Forest Service

No. 40 A newsletter for Ministry of Forests employees September, 1990

Staff dig in when forest fires break out

Forest fire season is not yet over.

But the heat is off, and protection staff, particularly in the Vancouver forest region, have had a chance to catch up on the paperwork generated by the fire flap that was started by heavy lightning on August 10.

Between August 10 - 16 there were 1,100 forest fires reported in the province. As of September 13 there were more than 2,921 fires compared to the 3,245 fires reported for all of 1989.

Rapattack crew member Doris Odenwald

"This was one of the worst fire seasons for the Squamish forest district," said **Russ Hughes**, fire control officer, Vancouver forest region. "It was at least as critical as the 1985 season experienced in Invermere.

"We applied some of the lessons we learned there, and used the systems that worked. Our people had the same energy and the same commitment."

Both Forests Minister **Claude Richmond** and Deputy Minister **Philip Halkett** travelled to the scene of the most intense fires to get a first-hand look at the situation.

"I was impressed by the way that our crews maintained a high level of organization at a time when hundreds of firefighters were being brought into the Squamish forest district," Richmond said.

During busy periods, Forest Service staff from districts and regions are used to trading in their pens, computers, and other tools, for shovels, pulaskis and coveralls, to help dig fire guards or perform other equally hard and dirty fire suppression duties.

This year about 19 Victoria staff members spent nine hours at the Green Timbers training facility in Surrey before being transported to Squamish to work on the Quill fire.

Mobile provincial unit crews in Squamish.

"We skipped the frills and got right down to the nitty gritty," said **Corey Smeele**, planning forester, silviculture branch. "Most of us already had some bush experience."

"I was expecting to see a lot of confusion when we arrived at the fire camp at midnight," Smeele said. "I thought it would be like the army and they would just send us out into the flames.

"But it wasn't like that. There are meetings every night, so you always know where you are going and what you are going to be doing. It wasn't a macho thing. Safety was the main message they tried to get across."

Do we use "all the right words?"

B.C.'s forest industry, and forestry, grew up during a historical period when conquering the last frontier, and its valuable timber, meant progress.

The values, ideas and even the words developed, mostly by men during this period, still remain — and have prompted one analyst to see the following equation:

- forestry = masculine = developmental;
- preservation = feminine = sustainable.

Whether or not you agree with this thesis developed by **Rosey Siney** of Rodon Communications Ltd., Vancouver, it forces all of us involved in forestry to look at the words we use in our day-to-day operations.

Do they accurately describe our attitude toward forest resource management? Are they too patriarchal/masculine (or even macho) — and not enough matriarchal/feminine — to be communicative and effective in today's more gender-balanced society?

Siney categorizes aggression, domination, achievement, development, growth, action, results, data, representation, profit, progress and heirarchy as patriarchal/masculine values, while consensus, nurturing, sustainable, preservation, conservation, choice, process, emotion, participation, sharing, status quo and network are seen as matriarchal/feminine.

Do you agree?

And, to keep the pot boiling, let us add another observation: do clinical phrases like '*prescribed* burning', 'pre-harvest silvicultural *prescriptions*', and 'forest *rehabilitation*' imply that our forests are sick? How would you categorize the following words?

• audits (silviculture) • blade scarifying • booms • brushing • bucking • choking • churning (the soil) • competing (vegetation) • conifer release • controlling • denudation • felling • fertilizing • fire suppression • grapple yarding • harvesting • initial attack • intensive planting • juvenile spacing • loggers • management • mounding • pruning • rapattack • sanitation • spraying • selective harvesting • skidding • stand tending • stumpage • value-added • waste • windthrowing.

What do you think?

If you have any thoughts on this topic, please share them by writing to the editor, B.C. Forest Service Newsletter.

Employment equity for women gets support

It's no news that forestry has traditionally been a male-dominated profession. However, with the increasing participation of women in forestry programs, this is expected to change.

Some progress is being made within the Forest Service as a result of the concerted effort of the Women's Programs committee, whose 1990/91 action plan was approved by the executive on August 21.

A preliminary work-force analysis, to identify the trends and issues that affect women in the ministry, provided the committee with the data needed to put together the action plan.

Some reports on the status of women in the ministry have been made in the past.

"But no one had ever compiled the data," said **Charlene Levis**, steering committee member. "This preliminary work force analysis will serve as a benchmark to track the status of women in the ministry, as well as a source of data."

But the real drive behind the action plan, says Levis, was the input from all of the Women's Programs representatives, who come from various districts, regions and branches.

