Forest Service News

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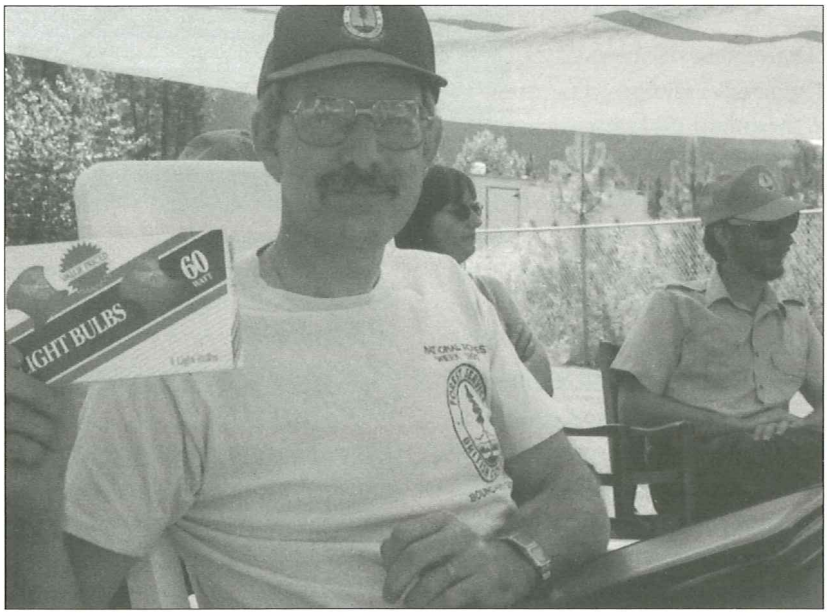
Changes by the bucket in Boundary district



Ken Weaver displays his "bright idea" prize.

Paving the way for change, the Boundary forest district held a "bucket o' change" day to examine several new initiatives to streamline office operations.

The session, which combined business with fun, gave staff a chance to explore Integrated Workplace Strategy (ISW) activities, including work flow, office design, employee relations and mobile office opportunities.

Employee recognition also played a key role in the day's events. After a hotdog and hamburger lunch prepared and served by management, Planning Assistant **Jeff Holitzki** presented awards for long service and safety, reviewed the status of ISW activities, and introduced an office recognition program.

Ross Elliott, resource officer, protection/recreation; **Noel Fisher**, small business technician; and **Ken Weaver**, operations manager received 25-year service awards. Small Business Technician **Virgil Osborne** received a 35-year award, and Compliance and Enforcement Technician **Stan Jensen** was recognized for 30 no-time loss, accident-free years.

District Manager **Glen Thompson** summarized successful changes over the last two years, including:

- implementing an electronic silviculture prescription referral system;
- routing mail to appropriate staff rather than the district manager;
- using the Internet and LAN to create web-based communications;
- defining, analysing and changing work patterns as part of ISW;

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A few words from David Zirnhelt, Minister of Forests

I am very happy to have this opportunity to introduce myself and talk a little about the forest industry and our role in it.

My appointment as Forests Minister came as welcome news to me. As a woodlot licence holder in my home riding of Cariboo South, I have been directly involved in the industry for some time. This first-hand experience has given me valuable insights into the industry. It was also my first introduction to the Forest Service.

All Forest Service staff, and particularly those in the district,

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Please distribute to all employees at their workstations

A few words, continued from page 1

have earned my respect for their dedication and professionalism, qualities which I know are an ingrained part of the Forest Service culture. And I know things have become considerably more complicated with the introduction of the Forest Practices Code.

Implementing the Forest Practices Code is requiring a great deal of hard work from everyone. The code is turning the forest industry onto a sustainable course. We can be proud that B.C. has the most comprehensive forest management practices among 14 leading international jurisdictions. We can also take pride in knowing that we manage our forests not only for timber production, but also for cultural, historical, recreational, social and environmental values.

The code will continue to evolve for another year as we work to make it more efficient and effective. As we near the June 15, 1997, full compliance deadline, I will be working with staff to ensure a balance is maintained between an effective code and one that is efficient to deliver.

