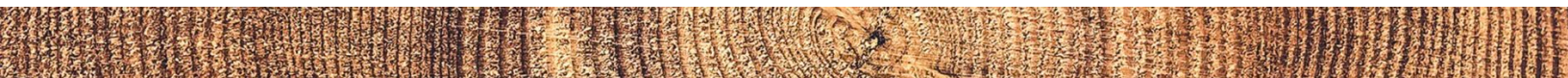


COMMUNITY FOREST INDICATORS 2023



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

MEASURING THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY



WE ARE GRATEFUL to our members who contributed their time and effort in providing responses to this year's indicators survey. We also deeply appreciate the support and dedication of the BC Community Forest Association Board of Directors.

Many thanks go out to our numerous government, industry, and academic partners for the productive and collaborative relationships that we share. Together we have fostered communication, understanding, and shared goals to create opportunities, to innovate and to address challenges. We look forward to more positive collaborations in the future.

This report is a snapshot of community forestry activities in British Columbia for the last fiscal year for the reporting organizations. Our annual Community Forest Indicators Report tells the stories of community forestry across the province.

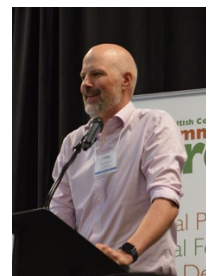
Stories are at the heart of our work; they connect us with one another and need to be shared. Over the years, community forests have demonstrated leadership in innovation, adaptive management, and a commitment to long-term planning horizons. The BCCFA is proud to work alongside and advocate for such an inspiring group of organizations and individuals. Our hope is that this report helps spread the word about the strides our members are taking to uphold multiple values on the landscape while working together towards a more sustainable future.

Follow us on social media to learn more about the stories and successes of our members!

— Jennifer Gunter, BCCFA Executive Director;
Susan Mulkey, Senior Manager and Governance Specialist; and Carly Dow, Manager of Communications and Outreach



OUR THANKS to our partners and collaborators including: BC Wildfire Service, Forest Enhancement Society of BC, BC Ministry of Forests, Forest Professionals of BC, University of BC Faculty of Forestry, Federation of BC Woodlot Associations, First Nations Forestry Council, Council of Forest Industries, BC Forest Safety Council, and Truck Loggers Assn. CARLY DOW PHOTOS





BCCFA CONFERENCE 2022 FIELD TRIP ON ARROW LAKES, PHOTO BY CARLY DOW

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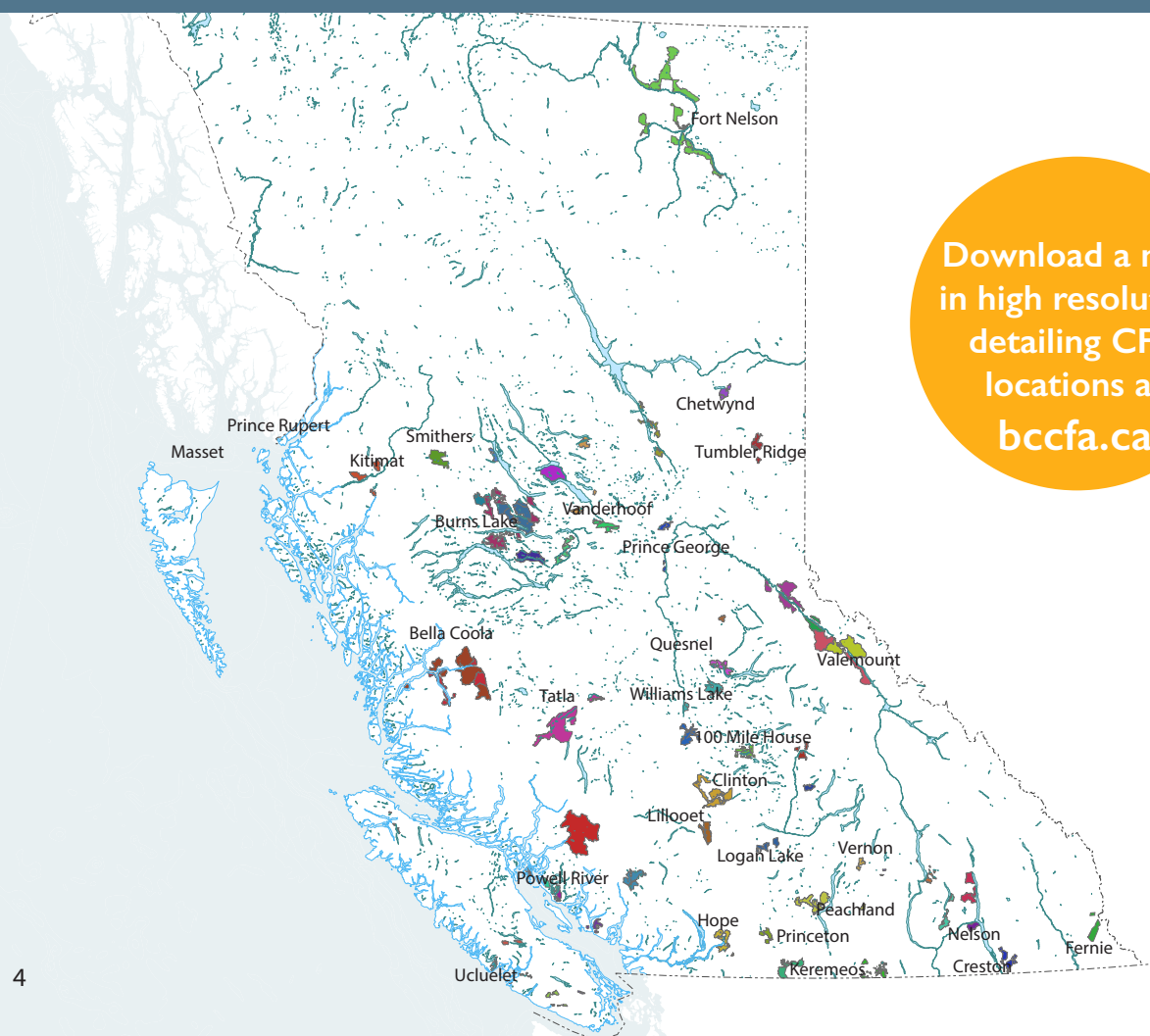
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COMMUNITY FORESTS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE 2023 INDICATORS SURVEY