"Contributing to the success of women's programs is the increased awareness and changing values of line managers," said **Harry Powell**, director, human resources branch, and former ministry advisor to the Women's Secretariat.

It is for this reason that one of the main points made by the steering committee to the executive is that Women's Programs in our ministry be incorporated as part of an employment equity program.

- Women make up about 50 per cent of the work force.
- In the Forest Service, women make up 29 per cent of the work force.
- Of the 360 'excluded positions': 59 positions are held by women — 55 at management levels 1 and 2.
- Out of 1,979 males in the Forest Service, 175 earn less than $1,000 bi-weekly.
- Out of 812 females in the Forest Service, 580 earn less than $1,000 bi-weekly.

"During the '90s we will, along with other public and private sector organizations, be under significant pressure from all sectors to increase the proportional representation of women and other under-represented groups," Powell said.

News systems give better access

Computer systems aren't just implemented overnight.

But the major licence silviculture information system (MLSIS), used to monitor the pre-harvest silviculture prescriptions of major tenure holders, is now complete and available for use.

Regional survey and assessment coordinators will be training all districts this fall. Once training is complete, districts will be able to update and access information on major tenure immediately. MLSIS will be an effective way to assess information when needed.

"The districts were complaining that they were sending their information into a black hole where it was hard to access," said **John Gallimore**, MLSIS forester, silviculture branch.

But now, through the magic of integrated information system technology, users of the forest tenure administration system (FTAS) can also view MLSIS-related information.

The FTAS, which is the first "stream" of the revenue intitiative, is an umbrella for delivering operations functions in a cooperative computer environment. It is being implemented in stages. "Right now, the timber mark registry system, the timber tenure file inquiry and the recreation project inquiry guides are up and running," says **John Mallett**, FTAS project manager, timber harvesting branch.

Mallett is in the process of marketing FTAS, and developing a do-it-yourself instruction program, with the help of information systems branch.

We'll keep you posted.

You said it!

"Reality is a bit like beauty: it's in the eye of the beholder."

Dave Spittlehouse,
Research branch climatologist

Ins and outs

Bob Merrell is the new manager, Green Timbers Forest Nursery.

Bob was transferred from the Surrey Nursery where he worked as a senior nursery technician for five years. Previously, Bob worked in the Powell River forest district, and with MacMillan Bloedel Ltd.

Ken Magee, protection officer, Prince George forest region, will retire on September 21 after 34 years with the Forest Service.

Ken began his career in Nelson in 1956. He was promoted to ranger in 1960, moving to Prince George, then became the Prince Rupert ranger supervisor in 1973. In 1977 he returned to Prince George and was appointed district manager, Prince George west, in 1979. He assumed his present position in 1988.

Ken will be missed by his many friends and co-workers throughout the province. His warm smile and calm manner was deeply appreciated.

— submitted by **Esther Soles**,
correspondent,
Prince George region

In Memoriam

Cyril Peacher, protection assistant, Salmon Arm forest district, died August 11 in an air patrol plane crash, while spotting specific fire reports for the B.C. Forest Service. He was 47.

Peacher was well-respected, and will be missed by his co-workers in the Salmon Arm and Vernon forest districts, who remember him as a capable individual.

Donations can be made to the Cyril Peacher Memorial Fund for the Lupus Foundation, c/o the Enderby and District Credit Union, Box 670, Enderby, B.C., V0E 1V0.

Wooly alternative to herbicides, machines

What do you get when you cross agrology with silviculture? You get sheep.

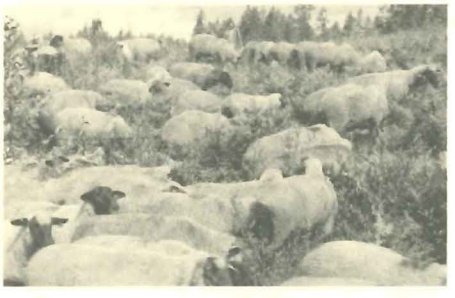
Well, not right away. But it didn't take long for staff in the Clearwater and 100 Mile House forest districts to put two and two together. In 1985, sheep in the two districts were overgrazing their native ranges, said **Geoff Ellen**, Clearwater range resource officer.

