



The British Columbia FOREST SERVICE Newsletter

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Kamloops to get new fire centre

Construction is scheduled to begin this fall on a new fire centre in Kamloops.

The 1,500-square-metre building is to be built on a site adjacent to the tanker base at the Kamloops airport. According to protection program Acting Assistant Director Gary Hartwig and Kamloops fire centre Manager Dennis Hutcheson, it will make an immense difference for local fire suppression crews and protection branch staff.

"This will really improve our capability and our efficiency," said Hutcheson. "Everybody here is really looking forward to getting some room to breathe."

Kamloops protection staff and fire crews are now "spread all over the place," he added. That not only creates a logistical headache, it slows down response time.

"This project will allow us to consolidate everyone in one location," said Hartwig.

The new facility will house an initial attack crew, a unit crew, 15 full-time protection staff, equipment and maintenance facilities, a dispatch centre, and state-of-the-art fire detection and resource tracking technology. It will also afford personnel direct access to helicopters and other aircraft.

"We won't have to shuttle people and equipment back and forth from bases to the airport as we have in the past," said Hartwig. The Kamloops fire centre is one of six in the province, whose service areas roughly correspond with the forest regions.

"Kamloops is the busiest centre, and it has some of the most complex fire management and urban interface issues in the province," said Hartwig. The fire centre is also one of the main marshalling and dispatch centres

for shuttling crews and equipment to other areas of the province and to other jurisdictions.

The facility will not only enhance dispatch of crews to within the region, it will also improve the coordination of activities with other provinces, Hartwig explained.

Hutcheson said hundreds of people are frequently transported through the fire centre. At one time last summer, he recalled, more

than 400 suppression personnel were marshalled through the centre to other provinces.

Facility planning, spearheaded by technical and administrative services branch Project Development Supervisor Bill Aten and Civil and Structural Coordinator Paul Bishop, has been underway for several months. Construction is scheduled to be complete by the spring of 1997.

THEY COME IN THREES



For Penticton forest district Manager John Wenger, 1995 was a year of milestones: 25 years with the Forest Service, 10 years in the district and a 50th birthday. With the help of district staff and Regional Manager Fred Baxter, the events didn't go unnoticed.

Staff helped commemorate Wenger's birthday on December 15 by decorating his office. In January, Baxter presented him with his 25 year certificate. Then Operations Manager Brian Brown awarded Wenger with a "Garnet Hour," an employee recognition award introduced in the district which entitles the recipient to an hour off. According to Brown, Wenger is glad to see 1995 behind him.

Spring marks end of long careers

The property services section at resource tenures and engineering branch is about to lose 74 years worth of corporate memory.

Two of the section's longest-serving members, Property Services Manager **Peter Downs** and Senior Property Negotiator **Tom Almond**, have decided to retire this spring.

Downs joined the Forest Service in 1962 and worked in Fort St. John and Williams Lake before returning to Victoria in 1974. In '75 he joined the property services office, and guided the section through the many changes and challenges over the next 20 years. Downs will retire March 31.

Almond began his career with the Forest Service in 1956 as a junior chainman in the engineering division. He held a number of positions in several locations, and joined property services in 1968. His work has contributed to better forest access and management in many areas of the province. Almond's last day with the ministry will be April 12.

Financial management branch Manager **Sherman Long** will wind up his 37-year career with the Forest Service on March 29. Long joined the Forest Service in 1959 as an axe man on a road survey crew at Chilliwack Lake. During his career, he worked on various field assignments until taking an office job as timekeeper and later

construction accountant. After a stint in Prince George forest region, he moved to Victoria where he worked in a variety of financial management positions.

Long's colleagues are planning a retirement dinner for April 3. Anyone who would like to attend should contact **Pat Child** at 387-6770 before March 15.

Employee suggestion earns \$200

A former employee of the Chilliwack forest district has won two awards of \$100 each for ideas to help applicants for timber marks.

