualified contractors, role of prime contractor and contractor and subcontractor responsibilities including part-time operators
- * safety management system due diligence
- * public safety awareness and education re trail use,

firewood collection, road access and use, radio use, signage, road maintenance and conditions, and road deactivation, etc.

- * accountability versus liability
- * available safety tool kit resources
- * impairment
- * certification options for new woodlots
- * best options for securing input and feedback from community forest and woodlot owners/operators to facilitate timely and relevant working solutions to emerging safety challenges.

The founding committee members are:

- Bill Golding – Wetzin’kwa Community Forest Corp.
- Dave Lasser – Sunshine Coast Community Forest
- Shawn Flynn – Woodlot Owner/Nanosee Bay
- Mark Churchill – Woodlot Licensee/Vanderhoof
- Gary Hanson – Woodlot Licensee/Smithers

For more information on this group, how to participate, and to share any safety concerns that you would like to see the group consider, please contact the BC Forest Safety Council at toll-free 1-877-741-1060 or email meierhofer@bcforestsafe.org.

This is one of a series of Spotlight on safety columns produced for the Woodland Almanac by the BC Forest Safety Council. If you have a suggestion or would like to see a particular safety topic covered, please let us know. BCFSC has a team of safety advisors with more than 100 years of combined forestry and safety experience to provide trusted guidance and advice in all safety matters. Email safetyadvisors@bcforestsafe.org or call toll-free: 1-877-741-1060. The BCFSC is here to support industry achieve excellence in health and safety for all forest operations and their workers. ♦

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