



The British Columbia

Forest Service

Newsletter

Vol. 4, No. 1

A newsletter for Ministry of Forests employees

January 1994

PC-based reporting and mapping system nets \$16,000 suggestion award

On December 17, 1993, **Anthony Britneff** of inventory branch received an Employee Suggestion Program certificate recognizing his work on the design, development and implementation of the Forest Inventory Reporting (FIR) system. Britneff's total suggestion award will be \$16,666.

FIR is an integrated, inventory database reporting and color-theme mapping system for timber, recreation and resources. The FIR system is now used throughout the Forest Service and has a range of applications. It is also being adopted by the ministries of Agriculture and Environment, Lands and Parks.

The adoption of FIR is expected to save the Forest Service as much as \$500,000 per year in equipment, training, staff time and BCSC mainframe charges.

The award was evaluated and supported by Range branch Director **Tom Lester**; **Dave Gilbert**, director of inventory branch; and **Dave Ford**, manager of planning and data administration,



*Congratulations all around. (left to right) **Dave Gilbert**, director, inventory branch; **Andrew Petter**, Minister of Forests; **Anthony Britneff**, statistics and reports supervisor, inventory branch; **Pat Wolfe**, Ministry of Finance.*

information systems branch. The award certificate was presented by Forests Minister **Andrew Petter**.

Workshop will recap 20 years of research and solutions

A workshop being held May 10-12, 1994 in Queen Charlotte City will discuss the results of more than 20 years of research on timber harvesting on steep slopes of coastal British Columbia. By bringing together forest scientists and forest managers, workshop organizers hope to use this occasion as an opportunity to bridge the gap between research and operational forestry.

The Carnation Creek Experimental Watershed, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, is currently the longest-running project in North America dealing with the impacts of forestry practices on a coastal stream ecosystem.

In 1981, the Fish/Forestry Interaction Program began in the Queen Charlotte Islands. The program's main objectives include: studying the effects of landslides on stream channel morphology and fish habitats; investigating various watershed rehabilitation techniques and silvicultural treatments; and,

facilitating the transfer of information to field managers, forestry and fisheries staff, and the general public.

While these two projects were conducted in similar environments, different approaches have provided the opportunity to study ecological responses over long time periods and diverse geographic conditions and harvesting histories.

An earlier workshop considered research results to 1986. Since then, substantial progress has been made in identifying issues and developing solutions. The purpose of the 1994 workshop is to integrate the findings from these projects and to link the scientific results to management practices and prescriptions.

*For more information, contact **Steve Chatwin** at research branch, 387-5887.*

Please distribute to all employees at their work stations

Law enforcement training courses now being offered

Regulatory offences, log theft, arson and vandalism at recreation sites cost British Columbia hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost forest revenues and absorb a substantial portion of many districts' annual budgets.

As the value and scarcity of timber increases and more people become interested in wilderness recreation, the Forest Service will play an extended role in law enforcement.

Operations Enforcement Training Officer **John Smith** spent 25 years with the RCMP and another ten years training conservation officers with the Ministry of Environment Lands and Parks before coming to the Forest Service in 1992. Smith has developed a series of courses for forest officers that cover basic law enforcement, advanced investigation techniques, and wildfire investigations.

The basic course concentrates on familiarizing participants with the Canadian criminal justice system, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and basic investigation techniques. It also includes procedures for issuing tickets under the Violation

Ticket Administration Regulations and offences under the *Forest Act*.

The course was built around the needs of resource assistants and other field staff to be able to recognize that, when there is an infraction under the *Forest Act* or the Criminal Code, there are certain steps that must be taken. When to call for more advice and the importance of protecting a crime scene are also an integral part of the three-day course.

Early in the new year, Smith will deliver an advanced course for staff who investigate more serious offences such as fraud, trespass and arson. This course will concentrate on criminal investigative techniques and the role of the investigator in working with Crown Counsel when criminal charges are being pursued. The advanced course also draws on the expertise of the RCMP's log theft unit, which works closely with the Forest Service in criminal investigations.