Sandra Lowther, who worked for the district for a year under the public service training program, received the cheque and certificate in early February under the employee recognition awards. She suggested that the Forest Service

include additional information with timber mark applications to notify applicants of municipal by-laws and logging tax regulations that could affect their operation.

Forest land use and timber marks Administrator **Rick Miller** and former resource tenures and engineering branch Director **Bob Harding** reviewed her ideas and recommended the award. Lowther has since moved to the Ministry of Health.



*Deputy Minister **Gerry Armstrong** and Takla Indian Band Chief **Michael Teegee** and band councillors signed an agreement in December outlining economic initiatives and consultation protocols between the Forest Service and the band. Also present for the signing were (l. to r.) **Ray Schultz**, who was then acting regional manager in Prince George forest region; **Sandra Teegee**, councillor; **Peter Abraham**, elder; **Kummar Sharma**, Takla Band controller; and **Colin Teegee**, councillor.*

(Jeff Elder photo)

Finland conference sets agenda for forestry researchers

A Forest Service researcher was among more than 3,000 delegates at the 1995 International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) World Congress held in Finland last summer.

Research branch's Pasi Puttonen joined colleagues from 103 countries to share ideas and discuss the changing role of forestry research. Officially opened by Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, the congress focused on the political, socio-economic and environmental changes affecting forest management.

Participants identified three guiding principles to help the research community respond to the challenges:

- promote "holistic" scientific input into forest management decisions through greater emphasis on ecosystem research and more study of social and economic implications of forestry;
- become more proactive in forest policy development to ensure decisions are based on good science; and
- broaden geographic focus and involve researchers from developing countries.

The IUFRO world congress is the forestry research community's premiere event. The five-day agenda included five keynote speakers, 1,200 presentations, 256 technical sessions and 63 research group meetings.

Puttonen chaired a session titled The Quality of Forest Tree Seedlings and Plantations, during which he discussed activities in B.C. and summarized developments elsewhere. He also gave a presenta-



On one of the two field trips Puttonen joined during his stay in Finland, delegates rowed a traditional long boat to examine small scale forestry sites and the silvicultural methods that are employed. The day ended with a campfire and a sauna.

tion in which he described some of the research branch's progress in seedling establishment physiology, seedling quality, and the use of molecular markers to measure the level of genetic diversity in natural and managed forests.

The IUFRO is an international organization designed to promote cooperation and the exchange of information among forestry

researchers. It was founded in Germany more than 100 years ago. The next world congress will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2000.

More information on the congress and abstracts are available on the Internet at <http://www.metla.fi/iufro/congress.html>.

— Submitted by Pasi Puttonen and Jill Petersen, research branch

District profiles prove popular

This issue features Focus on the Queen Charlotte Islands forest district, the latest in our ongoing series of district profiles. Since its launch a year ago, the series has proved popular: staff in the featured district have welcomed the opportunity to tell their story, and people elsewhere get some insight into what their colleagues are doing.

So we want to keep it going, and we need your help. If you would like to see your district profiled in the newsletter, let us know. We take care of the work — all you have to do is tell us what topics you would like to see covered and who to talk to for the information. Send us a few photographs and . . . that's it.

Contact Paul Lackhoff or Ken Kolba at the numbers shown on page 8. Thanks for your continued support.

B.C.'s island archipelago

For rugged outdoor types, the Queen Charlotte Islands are paradise. The archipelago includes nearly 200 islands, thousands of kilometres of sheltered waterways, historical sites and untouched wilderness.

"You live up here more for the lifestyle than for the job," said Recreation Specialist **Brian Eccles**, one of a handful of district staff who have made the Charlottes their home.

But the Queen Charlottes are becoming increasingly popular with tourists. Forty per cent of the visitors are B.C. residents. But the majority come from elsewhere, some from as far away as Australia, lured

by the excellent outdoor recreation opportunities: fishing, hiking, scuba diving, kayaking, surfing and beachcombing.

Forest Service campgrounds — which offer access to the water but few other amenities — are ideal staging grounds for fun-seekers. And they're in high demand.

