



"Celebrating Achievement and Innovation" | [Special Edition](#) Dec. 2006 | Volume 3, Issue 4 | [Archive](#)

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A Few Thoughts from Doug Konkin

Collectively we accomplished a great deal over the past year. Our work has made a difference and we are viewed within government as an agency that is learning, improving and getting things done. We can be proud of our achievements and should celebrate them!

That is the idea behind this "special edition" of the Forest Service *News*. It is a mix of stories that celebrate a few of our corporate-wide, individual and small group successes. I hope you enjoy reading them.

At the recent provincial leadership meeting, I noted the resistance three years ago to referencing the word 'excellence' somewhere in the Forest Service vision, mission and values. Since then, we have done amazing things and are, and are seen to be, leaders on many fronts. I told the leadership group we should think about excellence and what it means to pursue greatness.

Some say public service agencies can't be great. I don't believe that, I think greatness starts with individuals caring about each other. It comes with people believing they can make a difference and always be better. It is doing things when people thought they couldn't get done; those are things I think are common place in the Forest Service.

Great organizations and people provide enduring, superior performance that has a real impact on the world around them. In the past year I have seen many leaders emerge throughout the Forest Service, I have seen many individual and corporate accomplishments that have that kind of impact, and through learning and continuous improvement we can do even more.

Many say we are a very good organization, others say we have a ways to go. Like any family of people

Forest Service News - A Voice for Staff

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Forest Service News
A quarterly newsletter for all
Forest Service employees.

Contact: Sonia Donison is providing administrative and coordination support for the newsletter. Questions or comments about Forest Service *News* should be directed to Sonia as 250-953-3859 or [email](#)

Call for Stories/Ideas
The success of Forest Service *News* depends upon the active engagement of staff throughout the organization. One way for people to support the newsletter is to share your ideas, news, stories, successes, experiences with revitalization and learning,

we have differences of opinion depending on our expectations, our experience and what is going on around us.

In my meetings with staff we all agree we need to try and get better and I am often told we need to communicate better, continue focussing on people, remove unnecessary process, improve business practices and focus on key targets. In the New Year we will continue to work on all of that.

As 2006 draws to a close and you reflect on the past year, I invite you to think about what you have achieved and take time to focus on the people around you, both at home and at work.

I thank you all for your contributions and wish you and your family a safe and joyous holiday season!

Doug Konkin
Deputy Minister

celebrations and photos for use in future editions of the newsletter. People are asked to check with Sonia at 250-953-3859 or [email](#) about their idea or ideas before writing a story.

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Kootenay Lake Forestry Centre Partners with Protection

Strengthening partnership opportunities among Field Services, BCTS and Protection, succession planning and knowledge transfer between programs are just some of the Forest Service Road Ahead objectives in 2006.

“In the Kootenay Lake Forestry Centre, we have seen these words turn into action,” says District Manager Garry Beaudry. “The forestry centre houses the Kootenay Lake District, Kootenay Lake Fire Zone, BCTS Kootenay Business Area and the Regional Point of Delivery (POD) staff. There are a lot of advantages in being under the same roof, with a couple of the key ones being open communication and social interactions.”

According to Beaudry, “this is part of the reason there has been a healthy exchange of staff and several opportunities for program crossover with Protection in the past few years.” Some examples include: the district, BCTS and regional staff participation in the Protection Partnership Program, BCTS using Protection expertise and staff in prescribed burning activities, and the district hiring the Initial Attack (IA) crew to help install bridges under the recreation program.

One of the more significant opportunities this year occurred when Amy Jaarsma, the Small Scale Salvage Technician in Kootenay Lake, identified through her EPDP a desire to expand her knowledge base and experience in Protection as part of her career development plan. In April, Amy was awarded a 5-month secondment opportunity to the Cranbrook Fire Zone as a Forest Protection Assistant.

“When the opportunity came along, I jumped in with both feet and immediately got involved with ecosystem restoration work,” says Amy. “I went to boot camp and was anxious to get to the front line. This took a while, but I learned a lot along the way.” In reflecting on the experience, Amy feels her EPDP was useful and by collaborating with her supervisor it became even more useful.

“There are many benefits of having people transfer across the ministry that go far beyond the immediate opportunity,” says Gene Desnoyers, Southeast Fire Centre Manager. “While Amy was there to enhance her Protection experience and knowledge for fire and non-fire aspects, her presence in the zone office provided equal learning for at least four other staff over the course of her Temporary Assignment. In particular, these people gained a greater awareness of C&E and an enhanced

understanding of the district organization (role, function, challenges).”

Amy also brought very thorough computer skills to the job, which helped Protection a great deal in areas such as coordinating the Zone Pre-organization data. She has a strong teaching and instructional background that helped support delivery of the Elementary School Fire Prevention Program.

According to Amy, “obstacles are sometimes encountered on things like this and we need extra help,” says Amy. “It may mean we have to make some changes in our plan, which is part of adapting and being flexible. The opportunity was a great experience for me and I am sure it will help me in my career path.”

Desnoyers also feels there is a spin-off benefit when a person returns to their work unit after a temporary assignment. They bring back knowledge and understanding of how another part of the Forest Service functions, in this case how the Protection program works and innovative approaches to business. The learning is not confined to the one person or to one location.

A reciprocal opportunity occurred in October, when two Protection employees started working for the district. Initial attack crew leader, Jason Devery from the Invermere Fire Zone and Forest Protection Assistant, Mark Healey of the Kootenay Lake Fire Zone, were successful in interviews for auxiliary positions in Kootenay Lake District’s Compliance and Enforcement program. Both are forest technicians and this opportunity will help them further their career goals.

“These are examples that show how the Forest Service’s focus on people is paying off in great opportunities for staff and helping to maintain our positive organizational culture,” says Beaudry. “This is great stuff for succession planning and knowledge transfer.”

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I thought it might take a year

In March 2003, the provincial government announced its plan to revitalize the BC forest industry.

“In making the announcement on the many elements of the plan, government put a tremendous challenge in front of the Forest Service,” says Bob Friesen, Assistant Deputy Minister, Tenure and Revenue. “At the time, I thought it would take us about a year to complete this work, but it soon became evident that I seriously underestimated the complexity of some of the elements and the time commitment involved in working with our clients to put these changes in place. Looking back, I can now understand why it has taken us about three years to complete the major pieces of the plan.”

The Forestry Revitalization Plan contains strategies for virtually all aspects of the forest industry and, according to Friesen, the Forest Service has now implemented most of the ‘big ticket’ items of the plan. “While there is more to do to finish implementation in a number of areas, we have implemented significant new policy and legislation, pretty much completed the timber reallocation to support our auction program and implemented the Market Pricing System on the Coast and in the Interior,” says Friesen. “We have also made an array of tenure changes and made important progress in providing more forestry opportunities for First Nations and we are working hard on small tenures.”

