



## **BCCFA 2022 Conference and AGM October 19 – 21 A Brief Summary**

Over three plus days, nearly 200 people made their way to Nakusp to participate in the BCCFA's 2022 Conference and AGM and to join the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the organization.

On Tuesday, delegates had the opportunity to participate in pre-conference field trips featuring Kootenay innovation. Thank you to Kalesnikoff and SIFCo for offering tours of their spaces.

Throughout Wednesday morning we were treated to a field trip to NACFOR's operating area, which included stops at one of their fuel treatment areas, Box Lake Lumber, and a beautiful lakeside lunch hike. On Wednesday afternoon delegates broke into groups and visited the Southern Mountain Central Selkirk Caribou maternity pen, or had the opportunity to work with Alan Simpson in a workshop on respectful negotiation, enhanced communication, and personal capacity building.

Our reception on Wednesday night was wonderfully attended and we enjoyed a brilliantly delivered presentation from the Arrow Lakes Historical Society on the history of logging in this area. We extend our gratitude to Richard Whitney from the Lakes People of the Colville Confederated Tribes for welcoming our delegates to gather on this traditional territory.

On Thursday morning the 2022 BCCFA Indicators Report was released. Our first session of the day highlighted the new provincial vision for forestry and how our community forests enhance and contribute to that vision. Thank you to Eamon O'Donoghue, Julie MacDougall and Doug Kelly for joining us this week to share their insights. We learned that a large focus of the work ahead will be moving from spatial management to dynamic, adaptive management of our landscapes.

Next, we were treated to a fascinating panel discussion on landscape level planning with moderator Garnet Mierau, Garry Merkel, Beth Eagles, Dave Gill and Erik Leslie. The community forest managers shared how they have been working under landscape plans for over 10 years, plans generated through deep engagement with the community with a long term lens. Momentum for landscape level planning must be driven from the land. And we must meet the people, the constituents, those who the plan is for - as we work to understand values, principles and priorities. This path ahead may come with its challenges, but will result in a more sustainable and resilient land, forest and future. Garry Merkel challenged the group to consider how timber supply is best driven by land and forest management decisions, and not vice versa.

Afterwards, Jeremy Shelford, a forester and lawyer with one of our sponsors - Ratcliff & Co., shared his expertise on the legal work that community forests may be faced with during their operations. We

learned that legal aid is available to community forests for a range of topics including log sales agreements, board governance and regulatory work.

Thank you to our Keynote Speaker, Jason Fisher, who brought us up to speed on forest carbon offsets.

For our afternoon session, Jennifer Gunter joined Steve Kozuki of FESBC, as well as Dr. Lori Daniels and her team Kelsey and Kea, for a discussion on adaptation for wildfire resilience. Through this session, moderated by Randy Spyksma, this message was reinforced - the time is now, and we must collectively do more on a provincial level to increase our wildfire mitigation efforts. As Lori stated, we are already awake - from the many fires of the past decade, we are all now aware of the urgency of our situation. We just need the political will and increased support, advocacy and capacity to shift into a higher gear of action to protect our communities and landbase from catastrophic fire events. We learned that while community forests are leaders in this work, there is still much to be done.

Thank you to Minister Conroy for joining us at our special 20th Anniversary banquet, to present the Robin Hood Award for Excellence in Community Forestry. A heartfelt congratulations again to Wetzin'kwa CF for being selected for the 2022 award - it is so well-deserved and we are so proud of the incredible work of community forests in this province. The innovation and ingenuity we see year after year from our award applicants is truly inspiring.

We were delighted to watch the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary video created by our UBC Intern, Natasha Silva, with the Masters of International forest Management Program. BCCFA members contributed brief testimonials of the ways their community forests and the network have made a difference both personally and in their communities.

We are pleased to welcome Tania Solanas from McLeod Lake Mackenzie CF to the board and to Dan Macmaster who is returning to the board for a 2 year term, as decided during the AGM.

Finally, with a look towards the future, we wrapped up our sessions with a panel of young forest professionals who shared their experiences working in the forest industry and their vision for the industry they would like to work in 20 years from now. Corky Evans summed up the session saying, "New ideas, new energy and the culture shift is an essential part of looking into the future. Transfer of knowledge and diversity, inclusion are challenges to overcome and are also essential to change and the future of the industry."

The conference was a testament to what we have seen in our work over the past 20 years. There is no doubt that community forestry provides a vision for the future of forestry in our province that is innovative, forward-thinking, and inclusive of multiple values on the landscape and in communities. Community forestry takes heart, courage and hard work, and we are proud and humbled to be walking this path alongside all of our members and partners as we continue to move forward and to support the practice and expansion of sustainable community forest management in BC.