"We have a problem satisfying demand during peak periods," said Eccles. "People find their favorite spot and keep coming back. Some spots are jealously guarded."

Despite the demand, Eccles explained that given the limited use during the off-season, the district can't justify expanding the campground system.

FOCUS ON QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS FOREST DISTRICT

Great white sharks, giant sea turtles and 200-pound halibut

The story of the six-pound trout that got away wouldn't get much attention in the Queen Charlottes. Up there, fishing takes on the dimensions of a big game hunt.

Recreation Specialist **Brian Eccles**, an avid halibut angler, thinks of the fish as a quarry worthy of respect. In his 20 years on the Charlottes, Eccles has landed six halibut weighing in at more than 200 pounds.

"You have to be very careful," he says, "a fish that size can break your leg or smash your boat."

To get a fish that big takes skill and know-how. Eccles begins by baiting his hook with a three-pound fish. Then he'll let the bait drop to the bottom as much as 300 feet below.

When a big one bites — locals call them barn doors — Eccles braces for up to two hours of hard work, playing the fish on 40-pound test line to get it along side the boat.

Even then, the fish has lots of fight left. Eccles packs a harpoon with a detachable head. He drives the spear into the fish, removes the shaft, and lets the fish go, dragging a brightly colored buoy on a six-foot cord.



Then it's a waiting game. The buoy disappears, and resurfaces several hundred feet away — over and over, until the fish tires. When Eccles

Brian Eccles with a prize catch — a 200-pound halibut.

gets near enough, he shoots it before loading it into the boat.

Filleting the catch also takes on incredible proportions. Each side yields two fillets, as much as five-and-a-half feet long and eight inches thick — up to 160 pounds of prized white flesh.

However, things don't always go that smoothly. Field Operations Supervisor **Dan Vatamaniuck** had a 104-pound halibut nearly to his boat when his catch took off with renewed vigor. The sea lion that had been circling nearby made him suspicious, and sure enough it surfaced 50 feet away with the halibut in its mouth. Vatamaniuck was not about to give up, and took his boat nearly on top of the sea lion before it relinquished its dinner.

In the spring, when warm Pacific currents extend north to the Charlottes, the stories become even more bizarre. The ocean turns the green color of the tropics, and great white sharks, giant sea turtles, 3,000-pound ocean sunfish and man-of-war jellyfish infiltrate the coastal waters.

When the warm currents recede, great whites sometimes get left behind. They grow lethargic in the colder water and locals occasionally find them washed up on shore.

Three years ago, officials did an autopsy on a 17-footer that was found on the beach. In its stomach, they found a large, intact seal.

Then there's the time Cruising and Waste Coordinator **Tery Haymond** was kayaking to Moresby Island. About half-way into the four-hour paddle, he glimpsed a dark shadow lurking just below the surface. Closer inspection revealed it was a 12-foot blue shark.

"The tip of its fin was two feet from the kayak," he said. The shark must have been more alarmed than Haymond: it didn't stick around.

Community group tackles timber shortage

A looming — but avoidable — fibre shortage has prompted First Nations, community leaders and forest industry representatives to work together to resolve land-use issues in the Queen Charlotte Islands forest district.

The Islands Community Stability Initiative (ICSI) began last fall, when District Manager **Bob Brash** toured local communities to discuss the timber supply. The tour focused on timber availability and long-standing grievances in area communities, including access to timber and the amount of local milling and other value-added processing.

The gist of his message, according to District Planning Officer **John Andres**, was that the district faces a 30 per cent shortfall for 1996. Without change, the situation would only get worse next year. Nearly a third of island residents work directly in the forest industry.

"Instead of having cutting permits for the

next couple of years, we're looking at weeks or months," said Andres. Some forestry workers have already been affected.

In the past, Andres said, when controversy interrupted harvesting in one area, loggers would move to another site. But now, he added, they've run out of alternative sites.