Some pieces of the Forestry Revitalization Plan have caused surprises. As work was progressing on the

Market Pricing System in the Interior, Friesen notes that they “had to down tools and make very important changes in log grades, driven by the rapid expansion of the mountain pine beetle infestation. This was a major job that we needed to do to set the stage for implementing MPS in the Interior. The log grade project involved many people and I am extremely impressed with collaboration and Herculean effort of people from industry and in the Forest Service.”

Meanwhile, many others across the ministry were working hard to implement the new *Forest and Range Practices Act*, which is a significant change in how we and the forest industry govern activities in the field.

“As I reflect on the past three years and what this organization has accomplished with forestry revitalization, I want to pay tribute to the hundreds of people across the Forest Service who enabled us to achieve so much,” says Friesen. “Staff responded to the challenge of government and, at the same time, kept all the normal day-to-day business of the ministry in full operation.”

Friesen also points out that, while all the revitalization work was occurring, the Forest Service had to deal with many organizational changes and its own revitalization. A new organization, BC Timber Sales, was created within the Forest Service to implement a key piece of forestry revitalization. “We also have had to deal with the many challenges of the mountain pine beetle epidemic and softwood lumber,” says Friesen.

“We have done a lot and done it well,” says Friesen. “We see the face of industry changing in ways that will benefit the province over the long term. We have learned a lot about working with our client groups and it is my sense that government and industry acknowledge and appreciate what we have done.”

While much has been accomplished, Friesen is quick to point out that the job is not finished. “One of the most critical things we need to do is to monitor and examine the implications of the Forestry Revitalization Plan, as its elements unfold. All change brings consequences, intended and unintended, and the environment within which we work is ever changing. Industry’s challenges and problems have not disappeared and we must be prepared to adapt and refine the policy architecture that has been put in place.”

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Leadership Community of Practice

The Mackenzie Forest District recently undertook a unique leadership development initiative involving the district, a remote First Nations community, licensees, the RCMP and local school staff.

“The concept grew out of discussion about joint training with local forest licensees,” says District Manager Dave Francis. “We were doing some joint training, mainly in the ‘forestry’ area, and were looking to expand this. The ministry’s Road Ahead efforts to enhance leadership development and personal learning opportunities lead to the further expansion of the concept.”

If the major employers in Mackenzie acted as the catalyst, Dave and others in the district felt they could provide these learning opportunities in their community and involve other local organizations that would not likely be able to access such opportunities on their own. According to Dave “once we had done some joint learning, it was our feeling that perhaps we could establish a local Community of

Practice to continue to build on the investment. With that in mind, we felt that ‘The Leader’s Discipline’, a non-directive coaching workshop offered by Ian Chisholm of the Roy Group, would be an excellent trigger to make the concept a reality.”

One of the challenges faced by both public and private sector organizations in a small, isolated community, like Mackenzie, is limited access to training and learning opportunities. Individual organizations typically send small numbers of staff out of town, at considerable expense, to access these services. The concept developed by the district proposed that they work together as a community to bring the learning opportunity to Mackenzie.

In April 2006, two ‘Leader’s Discipline’ workshops were held, one in Mackenzie and the second in the remote First Nations community of Kwadacha, with 15 people participating in both sessions. In Mackenzie, the participants included: two school staff, one RCMP member, one person from the District of Mackenzie, two people from the McLeod Lake First Nation, three from the forest district and two each from Abitibi, Canfor and Pope & Talbot. The participants in Kwadacha were comprised of two from both Abitibi and Canfor, three from the forest district, and eight from the Kwadacha First Nation. The Kwadacha participants included school staff, band administration, elders and youth.

“The two workshops were very well received by the participants,” says Francis. “Our future plans include following up with the original group to develop a leadership Community of Practice and additional offerings of ‘The Leader’s Discipline’ workshop for new participants. This has been an extremely positive initiative and we expect it will provide many benefits to the communities and the organizations involved as well as the individuals. We see this as a shared experience in developing leaders and increasing the leadership capacity more broadly in the Mackenzie and Kwadacha communities. ”

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Adaptation is essential

The Future Forest Ecosystems Initiative (FFEI) is a Ministry of Forests and Range initiative for maintaining and enhancing the resilience and productivity of B.C.'s forest ecosystems. FFEI is the umbrella initiative under which the ministry is addressing climate change and other drivers of ecosystem change.

FFEI has its roots in a December 2005 symposium and workshop held in Prince George under the sponsorship of the province’s Chief Forester Jim Snetsinger. The session was attended by representatives from federal and provincial agencies, universities, First Nations, forest and range industries, environmental organizations and consulting resource professionals.

“Adaptation is essential for managing the effects of climate change, wildfire events, bark beetle infestations and other rapidly changing conditions in B.C.'s forest ecosystems,” says Snetsinger. “These and other influences are affecting the province’s forest ecosystems and their ability to recover from natural disturbances such as insect and disease outbreaks, wildfires and drought. Our economy and way of life in B.C. depends upon having resilient and productive forest ecosystems. The symposium in Prince George almost a year ago was a great opportunity to share perspectives and learn from others as we started to shape the FFEI.”

The purpose of FFEI is to adapt the forest management framework (legislation and policy), so that it

remains effective well into the future, despite ongoing and potential future changes to forest ecosystems. In June of this year, the ministry released *'Future Forest Ecosystems of B.C.: Draft Recommendations for Review and Comment'*. The report included 46 recommendations for projects designed to increase understanding of ecological processes and ecological change; and to apply that knowledge to the existing provincial forest management framework. Many recommendations directly address climate change and its impacts. The recommendations went through a broad consultation process during the summer, with the majority of feedback supporting FFEI as timely and important.

The draft recommendations were compiled from four sources:

- The symposium on Future Forest Ecosystems in December, 2005.
- The Forest Service report, *'Preparing for Climate Change: Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change on BC's Forest and Range Resources'*, released in May, 2006.
- The Forest Service report *'Management of Species Composition in Cut blocks in Beetle-Impacted TSAs'*, released in October, 2005.
- Analysis by the FFEI team.

Under FFEI, the implementation of some 46 projects will be targeted at achieving the following objectives:

1. Increasing our understanding of ecological processes and changes over time and associated risks to forest ecosystems and resources (through research, forecasting, and monitoring projects);
2. Using this knowledge to adapt the forest management framework (legislation and policy) to future ecological conditions (through policy evaluation and change projects); and
3. Communicating the adapted forest management framework (through extension projects).

“By adapting the forest management framework, we are hoping to maintain and enhance the resilience and productivity of B.C.'s forest ecosystems,” notes Snetsinger. “To that end, we are aiming to see forest ecosystems remain resilient to stress caused by climate change, human activity, and other agents of change. We also want to see ecosystems continuing to provide the basic services, products and benefits society values it depends upon.”

Here are some supporting definitions that may be useful:

Services – nutrient cycling; soil formation; climate, flood and disease regulation; water purification, etc.

Products – water, timber, non-timber forest products, fuel, etc.

Benefits – recreation; spiritual, aesthetic and educational values, etc.

According to Snetsinger “We expect implementation of some projects to start early in 2007. Many of the recommendations will be implemented through or in close collaboration with existing initiatives such as the Forest Science Program, BC Wildland Fire Strategy, Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan, Climate Change Initiative, FRPA Resource Evaluation Program, Rangeland Ecosystem Restoration and Forests for Tomorrow.”