*For more information about course dates and locations, contact **John Smith**, operations enforcement training officer, human resources branch, phone: 387-5879.*

Coming events:

Stewardship '94: A symposium on the land ethic, private land stewardship, and habitat conservation.

March 3-5, 1994, Coast Plaza Hotel, Vancouver.

This symposium will focus on private land and habitat conservation. It will bring together partners from a variety of disciplines and interest areas including municipal planners, conservationists, real estate developers and resource managers.

For more information, contact the Symposium Coordinator, 4506 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver V6R 2A5, telephone: 878-0488.

The Wilderness Vision: Colloquium on completing British Columbia's Protected Area System.

March 11-13, 1994, Vancouver.

The purpose of the colloquium, organized by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, is to provide a forum for open discussion and review of the critical issues affecting implementation of a protected areas system in British Columbia and stimulate progress toward completing a protected areas system by the year 2000. The colloquium will include presentations from conservationists, First Nations, government, industry, and academic organizations.

For more information, contact **Marcia Forst** at 886-7299 or **Sabine Jensen** at 886-0525.

Southern Interior Silviculture Committee winter conference

March 15-16, 1994, Coast Lakeside Resort, Penticton.

The conference will focus on forest health issues and will include sessions on pest management, brushing, selection systems and regeneration. For more information, please call **Mark Faliszewski**, reforestation and site preparation forester, Kamloops forest region, 828-4166.

1-800 number to be introduced for fire reporting

Every year, the British Columbia Forest Service fights approximately 2,900 wildfires. Nearly one third of these fires are discovered and reported by members of the public. Over the next three years, the Zenith 5555 number for fire reporting will be phased out and replaced with a 1-800 number. The new toll-free number will be **1-800-663-5555**.

With the old system, anyone reporting a fire had to go through an operator, who would then look up the Zenith 5555 file and forward the call to the appropriate Fire Control Room based on the caller's prefix. During peak periods, answering and forwarding these calls could become something of a scramble for BC Tel operators. Now, the 1-800 system will route calls automatically. This will reduce delays and help crews get to the fire sooner.

To make sure the new system phases in smoothly, BC Tel will be maintaining the Zenith system during the 1994 to 1996 fire seasons as well as implementing the 1-800 service.

Recreation site users must clean up their act

Kluachesi Lake, 100 kilometres southwest of Fort Nelson, is considered a valuable backcountry hunting and fishing destination by both resident and nonresident recreational users. Unfortunately, the popularity of the area has created problems with site degradation from garbage around the lakeshore and temporary structures abandoned by hunters.

Without road access, any type of cleanup project in a wilderness/backcountry setting can be costly. Enforcement is also problematic because it is difficult to monitor all the users who often fly in and out of the area.

A visit last summer to the Fort Nelson forest district by Forest Service executive members prompted a decision that immediate action was required to clean up and rehabilitate the area. Former deputy minister **Philip Halkett** sanctioned the cleanup project and measures to protect the recreational resource.

On August 23, 1993, Fort Nelson District Manager **Bob Read** established a Written Order under Section 105 of the *Forest Act* at Kluachesi Lake. The order regulates occupancy of the site by people and livestock (horses) and prohibits deposit of waste and use of green wood from the site. In compiling the order, the district received professional advice from Wilderness Area Management Specialist **Ron Routledge** of recreation branch, who set up a monitoring system for determining levels of wilderness campsite disturbance; and **Jan Hill** of the Ministry of the Attorney General, who assisted with the format and wording of the Written Order.

The order itself was posted at the site and advertisements were taken out in local papers. A contract was negotiated with the Fort Nelson Indian Band to assist with the campsite and shoreline cleanup before and after hunting season, which runs from August to October.