Alberni Valley Community Forest Corporation
Bamfield Huu-ay-aht Community Forest Society
Barkley Community Forest Corporation
Bella Coola Resource Society
Cheakamus Community Forest Ltd. Partnership
Cherry Ridge Management Committee
Cheslatta Community Forest
Chinook Community Forest Ltd.
Clinton & District Community Forest of BC Ltd.
Creston Valley Forest Corporation
District of Fort St James
District of Vanderhoof
Dunster Community Forest Society
Eniyud Community Forest
Esk'etemc Community Forest
Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative
HFN Forestry LP
Kaslo & District Community Forest Society

Khowutzun Community Forest
Little Prairie Community Forest Inc.
Logan Lake Community Forest Corporation
Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society
Nakusp and Area Community Forest, Inc. (NACFOR)
Powell River Community Forest Ltd.
Qala:yit Forestry Ltd. Partnership
Spelkúmtn Community Forest
Sunshine Coast Community Forest
Tumbler Ridge Community Forest Corporation
Valemount Community Forest Company Ltd.
Wells Gray Community Forest Corporation
Wells-Barkerville Community Forest Ltd
West Boundary Community Forest Inc.
Westbank First Nation Community Forest
Wetzin'Kwa Community Forest Corporation
Williams Lake Community Forest Ltd.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA the way we manage forests is undergoing significant changes driven by a provincial shift in forest policy. This includes an increased focus on Indigenous-led initiatives, collaborative co-management, and ecosystem resiliency. Community forests have long been leaders in implementing these priorities on the land base, operating as long-term, area-based tenures held by local communities. Through their dedication to sustainable practices, collaboration with Indigenous communities, and efforts to enhance forest resource value, community forests have been pioneers in driving positive change within the forestry sector. Their experiences and successes can serve as valuable examples for the industry as it continues to evolve, emphasizing the integration of Indigenous knowledge, collaboration, and value-added activities in shaping the future of forestry in British Columbia.

This report is a compilation of results from the BC Community Forest Association's ninth Community Forest Indicators Survey, providing insight into the wide range of values of community forestry. Quantitative

data was collected for 18 indicators outlined in the report, along with stories of what community forests experienced over the past reporting year. Thirty-five operating community forests, 71% of the BCCFA membership, participated in the 2022/2023 survey to provide data for this report.

Through their dedication to sustainable practices, collaboration with Indigenous communities, and efforts to enhance forest resource value, community forests have been pioneers in driving positive change within the forestry sector.

PHOTO: REGENERATION AFTER THE BURN,
BY WILLIAMS LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST

First Nations Collaboration

First Nations peoples are deeply involved in many aspects of community forestry as partners, owners, board members and employees of community forest organizations.

73%

of participants for this year's survey have taken action to respond to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) with a variety of commitments, including co-ownership, co-management, and shared decision making.

Many community forests have **successful partnerships and co-management** due to the trustworthy and long-lasting relationships they have fostered over time, which serves as an inspiration as more effort is put into reconciliation with First Nations in forest policy.



IRVIN JOHNSON, ESK'ETEMC ELDER, PHOTO BCCFA

Over 50%

of community forest respondents have cooperative planning in place with First Nations, and nearly half have employment contracts with First Nations and designated representation of their board of directors.



ON THE WAGON ROAD, KASLO, PHOTO: S. MULKEY

Healthy and Resilient Communities

Over the years, community forests have invested over **\$8 million** in wildfire risk reduction, while managing **over \$17 million** in grants and funding from outside sources, such as the Forest Enhancement Society of BC.

Nearly 2,000 volunteer hours

were contributed by community forest boards and staff to conduct educational programming.

The reporting community forests have invested over **\$2.4 million in recreation** and created **1,141 kms of trails** to date.

By managing for values beyond timber sales, community forests are strengthening and amplifying local social benefits.

Jobs and Economic Contributions

Community forests created 0.51 full time jobs/1,000 cubic metres in forestry, logging, and support services, which is approximately

83% greater than industry average

Over \$1.4 million

on average was generated in economic activity during the reporting period by survey respondents.

95%

of respondents made cash and/or in-kind contributions in their communities in the past reporting year, with a significant total of over **\$20 million** in the form of dividends, donations, grants, special projects and more.

Over \$2.2 million

was invested in activities that contributed to economic diversification during the reporting period, including wildfire mitigation, operating small sawmills, and supporting non-timber forest products.



Environmental Stewardship

Community forests actively manage for ecologically and culturally sensitive areas, with

75%

of reporting community forests having a plan in place or a plan in progress for conserving old growth beyond existing legal obligations.

During the reporting period, respondents invested

\$ half a million

in forest stewardship activities and additionally managed **\$455,000** from external sources.

Over 75%

of reporting community forests exceeded environmental compliance standards with practices such as maintaining larger than legislated riparian protection and exceeding leave-tree requirements during harvesting.

Total harvest in the reporting year:

813,974m³

Average harvest:

23,256 m³



Background information on the Community Forest Indicators survey questions and methodology as well as an electronic copy of this report can be found on our website at: bccfa.ca/indicators-report

Learn more about the
BCCFA and community
forestry in BC



ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

AAC = Allowable Annual Cut

CF = Community forest*

CFA = Community forest agreement

Ha = Hectares

PY = Person Year of Employment.
One PY, considered 1 full
time job = 1,750 hours.

M³ = cubic metres of wood

*Note: We often use the term “community forest” to refer to the organization that holds a community forest agreement.

PHOTO: KASLO & DISTRICT COMMUNITY
FOREST PLANTATION, BY SUSAN MULKEY

Indicator 1

Number of Jobs

COMMUNITY FORESTS CREATE JOBS in rural locations and communities. Person year (PY) is the metric used in this indicator to calculate employment per 1,000 m³ of timber harvested. Because harvest volume varies between each community forest, this metric is the best tool to explain jobs created based on harvest volumes.

Number of Person Year (PY) ^a based on reported harvest of 813,974 m ³				
Employment	Forestry, logging and support ^b	Trail building, firefighting, research etc.	Milling ^c	All activities ^d
Person years /1,000 m ³	0.514	0.016	0.494	1.024
Average person years per community forest	14.44	0.44	13.88	28.76
Total person years	418.79	12.87	402.45	834.11
Notes: Analysis completed by Peak Solutions Consulting Inc. ^a In accordance with BC Stats, one Person Year (PY) is 1,750 hours. This replaces Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of 1,820 hours used in previous BCCFA reports. ^b Includes forest management, logging, hauling, road building, silviculture (planting, spacing pruning etc.), administration and accounting. ^c Milling employment is based on jobs with one job representing one person year in this report. ^d Sum of Person Years for forestry, logging, support services, trail building etc., and milling.				