“The scope of FFEI and its various projects will undoubtedly evolve as we and other parts of government learn more about how to maintain and enhance the resilience and productivity of forest ecosystems through the forest management framework,” says Kristine Weese, FFEI Project Manager. “We expect projects under the initiative to be implemented over the next three to five years. At the same time, we will be working to incorporate the purpose and objectives of FFEI into normal ministry business.”

The chief forester feels the Future Forest Ecosystem Initiative is an excellent example of the Forest

Service demonstrating strong leadership on an issue of local, national and global importance.

For more information about the initiative and/or access a copy of the report:

http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/Future_Forests/

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Safety—An Ex-Logger's Tale

Trish Balcaen, District Manager, South Island Forest District

I was 5 years old the first time I experienced the consequence of death in the woods, then at age 6 my uncle barely survived a skidding accident and at 12 years of age I experienced the consequences of the second death.

These experiences changed the way I approach life and people. When I look back, it really is remarkable that at such a young age I sensed the grief my father experienced when he had to inform the wives of his colleagues that they no longer had a father for their kids.

When it came time for me to take the reins of my father's logging company, I instinctively approached it with one very clear mantra—**NO ONE WAS GOING TO DIE ON MY SHIFT.** And no one did.

Maybe it was luck—who knows?

I like to think it had a little something to do with talking to the 'boys' when I hired them—telling them that safety was first; letting them know they had support if their equipment required repair; telling them that I had a zero tolerance for booze and drugs on the job. More than these types of conversations, I like to think it was because every time I had a moment with them, I showed them I cared about their personal well-being.

How does this translate to our roles in the Ministry of Forests and Range? Well, I hope the work conducted by the ministry's safety team in building a bridge between ourselves and WorkSafe BC, the creation of some new policy and elevating the importance of safety through the BC Forest Safety Council will help.

To get to the heart of the matter, I don't think that policy or regulation is really what promotes a safe culture. I believe that safety lives in the conversations that heighten self-awareness and make us aware of our surroundings on a daily basis. These conversations don't have to be limited to the Forest Service family—they should also bridge to our colleagues in industry.

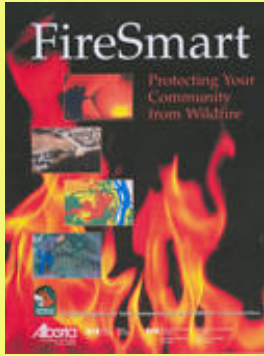
Safety is really about caring for one another. I have never met a person who was impacted by a death in the woods that could say "I did everything I could." What I think is far more prevalent is hearing people say "I wish I would have done something more."

I, for one, don't ever want to be in the place where I could have done something more and didn't.



BC Forest Safety Council
Unsafe is Unacceptable

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Partnerships in Fuel Management

The 2006 fire season again raised public awareness regarding wildland fire management and particularly fuel management in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Since the 2003 fire season and the release of the Filmon report, fuel management has become a leading issue for the Ministry of Forests and Range and many local Governments. Fuel management is not new to British Columbia, but 2003 galvanized attention on the issue, and created an opportunity to move ahead on fuel management initiatives with public interest and support.

The Ministry of Forests and Range launched a formal fuel management program in late 2004 and over the following year staffed 11 key positions to support the program. For delivery of the program, we are engaged with two key partners, the Union of BC Municipalities and First Nations Emergency Services Society. In the past two seasons, much work has been done to simultaneously build the program and launch key initiatives. Key components of the Fuel Management program include the identification of fuel hazards, as well as facilitating the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), Pilot Projects and Operational Fuel treatments.

Our Provincial Strategic Threat Analysis (PSTA) identified 1.7 million hectares of forest fuel that may threaten WUI areas, and this information is available to local governments and industry. Currently, approximately 70 of 200 Local Governments are developing CWPPs, with approximately 25 having been completed. A number of communities have initiated treatment work in the form of small fuel management Pilot projects and larger Operational projects.

The Ministry of Forests and Range is also working on the development of a new tenure that will facilitate fuel treatment for community protection. For information on this visit: <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hth/timten/index.htm>

Wildland fires will continue to occur each year and there are no guarantees from Mother Nature, but through these important initiatives, forest professionals will work to minimize the potential for catastrophic wildfires in the WUI.

For more information visit the following websites:

www.for.gov.bc.ca/protect/FuelManagement

www.civicnet.bc.ca

www.mpb.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca

www.fness.bc.ca/Mt_Pine_Beetle/beetle.htm

Judi Beck, PhD, RPF
Manager, Wildfire Management
BCFS Protection Program

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New Policy Process Off to Successful Start

The Forest Service has what can be described as a large ‘policy agenda.’ While generally acknowledged as having done a good job in policy development, a couple of years ago the Executive and many people involved with developing policy felt there was substantial room for improvement. Shortcomings on the policy development side often did not show up until the implementation phase, which meant extra work and time were required because the initial development work was lacking in some important way. It is especially critical for policies to be complete before moving to legislation.

Under the leadership of Sue Stephen, Director, Strategic Policy and Planning, the ministry embarked on a process in early 2005 to improve its corporate policy development. From the initial efforts of a working group that reviewed the many existing policy processes, the goal has been to create a process that is accessible and readily useable to staff.

According to Sue, “our ultimate goal is to have a transparent, efficient and effective process that engages staff and also provides Executive with a comprehensive summary of policies facing the ministry to ensure they are well informed when making strategic decisions about ministry business.” Solid progress has been made through the efforts of a continuous improvement working group initially and then the Policy Secretariat over the past year. The Corporate Policy Process is still in its early stages, but some 142 policies have been entered into the system and 101 of these are proceeding through subsequent phases of development.

The policy process supports the ministry Executive in setting priorities for the policy and legislative workloads. When fully implemented, it will help focus the resources required to develop policy by having clear direction from Executive and communicating the priorities for such work. The Corporate Policy Process is championed by the Strategic Policy and Planning Branch, which also chairs and coordinates the Policy Secretariat. The Secretariat is a team of policy experts from across the Forest Service that supports the policy process through their leadership and feedback on policy development and implementation.

The process has a number of steps from the policy idea stage to implementation. Good quality work at the front-end and each stage will translate into smoother implementation and policy that achieves what it was intended to do.

“The Corporate Policy Process is off to a successful start,” says Sue. “The Secretariat functions well and is a highly effective team. We are learning as individuals and as a team, and are increasingly comfortable with the process and in knowing that it works well. Reports and information from Executive and the Secretariat reviews are being used to inform policy development, consultation and decisions. People involved with policy work have responded positively and are submitting ideas. They are using the process and providing us with good suggestions on how to make improvements. In turn, feedback from the Secretariat helps them develop policy.”

Sue notes that “a lot of effort has gone into building relationships, communicating and re-communicating. Our early success is linked directly to the effectiveness of our relationships and communication. We place a high priority on communicating and, with Secretariat members in locations across the province, we use technology to the greatest extent possible to support these efforts—our system is online and our meetings have an online component.”