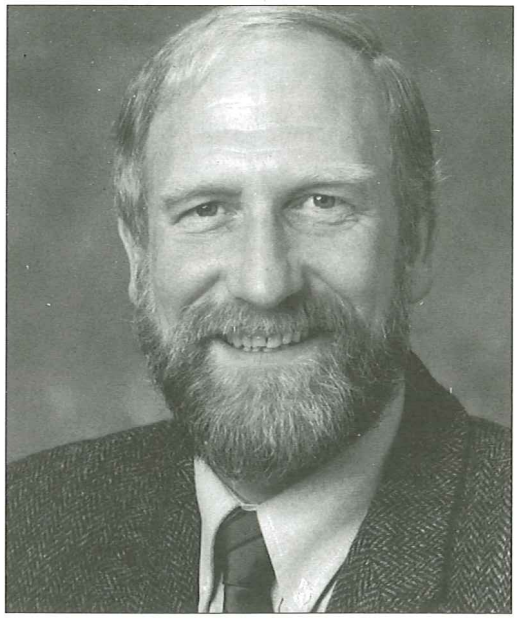
The aim of the code and its regulations is to improve forest and range management practices in B.C. — and after a year you can literally see it's working. In fact, when you fly over the province today you can see that the new cutblocks look different from the pre-code blocks.

The code is only one of our key accomplishments during the last five years. The land use planning process has made great inroads into achieving a common vision for how we use our resources. The timber supply review, now almost complete, is the first comprehensive inventory of every tree farm licence and timber supply area in the province.

Our challenge for the future, job creation and economic growth in forestry communities, remains among our top priorities. Several initiatives — the Forest Renewal Plan, the Forest Land Reserve and projects like the enhanced forest management pilot projects underway in the interior and on Vancouver Island — are setting the stage for stability and growth.

All of these initiatives have impacted the way we do business. It is my hope that a great part of this change is behind us and that we will spend the next few years fine-tuning and implementing what is now in place to ensure stability and growth in our forests.

These changes represent substantial progress toward securing the resource and the jobs it provides. While many people in all walks of life deserve credit for contributing to the process,



David Zirnhelt

Forest Service staff have earned the lion's share. And I would like to extend my congratulations for a job well done.

I plan on stopping in and meeting with district and regional staff this fall as I travel around the province. I also look forward to working with all Forest Service staff to achieve these and other goals, and to ensure that the forest industry continues to sustain British Columbia's enviable quality of life.

Victoria staff to stay put for now

Most Victoria staff will be staying in their current offices for a while yet. A possible mass move to the Selkirk Avenue site has been called off.

After extensive consultation with BCBC, Deputy Minister Gerry Armstrong decided that, given the budget pressure anticipated within the ministry for this and next fiscal year, limited resources could be better devoted to the Forest Service's business priorities.

Armstrong acknowledged that space concerns remain a priority with ministry executive, and other options will be examined.

New committee focuses on employment equity

The recent formation of the employment equity advisory committee has bolstered the Forest Service's commitment and ability to ensure equal opportunity in the workplace.

The committee, which has representatives of all regions and divisons, will promote effective communications among staff, region and division managers, and executive. The committee is also responsible for developing the Forest Service action plan to remedy inequities.

Part of this mandate includes advising managers and executive on employment equity issues, researching and championing the needs of designated groups within the Forest Service, identifying necessary training, and identifying barriers to employment equity and strategies to eliminate them.

"The goal is to create a workforce that is representative of the population we serve, and to ensure that individuals are not denied employment opportunities for reasons unrelated to their ability to do the job," said **Claire Handley**.

As acting manager of the employment equity office, Handley had the difficult task of choosing committee members from among the many nominations.

"There was so much interest and commitment among the people nominated," said Handley, who co-chairs the committee.

The committee will build on other employment equity activities introduced to the Forest Service since 1990, when the employment equity office was first established. Although considerable progress has been made in the past five years (Handley noted the Forest Service is seen as an employment equity leader among ministries), much has yet to be done.

One of the biggest contributions committee members will make is in their role as advocates of employment equity and active supporters of the employment equity program within their region or divison, said Revenue and Corporate Services ADM **Harry Powell**.

"We found in the past that people only called the employment equity office when there were problems," he explained. "One of the committee's goals is to promote best practices — things people are quietly doing that promote employment equity."

Together with employment equity representatives, who have been appointed in every Forest Service office, the committee members will provide a critical channel for communications. The employment equity office will continue to support and administer related activities.