The total employment coefficient of 1.02 is an increase from the previous report of 0.94. This, along with a slight increase in harvest to 813,974 m³, generated approximately 834 PYs while last year approximately 760 PYs were generated on a harvest of 808,070 m³. Community forests provide employment in a variety of activities, including forest management, wildfire risk reduction treatments, logging, hauling, silviculture, road/trail building and maintenance, scientific research, and administration and bookkeeping.

During the reporting period alone, 342 jobs were created in forestry activities by community forests. Between the new jobs created and those maintained over time, a total of 1,208 people (48 per community forest on average) derived all or part of their income from the community forests during this reporting period.

Community forests created 0.51 full time jobs/1,000 cubic metres in forestry, logging, and support services, which is approximately 83% greater than the industry average.



Number of people who derived all or part of their income from the community forests:

Total: 1,208

Average: 48

Indicator 2

Total Economic Activity

Obtaining social licence, involving support from First Nations, local communities, and stakeholders, demands community forests to invest in outreach. This includes comprehensive engagement, consultations, and local partnerships to enhance transparency, inclusivity, and sustainable practices in their operations. These added expenses are the main driver for our above-average jobs per cubic meter achievement in forestry and logging.

PHOTO: SUSAN MULKEY



LOCAL ECONOMIES BENEFIT from community forests in rural areas throughout BC. Not only do community forests provide local employment, but they also bring many benefits to their communities by contributing to local economic stability and resiliency. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents have an average population of 5,000 people or less, and the average annual harvest of all respondents is only 23,256 m³. This demonstrates that community forests can have an impact on their local economies even while operating on relatively small tenures. The total annual value of sales and expenditures of respondents within the reporting year is calculated in this indicator.

Value of sales	\$81,507,363
Average	\$2,202,901
Minimum	\$ 0
Maximum	\$12,415,855

Value of expenditures	\$49,805,451
Average	\$1,464,866
Minimum	\$25,000
Maximum	\$10,413,421

Community forests often incur extra costs compared to larger licence holders due to the need to manage for multiple values in the constrained areas in which they typically operate. They also need to involve community members in their planning beyond the legal requirements. Obtaining social licence, involving support from First Nations, local communities, and stakeholders, demands community forests to invest in outreach. This includes comprehensive engagement, consultations, and local partnerships to enhance transparency, inclusivity, and sustainable practices in their operations. These added expenses are the main driver for our above-average jobs per cubic meter (m³) achievement in forestry and logging.

Indicator 3

Community Contributions

COMMUNITY FORESTS SUPPORT their communities with contributions in the form of dividends, donations, grants, special projects and more. This act of giving back is a foundational pillar of community forestry. These cash and in-kind contributions also meet environmental, social, and cultural goals, helping to build trust and capacity in communities beyond economic priorities.

Total cash contributed to the community	
Total	\$20,970,256
Average	\$616,772

Total in-kind contributions to the community	
Total	\$403,391
Average	\$19,209

Ninety-five per cent of respondents made cash and/or in-kind contributions in their communities in the past reporting year. On average, they provided \$723,112 with an additional \$19,209 in in-kind contributions. The total cash contributions increased from \$13 million last year to nearly \$21 million this year.

The Community Granting Program of the Williams Lake Community Forest receives a guaranteed percentage of the Community Forest net profits annually. This net profit contribution is enshrined in the Shareholders and Limited Partnership Agreements, and the monies are given to the program before the shareholders take any dividends. Over \$70,000 was donated in 2022 to community groups and \$8,500 in scholarships to deserving students moving on and through post-secondary education including trades, technical and degree programs. Donations and scholarships are awarded through a robust application and review process developed by the Standing Committee on Resource Values and Interests, a group of 11 people appointed to represent the interests of neighbors, communities, and users of the Community Forest land.



PHOTO: STANDING COMMITTEE BY WILLIAMS LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST

Sample contributions:

Community forests made many community contributions in the reporting year including these from some of the smallest annual harvests.

- Khowutzun Community Forest** provided firewood for Cowichan Tribes ceremonial activities for elders and for use at longhouses. Last year the cost for labour, trucks, chainsaws and wood was \$42,000.
- The Bamfield Huu-ay-aht Community Forest Society (BHCF)** made a valuable contribution by providing 45 m3 of mostly cedar which was transported to the Great Central Mill in Port Alberni to be scaled and milled. The lumber obtained from this process has been used for various community projects, including the construction of the West Side Pavilion and the Centennial Park gazebo.
- Cherry Ridge Management Committee:** provided free wildfire fighting training for community members by covering the annual fee of \$100/person. In the past 5 years they have trained 150 people in their community.

Indicator 4

Funds Leveraged

Total \$ raised for projects from outside sources: **\$1,907,161** for an average of \$173,378 for those that leveraged.

One-third of the reporting community forests leverage their profits as seed funding to grow larger local projects. A total of over \$1.9 million was leveraged from outside sources during the reporting period.

COMMUNITY FORESTS LEVERAGE their revenue for local projects with support from outside sources. The additional funds that were brought in from outside sources include a wide range of community priorities such as wildfire risk reduction and recreation.

For example:

- **Creston Community Forest** leveraged a total of \$268,827 for a variety of activities including wildfire risk reduction work, trails construction, and garbage clean up on the community forest area.
- **The Dunster Community Forest (DCFS)** played a crucial role in supporting the Dunster Fine Arts Schoolhouse Society (DFASS) by leveraging \$30,000 to help them obtain a grant for finishing the siding of the schoolhouse. This collaboration highlights the community's dedication to enhancing the local arts and educational infrastructure. Under an agreement between the DCFS and DFASS, the DCFS takes responsibility for grant writing, administration, and project supervision for capital projects. From 2020 to 2023, the community has successfully raised \$500,000 to carry out significant upgrades to the schoolhouse. These upgrades include a new roof, new insulation, and new windows and doors, which will greatly improve the building's functionality, energy efficiency, and overall aesthetics.



Dunster School House before and after. PHOTOS BY KATHARINA MCNAUGHTON AND RAY THIESSEN

Cut Control

AS FORESTRY AND LOG HARVESTING OPERATIONS, community forests have an active role in the log market and must meet cut control requirements.

While most of the reporting community forests are successfully harvesting the volume of timber allocated to their tenure, some face challenges in meeting their cut control. These obstacles include timber losses due to wildfire, operational constraints, and permit process delays.