“Beyond the obvious benefits to the ministry’s business, I think the organization will benefit from the Corporate Policy Process in other ways in the coming year,” says Sue. “All of us are aware of the succession challenges we face in the Forest Service. We will lose a lot of knowledge and expertise over the next decade in all areas of our business, including policy development. We must start capturing the rationale behind the creation of specific policies to make it easier for future employees to work with and learn from existing policy.”

Sue wants to acknowledge the efforts of the original working group and the Secretariat in moving the concept of a ‘top-notch’ policy development process into a reality.

More information about the Corporate Policy Process and how to submit policy suggestions can be found at: <http://gww.for.gov.bc.ca/hcp/cpp/>

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"Our work touches on many parts and levels of government"

The Forest Service has been dealing with the challenges of the mountain pine beetle epidemic for many years and the Mountain Pine Beetle Emergency Response Team (ERT) led by Assistant Deputy Minister Ray Schultz, was created a year ago to spearhead the province’s overall efforts on this front.

“When I took on this job, I knew the scope of our work would be pretty broad based on my time as provincial bark beetle coordinator in 2001/02, and it has proven to be as complex and dynamic as I expected,” says Schultz. “The work for which we are responsible touches increasingly on the business of other ministries. In fact, the Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan has an assortment of actions that are being carried out by eight ministries beyond the Forest Service.”

The Action Plan is the cornerstone of a coordinated provincial response to the mountain pine beetle infestation. According to Schultz, “it is the tool we use to ensure the overall strategy stays on track. Parts of the plan obviously deal with bio-physical aspects of the infestation, but it is much more comprehensive. The plan is also being used to guide our collective efforts to address socio-economic factors and to stimulate economic growth in areas such as mining, energy and bio-energy, transportation and agriculture.”

“Throughout most of my career, I have been in situations where I collaborated with various levels of government, but I’ve never experienced the scope of what we have with the Emergency Response,” says Schultz. “In addition to eight other provincial ministries, our team works with local governments, First Nations, community coalitions, the province of Alberta, Parks Canada and other parts of the federal government. We have a high degree of interaction with these groups and agencies.”

“We currently work closely with two community coalition groups—Omineca and Cariboo-Chilcotin—and have started working with a similar group in the Southern Interior,” says Schultz. “We also work

extensively with the newly formed First Nations Forestry Council. In addition to looking for economic and forestry opportunities, one of the unique challenges for First Nations has been a significant impact on traditional use areas due to the extent of the epidemic.”

In efforts with the Alberta government and Parks Canada (Banff, Jasper and Yoho), attention is being paid to spread control strategies. These strategies cover what is called the ‘trans-border zone’, stretching along the BC-Alberta border from Fort St. John to the Kootenays in the southeast.

“A year ago, the Emergency Response team had just been formed,” says Schultz. “Since then, much has occurred and I am proud of the team and what we have accomplished. A lot of what we do occurs behind the scenes, but as with so many other matters, government is looking to the Forest Service to provide leadership for one of its high priorities.”

According to Schultz, “one of the strengths of the team is the diversity of experience and skills in the group. We have people with significant community economic development expertise, public communication skill, extensive First Nations collaborative and consultation experience, as well as lots of know-how on the forestry and beetle control front. And, we have solid administration, clerical support and business acumen, which are essential for success with the complex challenges at hand.”

Schulz feels much of what he sees in the team dovetails with the organizational revitalization of the Forest Service. “The Emergency Response is providing many opportunities to apply our leadership skills and to develop new ones,” notes Schultz. “Due to the unprecedented nature of the epidemic, all of us are learning new things and, with so many unknowns, we will continue to learn as individuals and as a team. We have been empowered to take on some very important work and, while this seems daunting task at times, all of us realize that accountability for our performance is very much a part of being empowered with this unique opportunity.”

The other members of the ERT are Rod DeBoice, Gord Borgstrom, Doug Macfarlane, Dave Cornwell, Terry Olsen and Jean Webb. The team will soon be looking for someone to lead its efforts on policy development and innovation. The ERT also works closely with the First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative led by Dan George.

For more information about the Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan, check:

http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/mountain_pine_beetle/

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Revitalizing the Forest Service

In July 2004, the Forest Service formally launched its overall strategy for organizational revitalization, referred to as the ‘Road Ahead’. In reflecting upon what has occurred since then, Sharon Stewart, Director of Strategic Human Resources feels “the culture of the Forest Service has evolved and changed as it

launched a number of initiatives to renew the ministry and achieve a higher level of performance.”

Significant progress has been made in all priority areas of the Road Ahead—vision, stewardship mandate, strengthening and developing leadership, becoming more of a learning organization, having workplace wellness as top of mind and preparing for future workforce/succession needs. “While we could provide an exhaustive list of activities,” says Stewart “the bottom line is that the Forest Service

has taken wide-ranging approach in its revitalization efforts and set a solid foundation for ongoing performance improvements.”

Stewart says that “leaders are being developed throughout the organization through coaching, mentoring and widespread involvement in things like participation in working groups, ‘Investment in Excellence’ and ‘Partners in Performance’. Scores of employees are becoming skilled learning organization practitioners and continuous improvement techniques and principles are being used more widely than ever.”

Much emphasis has been placed on what can be called ‘people initiatives’, but according to Stewart “we have worked hard to ensure there is a strong link to the business of the Forest Service. At times, we may not have made as strong a connection as we would like, but overall I think we are doing a good job. While there has been a significant level of engagement, not all employees have been able to participate and we continue to look for ways for more employees to be engaged and benefit from these important activities.”

While there always seems to be room to improve communications and dialogue with employees, a number of things have been implemented to make improvements on this front. For example, the Deputy Minister’s Employee Advisory Council was created and is working well. The Forest Service *News* has been in place for almost two years and has received a strongly positive response from employees. Other initiatives include ForesTree, the Business Information Mall and mapping the business of the Forest Service will contribute to enhanced communication, learning and information sharing.

According to Stewart, “we continually emphasize the importance of things like reward, recognition work-life balance, safety and personal well-being more than has ever been the case. Collectively, all these things contribute to overall organizational wellness and higher performance levels.”

“I hear from many staff that the Forest Service certainly is a good employer and an employer of choice for many people,” says Stewart. “The revitalization efforts of individuals, teams and working groups in all parts of the organization have moved us a great distance toward being an even better organization.”

A recognized strength of the Forest Service is the passion and commitment of employees. These two characteristics have been central to the success of revitalizing the organization. Stewart says “there is still work to be done to fully integrate the Road Ahead principles into the culture of the Forest Service and how we operate on a day-to-day basis, but the results of the last survey indicate that we are on the right track.”

“The Engagement Report we received from BC Stats at the end of the summer indicates that we compare well with the rest of the public service, but also that there is room for improvement,” says Stewart. “One initiative that I think will help us make these improvements is ‘Partners in Performance’. It involves sharing our best people practices and learning from each other, as we strive to realize higher performance levels.”