The initial cleanup required a large load of material to be removed by helicopter to a pickup area approximately 60 air miles east along the Alaska Highway at Prophet River. The



*The cleanup crew. Back row: (left to right) **Dean Cherkas**, resource assistant, Fort Nelson; **Archie Duntra**, Fort Nelson Indian Band; **Jack Badine**, Fort Nelson Indian Band; **Shirley Batke**, manager, finance and administration. Front row: **Glen Badine**, Fort Nelson Indian Band; **Joey Duntra**, Fort Nelson Indian Band.*

post-season cleanup found substantially less garbage. All makeshift structures and fire pits were dismantled and campsite areas were rehabilitated to recreate an untouched feel. Poles from the structures were piled at each site for re-use. Site surface degradation was the greatest problem because of poor horse management and cape salting (preserving animal hides) practices.

This year, signs will be posted, pamphlets distributed and advertisements placed in the newspaper to remind users about the Written Order. The regulations will be enforced by both the Forest Service and the Conservation Officer Service. The public has been receptive to this initiative where government agencies deal with an environmental problem on a cooperative and productive basis.

The regulations do not inhibit use, but they protect the area for future enjoyment. Camping, hunting and fishing activities should harmonize with the environment to create a more enjoyable backcountry experience rather than a situation where too many users, garbage accumulation, exposed tree root systems, vegetation and surface degradation, and unpleasant site aesthetics detract from people's enjoyment of the area.

The majority of users are very much in touch with what has been taking place at Kluachesi Lake and clean up after themselves by dismantling structures and leaving the site the way they found it. The regulations were established to inform and educate those users who still haven't got the message that these areas belong to everyone.



Makeshift structures abandoned by hunters detract from the aesthetics of backcountry recreation sites.

*Article and photos contributed by **Dean Cherkas**, resource assistant recreation/range, Fort Nelson forest district.*

Employment Systems Review will examine job barriers in the Forest Service

The Forest Service is taking the lead in making employment equity a reality by conducting the first ministry-wide Employment Systems Review (ESR) in the British Columbia public service.

An Employment Systems Review helps an organization identify barriers to employment, promotion and retention and provides ideas about how to remove those barriers. While the review focuses primarily on issues affecting the four designated employment equity target groups – Aboriginal people, women, people with disabilities, and members of visible minority groups – everyone in the Forest Service will benefit from elimination of barriers in the organization.

What are employment barriers?

Employment barriers are practices, policies, facilities or procedures that, in some way, prevent or hinder employment or advancement. These barriers are not harmful in intent but have a negative impact on some people because they are based on the physical and cultural norms of the traditional workforce.

During a series of employment equity training sessions held throughout the Forest Service in 1992, a number of these barriers were identified. They ranged from the overuse of professional designations in hiring procedures to inaccessible

washrooms in some facilities and child care difficulties.

But aren't these 'barriers' just part of the job?

In order to recruit and retain the best people, any organization needs to draw on the widest possible base for its staff. It also needs to offer the kind of opportunities for advancement and career development that people expect when choosing a career path and investing in higher education.

A career with the Forest Service offers a diversity of opportunities unmatched by other government ministries. However, as we change and grow we need to work to increase participation by all members of our community who demonstrate that they have the knowledge, skills and abilities required to do the job.

Who is responsible for the ESR?

The ESR initiative is being coordinated through the employment equity section of the human resources branch under the direction of **Charlene Levis**, employment equity manager. **Trevor Hitner**, an independent human rights consultant, has been hired by the ministry to conduct the review.

How will the ESR be carried out?

The information-gathering process has three major components: a document review, staff interviews, and focus groups.

The document review will look at all of the ministry's hiring policies, procedures and directives to identify any requirements that might negatively affect members of the four designated employment equity groups.

Staff interviews and focus group sessions complement the document review process by assessing the impact of policies, practices and organizational culture on employees. Hitner will conduct one-on-one interviews at all levels of the Forest Service from the executive to field staff. He will also lead focus groups in every region and at headquarters. The interviews and focus groups will be held off site, and, to maintain confidentiality, information will be reported only in summary form.