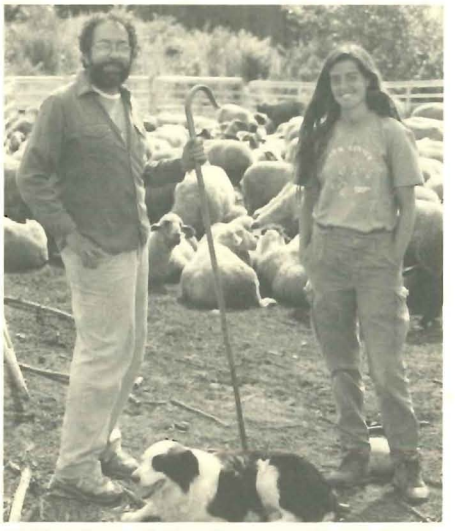
That's when Ellen and his colleagues hit on the idea of putting sheep in areas where they could graze out the herbacious plants that compete with young conifer seedlings.

"Actually, it was really funny — **Dave Tweedhope** was doing exactly the same thing in the 100 Mile district, and our herds were close together but neither of us was aware of it at the time," Ellen said.

Since then, successful district trials, conducted from 1985 to 1989, have warranted further research into using sheep as a silvicultural tool.

This summer, the Port Alberni and Duncan forest districts borrowed the sheep for some trials of their own.





Skilled shepards Ray Green and Penny Dewar are with the herds 24-hours-a-day.

"We had 308 sheep in the Port Alberni forest district," said **Ernie Beadle**, operations manager, forestry. "They have now joined 600 of their colleagues and are munching away in the Arrow forest district. The ministry really has to take its hat off to the people in the Kamloops and Cariboo regions who did the initial work," Beadle said. "All we've done is to use the tools they developed. Like most tools, it won't be the perfect answer. But we're grateful we have it."

There is more to this method than just sending a herd of hungry sheep out onto a plantation.

Silviculturalists have to determine the most effective time of year for grazing and how often it can be done. Predators in the area have to be considered, as well as the effects of sheep droppings on nearby watersheds.

Both Ellen and Beadle are adamant that the secret to success comes down to the shepherd's knowledge and skill.

"**Ray Green,** of West Coast Grazing, has a real commitment to try and make the silvicultural use of sheep work," Beadle said. "And **Penny Dewar**, also with West Coast, is cougar expert."

The sheep-method is appearing to be cost effective and many B.C. companies are now doing research of their own as well as carrying out projects.

"We started our project with 600 sheep in June, then beefed it up to 900 this August," said **Kathy Smith**, area silviculturalist, Westar Timber, Nakusp.

"With some guidance from Geoff, and a lot of research on our own, we have had excellent results and hope to expand.

"At $812 per hectare, (research included) our costs will be substantially less. We still have to do a lot of manual brushing, but this is another silvicultural tool that we can use."

Silviculture aside, the grazing projects could have big agricultural implications as well, Ellen said. Sheep producers could lower their costs of production and be able to compete with New Zealand, which exports low-cost lamb to Canada.

Computer game helps kids "think critically"

State-of-the-art computer forestry games are just starting to surface on the educational scene, and they may be more than just games to the generation of students who will use — and even design these new tools.

Hamish Kimmins, forest ecology professor, University of B.C., is excited about the prospects for the animated, color-graphics microcomputer game "ForToon", which is now at the proof-of-concept stage.

"The high school teachers loved it," he said, "not only because it can help them teach forestry and environmental issues, but because it has the potential to teach critical thinking.

"When completed, ForToon will be fully interactive. The kids can say: hey let's have a wildfire, and then ask what that will do to the greenhouse effect. Children really identify with the human aspect of ForToon, which allows them to decide the names of individuals or the gender of crew members."

ForToon is just one of the output formats of FORECAST, a model developed for researchers and professional decision makers. There is also an intermediate simulation model: FORCYTE.

"We think ForToon is a program that will fill a need for operational staff," said **Warren Mitchell**, silviculture issues forester. "It allows you to anticipate results with a user-friendly format. You can ask a simple question and get a simple answer, even though there are a lot of complex processes going on in between.

"In the past, programs were so complex, they didn't allow field staff to make the gaming projections. This is a more immediate tool."

Forest Service staff were surveyed by Kimmins to find out what kinds of forest management problems they wanted the simulator to solve, said **Mike Blackstock**, assistant silviculture analyst.

"It's not a finished product yet — but he (Kimmins) has a good idea where it is going."

In our next issue, look for more information about computer forestry games.

Keeping fit together:

Many of us can remember how good it feels to stretch, hop, jump or run, but we may find it hard to put the memories of fitter days back into practice.

Our newsletter correspondents have collected some inspiration from several Forest Service staff members who keep fit for fun, to improve their job performance, and to relieve stress.