Stewart notes that “our efforts to enhance employee engagement and make other improvements in the organization are supported by government’s Corporate Human Resource Plan. We applaud this plan, as it complements what we have been doing over the past few years in the Forest Service and see it as benefiting the entire public service.”

“When we embarked on the Road Ahead, our focus was on renewal and revitalization of an organization that had been through a difficult period,” says Stewart. “However, the result has been much more than expected, as we now see an organization that has set a solid foundation to achieve even higher performance levels.”

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A Few Thoughts from Doug Konkin

Collectively we accomplished a great deal over the past year. Our work has made a difference and we are viewed within government as an agency that is learning, improving and getting things done. We can be proud of our achievements and should celebrate them!

That is the idea behind this “special edition” of the Forest Service *News*. *It is* a mix of stories that celebrate a few of our corporate-wide, individual and small group successes. I hope you enjoy reading them.

At the recent provincial leadership meeting, I noted the resistance three years ago to referencing the word ‘excellence’ somewhere in the Forest Service vision, mission and values. Since then, we have done amazing things and are, and are seen to be, leaders on many fronts. I told the leadership group we should think about excellence and what it means to pursue greatness.

Some say public service agencies can’t be great. I don’t believe that, I think greatness starts with individuals caring about each other. It comes with people believing they can make a difference and always be better. It is doing things when people thought they couldn’t get done; those are things I think are common place in the Forest Service.

Great organizations and people provide enduring, superior performance that has a real impact on the world around them. In the past year I have seen many leaders emerge throughout the Forest Service, I have seen

many individual and corporate accomplishments that have that kind of impact, and through learning and continuous improvement we can do even more.

Many say we are a very good organization, others say we have a ways to go. Like any family of people we have differences of opinion depending on our expectations, our experience and what is going on around us.

In my meetings with staff we all agree we need to try and get better and I am often told we need to communicate better, continue focussing on people, remove unnecessary process, improve business practices and focus on key targets. In the New Year we will continue to work on all of that.

As 2006 draws to a close and you reflect on the past year, I invite you to think about what you have achieved and take time to focus on the people around you, both at home and at work.

I thank you all for your contributions and wish you and your family a safe and joyous holiday season!

Doug Konkin
Deputy Minister

Kootenay Lake Forestry Centre Partners with Protection

Strengthening partnership opportunities among Field Services, BCTS and Protection, succession planning and knowledge transfer between programs are just some of the Forest Service Road Ahead objectives in 2006.

“In the Kootenay Lake Forestry Centre, we have seen these words turn into action,” says District Manager Garry Beaudry. “The forestry centre houses the Kootenay Lake District, Kootenay Lake Fire Zone, BCTS Kootenay Business Area and the Regional Point of Delivery (POD) staff. There are a lot of advantages in being under the same roof, with a couple of the key ones being open communication and social interactions.”

According to Beaudry, “this is part of the reason there has been a healthy exchange of staff and several opportunities for program crossover with Protection in the past few years.” Some examples include: the district, BCTS and regional staff participation in the Protection Partnership Program, BCTS using Protection expertise and staff in prescribed burning activities, and the district hiring the Initial Attack (IA) crew to help install bridges under the recreation program.

One of the more significant opportunities this year occurred when Amy Jaarsma, the Small Scale Salvage

Technician in Kootenay Lake, identified through her EPDP a desire to expand her knowledge base and experience in Protection as part of her career development plan. In April, Amy was awarded a 5-month secondment opportunity to the Cranbrook Fire Zone as a Forest Protection Assistant.

“When the opportunity came along, I jumped in with both feet and immediately got involved with ecosystem restoration work,” says Amy. “I went to boot camp and was anxious to get to the front line. This took a while, but I learned a lot along the way.” In reflecting on the experience, Amy feels her EPDP was useful and by collaborating with her supervisor it became even more useful.

“There are many benefits of having people transfer across the ministry that go far beyond the immediate opportunity,” says Gene Desnoyers, Southeast Fire Centre Manager. “While Amy was there to enhance her Protection experience and knowledge for fire and non-fire aspects, her presence in the zone office provided equal learning for at least four other staff over the course of her Temporary Assignment. In particular, these people gained a greater awareness of C&E and an enhanced understanding of the district organization (role, function, challenges).”

Amy also brought very thorough computer skills to the job, which helped Protection a great deal in areas such as coordinating the Zone Pre-organization data. She has a strong teaching and instructional background that helped support delivery of the Elementary School Fire Prevention Program.

According to Amy, “obstacles are sometimes encountered on things like this and we need extra help,” says Amy. “It may mean we have to make some changes in our plan, which is part of adapting and being flexible. The opportunity was a great experience for me and I am sure it will help me in my career path.”

Desnoyers also feels there is a spin-off benefit when a person returns to their work unit after a temporary assignment. They bring back knowledge and understanding of how another part of the Forest Service functions, in this case how the Protection program works and innovative approaches to business. The learning is not confined to the one person or to one location.

A reciprocal opportunity occurred in October, when two Protection employees started working for the district. Initial attack crew leader, Jason Devery from the Invermere Fire Zone and Forest Protection Assistant, Mark Healey of the Kootenay Lake Fire Zone, were successful in interviews for auxiliary positions in Kootenay Lake District’s Compliance and Enforcement program. Both are forest technicians and this opportunity will help them further their career goals.

“These are examples that show how the Forest Service’s focus on people is paying off in great opportunities for staff and helping to maintain our positive organizational culture,” says Beaudry. “This is great stuff for succession planning and knowledge transfer.”

“I thought it might take a year... ..”

In March 2003, the provincial government announced its plan to revitalize the BC forest industry.

“In making the announcement on the many elements of the plan, government put a tremendous challenge in front of the Forest Service,” says Bob Friesen, Assistant Deputy Minister, Tenure and Revenue. “At the time, I thought it would take us about a year to complete this work, but it soon became evident that I seriously underestimated the complexity of some of the elements and the time commitment involved in working with our clients to put these changes in place. Looking back, I can now understand why it has taken us about three years to complete the major pieces of the plan.”

The Forestry Revitalization Plan contains strategies for virtually all aspects of the forest industry and, according to Friesen, the Forest Service has now implemented most of the ‘big ticket’ items of the plan. “While there is more to do to finish implementation in a number of areas, we have implemented significant new policy and legislation, pretty much completed the timber reallocation to support our auction program and implemented the Market Pricing System on the Coast and in the Interior,” says Friesen. “We have also made an array of tenure changes and made important progress in providing more forestry opportunities for First Nations and we are working hard on small tenures.”

Some pieces of the Forestry Revitalization Plan have caused surprises. As work was progressing on the Market Pricing System in the Interior, Friesen notes that they “had to down tools and make very important changes in log grades, driven by the rapid expansion of the mountain pine beetle infestation. This was a major job that we needed to do to set the stage for implementing MPS in the Interior. The log grade project involved many people and I am extremely impressed with collaboration and Herculean effort of people from industry and in the Forest Service.”

Meanwhile, many others across the ministry were working hard to implement the new *Forest and Range Practices Act*, which is a significant change in how we and the forest industry govern activities in the field.

