



2024 BCCFA CONFERENCE & AGM

June 11-13, 2024
Mackenzie, BC

Conference Summary Report

The BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA) was thrilled to welcome over 150 delegates to Mackenzie, BC, a small town north of Prince George. Our 2024 Conference host, the McLeod Lake Mackenzie Community Forest (MLMCF), went above and beyond to create a meaningful and memorable event. The opportunity to gather in a rural location provided many unique experiences for attendees, with a homegrown feel that resulted in an event with a lot of heart. One such unique experience was a daily bird banding tour in the early morning hours, during which delegates were treated to learning about bird anatomy, banding techniques and the studies at Mugaha Marsh.

Day 1 of the conference featured a field tour of MLMCF's wildfire risk reduction treatment areas along Highway 39, the only access route to and from the community of Mackenzie. With four curated stops that highlighted different aspects of their work, delegates were provided information on forest health, specialized harvesting equipment, monitoring sites and windthrow research. Presenters included MLMCF staff, consultants from Frontera Forest Solutions, Ken Byrne (UBC) and Forest Pathologists with the Ministry of Forests.

Following the field tour, delegates had the option to participate in a cultural hike with BCCFA Director and Mackenzie local Tania Solonas, or a number of other recreational activities. The day concluded with a welcome reception at the beautiful Mackenzie Recreation Centre, a facility that has been funded by MLMCF contributions.



Fons Raedschelders (BCWS) and Lori Daniels (UBC Tree Ring Lab)



Bird banding tour at Mugaha Marsh



Field trip and cultural walk on June 11

Day 2 commenced with a welcome from Doris Leclair, a Tse'khene Elder who joined us for the morning. Session 1, The State of the Forest Sector, was moderated by Garnet Mierau (Forest Professionals of BC) and included panelists George Brcko (Wells Gray CF), Tiffany Butler-Hernandez (First Nations Forestry Council), Melissa Sanderson (Ministry of Forests), Mike Hykaway (Ministry of Forests) and Todd Chamberlain (Interior Logging Association).



Welcome from Doris Leclair, Tse'khene Elder



Session 1: The State of the Forest Sector

In Session 2: Safety and Community Forests, we heard from Erin McLeod (Nakusp and Area CF) and Harley Wright (Lower North Thompson CF), who shared their experiences and insights relating to safety considerations for workers and volunteers, insurance requirements, and what to do in the event of an accident. The morning concluded with breakout sessions - Governance or the Manager's Meeting. Allan Bennett (Ministry of Forests) and Debbie Zandbelt (Timber Pricing Forester) spoke to issues surrounding waste during the Manager's Meeting.



Erin McLeod and Harley Wright, Safety and Community Forests Session

Moderated by BCCFA Director Aurora Lavender, Session 3: Climate Change Adaptation - From Projections to Practice featured presentations and important discussion from Colin Mahony (Research Climatologist, Ministry of Forests) and Erik Leslie (Harrop-Procter CF). Colin provided a high-level overview of climate change trends in Canada, followed by Erik who presented a case study of his specific climate change modelling for the Harrop-Procter tenure.



Manager's Breakout Session



Colin Mahony and Erik Leslie, Climate Change Adaptation Session

The sessions on Day 2 wrapped up with Networking for Wildfire Preparedness, Recovery and Resiliency, moderated by Dr. Lori Daniels. Lori provided a summary of her research and wildfire projections, followed by Larry Price (First Nations Emergency Services Society) who highlighted links between the work of FNESS and community forests. Fons Raedschelders (BCWS) spoke to opportunities for prescribed and cultural burning, Carly Dow (BCCFA) gave an overview of what was heard from BCCFA's Needs Assessment project, and Jennifer Gunter (BCCFA) presented on the growing partnership between BCCFA and BCWS. The room then broke into Fire Centre groups to begin networking and brainstorming, with support from experts - Lori, Larry, Fons, Erik and Steve Kozuki (FESBC), who circulated to each group with information and resources on specific topics.



Southeast Fire Centre discussing funding opportunities with Steve Kozuki



Sky Jarvis, notetaker extraordinaire for the Kamloops Fire Centre group

Wednesday concluded with the BCCFA's annual banquet and silent auction. Thank you to all those who donated items to the silent auction! The funds raised go towards sponsoring students to attend future conferences. The event featured live music from a local band and delicious local catering.



Randy Spyskma (BCCFA President), Dan Macmaster (BCCFA Director)



Todd Chamberlain (ILA), Jennifer Gunter (BCCFA ED), Frank Joe (Monashee CF)



McLeod Lake Mackenzie CF team



Deputy Minister Rick Manwaring and Chinook Community Forest representatives

The banquet included a presentation of the 2024 Robin Hood Memorial Award for Excellence in Community Forestry. Chinook Community Forest was selected as the recipient of this year's award, presented by Deputy Minister Rick Manwaring.

Chinook Community Forest is a partnership of six First Nations and two municipalities: Lake Babine Nation, Wet'suwet'en Nation, Tsil'k'az Nation, Cheslatta Carrier Nation, Nee Tahi Buhn Indian Band, Skin Tyee Nation, The Village

of Burns Lake and The Regional District Bulkley Nechako. Chinook Community Forest has taken a leading role in sustainable forest management and wildfire mitigation in the Burns Lake area, and has supported events and organizations with \$600,000 in donations during the past five years. Congratulations to Chinook Community Forest for their well-deserved acknowledgement!



Jennifer Gunter and the BCCFA Board of Directors

Following the AGM, Regional Chief Terry Teegee provided a keynote speech, delivering messages of support for community forestry in BC and speaking to the interconnectedness of the work we all do in creating a more sustainable future.

The final session of the event was First Nations Relations: History is the Context, Shared Decision Making is the Future. Led by Marieka Sax and Andreas Krebs (Resonant Strategic), delegates were given a historical overview and an opportunity to share and discuss their experiences in an interactive format.

Conference Lead Susan Mulkey (BCCFA) wrapped up the event by reminding delegates of the importance of the work we do together, and that the BCCFA has your back!

The final day of the conference commenced with the 2024 AGM for BCCFA members. We are pleased to welcome Dan Macmaster (West Boundary CF) and Steve Lorimer (Qala:yit CF) back for another term, and Angela French (Creston CF) to her first term with the BCCFA Board of Directors.

A special note of gratitude to Daniel Gratton, who retired from the board this year after serving 3 consecutive terms. Thank you also to Tania Solonas for her time as a Director.



Susan Mulkey, Regional Chief Terry Teegee, Jennifer Gunter

We at the BCCFA express our gratitude to all of the delegates, sponsors, speakers and exhibitors who joined us in Mackenzie for the 2024 Conference & AGM, and especially to our fantastic hosts at the MLMCF. Each time we gather, we are inspired and reminded of the powerful and brave work that community forests are accomplishing across the province.

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