The fibre shortage arose when harvesting "deferrals" were enacted in response to the Haida Nation's position on land use. The deferrals cover 243,000 hectares of the district's total one-million-hectare land area. That amounts to 20 per cent of the operable land base in tree farm licences and timber supply area in the district.

On February 1, community representatives presented a consensus document providing a basis for discussion with the Haida Nation, industry and the Forest Service.

"Our objectives are to find a balanced solution to some complex issues," said Andres. "We're pretty optimistic."

Experimental silviculture system used

Experiments in alternative silviculture are proving their worth in the forest district.

In a district characterized by salmon streams, steep slopes, torrential rains and frequent storm-force winds, the challenges of sustainable forestry are amplified in the Charlottes.

Among the recent successes is a group selection harvest on a 50-hectare site near Lagins Creek. Under the group selection silviculture system, small areas within a larger planning area are logged at regular time intervals. Over the entire cycle, all the timber can be extracted, but the larger area will always have enough trees to prevent erosion.

The Lagins Creek site was first harvested in 1992, when loggers cut quarter-hectare openings. The area is scheduled for three more passes, each 15 years apart.

"After that," said Silviculturist **Del Williams**, "the area cut in 1992 will be ready to harvest again."

Williams said the number of salmon streams at the Lagins Creek site prevented conventional logging methods. But one of the risks of small openings is windthrow.

"We have traditionally tried to minimize the perimeter of a cut area to reduce windthrow," said Williams. With nearly four winters — and the gales they pack — behind them, windthrow has not been a problem.

"We used the lay of the land to design cut-blocks to protect fish habitat and to prevent windthrow," Williams said. The district is also experimenting with single tree selection and patch cut silviculture systems.

REVENGE OF THE LUDDITES

Year 2000 threatens computer chaos

Like most of North America's computerized workplaces, the Forest Service is preparing for what many systems analysts predict will be the digital equivalent of a nuclear meltdown.

The experts say that, unless corrective measures are taken, tens of thousands of computer applications will cease to function at midnight, December 31, 1999.

Foreshadowing things to come, some programs have already begun to fail.

It's because many applications that incorporate dates are programmed for only two-digit years. For example, 1995 is key-stroked as 95. That works well until 2000, when entering the year as 00 will cause chaos.

In describing the situation as a small oversight with gigantic repercussions, U.S. experts predict it will cost corporate America billions of dollars to rewrite software to cope with the turn of the century.

Information systems branch Manager of Applications Development Nelson Lah says most Forest Service software can accommodate the turn of the century.

"We're comfortable that with careful planning, the turn of the century shouldn't cause any problems," he said, noting many of the ministry's applications were developed in the last 10 years, by which time programmers were aware of the two-digit date problem.

"We've had standards in place since the mid-80s that required four-digit years," Lah said. Nonetheless, many of the ministry's older applications will have to be modified or rewritten before the end of the decade.

Lah and Manager of Revenue Applications John DeLarge are heading a project team to determine how the millenium change will affect the Forest Service's computer applications. The project began in late 1995 with

an inventory of all applications and databases that do not incorporate four-digit dates. The team is also gathering relevant informa-

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Unless corrective measures are taken, tens of thousands of computer applications will cease to function at midnight, December 31, 1999.
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tion from major hardware and software vendors.

Much of the work will be rewriting older applications related to harvest billing, Lah

said. A plan is already in place to begin the upgrade during the 1996/97 fiscal year.

Lah said he and other members of the project team will work with application custodians to assess impacts and develop an upgrade strategy. "Right now, we're trying to get people aware of the need for revisions," he said. "Then next year we'll start doing the work."