“As I reflect on the past three years and what this organization has accomplished with forestry revitalization, I want to pay tribute to the hundreds of people across the Forest Service who enabled us to achieve so much,” says Friesen. “Staff responded to the challenge of government and, at the same time, kept all the normal day-to-day business of the ministry in full operation.”

Friesen also points out that, while all the revitalization work was occurring, the Forest Service had to deal with many organizational changes and its own revitalization. A new organization, BC Timber Sales, was created within the Forest Service to implement a key piece of forestry revitalization. “We also have had to deal with the many challenges of the mountain pine beetle epidemic and softwood lumber,” says Friesen.

“We have done a lot and done it well,” says Friesen. “We see the face of industry changing in ways that will benefit the province over the long term. We have learned a lot about working with our client groups and it is my sense that government and industry acknowledge and appreciate what we have done.”

While much has been accomplished, Friesen is quick to point out that the job is not finished. “One of the most critical things we need to do is to monitor and examine the implications of the Forestry Revitalization Plan, as its elements unfold. All change brings consequences, intended and unintended, and the environment within which we work is ever changing. Industry’s challenges and problems have not disappeared and we must be prepared to adapt and refine the policy architecture that has been put in place.”

Leadership Community of Practice

The Mackenzie Forest District recently undertook a unique leadership development initiative involving the district, a remote First Nations community, licensees, the RCMP and local school staff.

“The concept grew out of discussion about joint training with local forest licensees,” says District Manager Dave Francis. “We were doing some joint training, mainly in the ‘forestry’ area, and were looking to expand this. The ministry’s Road Ahead efforts to enhance leadership development and personal learning opportunities lead to the further expansion of the concept.”

If the major employers in Mackenzie acted as the catalyst, Dave and others in the district felt they could provide these learning opportunities in their community and involve other local organizations that would not likely be able to access such opportunities on their own. According to Dave “once we had done some joint learning, it was our feeling that perhaps we could establish a local Community of Practice to continue to build on the investment. With that in mind, we felt that ‘The Leader’s Discipline’, a non-directive coaching workshop offered by Ian Chisholm of the Roy Group, would be an excellent trigger to make the concept a reality.”

One of the challenges faced by both public and private sector organizations in a small, isolated community, like Mackenzie, is limited access to training and learning opportunities. Individual organizations typically send small numbers of staff out of town, at considerable expense, to access these services. The concept developed by the district proposed that they work together as a community to bring the learning opportunity to Mackenzie.

In April 2006, two ‘Leader’s Discipline’ workshops were held, one in Mackenzie and the second in the remote First Nations community of Kwadacha, with 15 people participating in both sessions. In Mackenzie, the participants included: two school staff, one RCMP member, one person from the District of Mackenzie, two people from the McLeod Lake First Nation, three from the forest district and two each from Abitibi, Canfor and Pope & Talbot. The participants in Kwadacha were comprised of two from both Abitibi and Canfor, three from the forest district, and eight from the Kwadacha First Nation. The Kwadacha participants included school staff, band administration, elders and youth.

“The two workshops were very well received by the participants,” says Francis. “Our future plans include following up with the original group to develop a leadership Community of Practice and additional offerings

of ‘The Leader’s Discipline’ workshop for new participants. This has been an extremely positive initiative and we expect it will provide many benefits to the communities and the organizations involved as well as the individuals. We see this as a shared experience in developing leaders and increasing the leadership capacity more broadly in the Mackenzie and Kwadacha communities. ”

“Adaptation is essential...”

The Future Forest Ecosystems Initiative (FFEI) is a Ministry of Forests and Range initiative for maintaining and enhancing the resilience and productivity of B.C.'s forest ecosystems. FFEI is the umbrella initiative under which the ministry is addressing climate change and other drivers of ecosystem change.

FFEI has its roots in a December 2005 symposium and workshop held in Prince George under the sponsorship of the province’s Chief Forester Jim Snetsinger. The session was attended by representatives from federal and provincial agencies, universities, First Nations, forest and range industries, environmental organizations and consulting resource professionals.

“Adaptation is essential for managing the effects of climate change, wildfire events, bark beetle infestations and other rapidly changing conditions in B.C.'s forest ecosystems,” says Snetsinger. “These and other influences are affecting the province’s forest ecosystems and their ability to recover from natural disturbances such as insect and disease outbreaks, wildfires and drought. Our economy and way of life in B. C. depends upon having resilient and productive forest ecosystems. The symposium in Prince George almost a year ago was a great opportunity to share perspectives and learn from others as we started to shape the FFEI.”

The purpose of FFEI is to adapt the forest management framework (legislation and policy), so that it remains effective well into the future, despite ongoing and potential future changes to forest ecosystems. In June of this year, the ministry released ‘*Future Forest Ecosystems of B.C.: Draft Recommendations for Review and Comment*’. The report included 46 recommendations for projects designed to increase understanding of ecological processes and ecological change; and to apply that knowledge to the existing provincial forest management framework. Many recommendations directly address climate change and its impacts. The recommendations went through a broad consultation process during the summer, with the majority of feedback supporting FFEI as timely and important.

The draft recommendations were compiled from four sources:

- The symposium on Future Forest Ecosystems in December, 2005.
- The Forest Service report, ‘*Preparing for Climate Change: Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change on BC’s Forest and Range Resources*’, released in May, 2006.
- The Forest Service report ‘*Management of Species Composition in Cut blocks in Beetle-Impacted TSAs*’, released in October, 2005.

- Analysis by the FFEI team.

Under FFEI, the implementation of some 46 projects will be targeted at achieving the following objectives:

1. Increasing our understanding of ecological processes and changes over time and associated risks to forest ecosystems and resources (through research, forecasting, and monitoring projects);
2. Using this knowledge to adapt the forest management framework (legislation and policy) to future ecological conditions (through policy evaluation and change projects); and
3. Communicating the adapted forest management framework (through extension projects).

“By adapting the forest management framework, we are hoping to maintain and enhance the resilience and productivity of B.C.'s forest ecosystems,” notes Snetsinger. “To that end, we are aiming to see forest ecosystems remain resilient to stress caused by climate change, human activity, and other agents of change. We also want to see ecosystems continuing to provide the basic services, products and benefits society values it depends upon.”

Here are some supporting definitions that may be useful:

Services – nutrient cycling; soil formation; climate, flood and disease regulation; water purification, etc.

Products – water, timber, non-timber forest products, fuel, etc.

Benefits – recreation; spiritual, aesthetic and educational values, etc.

According to Snetsinger “We expect implementation of some projects to start early in 2007. Many of the recommendations will be implemented through or in close collaboration with existing initiatives such as the Forest Science Program, BC Wildland Fire Strategy, Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan, Climate Change Initiative, FRPA Resource Evaluation Program, Rangeland Ecosystem Restoration and Forests for Tomorrow.”