A draft action plan produced by committee members is to be submitted to the Public Service Employee Relations Commission for review on August 31. Copies will be available on BBEENEWS or from committee members.

To learn about employment equity, contact the employment equity office or your committee representative:

Cariboo region: **Bernie Elkins**, Williams Lake forest district

Cariboo region: **Bill Young**, Horsefly forest district

Prince Rupert region: **Sherrill McCammon**, Prince Rupert forest region

Kamloops region: **Joanne Caldwell**, Merritt forest district

Revenue and corporate services division: **Shi Ning**, human resources branch

Operations division: **Penny Holt**, business design branch

Nelson region: **Cy McConnell**, Invermere forest district

Vancouver region: **Denise Hart**, Port McNeill forest district

Forestry division: **Sam Otukol**, resource inventory branch

Policy and planning division: **Glenn Ricketts**, executive

Prince George region: **Lyle Bonthoux**, Mackenzie forest district.

Bucket, continued from page 1

- replacing letters of response with an acknowledgement stamp; and
- increasing the use of technology to enhance meetings and presentations.

Range Planning Forester **Werner Baliko** won special recognition for his plan for inter-office sharing, by always using other people's equipment.

The district also introduced an informal office recognition program. Over the next six months, staff will trade token "smileys" to thank others for extra help, a good laugh, and jobs well-done.

— Submitted by Trina Innes, planning officer, Boundary forest district

500 years of reforestation expertise

Over 500 years of forestry experience were represented at the Cowichan Lake Research Station (CLRS) on June 10 when 20 pioneers of B.C.'s reforestation program gathered to pay tribute to **Bruce Devitt** and **Alf Bamford**.

The event was in recognition of recent awards made to both men: Devitt received a Distinguished Forester Award from the Association of Professional Foresters earlier this year, and Bamford was honored by the Forest Service at a tree-planting at CLRS last year.

Bamford, also known as Bambi, rejoined the Forest Service in 1946 after service overseas during the war. He worked in reforestation until his retirement in 1976.

Devitt worked for the Forest Service from 1957 until 1973, when he joined Pacific Logging Company. He ended his career as executive director of the B.C. Professional Foresters Association.

During their careers, the two men witnessed the growth of the nursery program from 1.2 million trees to 3.3 million by 1957, 72.8 million by 1976, to the current 225 million seedlings.

They and several colleagues gathered at CLRS to relive the past through stories and tours of forests they had planted as younger men.

After a moment of silence in memory of the recently-deceased **Peter Robson**, the group boarded a bus bound for local forests. The area, originally clearcut by Hillcrest Logging Company, was the site of regeneration surveys undertaken in 1957 by Devitt and **Alan Lamb, Mike Meagher, Graham Hart, Wilf Rhodes** and **Dave Wallinger**.

The team began replanting the following year, assisted by **Nels Sjoberg, Ulf Bitterlich, Len Platt, Neil Marshall** and **Mike Crown**. Over the next few years, over 5,000 hectares were planted.

But that wasn't the earliest planting undertaken by the group. In 1938, **Jack Long** and a crew planted 50,000 trees — a third of that year's total in B.C. — at Elk Falls Park near Campbell River. At the time, Long had yet to plant

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Students win with Merritt district

Employers of the Year: (l. to r.) Pat McAffee, engineering officer; Graham Seefeldt, recreation officer; Rod DeBoice, district manager; and Mike Morrison, planning technician.

The Merritt forest district's contribution to work experience opportunities for high school students has earned it the "Employer of the Year" award from the local school district.

"This award is a great honor to our staff," said District Manager **Rod DeBoice**. "This is an excellent opportunity to support youth and cultivate foresters of the future. It's definitely a worthwhile expenditure, and motivates staff to share their experiences with local youth."

The district hosted a number of high school students under the provincial government's work experience program. Grade 11 and 12 students are now required to complete 30 hours of work experience prior to graduation.

