

# BALANCED BUDGET 2007

*Forest Practices Board*

## **2007/08 – 2009/10 SERVICE PLAN**

February 2007



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## Message from the Chair and Accountability Statement

This annual service plan is prepared by the Forest Practices Board for presentation to the B.C. Legislature under the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*.

The plan outlines the results the Board expects to achieve in the three-year period from 2007/08 through 2009/10 with the funds voted to it by the Legislature, providing the basis for accountability and assessment of the Board's performance.

The service plan also provides a strategic context that guides the Board's current activities. It is the Board's intent to continue the delivery of its mandate through its audit, investigation, review and appeal, and reporting functions, while continuing to adapt to meet the challenges of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*.

The 2007/08 – 2009/10 Forest Practices Board Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of February 1, 2007 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Fraser". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce Fraser, Ph.D.  
Chair

February 1, 2007



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# Board Overview

## Purpose of the Board

The Forest Practices Board was created under the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* (the Code) as an independent watchdog for effective forest practices in B.C.'s public forests. The mandate of the Forest Practices Board is to provide independent assurance, to both the British Columbia public and the international marketplace, that forest and range licensees are carrying out sound practices and complying with legal requirements. Its mandate is also to ensure that resource ministries are appropriately monitoring and enforcing legislation.

The Board's mandate continues under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (the Act), which enables the Board to focus on the effectiveness of forest practices in achieving objectives, legislated by government, for forest resource values.

The Board audits tenure holders and government ministries for compliance with and enforcement of the Code and the Act; carries out special investigations and issues reports as appropriate; investigates concerns and complaints from the public; and participates in appeals to the Forest Appeals Commission.

Legislation ensures Board independence from licensees and government. While the Board submits reports to the Ministers of Forests and Range, Environment, Agriculture and Lands, and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, its reports are not provided to government for revision or comment in advance of public release. When the Board deals with an audit of or complaint about a government agency, that agency receives the same level of information about the Board's preliminary findings as any other auditee or complaint subject.

The Forest Practices Board's funding is determined directly by Treasury Board, and is distinct from the budget of the Ministry of Forests and Range.

## Vision, Mission and Values

### Vision

Forests that are soundly managed to sustain the full range of forest values and forest resources for British Columbians.

### Mission

The Board serves the public interest as the independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices in British Columbia.

## **Values**

The Board:

- acts on behalf of the public's interest, not those of any single group;
- is straightforward in its approach;
- emphasizes solutions over assigning blame;
- behaves in a non-adversarial, balanced manner;
- treats all people with respect, fairness and sensitivity;
- performs in a measured, unbiased and non-partisan manner;
- carries out its mandate with integrity and efficiency;
- provides clear and concise reports to the public;
- bases actions and decisions on knowledge, experience and common sense; and
- is accessible and accountable.

The Board remains objective and independent from industry, environmental groups and government. Board members have diverse backgrounds and experiences, allowing the Board to fairly represent the public interest. The expertise of the Board and its staff is recognized by stakeholders, and it has well-defined processes for audits and investigation. Specific strategies for achieving the Board's values include:

- consulting regularly with key stakeholders to share information and seek comment and perspectives on current issues the Board is examining;
- providing an opportunity for adversely affected parties to respond, and demonstrate how responses have been considered, before reports are finalized;
- seeking input from a variety of interest groups including heads of regulatory agencies, industry licensees, researchers and interested non-government organizations to determine issues worthy of investigation;
- dealing with all participants in a transparent and non-adversarial manner;
- seeking informal opportunities to resolve complaints where possible; and
- improving complaint investigation processes through surveys of participant satisfaction.



# Strategic Context

The Forest Practices Board provides the British Columbia public with an objective assessment of the state of forest practices on Crown land. It conducts independent audits of the practices being employed by forest licensees and the appropriateness of government enforcement of practice regulations. The Board also responds to complaints by members of the public, investigating the issues raised and reporting back to all concerned. As major forest practice issues arise from audits and complaints, the Board may conduct special investigations which review them in depth.

Recent investigations have looked at such matters as the implications of salvage harvesting in mountain pine beetle infected forests, the management of forest fuels, the quality of reforestation taking place in the province, the management of our expanding inventory of resource roads and public engagement in forest stewardship plans developed under the new *Forest and Range Practices Act*.