In the Nelson regional office, a small group of freethinkers has found an **excellent method for relaxing during the lunch hour or coffee breaks.**

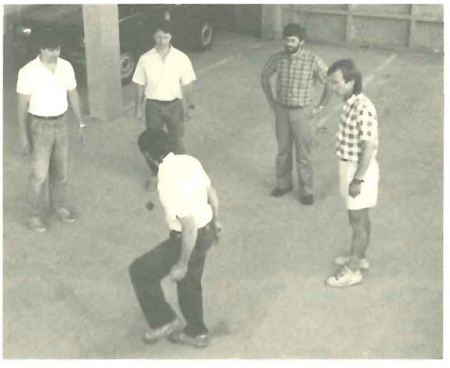
They play "hackey sack," an ancient and honorable tradition that has been rediscovered by North Americans.

"Throughout history, references are legion to games where a ball or sack is struck with any part of the body except the hands," said **Tom Braumandl**, ecologist. "The Mayan calendar was constructed to better schedule hackey sack matches, for which the Mayans built elaborate arenas. And Siegfried, of the *Niebelungenlied Saga*, was actually in search of a hackey sack — not a ring."

According to **Bernie Peschke**, silviculturist, the physical activity combines with camaraderie and informal problem-solving. On particularly bad days, **Mike Curran**, pedologist, has been known to write the names of his enemies on the . . .

The group is hoping to achieve its ultimate goal within the year (an 'oct'). This means that each individual in the circle will manage to pass the sack eight times before it hits the ground. **It takes teamwork, encouragement, and communication.** The present record is seven.

The group is also pleased that a covered hackey sack arena was recently constructed at the Nelson regional office and they are allowing Forest Service vehicles to park there.



Nelson hackey sackers: clockwise - Mike Curran (with sack), Bernie Peschke, Mike Madill, Gerald Reichenback, Tom Braumandl.

— submitted by **Dale Anderson**, correspondent, Nelson forest region

Living so close to the great outdoors should be reason enough to keep fit, but it took a trip to Nepal this spring to show Ailsa Siemens, Squamish forest district receptionist, just what "fit" really means.

"Despite regular walks in the beautiful Squamish district, it wasn't until after I took a 20-day, 290-kilometre trek around the Annapurna circuit in Nepal, that I could honestly say that I was fit.

"Hey, anyone who starts the day at 4 320 metres and hikes along ice ledges to 5 325 metres, then descends on rocky terrain to 3 824 metres, all in one day, has the right to brag a little.

"Now that I'm back to work, **daily walks to and from the office help keep off the nine kilograms I lost while trekking.**"

Brenda Partridge, resource clerk assistant, wasn't intimidated by the return of a slim receptionist from Nepal, and **went on to lose 6.75 kilograms herself with the help of daily mountain bike rides to the office.**

Not to be outdone, the district management team, **Paul Kuster, Don Kinnear, Ken Blom**, and **Liz Robitaille**, have **challenged all staff to a four kilometre bike race.**

The district management team, known as the "Geritol Gang", is in second place awaiting further challenges.

— submitted by **Ailsa Siemens**, correspondent, Squamish forest district

On the helipad in the Quesnel forest district, six-foot six-inch **Andre Kikkert**, a resource assistant, timber, silently practices "katas", which are patterns of strikes and blocks in the martial art Tae Kwon Do.

Andre has been involved in the martial arts since 1982, and enjoys competing against himself. He has found that the **training enables him to conserve energy and recover his wind more quickly** while working in the field. He is **learning how to avoid stressful or confrontational situations** now that he is moving up to the higher levels of training.

— submitted by **Deborah Lipscombe**, correspondent, Quesnel forest district

There are so many people who are dedicated to fitness in the Prince George regional office that it is difficult to choose just a few to highlight. The following are good examples of the commitment shared by many of our staff.

Sandy Currie and Terje Vold

Les Hawkins, appraisal coordinator

Three times a week, Les works out in the gym for 90 minutes using the Nautilaus method. On alternate days he jogs for 8.5 kilometres. He also keeps fit by umpiring in an adult softball league, and enjoys trail hiking with his wife whenever he gets a chance.

Fred Berekoff, appraisal officer

Fred **makes good use of his lunch hours by jogging for approximately seven kilometres three times a week**, while those of us who are not as dedicated to fitness are chowing down.

On the three days he doesn't jog, Fred **works out at a gym in the mornings before coming to work.** These two-hour sessions, using both universal and free weights, begin at 5:30 a.m. That is truly dedication.

In the evenings Fred can often be seen either riding a 10-speed bike or running along behind his three bike-riding sons. During the summer he plays slowpitch on the Forest Service team, and in the winter he plays hockey. As well as cross-country skiing himself, he teaches his kids how to ski. To keep fit at work, he walks up the five flights of stairs to our office — sometimes.

