



British Columbia
**Community
Forest
Association**
local people, local forests, local decisions



2023 BCCFA CONFERENCE & AGM June 7-9, 2023 Kamloops, BC

Conference Summary Report

Over 200 delegates gathered in Kamloops, BC from June 7-9th, 2023 to participate in the BC Community Forest Association's (BCCFA) sold out conference. The event was co-hosted by Logan Lake Community Forest, Lower North Thompson Community Forest, Clinton Community Forest and Wells Gray Community Forest. Thank you to each of these hosts for their efforts in providing a unique and informative experience for this year's attendees.

On Tuesday, June 6th, attendees had the opportunity to participate in pre-conference field trips featuring a new fuel break at Clinton Community Forest or a visit to the mill site at the Lower North Thompson Community Forest.

Throughout Wednesday morning we were treated to a fascinating field trip to Logan Lake Community Forest, which included multiple stops highlighting the wildfire risk reduction initiatives of the community forest throughout the prevention and recovery stages of their experience with the Tremont Creek Wildfire. The management team of Forsite Consultants spearheaded the planning of this great event.



Field tour of Logan Lake Community Forest (left and right)



Wednesday afternoon mountain biking crew

On Wednesday afternoon delegates had leisure time to network and explore the local mountain biking and hiking trails.

The Wednesday evening reception provided an excellent opportunity for everyone to gather for a formal welcome from Event Organizer Susan Mulkey (BCCFA), and an acknowledgement of our event taking place on the traditional lands of the Tk'emlups to Secwepemc First Nation.

On Thursday morning our first session of the day highlighted the province's vision for the future of the forest sector. Each one of our presenters helped us understand how the provincial government is working to bring this vision to fruition in collaboration with First Nations, along and with forest sector stakeholders and partners. Speakers included Shane Berg, Ministry of Forests, Assistant Deputy Minister, Chief Forester; Colin Ward, Assistant Deputy Minister, Reconciliation and Natural Resource Sector Policy, Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship; Rachael Pollard, Ministry of Forests, Executive Director, Forest Sector Transformation; and, Doug Kelly, Director, Ministry of Forests Forest Tenures Branch.



Event Organizer Susan Mulkey & BCCFA President Randy Spyksma



Jennifer Gunter, Colin Ward, Rachael Pollard, Shane Berg, Doug Kelly



BCCFA Executive Director Jennifer Gunter

Next, the program featured a panel discussion on prescribed fire and Indigenous-led cultural burning. Our fantastic presenters emphasized the value of Indigenous knowledge, the role of fire as a management tool, and the need for collaboration and communication in incorporating Indigenous practices into forest management.



Francis Johnson, Manager, Esk'etemc (Alkali Lake) First Nation Community Forest & Hereditary Chief



Moderator Tony Pesklevits (BC Wildfire Service); Jordon Gabriel (Lil'wat Forestry Ventures); Joe Gilchrist (Nlaka'pamux and Secwepemc Nations); Francis Johnson; Klay Tindall (Lil'wat Forestry Ventures); Hugh Flinton (Williams Lake Community Forest)

Thursday afternoon included multiple concurrent breakout sessions covering a variety of topics. During the Old Growth session with Norah White, we learned about the development of the Action Plan aimed at implementing the recommendations put forth by the Old Growth Strategic Review (OGSR) and discussed priority topics for community forests.

Meanwhile, Aleece Laird of Amplify Consulting Inc. provided a presentation on communications, highlighting that purposeful, intentional, timely, and consistent communication is key, and monitoring communication success through metrics like website visits is essential. Building social licence is a long-term process that requires consistent effort.



Norah White, Executive Director, Provincial Old Growth Strategy, Office of the Chief Forester, Ministry of Forests



Allan Bennett and Debbie Zandbelt



Aleece Liard



Kelly Osbourne

Debbie Zandbelt, Timber Pricing Forester & BCCFA Advisor, and Allan Bennett, Director Timber Pricing Branch, Ministry of Forests, provided an update on the new stumpage redetermination objectives and dates for all CFAs and the new waste assessment process for Interior CFAs.