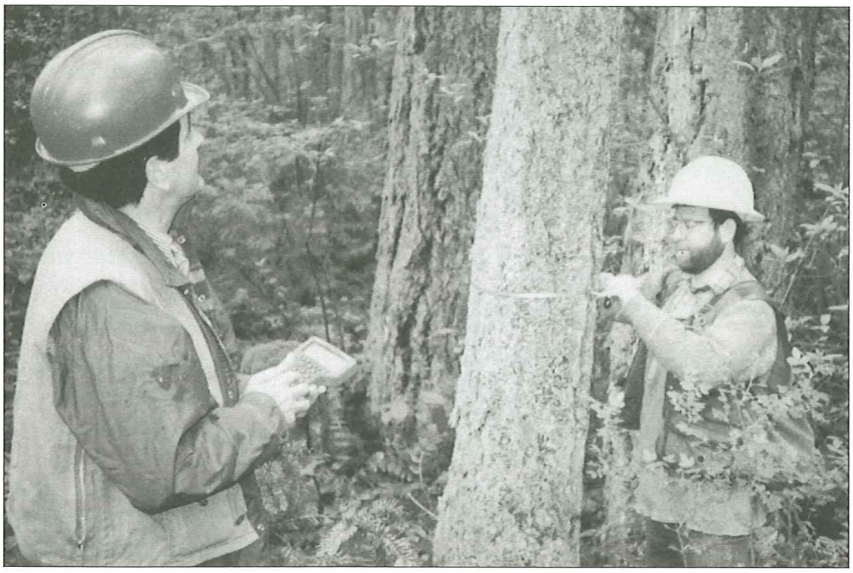
Corporate services Manager **Joanne Caldwell** coordinated the program between district staff and local schools.

"I became committed to the program after learning the results of a survey conducted by local schools," she said. "Students named forestry after only teaching and law enforcement as their most preferred career. If that kind of interest is there, we need to tap into it."

The youngsters have worked with staff, learning about lakes classification, planning and engineering. They've also taken helicopter flights around the district.

— Submitted by Joanne Caldwell, Merritt forest district

Handheld computers improve data quality



Grant Loeb (r.) helps Carlos Martins demonstrate hand-held computer technology to improve growth and yield surveys.

The growth and yield section of the resources inventory branch has introduced a new handheld computer system that virtually eliminates errors in the collection of growth and yield field data.

"When the project started, the main objective was to collect data for all resources inventory branch programs as efficiently as field sheets with the added benefit of data editing in the field," says **Jon Vivian**, manager of growth and yield with the resources inventory branch.

Working with regional growth and yield coordinators and contractors, the section began development of the system in 1990. It is aimed at reducing the errors associated with collecting field data for the establishment and remeasurement of growth and yield sample plots. After two years of field testing, its use is now mandatory for all growth and yield contractors.

The system consists of two main computer programs, GYHAND and GYHOST. The GYHAND program, as the name implies, is the handheld data capture component. In addition to collecting and recording growth and yield field data, it also performs field calculations to determine, for example, stand composition.

As well, GYHAND compares current data with previously-collected information to see if the new measurement is within expected ranges. A "verify/complete" option will also check that all essential data have been collected.

The GYHOST program resides on a personal computer and is used to produce office reports. It serves as the data transfer link between the handheld and the PC. GYHOST also serves a variety of other data functions including display, enter, edit, and assists users in obtaining the quality assurance of the data.

"The main advantage to the handheld system is that you get clean data direct from the source plots," says **Carlos Martins**, one of the system's main developers. "For example, when you enter the height, GYHAND will compare this with the tree diameter to see if it makes sense. If not, it will warn you."

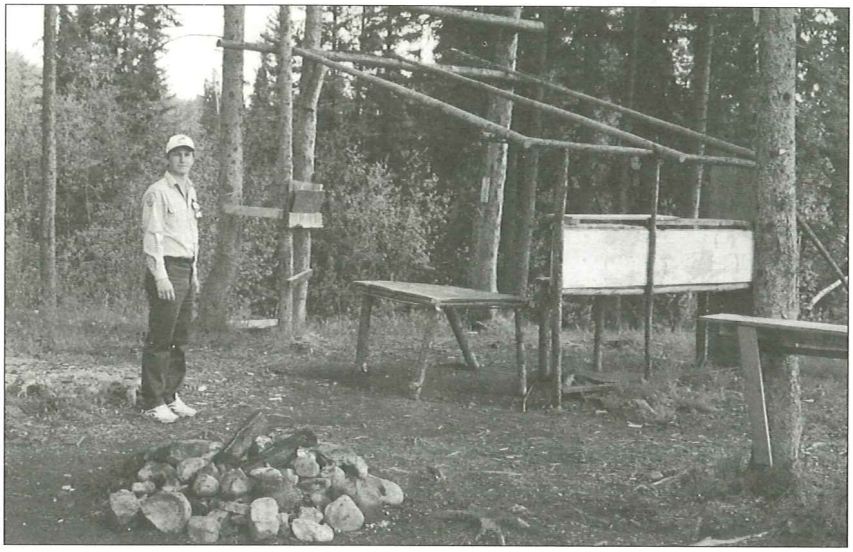
"The handheld system eliminates the need for manual transfer of field data," says **Joe Braz**, the project leader. "In addition, basic office calculations are done for you in the field without human error."