POWELL RIVER COMMUNITY FOREST, PHOTO ANJISMITHFOTOS



74% of community forests reported being on track to meet their cut control

Supplying regional log home and timber frame builders with high quality building logs

"The Williams Lake Community Forest focuses on extracting high-quality log home and timber frame logs. Artisan builders in the Cariboo Region require straight grained logs without rot or ring shake, with lengths exceeding 30' and diameters over 12", mainly Douglas-fir and occasionally spruce. Houses built from these logs are shipped globally, creating significant employment opportunities in the regional forest sector." — Hugh Flinton, Manager



PHOTOS: WILLIAMS LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST

Indicator 6

Distribution of Log Sales

59% of respondents are shipping pulp or other low value fibre at a loss that would otherwise be waste, to achieve environmental or social benefits.

Only 35% of respondents have accessed external funding to help pay for shipping residual fibre.

Respondents were asked about the challenges they face in their efforts effort to utilize residual fibre. The economics of handling waste and long distances to markets, availability of contractors to process waste, and the small scale of most operations greatly limit opportunities. **Many sell pulp logs at break even or a loss when they are too far from a market.**

The great news for community forests is that **there is a high demand for firewood.**

Many, particularly on the coast, are paying contractors to bring low quality wood to the roadside or to another staging area after it is scaled and prior to the waste survey for use as firewood rather than piling material for burning or sending it to the pulp mill at a significant financial loss. Community members can then apply for a firewood permit.

COMMUNITY FORESTS CONTRIBUTE to the open log market. This indicator provides the total percentage of community forest sales to a variety of milling and manufacturing facilities. In supporting a wide scope of markets with locally harvested logs, community forests participate in distribution and diversification. Further, this indicator calculates the efforts of community forests to reduce post-harvest waste.

Distribution of log sales	
Sales to very large mills > 850,000 m³/year	14.0%
Sales to large mills 295,000–850,000 m³/year	40.7%
Sales to medium mills 95,000–295,000 m³/year	11.4%
Sales to small mills < 95,000 m³/year	2.6%
Sales to value-added mills	8.6%
Sales to facilities that use low quality fibre (chip, pellet, pulp & paper)	9.1%
Logs exported	0.6%
Broker	13.0%

Log sales were opened to an average of 3.6 bidders, and logs were sold to an average of 3.5 different buyers, which is consistent with the average from the previous reporting period. Some community forests sell to as many as 8 to 10 different entities. Eighty per cent of respondents consider 75% or more of their sales to mills to be local.

“We have very little waste wood. Our wood is utilized to a 3-inch top. All waste wood is decked at roadside and is available for firewood. It does not last long.” — Chris Law, Manager, Alberni Valley Community Forest.



Kalesnikoff mass timber plant is an innovative facility producing engineered cross laminated timber (CLT) panels and glue laminated beams. The plant draws fibre from Kootenay community forests, and its operations were highlighted with a tour as part of the 2022 BCCFA Conference in Nakusp.

PHOTOS: SUSAN MULKEY

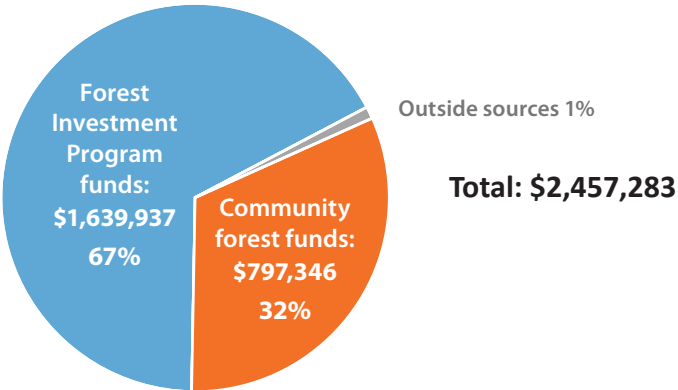
Indicator
7

Investments in Intensive Silviculture

THE LONG-TERM HEALTH and productivity of forests are a priority for community forests. As area-based tenures with a focus on multiple values, community forests are planning for the future and making investments in silviculture activities. Many community forests invest in silviculture above and beyond legal requirements.

Community forest investment in intensive silviculture	
Total dollar value	\$797,346
Total in-kind value	\$205,282
Average of those that invested	\$72,486

Value and source of investment in intensive silviculture



Williams Lake Timber Supply Area Fertilization Program: “The Williams Lake Community Forest (WLCF) is the Ministry of Forests Land Based Investment (LBI) Program Recipient for the Williams Lake Timber Supply Area (WL TSA) Fertilization Program. When regional major licensees declined the opportunity to become the LBI provincial recipients for the WL TSA Fertilization program, the WLCF and its Management Team stepped up in 2018 to lead the program for the entire TSA. This work is incremental to the core activities of the WLCF. However, we are proud to provide this service to the communities dependent on the forest resource in the WL TSA.” — Hugh Flinton, Manager PHOTO: WILLIAMS LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST

Respondents that made investments in incremental silviculture in the reporting year past the free to grow stage, going above and beyond legal requirements: **53%**

Total investment: **\$800,000.**

Area treated: **1,756** hectares, an increase from the previous period.

Collectively treated to date: **6,888** hectares, an average of 160 hectares.



POWELL RIVER TREE PLANTERS, PHOTO: ANJSMITHFOTOS

Indicator 8

Economic Diversification

Total value of diversified sales: **\$2,215,050** an average of \$738,350 for those that had revenue from diversified sales.



In addition to the dollar amount of diversified sales, community forests reported \$219,657 in in-kind diversification contributions, namely as firewood donations to their communities and by supporting their micro sawmills with log supply.

WEST BOUNDARY WINTER REVIEW
OF FESBC WORK PHOTO: PETER FLETT

COMMUNITY FORESTS derive most of their revenue from log sales, just like the rest of the forest sector in BC. Legislation gives community forests the right to manage for the development of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs).¹ Yet the absence of a regulation and respect for the traditional use rights of First Nations have left commercial NTFP management undeveloped on community forests.

Respondents are instead offering services. For example, wildfire mitigation, activities that include the planning, supervision, and inspection services for major licensees and management of the Williams Lake Timber Supply Area Fertilization Program (see Indicator 7). Community forests also diversify their revenue from their log sales by operating small sawmills and focusing on local, rural manufacturing. Those with their own mill and firewood sales reported on volume of these in Indicator #6. In this indicator, we are reporting on the dollar value to demonstrate that community forests are diversifying their revenue sources in addition to log sales. Over \$2.2 million was invested in activities that contributed to economic diversification during the reporting period.