Susan Mulkey provided an overview the governance history of community forest organizations in BC - what works and the pitfalls to avoid - during the Community Forest Board Governance Essentials breakout session.

We learned about the Forest Landscape Plan framework and how community forests can be involved from Julie Castonguay, Manager, Forest Landscape Planning, Forest Science, Planning and Practices Branch, Office of the Chief Forester, Ministry of Forests. Julie also presented in another session with Kelly Osbourne, BC Wildfire Service, giving delegates an update on the Forest and Range Practices Act reforms and provisions for Government to establish mandatory forest practices within WUI areas to address the critical need to protect human health and safety.

Finally, our breakout sessions included a Wildfire Resiliency Roundtable – Manager’s Knowledge Exchange, featuring a presentation from Dr. Kelsey Copes-Gerbitz & Dr. Sarah Dickson-Hoyle, UBC Faculty of Forestry. Community forest managers shared what they have learned through their work to date, and what skills and tools all community forest managers need to be successful in the new era of wildfire risk and climate change.



Warren Hansen, Mike Francis , Sky Jarvis



Banquet guests on Thursday evening of the conference



Susan Mulkey, Tony Pesklevits, Jennifer Gunter

Thursday concluded with the BCCFA's annual banquet and silent auction. Thank you to all those who donated items to the silent auction, making it the most successful one yet! The funds raised go towards sponsoring students to attend future conferences.

Delegates had an opportunity to socialize and view the excellent poster presentations and informational displays from the UBC students who attended this year's event.



Chief Forester Shane Berg with 2023 Robin Hood Award Winners, Williams Lake Community Forest

The banquet featured a presentation of the 2023 Robin Hood Memorial Award for Excellence in Community Forestry. This year's award was given to Williams Lake Community Forest - an honour that is well-deserved.

The Williams Lake Community Forest has many programs designed to benefit the local community, uphold best practices in community forestry, and contribute to the local economy.

Some of those programs include a robust project grant fund for local community groups, with contributions of 5% of the community forest's annual profit; strong relationship-building between the founding partners, the City of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake First Nation; and, a significant wildfire reduction program, treating 850 hectares to date.

Thank you to Chief Forester, Shane Berg, for presenting this year's Robin Hood award.



BCCFA Board of Directors (left to right): Tania Solonas, Ken Nielsen, Dan Macmaster, Warren Hansen, Randy Spysma, Aurora Lavender, Daniel Gratton, Klay Tindall and George Brcko,

The final day of the conference commenced with the 2023 AGM for members. We are pleased to welcome Aurora Lavender of Wetzin'kwa Community Forest to the BCCFA Board of Directors.

A special note of gratitude to Colin Macleod, who retired from the board this year after serving 3 consecutive terms. Thank you also to Frances Swan for her time as a Director.

The conference concluded with what many agreed was the most powerful and moving session of the entire event. Moderated by David Waldron of Synapse Strategies, this session featured compelling presentations from Gwen Bridge and Lennard Joe on the work of reconciliation and integrating Western and Indigenous approaches to governance, policy and stewardship of lands, water and ecosystems.

The session encouraged thoughtful discussion and participation with the entire room of delegates, making for an inspiring and stunning conclusion to a wonderful 3-day conference.



Gwen Bridge, Gwen Bridge Consulting Ltd.



Lennard Joe, CEO First Nations Forestry Council



Jennifer Gunter, David Waldron, Susan Mulkey, Gwen Bridge, Lennard Joe

We would like to express our gratitude to all of the delegates, sponsors, speakers and exhibitors who joined us in Kamloops for the 2023 Conference & AGM. The work of community forestry takes courage, innovation and leadership, and we are consistently reminded of these qualities in our membership every time we gather to learn and celebrate our successes.

For conference presentations and detailed session notes [click here](#).