With the success of GYHAND and GYHOST, the resources inventory branch has recently developed a second handheld system to collect and validate decay and volume data. Similar in nature to its predecessor, DVHAND and DVHOST reduces or eliminates errors in collecting data. The developers, **Ken Richardson** and **Will Smith**, couldn't be happier with the results after the first year of operations on the Queen Charlotte Islands.

"The results speak for themselves," says Vivian. "Field time has increased slightly, but far less time is spent in the office manually editing the data."

For further information on the handheld system, call the resources inventory branch at 387-1314.

Cleaning up the Fort Nelson backcountry



An all-too-typical scene in Fort Nelson forest district: Steve Amonson undertakes a campaign to get those responsible to clean up their act. (Jeff Elder photo)

They're beside roads, near rivers and lakes — crude shelters used mostly by hunters. Tent frames made from wooden poles or actual cabins made of logs, plywood and plastic.

Next to these "unauthorized structures" is another problem — garbage and lots of it. Discarded beer cans, bottles, rope, tarps, burnt-out stoves and other refuse.

Steve Amonson hopes to change all this. He's the range and recreation officer in the Fort Nelson forest district. This spring he produced a brochure entitled *Keeping our Backcountry Areas in World Class Condition*, which has been mailed to local guide-outfitter associations, rod and gun clubs and other user groups.

A series of signs and advertisements featuring both volunteer clean-up efforts and reminders about applicable laws will appear later this summer.

The program is a cooperative effort involving the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Forest Service, with funding from Forest Renewal BC.

Amonson, an outdoor enthusiast himself, explains, "There are only so many good camping spots, and having a structure there limits availability for others."

He feels that hunters have to respect the desires of other people for a wilderness experience, or one day their access may be limited.

"It's always been illegal to litter or to build structures without tenure from B.C. Lands, but now the law is strengthened under the Forest Practices Code. But I'll do my best to convince people to clean-up their mess before using the legal route. We just want the backcountry cleaned up," he said.

"The majority of backcountry users support this approach," said **Ron Rutledge**, Prince George region's wilderness management specialist. Rutledge did a backcountry recreation survey in the Fort Nelson and Fort St. John forest districts in 1993.

"I asked visitors how the area should be managed. Almost 90 per cent of respondents felt that over-used areas should be rehabilitated and that users should be educated more about how to minimize their impacts. Over 65 per cent of respondents felt that the use of over-used areas should be discouraged or prohibited and that there should be more patrols to enforce regulations if resources or the quality of experiences were threatened," he said.

Ross Peck is president of the Northern B.C. Guides and

Cranbrook manager says good-bye

Another 35-year career with the Forest Service came to an end early this month, with the retirement of Don Hendren, operations manager, Cranbrook forest district.

Hendren started with the ministry as a dispatcher in Elko in 1961. By the early 1970s, he had worked his way up to deputy ranger, and in 1972 was promoted to training officer in Prince Rupert. After a stint as ranger in Princeton, Hendren became operations superintendent in Invermere. He had worked at his current job since 1991.

Outfitters Association, and both he and his members depend on an unspoiled backcountry. He's removed dozens of abandoned oil drums from fly-in camps and cleaned up litter with the help of local river boaters — 14 large garbage bags full from one camp on the Tuchodi Lakes alone.

"If there's a pile of garbage people keep throwing more on it. Once you get sites clean, people are more responsible," he said.

Rich Petersen, president of the North Peace Rod and Gun Club, has travelled the local backcountry for over 25 years.