John McClary, recreation officer

John **keeps fit by jogging up our five flights of stairs, twice a day**. He also **makes it a habit to go for a brisk walk during the lunch hour.** At home he lifts weights and also enjoys both snow skiing and water skiing. **During working hours John tries to be aware of his posture and avoids slumping over his paperwork.**

Recently he has been **keeping cool and healthy by drinking at least six cups of water a day.**

Betty Brittons, financial systems coordinator

Betty is a **real inspiration to the 40-plus crowd** who tend to believe that changes in their metabolism make fitness too difficult to bother with.

Looking better every day, Betty rides her mountain bike and **takes brisk walks** whenever she gets the chance. Most days, Betty goes home for lunch, both to get a break and to **prepare and eat the healthy food she enjoys.**

Heidi Evensen, field engineer, roads

Six days a week, rain or shine, Heidi jogs along her 9.5-kilometre route. As well as playing softball two or three times a week and **being aware of eating properly**, Heidi gets a lot of exercise at her job which involves many hours of field work.

These are just some samples of various fit people in our office. We also have swimmers, bikers, hikers and many others. In fact, Betty's example has inspired me to walk to work every morning and to cut down on my fats and sugars. By this time next year I may be a fit person too!

— submitted by **Esther Soles**, correspondent, Prince George forest region

Rena Gillin, zone resource assistant, Prince George forest district, looks so fit she has been featured in the weekend supplement of the *Prince George Citizen*.

How does she do it?

"I'm always looking around for bears," she said. Seriously, Rena doesn't

for fun and inspiration

ike to run ... and then eat.

have a regimented lifestyle so often associated with keeping fit. Her silviculture field work and six hours of being a cocktail waitress at night, are enough to keep her in top condition.

The "majority" of the staff in the Campbell River forest district were happy to hear about the smoking ban which takes effect in October — some wanted it even earlier.

About a dozen people in the district walk or ride bikes to work, others form a slowpitch team. In the 1990 Mt. Washington snow-to-surf race, the district team, known as the "Indistinct Societarians" were fourth overall (out of 150 teams) and won the men's masters division.

They challenge other Vancouver Island Forest Service offices to enter next year's race.

— submitted by **John Tisdale**, correspondent, Campbell River forest district

The Vernon forest district staff are active in various community-organized fitness events. So much so, that Linda Vlasveld, correspondent, keeps a photo album of events.

Recently, the district entered two teams in the B.C. Hydro "Corporate Cup" and tied for first place, bringing home the two top prizes.

"Some of the staff in the Merritt office, particularly management, may be more fit than staff in other districts," says **Ian Howes**, operations manager.

"They work on the top floor of one of Merritt's tallest buildings. By the most conservative estimates, altogether, staff on the top floor make about 200 trips per day up and down the stairs. That's like climbing a Carmanah giant 15 times."

Mel Monteith, Clearwater forest district manager, **cycles 25 kilometres to and from work**. Before discovering bicycles, Mel walked 11 kilometres to and from work, regardless of the season.

All together now . . . in the Kamloops region, 40 staff from the regional and district offices and tanker base joined the YMCA through a corporate membership. **Heather Gell**, who walks from 5:45 a.m. to 6:45 a.m. before going to work, spearheaded the drive for members, along with **Nina Barber**, resource clerk assistant, Kamloops district.

When lunch time rolls around, there are some Forest Service employees who would rather run first — and eat later.

At the Cowichan Lake Research Station fitness has always been important and operational decisions, to purchase mountain bikes or return vehicles, have been influenced accordingly.

The practice of running at noon was started five years ago by research scientists **Jack Woods** and **John Russell**.

"Not only did it provide a break from the office, it seemed to improve overall productivity," said **Don Carson**, research station manager. "Now we have made it a year-round habit and the run is often concluded with a jump into Cowichan Lake — brief in the winter months."

In 1989, a fitness circuit was completed with the hard work of an Environmental Youth Corps crew and the support of research station staff.

"Combined with the run, the circuit helps to condition the heart and lungs, increase muscle strength, endurance and flexibility," Carson said. "It has been a great addition to the camp and provides visitors with a way to lose the extra weight put on at the cookhouse."

In Victoria, some noon hour runners get such a boost from their good habit, that they do it without the amenities of showers or fitness circuits.

Sandy Currie and **Terje Vold** of integrated resources branch, and some of their colleagues, follow a makeshift route along the streets and through the parks near their downtown Victoria office.

"It really charges you up and gets you set for the afternoon," said Currie, who has been running at noon since 1984. "There are some days when you have to force yourself, but usually you feel better afterwards," he said.