“The scope of FFEI and its various projects will undoubtedly evolve as we and other parts of government learn more about how to maintain and enhance the resilience and productivity of forest ecosystems through the forest management framework,” says Kristine Weese, FFEI Project Manager. “We expect projects under the initiative to be implemented over the next three to five years. At the same time, we will be working to incorporate the purpose and objectives of FFEI into normal ministry business.”

The chief forester feels the Future Forest Ecosystem Initiative is an excellent example of the Forest Service demonstrating strong leadership on an issue of local, national and global importance.

For more information about the initiative and/or access a copy of the report

http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/Future_Forests/

Safety—An Ex-Logger's Tale

Trish Balcaen, District Manager, South Island Forest District

I was 5 years old the first time I experienced the consequence of death in the woods, then at age 6 my uncle barely survived a skidding accident and at 12 years of age I experienced the consequences of the second death

These experiences changed the way I approach life and people. When I look back, it really is remarkable that at such a young age I sensed the grief my father experienced when he had to inform the wives of his colleagues that they no longer had a father for their kids.

When it came time for me to take the reins of my father's logging company, I instinctively approached it with one very clear mantra—**NO ONE WAS GOING TO DIE ON MY SHIFT.** And no one did.

Maybe it was luck—who knows?

I like to think it had a little something to do with talking to the 'boys' when I hired them—telling them that safety was first; letting them know they had support if their equipment required repair; telling them that I had a zero tolerance for booze and drugs on the job. More than these types of conversations, I like to think it was because every time I had a moment with them, I showed them I cared about their personal well-being.

How does this translate to our roles in the Ministry of Forests and Range? Well, I hope the work conducted by the ministry's safety team in building a bridge between ourselves and WorkSafe BC, the creation of some new policy and elevating the importance of safety through the BC Forest Safety Council will help.

To get to the heart of the matter, I don't think that policy or regulation is really what promotes a safe culture. I believe that safety lives in the conversations that heighten self-awareness and make us aware of our surroundings on a daily basis. These conversations don't have to be limited to the Forest Service family—they should also bridge to our colleagues in industry.

Safety is really about caring for one another. I have never met a person who was impacted by a death in the woods that could say "I did everything I could." What I think is far more prevalent is hearing people say "I wish I would have done something more."

I, for one, don't ever want to be in the place where I could have done something more and didn't.

Partnerships in Fuel Management

The 2006 fire season again raised public awareness regarding wildland fire management and particularly fuel management in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Since the 2003 fire season and the release of the Filmon report, fuel management has become a leading issue for the Ministry of Forests and Range and many local Governments. Fuel management is not new to British Columbia, but 2003 galvanized attention on the issue, and created an opportunity to move ahead on fuel management initiatives with public interest and support.

The Ministry of Forests and Range launched a formal fuel management program in late 2004 and over the following year staffed 11 key positions to support the program. For delivery of the program, we are engaged with two key partners, the Union of BC Municipalities and First Nations Emergency Services Society. In the past two seasons, much work has been done to simultaneously build the program and launch key initiatives. Key components of the Fuel Management program include the identification of fuel hazards, as well as facilitating the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), Pilot Projects and Operational Fuel treatments.

Our Provincial Strategic Threat Analysis (PSTA) identified 1.7 million hectares of forest fuel that may threaten WUI areas, and this information is available to local governments and industry. Currently, approximately 70 of 200 Local Governments are developing CWPPs, with approximately 25 having been completed. A number of communities have initiated treatment work in the form of small fuel management Pilot projects and larger Operational projects.

The Ministry of Forests and Range is also working on the development of a new tenure that will facilitate fuel treatment for community protection. For information on this visit: <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hth/timten/index.htm>

Wildland fires will continue to occur each year and there are no guarantees from Mother Nature, but through these important initiatives, forest professionals will work to minimize the potential for catastrophic wildfires in the WUI.

For more information visit the following websites:

www.for.gov.bc.ca/protect/FuelManagement

www.civicnet.bc.ca

www.mpb.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca

www.fness.bc.ca/Mt_Pine_Beetle/beetle.htm

Judi Beck, PhD, RPF
Manager, Wildfire Management
BCFS Protection Program

“New Policy Process Off to Successful Start”

The Forest Service has what can be described as a large ‘policy agenda.’ While generally acknowledged as having done a good job in policy development, a couple of years ago the Executive and many people involved with developing policy felt there was substantial room for improvement. Shortcomings on the policy development side often did not show up until the implementation phase, which meant extra work and time were required because the initial development work was lacking in some important way. It is especially critical for policies to be complete before moving to legislation.

Under the leadership of Sue Stephen, Director – Strategic Policy and Planning, the ministry embarked on a process in early 2005 to improve its corporate policy development. From the initial efforts of a working group that reviewed the many existing policy processes, the goal has been to create a process that is accessible and readily useable to staff.

According to Sue, “our ultimate goal is to have a transparent, efficient and effective process that engages staff and also provides Executive with a comprehensive summary of policies facing the ministry to ensure they are well informed when making strategic decisions about ministry business.” Solid progress has been made through the efforts of a continuous improvement working group initially and then the Policy Secretariat over the past year. The Corporate Policy Process is still in its early stages, but some 142 policies have been entered into the system and 101 of these are proceeding through subsequent phases of development.

The policy process supports the ministry Executive in setting priorities for the policy and legislative workloads. When fully implemented, it will help focus the resources required to develop policy by having clear direction from Executive and communicating the priorities for such work. The Corporate Policy Process is championed by the Strategic Policy and Planning Branch, which also chairs and coordinates the Policy Secretariat. The Secretariat is a team of policy experts from across the Forest Service that supports the policy process through their leadership and feedback on policy development and implementation.

The process has a number of steps from the policy idea stage to implementation. Good quality work at the front-end and each stage will translate into smoother implementation and policy that achieves what it was intended to do.

“The Corporate Policy Process is off to a successful start,” says Sue. “The Secretariat functions well and is a highly effective team. We are learning as individuals and as a team, and are increasingly comfortable with the process and in knowing that it works well. Reports and information from Executive and the Secretariat

reviews are being used to inform policy development, consultation and decisions. People involved with policy work have responded positively and are submitting ideas. They are using the process and providing us with good suggestions on how to make improvements. In turn, feedback from the Secretariat helps them develop policy.”

Sue notes that “a lot of effort has gone into building relationships, communicating and re-communicating. Our early success is linked directly to the effectiveness of our relationships and communication. We place a high priority on communicating and, with Secretariat members in locations across the province, we use technology to the greatest extent possible to support these efforts—our system is online and our meetings have an online component.”

“Beyond the obvious benefits to the ministry’s business, I think the organization will benefit from the Corporate Policy Process in other ways in the coming year,” says Sue. “All of us are aware of the succession challenges we face in the Forest Service. We will lose a lot of knowledge and expertise over the next decade in all areas of our business, including policy development. We must start capturing the rationale behind the creation of specific policies to make it easier for future employees to work with and learn from existing policy.”

Sue wants to acknowledge the efforts of the original working group and the Secretariat in moving the concept of a ‘top-notch’ policy development process into a reality.

More information about the Corporate Policy Process and how to submit policy suggestions can be found at <http://gww.for.gov.bc.ca/hcp/cpp/>

“Our work touches on many parts and levels of government....”