"There's been a real increase of litter and structures. They (hunters) leave a real mess. All legitimate users will be glad to see improvements. When I go into a campsite, I don't care if there's anything there at all. I don't want to see plastic and garbage."

Petersen said he's seen a lot of unusual items left behind in the wilderness — a bedspring and mattress, even a bathtub.

"People must think it's a joke, but they don't bother taking it out."

Hunters and other backcountry users are reminded to pack out cans or garbage which can't be burned. Wooden tent frames should be taken down. The poles can be left leaning against a tree near the camp, so they're available for the next person.

Users are also encouraged to bring plastic lawn chairs and tables rather than cutting down trees to make furniture. The brochure describing applicable regulations and tips on how to limit human impact on the backcountry is available at the Fort Nelson forest district office, telephone 774-3936.

— Submitted by Jeff Elder, Prince George forest region

Always ready to help, no matter what

Life took a curious twist in late July for staff at the Haig Fire Attack Base and the Abbotsford Provincial Warehouse. The day saw protection staff setting fires and warehouse staff putting them out.

That morning, Sto:lo and coastal unit crews joined Haig personnel to set fire to a swath of grass 300 by 500 metres at the Abbotsford airport. It was, of course, deliberate – a preventive measure to eliminate a fire hazard at the site of the Abbotsford airshow.

"It all went quite well except the grass didn't burn that good," said Initial Attack Crew Leader Jeff Munro. Protection crews used the event as a training exercise.

The same day, warehouse Stockman Wayne Demeyer was riding his bike home from work when a hydro transformer exploded on a pole right in front of him. Demeyer parked his bike and started stamping out fires started by sparks showering into the grass. He was soon joined by workmate John Brouillard, who also happened by.

The ad hoc fire crew was soon joined by neighboring farmers, who arrived fully equipped with buckets of water. All in a day's work.

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his first tree, so **Harold McWilliams** and **Ted Whiting** were sent from other camps to help.

Their trees were burned the same year in the great Bloedel fire. The fire caused Long to redouble his efforts, and sped up development of a new nursery at Quinsam. The site has since been converted to a seed orchard.

Retired Chief Forester Bill Young plays the pipes for former colleagues Bruce Devitt (l.), Jack Long (c.) and Alf Bamford (r.).

McWilliams and Whiting went on to form part of the Forest Service's first reforestation division in 1946. Their legacy, and that of the 20 reforestation pioneers, can be seen in many areas of B.C.

— Submitted by Mike Meagher and Dave Wallinger

BDB to release new mapping software

The business design branch is about to release a new application to automate silviculture mapping requirements under the Forest Practices Code.

The program, called the Five-Year Silviculture Mapping System (SPMS) provides a simple, standardized way of producing reports and colour-coded maps. The code requires five-year silvicultural plans showing biological and other features and resources, rendered according to Forest Service cartographic standards.

However, no automation existed to perform the task. Prince George forest region developed a prototype last year, then business design branch assumed the project.

SPMS can be run in both single mapsheet or process batches automatically. It uses existing Forest Service software, including ISIS, SIA, a new version of Reports 3D and Microstation, meaning training costs will be modest. No new hardware is required.

The software was tested in seven district offices, and is scheduled for release by the end of September. A half-day training course will be offered in the fall.

For more information, contact **Christopher Miller**, business analyst, business design branch, at 387-3593, e-mail crmiller@for01.for.gov.bc.ca.

Vernon staff continue winning ways

Vernon forest district Operations Manager Rick Smith was among a handful of individuals to receive a Forests Excellence Award from Forest Renewal BC.

Rick Smith (r.) and Roger Stanyer.

Smith was presented with his award by FRBC Chair Roger Stanyer at a late June ceremony at the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George.

The award recognizes Smith's innovation in developing a holistic vision of forestry in the Vernon district in the 1980s. Smith and his colleagues experimented with partial cutting systems, which have since been incorporated into the district's Small Business Forest Enterprise Program operations. The work has attracted international attention.

Smith is also credited with a key role in the development of the Okanagan Timber Harvesting Guidelines in the late 1980s. The guidelines called for an integrated approach to logging that preserved the forest environment.

FRBC introduced the Forests Excellence Awards this year. The corporation received more than 120 nominations in eight categories. They were judged by a committee comprising representatives of the forest industry, labor, environmental groups, First Nations, communities and government.

Forest Service News

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