Vold, who has been running for 10 years, also cycles to and from work when possible.

"Running is very relaxing," Vold said. "I really do think it helps your mental health — especially for evening out and putting things in perspective. While I'm running, I think about what I will be doing in the afternoon, so I am better prepared."

Running is especially stimulating during the winter months, Vold says, because when you work in an office you spend so little time outdoors.

On July 31 **Doug Flintoft**, Quesnel forest district manager, reached his goal of running 10,000 miles. He started keeping a log in 1975.

Flintoft runs for personal satisfaction and good health — three to five miles at lunch and five to 10 miles over the weekend.

He says that running breaks the day up and helps him avoid the "two o'clock nod." In the past he has run on cruise ships, at 3 000 metres in Hawaii, in Finland, Innuvik, and in Kitimat, where he was chased by bears.

— submitted by **Deborah Lipscombe**, correspondent, Quesnel forest district

John Ingram, silviculture officer, Campbell River, not only runs during his lunch hour, but after work as well. No wonder he can run 30 kilometres in one day. He is in training for his second running of the Victoria marathon being held this fall.

The Nelson forest region and Kootenay Lake district staff have been on the fitness bandwagon all year.

"Our greatest quest was to enter a corporate cup team in the annual Bloomsday 12-kilometre run in Spokane, Washington, which attracted more than 51,000 entrants."

Ailsa and Bill Siemens: fitness Nepal style

They didn't win, but managed to stimulate enough interest in the race to enter two or three Nelson teams next year.

The team also issues a challenge to other Forest Service offices to enter a corporate team and they have a few pointers to help you.

Al Bradley: The secret to surviving this race, is to find a nice bum to follow for 12 kilometres.

Al Coombs: Order your race singlets a couple of sizes too small — it will give you the incentive to get in shape.

Betty Corbin-Charman: If you want to "place", then have a woman on your team. She will train harder than anyone just so she can show up all the men on the team.

Robert Westhoff: The first kilometre is nothing — they push, pull, or carry you. After five kilometres your mind goes numb. At eight kilometres you wonder what you are doing in the race. When you hit 11 kilometres you no longer wonder: you wander off the track, sit down, and get right ticked off with the idiots who are running in the opposite direction, wearing "finisher's" shirts. At 12 kilometres you see a sign that says "smile, you are being photographed" so you run as if you had just started. Then, you collapse right — across the finish line.

Terry Peter: Don't wear a hat if the wind is blowing. You will have such a stiff arm from carrying it 12 kilometres that you won't be able to write for a week.

— submitted by **Dale Anderson**, correspondent, Nelson forest region

Diplomacy exercised for FRDA

By **Jim Challenger**, public affairs branch

Although no funding has yet been approved for a second Canada-B.C. joint Forest Resource Development Agreement, representatives from industry, associations, federal and provincial governments, as well as contractors and consultants, attended a workshop in Nanaimo, June 11 to build a framework for extension services and public information in B.C.

It could have been the workshop from hell — but it wasn't — thanks to workshop facilitator **John McCullough**, Baker McCullough Imagineers.

McCullough, who is sort of a cross between **Henry Kissinger** and an aerobics instructor, showed us that we could only achieve our collective vision through a collaborative effort. Gracefully, he led us through exercises that demonstrated just how much we had in common.

A 'statement of purpose' distilled from everyone's input, confirmed that we would work "to provide a full range of effective training, education and communication services through a collaborative and responsive framework."

Next, a series of specific objectives were drafted by the entire group. Volunteers put their names on the line to take personal responsibility for achieving the objectives. Others had the opportunity to sign up as active participants, consultants, or to be kept informed.

The objectives, along with the name of the coordinator, are:

- **Drew Brasier**, silviculture branch, to develop a neutral and representative structure to meet our statement of purpose;
- **Art Shortreid**, Forestry Canada, to put in place a master plan for securing sustained funding and staffing for achieving our vision and purpose;
- **Roberta Parish**, research branch, to identify roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies involved in extension, education and communication;
- **Jim Challenger**, public affairs branch, to put in place a responsive plan for transferring information, including: definitions of target groups; organization and coordination of all resources and activities; timetables; and, follow-up and evaluation;
- **Alison Nicholson**, research branch, to establish a leadership position in exploring and developing the emerging paradigm (pattern) in forestry and to promote and accelerate the acceptance of new technology and thinking;
- **Cindy Pearce**, consultant, Vancouver, to put in place a strategy for the promotion of lifelong learning within the forestry community; and,
- **Dave Wilford**, Prince Rupert forest region, to solicit active participation, representation and support from all forest resource stakeholders.