What happens to the information gathered through the ESR?

The final report will be presented to the executive by the end of the current fiscal year. The findings and recommendations of the ESR will become part of the 1994/95 employment equity action plan.

*For more information about the Employment Systems Review or the workforce profile, contact **Yvonne Laurence** in the employment equity section of the human resources branch, phone: 387-8764.*

Count yourself in!

Early in the new year, everyone who works in the British Columbia public service will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire and return it to BC Stats. The questionnaire is being used to gather data for the provincial government's ongoing employment equity program.

The goal of employment equity is to achieve a workforce that is representative of the population. This is done by ensuring equal opportunity for everyone and removing barriers that deny people employment or advancement because of factors that have nothing to do with their ability to do the job.

In order to implement effective employment equity action plans in all ministries, the government needs to develop a workforce profile that shows what the public service looks like now. The survey results will not be used to set hiring quotas. Instead, they will be used to measure the success of the employment equity initiative over time.

The workforce profile and employment equity are supported by the BCGEU and the PEA. So count yourself in!

Biological weed control is part of an international effort

The Forest Service is a major participant in an international effort to find better ways to control weeds – naturally!

The bio-control program targets non-native plants that impact on the rangeland resource. The goal of biological control is to restore balance rather than trying to eliminate an undesirable plant species outright.

Provincial Noxious Weed Coordinator **Allen Sturko** says, "All of these plants have evolved to cope with a host of predators. It is usually when those predators are removed that they become a problem. When non-native plants are introduced either accidentally or on purpose, they move into niches or habitats that they like and there is nothing interfering with their seed production – nothing to help reduce their natural competitive ability. If we can establish a balance between the weeds and the insects that prey on those plants, we'll eventually bring the population down to an acceptable level."

Biological control of weeds in Canada began in 1956 when two defoliating beetles were introduced into British Columbia to control St. John's wort. The program now includes 50 insects that are being used to control 19 different weed species.

According to Sturko, meticulous screening is the key to making biological weed control a success. Insects used in the program must be host specific and not attack commercially important or endangered native plants. "The last thing we want to do," he says, "is introduce an insect that causes more problems than we already have. That's why it can take up to six years before any insects are approved for release in North America."

The International Institute for Biological Control in Europe is a principal player in the screening process. Before any insects are shipped to North America, they are screened in Europe to determine how host-specific they are. The insects are collected in the field and tested on target plants at various stages in their development. In some cases, test plants are shipped from B.C. to be used in the screening process.

Once the screening has been completed and the insects are approved for release, they are brought to a propagation facility operated by the range resources program at the Agriculture Canada Research Station in Kamloops. Usually the insects arrive in small numbers, so the next step is to increase the population and then release them on weed infestations throughout the province. Ideally, an insect should be able to get to the target plant under its own power – flying or crawling. It also needs to be able to reproduce in sufficient numbers that it can eventually become an effective control mechanism. "We have one insect, a large weevil, that is particularly effective on knapweed," Sturko says. "But it travels very slowly so we have a collection and distribution program to help speed its spread."

Insects propagated and collected in B.C. have also been made available for release in other parts of Canada and in the United States.

Through biological means, two weed species – St. John's wort and nodding thistle – have been reduced to the point that they can be considered under control. Several of the other insects in the program are now spread throughout their habitat and it is only a matter of time before their population increases to the point where their target weed population will also be reduced.

Sturko admits that herbicides have their place in controlling weeds and the range resources program will continue to use herbicides to slow or prevent the spread of weeds to non-infested areas. However, many of the noxious weeds occur in sensitive areas such as watersheds and grazing lands. Bio-control can be targeted very specifically to leave other plants alone. Also, plants such as knapweed are so widely established that herbicides would have to be applied repeatedly, and over large areas to prevent the plant from quickly re-establishing itself.