Lower North Thompson Community Forest firewood processor: "We have recently completed upgrades to our firewood processor that will improve safety and production efficiency to meet local demand. On our forest harvest side, having a processor allows us to recover a portion of the non-saw log timber profile, including the harvest of birch. This means we not only support locals in heating their homes but are also recovering more fibre." — Sky Jarvis, FIT (Forest Technician) #Sustainability #WoodIsGood PHOTO: SKY JARVIS

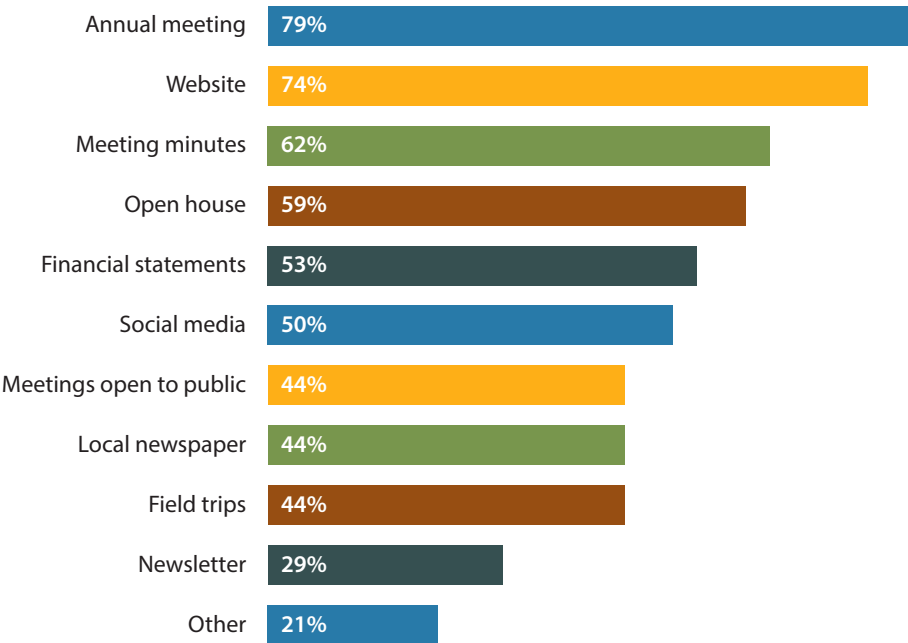
¹ When it comes to NTFPs, to date community forests are generally not involved in commercial activity, beyond services. Instead, they have taken on the role of facilitating access to resources such as berries, mushrooms and medicinal plants for the community and adapting the timber harvesting approach to protect the non-timber resources.

Indicator 9

Community Accountability

ACCOUNTABILITY AND BUILDING TRUST with local communities are key components of community forestry, which demonstrates how community forests are unique from other types of tenures. Community forests are legally obligated to report annually to residents, a requirement that is part of their licence agreement with the province. Although every community forest is required to develop a Management Plan that contains their social, economic and resource management goals, they often go above and beyond this obligation to also connect with their communities more frequently via social media, events, and monthly newsletters. Meaningful relationships and building trust are at the root of the work that community forests do, and they see the importance of maintaining these connections.

Tools used by community forests to communicate



Meaningful relationships and building trust are at the root of the work that community forests do, and they see the importance of maintaining these connections.

100% of survey respondents report annually to their community



WEST BOUNDARY FIELD TOUR PHOTO: PETER FLETT

Indicator 10

Public Engagement

During the reporting period, **1,223 volunteer and in-kind hours** were contributed by board, staff and contractors relating to public engagement, demonstrating the time and commitment community forests dedicate to connecting with their communities.

“Mike, the General Manager of the Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society, maintains an open-door policy. The office, located in the heart of the community, is frequently visited by directors, customers, and members of the public. We have created a Facebook page in which we can engage local community members — posting forestry related news, updates on our mill/ firewood production, and community events.”
— Skye Jarvis, Junior Forest Technician, Lower North Thompson Community Forest

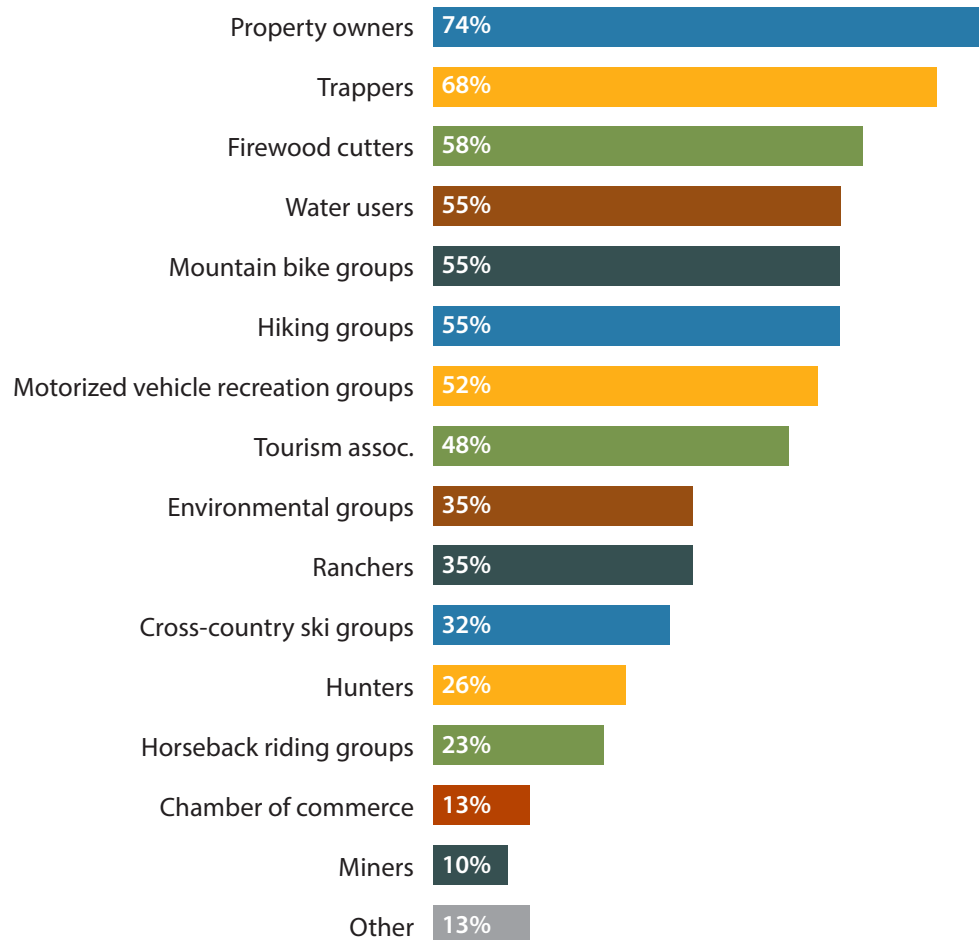
COMMUNITY FORESTS REGULARLY ENGAGE with the public and stakeholder groups that have varied interests in the forest tenure area. The groups that were most often engaged with during the reporting period were property owners, water users, trappers, firewood cutters, and recreational groups including hikers and mountain bikers. Public engagement helps community forests make decisions that accurately reflect local values, while increasing the awareness of forest management and community forest objectives.