Lofty objectives? Yes, but the will to see them achieved by workshop participants was never stronger.

Each of us left with a personal commitment to work towards our common vision and to start "creating the future" of forest education, training and communications in B.C.

Mice and flood make summer memorable

Normally, down in the underground, where rows and rows of ministry records are kept in Victoria records services, things are pretty quiet.

Not this summer.

First, there were mice who invaded the files in search of paper to build their nests.

"We're helping them with housing," said **Barrie Goodwin**, supervisor, records services, who tends to find the good side of the situation.

"The thing that was so nice about it was that the mice were considerate," Goodwin said.

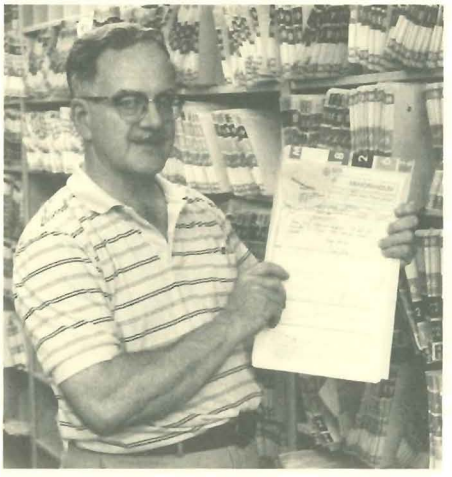
Instead of taking the whole document, they nibbled off everything except the name and address — so it will be easier to trace.

The mice were neat and careful in their pursuit of paper. It was just by chance that, out of the thousands of files, records services staff noticed a rip in one of the papers.

And there was more excitement in the basement this summer.

Goodwin came in to work one morning and found the entire floor covered in water.

The flood soaked about 180 boxes of files. After the scene was photographed, the files were put into cold storage and will be freeze-dried to minimize the damage.



Barrie Goodwin shows document chewed by mice who left only a name.

Even with the mice and the flood "there was nothing really lost that can't be replaced," Goodwin said.

Right: After the flood.

"Conk" in Prince George means they like you

By **Esther Soles**, correspondent

A reward and recognition initiative in the Prince George regional office has staff waiting eagerly every second Friday to see who will be the next to get conked.

A giant conk, donated by **Richard Reich**, forest pathologist, has been mounted on a handcrafted and engraved wooden stand. The engraving reads "Conk Award — With Appreciation."

The first recipient, chosen by the reward and recognition committee, was **Marcia Staub**, accounts payable clerk. Within two weeks, Marcia had to choose a deserving successor. The idea is to present the award to "a fellow employee who helps us do our jobs in an easier or more professional manner."

Marcia passed the award on to **Jean Fricker**, personnel clerk. Jean's delight in being honored was evident in the ear-to-ear grin she wore for the entire day. Two weeks later, Jean chose receptionist **Wendy Ellis** as the conk recipient. Our final winner to date, word processing operator **Brenda Ziglin**, is proudly displaying the conk on her desk at present.

Wendy Ellis (left) accepts the "Conk" award from Jean Fricker.

As well as the actual conk, each winner receives a certificate which attests to their "outstanding service, support and contribution to team spirit", and their own button which says: "I've been conked."

This award has brought about a renewed pride of accomplishment and team spirit and has been so successful that there is talk of doubling the fun by bringing in a second award. Because, in the Prince George regional office, the happiest person around is the one who just got "conked."

Velda inspires from on-high

Velda Mork was the first employee in the Vanderhoof forest district to be presented with an award by a staff reward and recognition committee recently.

Velda was surprised at a staff meeting (which she tried to avoid) with a Fuschia basket and spicy ode, written by **Craig Hooper**, (with apologies to all poets living and dead), entitled:

To Velda the Lookout Lady on the Occasion of Her 11th Year on Sinkut Mountain Lookout

To raise money for their reward and recognition program the Vanderhoof staff held an auction, assisted by **Lianne Clearwaters** from V.I.P Auction Mart.

What was on the block? The district management team.

The winners were able to use their managers for three hours one afternoon, to do whatever they wanted, as long as it was work-related.

The grand total raised at this humorous event was $204.

— submitted by **Monica Hall**, Vanderhoof forest district

No room for smoke

As of October 1, all B.C. government workplaces will be smoke-free.

The policy is being implemented in response to the effects of environmental tobacco smoke.

"The ministry will adopt the policy that has been set out," said **Jim Stobie**, manager, occupational health and accident prevention, human resources branch.