The biological control program is a cooperative effort between the Forest Service, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Agriculture Canada and a number of Canadian and U.S. agencies. In 1993, FRDA funds were made available to screen insects for biological control of hound's tongue. Because all of the parties in the program are using the same screening standards, it is usually possible to share both the costs and benefits by coordinating activities to avoid duplication of effort.

*For more information about the bio-control program, contact **Allen Sturko**, provincial noxious weed coordinator, range branch, Kamloops, phone: 376-3973.*



*Coming to a knapweed plant near you! **Larinus minutus** larvae eat the seeds of spotted and diffuse knapweed species.*

Photo courtesy of Allen Sturko.

Safety award goes to Kamloops regional office

The Kamloops regional office has been named this year's winner of the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE) Achievement Recognition Award in the 'firms employing 51-501 employees' category.

On December 8, 1993, an award luncheon was held at the Delta Pacific Resort and Convention Centre in Richmond recognizing companies and individuals who had demonstrated excellence in safety and health promotion over the past year. Regional Safety Officer **Esther MacDonald** and **Deborah Newby**, who chaired the Kamloops regional office Occupational Health and Safety Committee for the time the award covered, were invited to receive the award on behalf of the Kamloops region.

The regional office's accomplishments that demonstrated excellence in safety and health above other nominees included: creating a fun atmosphere around safety; involvement in Canadian Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) week; and, health and safety promotion throughout the year.

"We are very pleased that our efforts have been recognized," MacDonald says. "We have always made an effort to make COSH week special. When Deborah became chairperson of the OH&S committee in 1992, she brought a level of enthusiasm that inspired us to go forward into some new and exciting areas with our safety initiatives."

"In June 1992, we held a Safety 'Reach for the Top'

competition. It was similar to the TV quiz show, with contestants from each section taking part. We had a master of ceremonies, buzzers, a timekeeper, an official judge, and even our own version of **Vanna White** to give out door prizes to the audience. We had an incredible level of participation from the staff. Some sections had cheerleaders, others brought along big banners to wave. OH&S committee members made up more than 300 health and safety related questions to ask contestants. Everyone learned a lot and had a lot of fun doing it."

This year, in keeping with the spirit of the Canada Summer Games, the regional office held its own Safety Olympics. A different event was held each day and those who signed up had no prior idea of what their event would be. These events ranged from fire extinguisher competitions through vehicle inspection checks and tire changing, to the obstacle course (driving mini tricycles).

Another event was the safety equipment drill. Teams were given emergency scenarios and had to select and don appropriate safety gear chosen from a huge pile of equipment within a set time limit.

Although the events were highly entertaining, there was also a serious component. Daily question and answer sessions were held on the correct way to safely perform different tasks. Door prizes and prizes for correct answers were given out daily.

Each year, COSH week winds up with a barbecue with members of the OH&S committee cooking up the burgers and Regional Manager **Fred Baxter** presenting the individual safety awards. Keeping the emphasis on safety, those attending this year were also given a multiple choice safety quiz. **Lyn Diduck**, senior accounts payable clerk, was the grand winner.

Apart from participation in COSH week, other activities that helped Kamloops win the award were nutritional tours for staff at local supermarkets and bulk purchasing of home safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and first aid kits.

Macdonald adds, "The support of Fred Baxter and the rest of the regional management team has been essential to the success of our projects, and we have always had their full backing and cooperation. Events take place at lunch hours, so it is a sharing of time between the employer and employees."

"Although Deborah is no longer on the committee, we are on a roll now, and we already have some great ideas for next June. Safety is a top priority in our region. By promoting it in these fun and interesting ways, everyone has a better awareness of health and safety issues."