SUSAN MULKEY PHOTO

Seventy-four per cent of reporting community forests have developed formal agreements with one or more of their forest user groups, which is an increase from the previous year.

Engagement with Community Sectors



Indicator 11

Investments in Community Education

MANY COMMUNITY FOREST practitioners are inspired educators. Not only do community forests provide space and opportunity for people to connect with local forests, but they also foster learning and valuable resources for education relating to forest ecosystems and forest management. With long-term tenures that have a focus on future forest health, community forests understand the importance of connecting with youth and other community members to encourage a wider comprehension of forest management for years to come.

Investment in education	
Total community forest dollars invested	\$196,918
Total hours invested	\$1,938 hours

Nearly 2,000 hours were dedicated to coordinating and delivering educational activities in the reporting period, which is a combination paid and in-kind time. Forty-seven per cent of respondents conduct education activities with K-12 students.

Investments in education include school presentations, field trips, public events, as well as job training sponsored by the community forest.



WILLIAMS LAKE PHOTOS: LAUREN CARUTHERS PHOTOGRAPHY

West Boundary Community Forest’s Wilgress Outdoor Education Centre

In the past year, the Wilgress Outdoor Education Centre has successfully hosted more than 20 diverse local classes ranging from kindergarten to grade 12. Each visit was carefully tailored to accommodate the unique learning styles and curriculum topics of the students. The Centre’s approach involves engaging students in hands-on activities that revolve around various subjects such as sustainable forest management, aquatic studies, First Nations traditional knowledge, post-secondary forestry education, ecological principles, and outdoor education. By providing a dynamic learning environment and promoting engagement with nature, the Education Centre plays a vital role in nurturing a deeper understanding of forests and their sustainable management among the youth and broader community.

Indicator 12

Investments in Recreation

85% of respondents have invested their own funds into local recreation initiatives



POWELL RIVER PHOTO:
ANJISMITHFOTOS

COMMUNITY FORESTS DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES by providing a diverse array of recreational activities within their tenures. They are committed to not only maintaining existing recreational features but also to supporting the creation of new trails and amenities, at times beyond their own boundaries. These recreation features encompass a wide range of infrastructure such as information kiosks, warming huts, cabins, scenic viewpoints, as well as trails for activities like hiking, biking, horseback riding, and skiing. It is worth noting that a significant 85% of respondents have invested their own funds into local recreation initiatives, highlighting the strong community priority for enhancement of recreational opportunities within and around community forests.

Investment in recreation during reporting period	
Total	\$451,157
Average of those that invested	\$15,039

In addition to the funds provided by community forests, respondents managed another \$194,050 from outside funding sources. To date, the reporting community forests have invested over \$2.4 million in recreation and created 1,141 kms of trails. Considering the relatively small size of community forest tenures, the dedication to building extensive trail networks demonstrates a commitment to community values beyond timber.

Number of kilometres of trail during reporting period	
Total	151
Average kms of those that built & maintained trails	5.2

Number of volunteer hours during reporting period	
Total	4,269
Average hours of those that built & maintained trails	142.3



Kaslo and District Community Forest works in partnership with local recreational groups, local government and funders to develop FireSmart trails within the community forest licence area. The kiosk pictured here is an important educational component of their program.

EDUCATION ON THE KASLO CFA, PHOTO S. MULKEY

Indicator 13

Proactive Management of Wildfire Hazard

COMMUNITY FORESTS ARE PLAYING an important role in community education and in working with community members to support wildfire adapted and prepared communities. As leaders in wildfire risk reduction, many community forests are taking action to reduce the risk of wildfire to their communities, encourage collaborative cultural burning with Indigenous partners, and manage for forest health as much as possible. Wildfire is among the top issues of concern throughout much of BC, not only for residents, but also



PRESCRIBED BURN ON SIFCO, EAST SIDE OF THE SLOCAN VALLEY, ANJISMITHFOTOS

for policy makers, local and provincial governments, First Nations, and forest managers. Most community forests are in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), the area of transition between wilderness and communities, which provides a unique opportunity for them to lead the way in proactive management of wildfire. As we see provincial policy shift in how the WUI is managed, community forests can play a critical role in the preparedness, response, and recovery phases of wildfire work on the landscape.

Investment to reduce wildfire hazard	
Total	\$1,047,244
Average of those that invested	\$74,803

Number of volunteer hours towards wildfire-related work	
Total	642
Average hours of those that conducted wildfire-related work	91.7

Number of hectares treated to date	
Total	3,737
Average # of ha treated to date	233.6

Community forests know the importance of building wildfire resiliency in their communities and use their own dollars to contribute to this work. Over \$1 million was invested in wildfire risk reduction activities during the reporting period, with an additional \$3.9 million managed from outside sources. Over 600 hours of volunteer time were put toward wildfire-related work in the reporting period. Over time, we estimate that community forests have invested over \$8 million of their own dollars, while managing over \$17 million in grants and funding from outside sources, such as the Forest Enhancement Society of BC.

The BCCFA and Province of BC continue to recognize the important role community forests play in wildfire risk reduction. Growing on the work over the past two years supported by the province’s Economic Recovery Initiative, the BCCFA is proud to begin a partnership with BC Wildfire Service to support community forests to become more resilient in projects encouraging resiliency to wildfire and climate change.

“The West Boundary Community Forest (WBCF) partnered with the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB), the Ministry of Forests, and the BC Wildfire Service to conduct a prescribed burn in the Rexin area, near Rock Creek, in April 2022. This was the first prescribed burn in which WBCF participated in such proximity to the community and it served multiple purposes, including ecosystem restoration, wildlife habitat improvement, traditional practice implementation, and reducing future wildfire risk for the community.”
— Dan Macmaster, Manager

Indicator 14

Forest Worker Safety



POWELL RIVER PHOTO: ANJISMITHFOTOS



SHANE AND TANNER MCKINNON FROM KASLO, PHOTO: CASEY MCKINNON

THE FOREST SECTOR PRIORITIZES worker safety and acknowledges the inherent risks involved in the industry. Most survey respondents require their employees and contractors to hold safety certification from the BC Forest Safety Council or an equivalent program. Although the total number of recordable incidents decreased by more than half compared to the previous year, unfortunately, there were two fatalities reported in the current year.