As the ministry's appointed coordinator of the smoke-free policy, Stobie says that "cooperative compliance" will be sought from employees, who will have to go outside of buildings to smoke.

What affects do such bans have on smokers? "Generally, a good percentage of people voluntarily quit," Stobie said.

'Forests' wins for best participation

Our ministry won the 1989 Suggestion Awards Program plaque for the most participation by any ministry.

The Ministry of Health won the 'Ministry of the Year' plaque for 1989, which was held by the Ministry of Forests in 1988.

Ted Murray, recreation analysis specialist, integrated resources branch, won an award for initiating an inter-ministry working group.

Kamill Apt, landscape inventory development forester, evaluated Murray's suggestion, which brings together the ministries of Forests, Environment, Tourism, and Parks.

"The harmonized goals and strategies of the different ministries will diffuse much of the public controversy over environmental, resource extraction, and resource-and land-use diversification issues," Apt said. "This will likely yield substantial social, economic, and political benefits."

Murray will receive a Cross pen and certificate for his suggestion.

Marvin Wilkinson, scaling coordinator, Prince George forest region, will receive $375 for his suggestion to complete 'summary of scale' forms (for timber harvested from cruise-based tenures) in districts and mail them directly to valuation data services for billing. This would allow cruise-based invoices to be issued one month sooner.

The **Ministry Suggestion Awards** program is also beginning to bear fruit.

The first recipient in the decentralized program was **Andy MacKinnon**, manager, forest ecology research, research branch whose $100 award "went to a good cause."

He signed his cheque over to the bartender and treated his co-workers after work.

Presenting the award at a research branch staff meeting, integrated resource manager **Gerry Still**, explained that MacKinnon put the branch on the leading edge by suggesting that staff should coordinate travel arrangements to save money.

Ex-marking crew members hope to meet annually

A reunion of ex-silviculture tree markers was held in July at the actual location where marking crews were stationed in the 1950s and '60s — Smithers Landing on Babine Lake.

About a year and a half ago, **Jim Barnes**, zone resource assistant, Fort St. James forest district drew up a list with a few other crew members. Surprisingly, 60 crew persons were found and most indicated an interest in reuniting.

A reunion date was set for the Canada Day long weekend and 10 members of the "old crew" showed up with spouses and even a few grandchildren.

There were a few parties and potlucks. Photo albums were passed around and stories were shared around the campfire. A good time was had by all — even though the weather and the bugs did not cooperate.

Another reunion is planned for 1991, hopefully with more of the "old crew."

— submitted by **Jim Barnes**, zone resource assistant, Fort St. James

Left to right: Pete Valk, Jim Barnes, Charlie Willson, Russ Trenaman, Ed Siwicki, Dennis Gardon, Gord Finch, George Van Tine, Ross Johnson and Art Twaites.

Weigh-in set for October 31

In 1989 Campbell River forest technician **Jim Simpson** became the "king of the pumpkin patch" with an 88-kilogram pumpkin (nurtured on his secret formula beer), that he entered in the local Forest Service staff pumpkin-growing contest.

This year, all Forest Service staff who think they may have a big one, are welcome to weigh-in for 1990 to participate in this "friendly game."

The official weigh-in day is Halloween. According to expert advice, you should harvest your giant pumpkin before the first frost (with several strong friends) and store it in a warm, dry place.

— submitted by **John Tisdale**, correspondent, Campbell River forest district

Hard hats "mandatory" next year

Dave Gilbert, acting director, inventory branch, well-known for his technological innovations, demonstrated a new application for GPS (global positioning system) at the first inventory branch golf tournament in Victoria, June 22.

Playing before a packed gallery, Dave first amazed onlookers with his enthusiastic swings and quickness in locating errant balls with the GPS.

GPS is a compact electronic receiving device which can determine accurate geographic positions by triangulating on the signals from three or more satellites. Clear?

The inventory branch tournment attracted 44 entrants — half claiming "duffer" status which was believable.

Two players distinguished themselves with 'birdies' - one robin on the first hole and a mallard on the sixth. Birds were not the only endangered species and hard hats will be mandatory next year.

Special thanks go to organizers **Chon Kim, Gordon Creed, Gerry Bourdon and Dag Kristiansen.**

— submitted by **Jack McLellan**, correspondent, inventory branch

Districts mixed up

The district office referred to in a caption on page six of the July issue, should have been Morice, not Bulkley, which is a close neighbor but is not in Houston.

On the same page, it is the town of Chetwynd, not the Chetwynd forest district, that was chosen to be Canada's 'Forestry Capital' in 1992.

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