*Article and photos contributed by **Esther MacDonald**, human resources/safety/training officer, Kamloops forest region.*



*Kamloops Regional Manager **Fred Baxter**, left, gets final instructions from **Deborah Newby** prior to the tricycle race.*

Mackenzie forest district staff lead rescue effort

By 4 p.m. on December 29, 1993 it was already getting dark, and the temperature was expected to fall below -10 celsius that night. A contractor employed by the Forest Service to do Global Positioning System surveys was lost in the bush, 50 kilometres north of Mackenzie.

A preliminary search by two other members of the crew had failed and, as darkness fell, the search helicopter had to turn back. Before returning to base, one crew member was left on site with survival gear and sleeping bags in case the missing worker showed up.

Back in Mackenzie, District Manager **Rod DeBoice** had been following events over the radio. "After interviewing the pilot and crew members, we found out that the guy who was lost was ill-equipped and had no matches. That, together with the weather reports, confirmed that we had to find him," said DeBoice.

At 4:30 p.m. he called the RCMP, members of the Mackenzie Search and Rescue Team, and his own staff. At 6:30 p.m. the search team – including Forest Service employees **Roger Wysocki**, **Bruce Armstrong** and **Steve Shier** – left Mackenzie for a 40 kilometre trip by

snowmobile. However, brush became so thick the rescuers had to leave their machines and continue on foot.

Search team members located the missing contractor at 11 p.m. He was soaking wet and showing signs of dehydration and hypothermia. They administered first aid and got him and the co-worker who had stayed behind back safely to Mackenzie at 4 a.m.

"It was a good news story, but we also had the potential for a fatality. That's why we called the Workers' Compensation Board to point out the need for contractors to be properly trained and equipped. The district will also be billing the company for our costs in the search," said DeBoice.

"I'd like to remind all staff who supervise contractors, or those who work outdoors themselves in winter conditions, to prepare for the worst – carry survival gear and wear adequate clothing. You might end up having to spend the night in the bush, and a hot drink and a fire can mean the difference between life or death," he added.

Contributed by Jeff Elder, communications officer, Prince George forest region.

Management plan signed for Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail

A management plan for the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail, located between Quesnel and Bella Coola, was recently signed by representatives of the Forest Service and the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture. This is the first approved management plan for a designated heritage trail in British Columbia. As such, it serves as a prototype plan and marks an important milestone in the protection of heritage trails.

The management plan represents a culmination of efforts by many people, including staff from three levels of government, interested citizens, and representatives of the Nuxalk-Carrier First Nations.

This historic trail, regarded as one of the major east-west Aboriginal trade routes, has a record of almost 6,000 years of use. In 1793, Aboriginal people guided Alexander Mackenzie from the Fraser River to the Pacific Ocean along the Nuxalk-Carrier grease trading route in the first documented crossing of North America by Europeans.

Historic routes are important and valuable provincial resources. Trails with historical and heritage significance are recognized and protected as historic sites under the *Heritage Conservation Act*. This management plan ensures that the provincially and nationally significant heritage values of this 450-kilometre corridor will always be protected.

In B.C., designated heritage trails are managed under a memorandum of agreement between the Ministry of Forests

and the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture that ensures that the heritage, recreation, and landscape values of designated trails are maintained and given priority over other resources.

For more information, contact Greg Nichols, Cariboo forest region, phone: 398-4420, or George Sranko, recreation branch, phone: 356-5890.

Knowledge network to air forestry series

A nine-part series on forestry – *Forest of Trees*, *Forest of Images*, *Forest of Words* – that began with two episodes last June will continue starting Thursday, January 27, 1994, at 8 p.m.

The series, which will continue until March, attempts to find common ground beyond the current polarized debate over forest policy in British Columbia.

Each segment will consist of a series of films produced by the forest industry, environmentalists and government and will be followed by a discussion among panelists from a variety of perspectives on forest issues. The final program in March will also feature a live phone-in discussion.

Friends gather for a tribute to Jack Biickert

More than 150 friends, co-workers and family members gathered at the Gorge Vale Golf Club in Victoria on December 8, 1993 to pay an emotional tribute to retiring Valuation Branch Director **Jack Biickert**. Speeches and presentations lasted far into the evening.