One fatality was due to a pre-existing health condition, while the other resulted from an accident involving a contractor using equipment borrowed from the community forest for another community project. These incidents have highlighted the need for enhanced safety education. As a response, collaboration with the BC Forest Safety Council and WorkSafeBC will be strengthened to focus on improving safety practices across our membership.

Percentage requiring Safe Certification	
Yes	82%
No	18%

Number and severity of recordable incidents	
Minor	12
Serious (requiring attention)	2
Fatality	2
Total	16



WETZINKWA ROBIN HOOD AWARD PHOTO: CARLY DOW

Wetzin'kwa Community Forest 2022 Robin Hood Memorial Award (RHMA) Winners

The RHMA for Excellence in Community Forestry is given annually to the community forest that best exemplifies the values exhibited by the community-forest program and the late BC community forestry pioneer, Robin Hood. The award winner receives a \$10,000 grant.

L to R — Aurora Lavender, David Louwerse, Colin Macleod, Minister Katrine Conroy, Jennifer Gunter

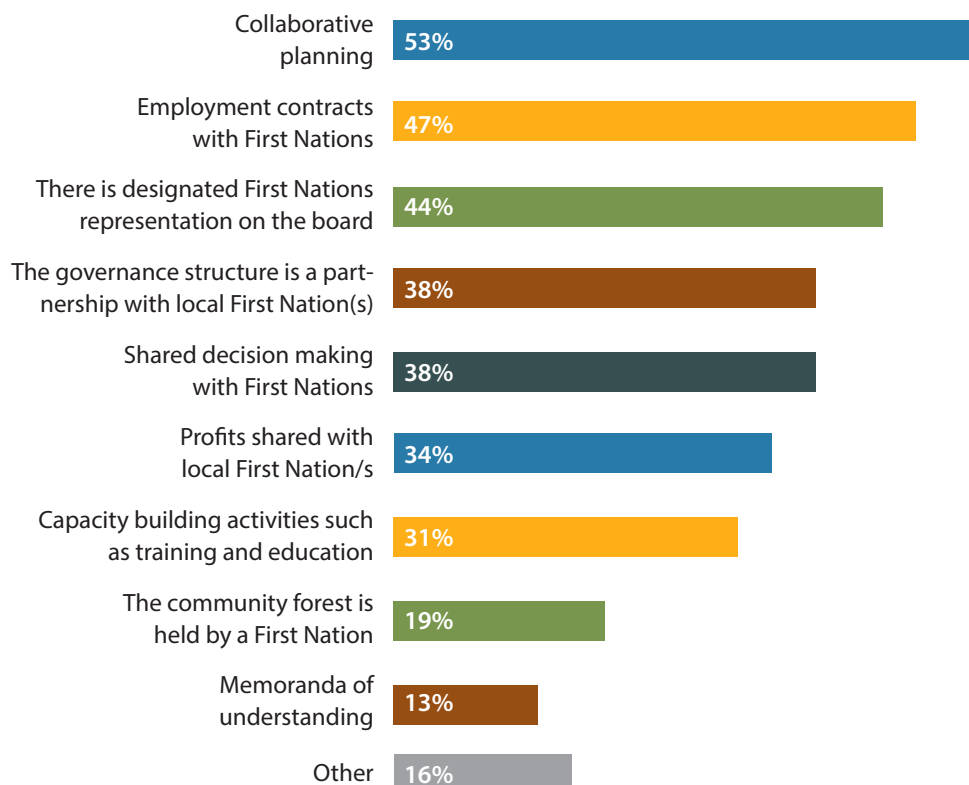
bccfa.ca/2022-robin-hood-memorial-award-winner-wetzinkwa-cf/

Indicator 15

First Nations Collaboration

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES are deeply involved in many aspects of community forestry as tenure holders, partners, board members and employees of community forest organizations. As specified in one of the eight provincial goals for the community forest program, the work of community forests is required to be inclusive. Community forests endeavor to promote forest management that not only respects First Nation rights and cultural values, but also paves a collaborative path forward in developing trusted relationships that foster real empowerment and exchange of knowledge. As provincial government reforms policy to place more focus on First Nations-led forestry, we see that community forests can provide relevant examples of how this work is already being implemented at the community level. Community forestry has the potential to inspire others in the industry so First Nations communities are not only involved in forest management as a requirement, but because it is the right thing to do for a more comprehensive, adaptive, and collaborative way forward to long-term management of the land. For many community forests, this is the only way to operate. By measuring the types of involvement with First Nations beyond legal requirements, this indicator demonstrates how community forests are working with First Nations across the province.

First Nations Involvement



73% of participants took action to respond to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act with commitments including co-ownership, co-management, and shared decision making

953 volunteer hours were dedicated to working on collaboration with First Nations

“The Wetzin’kwa Community Forest Corporation (WCFC) is an equal partner with the Office of Wet’suwet’en. Wetzin’kwa engages with the House groups on whose traditional territories the community forest lies and prioritizes the protection of First Nations cultural resources and heritage features. Culture is one of WCFC’s core values, and WCFC’s objective is to protect and conserve cultural heritage sites, features, and values, and to maintain and enhance a good working relationship with Wet’suwet’en peoples. Harvesting and road development plans are referred to the Office of the Wet’suwet’en and House groups to ensure known cultural heritage sites and resource values are identified and protected.” — Aurora Lavender, Manager

Indicator 16

Management of Sensitive Areas

47% of the combined tenure area of respondents is considered sensitive, and **16%** of those sensitive areas is operable. **18%** of the total reported area is designated as community watersheds

With the introduction of the old growth deferral requirements from the provincial government, many community forests have been challenged to meet these requirements within the constraints of their relatively small tenures.

- 45%, are in the process of developing their own deferral plan in collaboration with First Nations.
- 24% are voluntarily deferring harvesting in the polygons assigned by the province's Technical Advisory Panel (TAP).
- 17% are delayed while they await direction from local First Nations.
- 14% are using the field verification guidance to find replacement deferral areas.

SENSITIVE HABITATS such as watersheds, old growth and culturally important areas are given special management considerations on the land base. Community forest tenures are mandated to include community values in their operations and planning, and the long-term care and stewardship of these sensitive areas is a key priority for many rural and Indigenous communities. Survey respondents reported on the area within their tenure that is sensitive. Sensitive areas are defined as any of the following:

- Domestic and community watersheds;
- Riparian areas;
- Visually sensitive areas;
- Potentially unstable and unstable terrain;
- Areas with archaeological or cultural heritage values;
- Identified and critical wildlife habitat;
- Fisheries sensitive watersheds;
- Recreation trails and sites; or
- Areas identified as sensitive by the community.