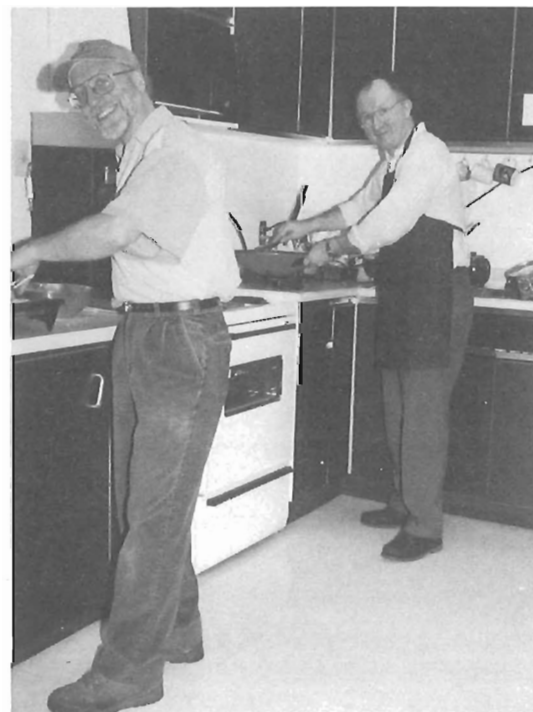
With careful planning, the Forest Service will meet this challenge — unlike other organizations that may not be so fortunate, Lah said.

Managers treat staff to breakfast

Kalum forest district Corporate Services Manager Orest Wakaruk (l) and District Manager Brian Downie whip up some scrambled eggs and french toast for a staff breakfast hosted by the district management team.

Other members of the management team who took on the cook's role were Land Information and Planning Manager Norm Parry and Operations Manager Erle Holt.

Team members don't know it yet, but staff plan to do whatever it takes to turn the breakfast into an annual event. Besides, they're getting so much practice, it would be a shame to let it go to waste. On Valentine's Day, the district management team was back in the kitchen, cooking breakfast once again for staff and



the regional management team, which held its monthly meeting in Kalum.

CHIPS automation goes on-line

There's something different about Forest Service paycheques, but this time it's not more employer deductions.

In late December, the Forest Service introduced new automation to streamline human resource management. Called CHIPS (Corporate Human Resources Information and Payroll System), the system is designed to support all aspects of human resource management: payroll, leave, recruitment, training administration, and occupational health and safety.

The first module — payroll and leave — came on stream December 27, and staff received their first CHIPS paycheques on January 12. Other modules will be introduced this spring, with more to follow.

Although the system was rolled out in all provincial ministries simultaneously, the Forest Service was the only one to immediately adopt the decentralized version. Now on-line at 66 Forest Service locations, CHIPS gives the districts control over leave/human resource/pay management.

"It speeds things up," said Project Manager Lorna Young. "Data is input right in the district office, rather than sent to headquarters. As well, district personnel can keep on-line track of their payroll, human resources and leave."

For the Forest Service, the roll-out capped a two-year effort to replace old Dun and Bradstreet systems, which Project Sponsor Derek Hamlet said was antiquated.

As a key proponent of CHIPS, the Forest Service was one of two ministries involved in a four-month pilot project. Project developers set up a virtual world to test the system, said Young. They invented a ministry with six decentralized locations.

"We ran through the process that you would expect to encounter on a day-to-day basis," she said.

After testing, a Forest Service team comprising the CHIPS steering committee, project

working groups and regional and branch coordinators implemented the system. Core users received four days of training prior to the system going on-line.

The implementation was almost perfect: Hamlet said that there were only three sig-

nificant problems among the first 5,000 paycheques issued.

"We're quite excited about how the system is working," he said, referring to a big improvement in the quality and accuracy of the information.

Victoria staff move to new offices

The business design branch and protection branch are among the first tenants at what will eventually be a mega-development on the Gorge waterfront in Victoria.

The branches moved into the Arc Building, an arc-shaped building that boasts floor-to-ceiling glass walls and water views.

"It's a pleasure to have all staff together in one location after almost two years of planning and building this branch," said business design branch Director Shelley Sullivan. Sullivan's staff were previously spread over four locations in Victoria.

The move also united all Victoria protection

staff in one location for the first time.