Wes Cheston, assistant deputy minister, operations, recounted how Jack's phenomenal memory earned him a reputation for always knowing the state of every licensee in the Prince Rupert region. Regional Staff Manager **Terry Walker** recalled a time when Jack put his job on the line to arrange a rescue mission to locate two lost rafters on the Skeena River.

Everyone had a story to tell about their own exposure to Jack's unbridled enthusiasm. Whether it was former Forests Minister **Dan Miller**, who had encountered the 'legendary Jack Biickert briefing notes,' or Kispiox District Manager **Charlie Willson**, who remembered Jack as a would-be hunter.

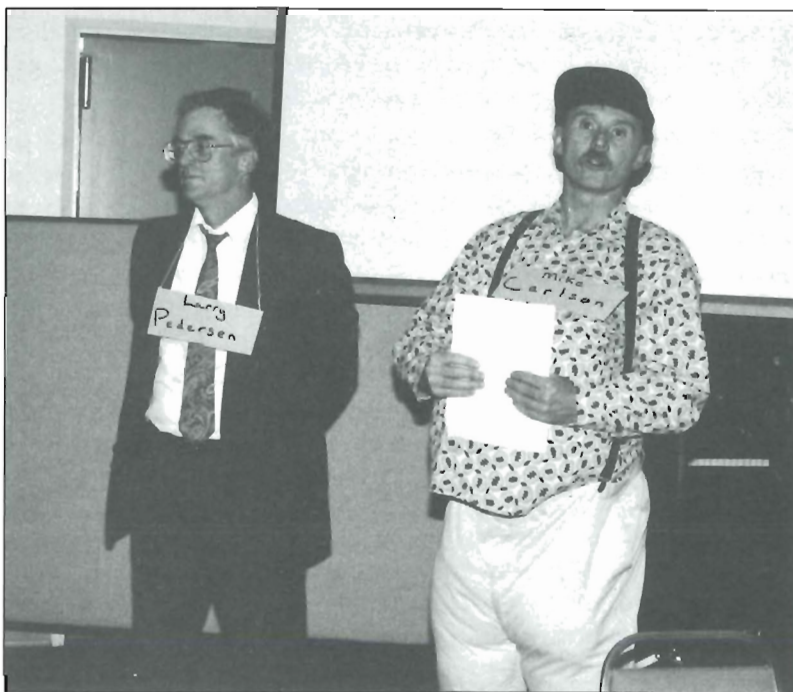
On the lighter side, **Mike Brownlee** and **Ralph Archibald** delighted the assembled guests with their humorous slide presentation on Jack's life history.

To close the event, Jack thanked everyone, saying, "The Forest Service has been good to me. I've worked for ten ministers, had 12 distinct jobs and 19 bosses – I think I wear them out."

"Mickey and I have sold houses and moved a thousand

miles five times. I think it's an itch to follow the action – sometimes the action chased me."

"It was more than a job. It was family, it was forestry, it was the Forest Service. I wish each and every one of you good health, good fortune, good Forest Service!"



Mike Brownlee and Ralph Archibald (a/k/a Mike Carlson and Larry Pedersen) presented their carefully crafted slide presentation – The Biickert Chronicles.



*Chief Forester **John Cuthbert** (right) came with a bag of goodies to help Jack along the way to his retirement.*

The **B.C. Forest Service Newsletter** is published on the second Monday of every month by the B.C. Forest Service, public affairs branch, at 595 Pandora Avenue, Victoria, British Columbia.

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Contributions are welcome. Please send your comments, suggestions and contributions to: **Paul Lackhoff**, editor, (phone: 953-3142, PROFS: PTLACKHO) at public affairs branch, or **Gordon Williams** (phone/fax: 380-9959).

The deadline for contributions to the next issue of the Forest Service Newsletter is January 31, 1994.