KASLO PHOTO: SUSAN MULKEY

"The fisher is a fur-bearing mammal and is designated a species at risk in BC. It requires management at both the landscape and stand level to ensure sufficient and appropriate habitat." "The Eniyud Community Forest (ECF) has incorporated the provincial fisher tool into its management and requires harvesting to retain significant advanced regeneration and retention of all deciduous to reflect this critical value.¹ Furthermore, areas where high-risk identified stands are located are removed from harvest. The ECF is focused on retaining significant variations of retention across its proposed blocks, where possible to ensure that diversity is maintained throughout the land base. This can be very challenging in the dry NDT3 systems where stand-replacing fires are frequent." — Mike Tomlinson, Manager

¹ In a 2021 investigation, the Forest Practices Board reported that there are "tools available in the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) to protect fisher habitat at the stand level, and (government) is relying on forest licensees following non-legal guidance." bcfpb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/IRC236-PG-Fisher-Habitat.pdf

Indicator 17

Investments in Forest Stewardship

INVESTING IN FOREST STEWARDSHIP is an investment in the future. Community forests are investing in their forestry operations for the generations to come, far beyond what is legally required. Healthy forests can help foster healthy communities with resilient local economies, and community forests make substantial financial investments to maintain the ecological integrity of their tenures. Forest stewardship activities include investing in monitoring programs and inventory tools such as LiDAR, conducting prescribed burns, and managing for sensitive areas including old growth.

Investment in enhanced or modified management for ecological or social reasons	
Total \$	\$507,248
Average of those that invested	\$39,019

Number of hectares treated within and outside the CF boundary	
Total ha	1,339
Average ha treated	167.4

Number of volunteer hours put towards stewardship activities	
Total volunteer hours	815
Average volunteer hours	102

With the half a million dollars that reporting community forests invested in stewardship above and beyond legal requirements, they managed an additional \$455,000 during the reporting period from external sources such as the Forest Enhancement Society of BC.

"In the development of a recent block, we learned that the block overlapped with the potential Old-Growth Recruitment (OGR) polygons. We hired a forest ecologist to ascertain the quality of the polygon using methodologies adapted from the Great Bear Rainforest. Some of the original block area had indeed good OGR and we modified the block. The OGR now anchors a reserve corridor system to function as future old-growth and wildlife corridors. All our blocks now go through a voluntary ecosystem assessment where ecosystems and wildlife values are assessed and to provide linkages to our strategic Ecosystem Based Management objectives. Our approach includes an immediate set aside of the BEST 10% of the OGR polygons to meet the target recommendation." — Warren Hansen, Manager, Sunshine Coast Community Forest

75% of reporting community forests have a plan in place or a plan in progress for conserving old growth beyond existing legal obligations. **39%** of respondents are developing a new plan for the three types of Old Growth described by the Technical Advisory Panel (gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/old-growth-forests/information-and-analysis). Alternatively, community forests are implementing zoning concepts based on principles guided by the local First Nations and Ecosystem Based Management.

To improve management strategies, community forests are investing in tools to help secure solid forest inventory information.

- **88% of respondents have invested in LiDAR, an increase from the previous two reporting periods.**
- **50% of respondents have monitoring programs in place.**

Indicator 18

Compliance with Environmental Standards



2022 BCCFA FIELD TRIP, NAKUSP
PHOTO: CARLY DOW

“We received a Compliance Notice from MOF resulting from a landslide occurring from the Nov. 15, 2021 atmospheric weather event. A landslide assessment report was completed by the district. Our main learnings are that climate change is upon us and we must adapt our practices. We have modified our culvert table to reflect the larger runoff from the new normal of storm events. And in the future, we will be more responsive with road deactivation, even though it may limit community access to firewood.”
— Warren Hansen, Manager, Sunshine Coast Community Forest

COMMUNITY FORESTS STRIVE for excellency in all facets of their work, including compliance with environmental standards. This indicator reviews the number of compliance and enforcement inspections that were conducted during the reporting period, and the number of determinations issued against community forests. Two determinations were issued against community forests over the reporting period, one of which was a notice from the Ministry of Forests resulting from a landslide that occurred due to the 2021 atmospheric river weather event.

Compliance & Enforcement inspections conducted & determinations	
Total inspections	8
Determinations issued against the CF	2

CFA management practices met, exceeded, or significantly exceeded requirements outlined in legislation

Percentage that met requirements	24%
Percentage that exceeded requirements	49%
Percentage that significantly exceeded requirements	27%

During the reporting period, 76% of respondents exceeded or significantly exceeded the standard requirements in British Columbia. This is an increase from the previous reporting period.

Examples of how community forests exceed standards include:

- Non-herbicide vegetation management;
- Increased retention and riparian buffers that that significantly exceed provincial regulations;
- Exceeded leave tree requirements in Visual Quality Objective (VQO) polygons;
- Conducted a third-party audit of all phases of management and operations, record keeping and governance;
- Planted culturally important indigenous plants; and
- Extended community engagement and incorporation of First Nation values in management practices.



KASLO PHOTOS BY JEFF REYDEN

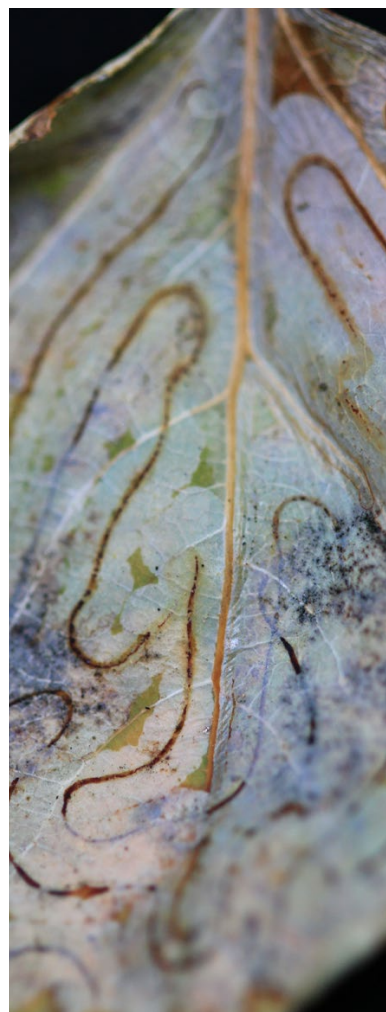




PHOTO: S. MULKEY

The BC Community Forest Association is a network of rural community-based organizations engaged in community forest management, and those seeking to establish new community forests. We represent over 90 rural and Indigenous communities across our province. We share a vision of a network of diverse community forest initiatives, where local people practice ecologically responsible forest management in perpetuity, fostering and supporting healthy and vibrant rural communities and economies.



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

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