The Forest Service has been dealing with the challenges of the mountain pine beetle epidemic for many years and the Mountain Pine Beetle Emergency Response Team (ERT) led by Assistant Deputy Minister Ray Schultz, was created a year ago to spearhead the province’s overall efforts on this front.

“When I took on this job, I knew the scope of our work would be pretty broad based on my time as provincial bark beetle coordinator in 2001/02, and it has proven to be as complex and dynamic as I expected,” says Schultz. “The work for which we are responsible touches increasingly on the business of other ministries. In fact, the Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan has an assortment of actions that are being carried out by eight ministries beyond the Forest Service.”

The Action Plan is the cornerstone of a coordinated provincial response to the mountain pine beetle infestation. According to Schultz, “it is the tool we use to ensure the overall strategy stays on track. Parts of the plan obviously deal with bio-physical aspects of the infestation, but it is much more comprehensive. The plan is also being used to guide our collective efforts to address socio-economic factors and to stimulate

economic growth in areas such as mining, energy and bio-energy, transportation and agriculture.”

“Throughout most of my career, I have been in situations where I collaborated with various levels of government, but I’ve never experienced the scope of what we have with the Emergency Response,” says Schultz. “In addition to eight other provincial ministries, our team works with local governments, First Nations, community coalitions, the province of Alberta, Parks Canada and other parts of the federal government. We have a high degree of interaction with these groups and agencies.”

“We currently work closely with two community coalition groups—Omineca and Cariboo-Chilcotin—and have started working with a similar group in the Southern Interior,” says Schultz. “We also work extensively with the newly formed First Nations Forestry Council. In addition to looking for economic and forestry opportunities, one of the unique challenges for First Nations has been a significant impact on traditional use areas due to the extent of the epidemic.”

In efforts with the Alberta government and Parks Canada (Banff, Jasper and Yoho), attention is being paid to spread control strategies. These strategies cover what is called the ‘trans-border zone’, stretching along the BC-Alberta border from Fort St. John to the Kootenays in the southeast.

“A year ago, the Emergency Response team had just been formed,” says Schultz. “Since then, much has occurred and I am proud of the team and what we have accomplished. A lot of what we do occurs behind the scenes, but as with so many other matters, government is looking to the Forest Service to provide leadership for one of its high priorities.”

According to Schultz, “one of the strengths of the team is the diversity of experience and skills in the group. We have people with significant community economic development expertise, public communication skill, extensive First Nations collaborative and consultation experience, as well as lots of know-how on the forestry and beetle control front. And, we have solid administration, clerical support and business acumen, which are essential for success with the complex challenges at hand.”

Schulz feels much of what he sees in the team dovetails with the organizational revitalization of the Forest Service. “The Emergency Response is providing many opportunities to apply our leadership skills and to develop new ones,” notes Schultz. “Due to the unprecedented nature of the epidemic, all of us are learning new things and, with so many unknowns, we will continue to learn as individuals and as a team. We have been empowered to take on some very important work and, while this seems daunting task at times, all of us realize that accountability for our performance is very much a part of being empowered with this unique opportunity.”

The other members of the ERT are Rod DeBoice, Gord Borgstrom, Doug Macfarlane, Dave Cornwell, Terry Olsen and Jean Webb. The team will soon be looking for someone to lead its efforts on policy development and innovation. The ERT also works closely with the First Nations Mountain Pine Beetle Initiative led by Dan George.

For more information about the Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan, check

http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/mountain_pine_beetle/

“Revitalizing the Forest Service”

In July 2004, the Forest Service formally launched its overall strategy for organizational revitalization, referred to as the ‘Road Ahead’. In reflecting upon what has occurred since then, Sharon Stewart, Director of Strategic Human Resources feels “the culture of the Forest Service has evolved and changed as it launched a number of initiatives to renew the ministry and achieve a higher level of performance.”

Significant progress has been made in all priority areas of the Road Ahead—vision, stewardship mandate, strengthening and developing leadership, becoming more of a learning organization, having workplace wellness as top of mind and preparing for future workforce/succession needs. “While we could provide an exhaustive list of activities,” says Stewart “the bottom line is that the Forest Service has taken wide-ranging approach in its revitalization efforts and set a solid foundation for ongoing performance improvements.”

Stewart says that “leaders are being developed throughout the organization through coaching, mentoring and widespread involvement in things like participation in working groups, ‘Investment in Excellence’ and ‘Partners in Performance’. Scores of employees are becoming skilled learning organization practitioners and continuous improvement techniques and principles are being used more widely than ever.”

Much emphasis has been placed on what can be called ‘people initiatives’, but according to Stewart “we have worked hard to ensure there is a strong link to the business of the Forest Service. At times, we may not have made as strong a connection as we would like, but overall I think we are doing a good job. While there has been a significant level of engagement, not all employees have been able to participate and we continue to look for ways for more employees to be engaged and benefit from these important activities.”

While there always seems to be room to improve communications and dialogue with employees, a number of things have been implemented to make improvements on this front. For example, the Deputy Minister’s Employee Advisory Council was created and is working well. The *Forest Service News* has been in place for almost two years and has received a strongly positive response from employees. Other initiatives include ForesTree, the Business Information Mall and mapping the business of the Forest Service will contribute to enhanced communication, learning and information sharing.

According to Stewart, “we continually emphasize the importance of things like reward, recognition work-life balance, safety and personal well-being more than has ever been the case. Collectively, all these things contribute to overall organizational wellness and higher performance levels.”

“I hear from many staff that the Forest Service certainly is a good employer and an employer of choice for many people,” says Stewart. “The revitalization efforts of individuals, teams and working groups in all parts of the organization have moved us a great distance toward being an even better organization.”

A recognized strength of the Forest Service is the passion and commitment of employees. These two characteristics have been central to the success of revitalizing the organization. Stewart says “there is still work to be done to fully integrate the Road Ahead principles into the culture of the Forest Service and how we operate on a day-to-day basis, but the results of the last survey indicate that we are on the right track.”

“The Engagement Report we received from BC Stats at the end of the summer indicates that we compare well with the rest of the public service, but also that there is room for improvement,” says Stewart. “One initiative that I think will help us make these improvements is ‘Partners in Performance’. It involves sharing our best people practices and learning from each other, as we strive to realize higher performance levels.”

Stewart notes that “our efforts to enhance employee engagement and make other improvements in the organization are supported by government’s Corporate Human Resource Plan. We applaud this plan, as it complements what we have been doing over the past few years in the Forest Service and see it as benefiting the entire public service.”

“When we embarked on the Road Ahead, our focus was on renewal and revitalization of an organization that had been through a difficult period,” says Stewart. “However, the result has been much more than expected, as we now see an organization that has set a solid foundation to achieve even higher performance levels.”









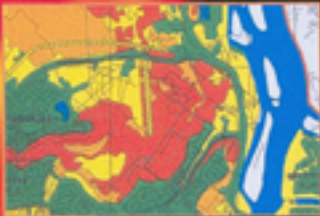




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