The development, at the former site of a Pacific Forest Products sawmill, is a joint undertaking between private developers and BC Buildings Corp. The 10-year development calls for restaurants and shops, a school, senior citizens housing, family housing and upscale condominiums.

The new address for both Forest Branches is Building A, 2957 Jutland Road, Victoria, V8V 1X4. Phone numbers remain unchanged, however all faxes for the business design branch should now be sent to 356-5355.

ADM's visit to Horsefly promotes mutual understanding

The Horsefly forest district recently invited Revenue and Corporate Services Division ADM Harry Powell to attend a staff meeting to discuss executive priorities and the district's perspective and concerns.

Powell travelled to the district January 17, where he met first with the district management team and then joined district staff at a local pub — which closed for the day to enable Horsefly staff to hold their quarterly meeting. The sessions proved a valuable experience for everyone.

"It brought a very personal element into the direction we get from executive," said District Manager Bill Young. "Staff sometimes wonder what kind of people are behind these policies."

Powell shared Young's evaluation of the day.

"It was an excellent opportunity to interact with staff where the real essence of the Forest Service's business is conducted," he said. "I left with a better understanding of the issues facing our districts and heightened commitment to help find solutions."

Hold on: help is on the way

Relief is at hand for Forest Service offices coping with job vacancies.

The Forest Service has received approval from the Public Service Employees Relations Committee (PSERC) to post 200 out-of-service competitions. A special Forest Service issue of B.C. Postings, the government-wide employment opportunities tabloid, was published February 16.

The development will come as welcome news — especially in some district offices that are significantly understaffed. For example, Prince George forest region has 112 vacancies representing nearly 30 per cent of all regional positions.

Human resources branch Operations Manager Cathy Leahy said the large vacancy rate is partly due to the government's managed staffing strategy, which has prohibited out-of-service hiring since last fall.

"Since then, there has only been staff movement within the Forest Service," she said.

The agreement with PSERC granted the Forest Service a blanket exemption from hiring restrictions for various job classifications in certain districts.

"Generally these are locations that would not attract in-service applicants," Leahy explained.

Despite the restrictions, Forest Service hiring has fared well compared to other ministries. In the 1994/95 fiscal year, there were 982 competitions for Forest Service

positions. The government-wide average was only 163 per ministry.

This recruitment campaign is the largest since the Canada-wide initiative last year. Help wanted ads in major market newspapers produced more than 1,600 applicants. As a result, 320 positions were filled.

"The response was still not enough to fill all the vacancies," said Leahy, acknowledging an apparent shortage of qualified forestry technicians and professional foresters.

WANT A JOB? Get a forestry degree!

Professional forestry is one of B.C.'s hot career opportunities for the '90s.

The University of British Columbia Faculty of Forestry Coordinator of Student Services Donna Goss predicts full employment for this year's professional forester stream graduates.

"We've averaged at least 90 per cent placement for the last few years," she said. "This year I expect it to be 100 per cent." Most of the career opportunities come from private industry and consulting companies, she said, who are starting to compete for the brightest students.

Even summer work, so difficult to come by for most university and college enrollees, is readily available for forestry students.

"Summer students come in and say 'Gee, for someone with no experience is \$3,000 a month a good salary?'," Goss noted.

The hot job market is mostly limited to B.C., said Goss, who gets job enquiries from forestry students in eastern Canada.

UBC has expanded its forestry program for the last several years. Of about 500 students currently in the program, about two-thirds are planning careers as professional foresters.

To acquire registered professional forester status, students must graduate, work under an RPF for two years, then successfully write an exam. About 60 people will graduate from the RPF stream this spring.

The faculty receives 700 to 800 applications a year for entry into the program. Of those, about 400 are accepted, and about 200 actually enter the program.

Goss said the Forest Service has typically not hired new program graduates. The last time the ministry recruited directly from UBC was in 1991, she said.

That's something Goss would like to see changed — particularly as it applies to summer work experience. About 15 per cent of UBC graduates want to work for government.

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