In conducting and reporting on these investigative activities, the Board maintains a watch on strategic issues that provide the context for forest management in the province. While not all strategic issues lie directly within the mandate of the Board, they do affect the parties that we audit or investigate and need to be taken into consideration. Following are some of the large scale issues we believe to be important.

## **Implications of Changing Climate**

Climate change is beginning to affect many aspects of B.C.'s forests. The mountain pine beetle epidemic and the expansion of many other pests and pathogens of commercial forest species, partly attributable to warmer conditions and changes in the moisture regime, are challenging both our forest health activity and our approach to reforesting for the future. What species to plant, and where to plant them, to respond to climate change has become at least as important as getting forest cover rapidly established on harvested sites.

Changes in the annual pattern of snow and rain, when coupled with long term fuel accumulations, is raising the importance of fuel and wildfire management, both from the perspective of maintaining forest land values and the safety of forest edge communities. Water management for forest growth, fisheries, wildlife habitat and community water supplies are all affected by climate change and are important factors in forest management that require ongoing adaptation of practices examined by the Board.

## **Evolution of Forest Practices Regulation**

With the introduction of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, the province is moving away from prescriptive regulation to “results-based” regulation which places greater reliance on professionals to devise practices to meet goals and objectives set by government. Stewardship of forest values ranging from biodiversity to community water supplies is

being increasingly delegated to forest licensees. The new regime has many implications for public involvement, enforcement by government agencies, responsibilities of professionals and audit by the Board. We are responding to these changes in all aspects of our audits, complaint investigations, special investigations and administrative appeals. In particular, we are working to establish auditing methods, using criteria and indicators of successful forestry performance, that are suitable for assessing results on the ground rather than conformity with prescribed practices.

### **Industrial Tenures**

International competition arising from the consumption potential of China, fibre supply proliferation from South America and Russia, and changes in the softwood lumber agreement with the United States are all affecting the complex of tenure arrangements in the province. On the one hand, large commodity product producers are consolidating into larger firms to meet the demands of global competition. On the other, there is growth in the number of smaller tenures being granted as part of the effort to establish market based pricing of timber through BC Timber Sales.

While the major industries are responding to global market forces, the province is providing for the needs of First Nations by granting temporary tenures designed to bring aboriginal communities into the industry and to enhance their economic development. A similar initiative is granting an increasing number of community forests with agreements that allow a focus on a variety of forest values in addition to timber. These smaller tenures, while comprising a relatively limited proportion of the provincial harvest, represent a major development in the diversity of operations that will attract the audit and investigation attention of the Board.

### **Threatened Species**

As the extent of development of the natural landscape of the province increases, there are a corresponding number of issues arising about the conservation of threatened species. Mountain caribou, spotted owls and marbled murrelets are the subject of major provincial conservation initiatives. They are high profile examples of species that are affected by forest practices and regularly appear in public concerns brought to the Board. The short list of species identified in public concerns is rapidly growing to include everything from frogs to rare plant communities as biodiversity experiences the impact of development. Forest practices are often material to conservation efforts, but the Board is also aware that the cumulative impacts of all natural resource activities are beginning to challenge the primary role of forest management.

Implications of climate change, new approaches to forest legislation, evolving tenure arrangements and the accumulating human footprint on forested land are examples of the increasing complexity of forest management and the contextual challenges facing the Forest Practices Board in carrying out its statutory functions.

# Core Business Areas

The Forest Practices Board has two core business areas.

## **1. Conducting and publishing independent public reports on audits and special investigations.**

The Board provides the public with objective information about the state of forest and range practices, validates sound practices and recommends improvements based upon direct field observation, consultation and research.

## **2. Conducting complaint investigations and administrative appeals.**

The Board provides a venue to address public complaints and concerns regarding forest and range practices.

Core business areas arise from the Board's legislated mandate. With regard to forest and range planning and practices, the Act states that the Board:

- must carry out periodic independent audits to determine compliance and the appropriateness of government enforcement;
- may carry out special investigations;
- may make a special report and comment publicly;
- must deal with complaints from the public; and
- may undertake appeals.

Functions are performed by professional staff and contractors under the guidance of the independent Board.

# Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results

## Overview

### Board Overall Goal

*The Board's independent watchdog function will promote the continuous improvement and application of sound forest and range practices to achieve the sustainable management of the public resources of British Columbia.*

Management and conservation objectives set by government provide the framework for assessing sustainability of forest and range practices.

### Linkage to the Five Great Goals

**Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.**

The Board provides credible, objective and independent verification of sustainable industry and government forest and range practices. Board audits and investigations are objective, thorough, field-based and are extensively checked before reports are published. While the Board occasionally finds it necessary to report on inadequate practices, its approach is to recommend improvements to forest and range practices and government enforcement, consistent with industry's continuing efforts to adapt and improve.

# Performance Plan

## Performance Plan Summary Table

Five Great Goals	<b>Board Mission</b> The Board serves the public interest as the independent watchdog for sound forest and range practices in British Columbia.		
Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.	Board Goals	Board Objectives	Performance Measures
	← 1. Continuous improvement in forest and range practices.	← Sustainable management of the full spectrum of resources identified in the <i>Forest and Range Practices Act</i> . Widely accepted procedures for auditing forest and range practices under the Act.	← 100% of audit recommendations monitored to assess implementation. 100% of available administrative penalties and appeals reviewed. Audit reference manual updated and implemented by end of 3-year period.
	← 2. A fair and effective means for the public to bring forward concerns about forest and range practices.	← Members of the public satisfied that forest practices are lawful, continuously improved and ultimately sustainable.	← All participants provided an opportunity to comment on the fairness and objectivity of complaint investigations. 100% of complaint investigation recommendations monitored to assess implementation. Completion and implementation of revisions identified through the review of the complaint investigation process.
	← 3. Independent, objective analysis of significant forest and range practice issues of public importance.	← Government, agencies and licensees are addressing important practices issues affecting the sustainability for forest and range values.	← Three special investigations dealing with issues of major public importance completed and published. 100% of special investigation recommendations monitored to assess implementation.

## **Goal 1: *Continuous improvement in forest and range practices.***

**Objective:** *Forest and range licensees and government agencies are achieving sustainable management of the full spectrum of resources identified in the Forest and Range Practices Act.*

The objective includes:

- legislation effective in fostering sustainable forest practices;
- forest and range licensees developing and continuously improving practices to help to achieve the resource objectives set by government; and
- regulatory agencies fostering continuous improvement of forest and range practices through their compliance, enforcement and evaluation programs.

### **Strategies**

- Conduct random audits to assess the appropriateness of government enforcement and the compliance of forest and range licensees with the Act.
- Develop support for audit findings and recommendations by providing an opportunity for adversely affected parties to respond, and demonstrate how responses have been considered, before reports are finalized.
- Develop the Board's capacity to assess the effectiveness of forest practices in achieving objectives set by government.
- Increase audit focus on First Nations, Small Business and Community operators with less professional forestry management experience.
- Consider information arising from third-party forest certification to increase the efficiency of audit procedures.
- Monitor and assess whether regulatory agencies and licensees have adequately implemented audit recommendations for improved practices, following up as necessary to ensure responses are adequate.
- Initiate or participate in administrative appeals when the Board believes that doing so is in the public interest.
- Monitor whether Board interventions in appeals and penalties are effective in upholding standards of performance expected of license holders.

## Performance Measures

Performance Measures	2006/07 Benchmark	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target
Proportion of recommendations from published audit reports that will be monitored to assess adequacy of implementation	100%	100%	100%	100%
Proportion of administrative penalties and appeals that will be systematically reviewed	100% of those made available to the Board	100% of those made available to the Board	100% of those made available to the Board	100% of those made available to the Board
Implementation of an updated audit reference manual	N/A	Update initiated	Implementation initiated	Full implementation of the updated manual

**Goal 2:** *A fair and effective means for members of the public to bring forward their concerns about forest and range practices.*

**Objective:** *Members of the public are satisfied that forest and range practices in British Columbia are lawful, continuously improved and ultimately sustainable.*

### Strategies

- Deal with all participants in a transparent and non-adversarial manner during complaint investigations.
- Seek informal opportunities to resolve complaints where possible.
- Focus complaint investigations to first address issues directly raised by, and relevant to, the participants, and second address underlying or thematic issues of public interest.
- Provide parties that are adversely affected by investigation findings with an opportunity to respond, and demonstrate how responses were considered, before the report is finalized.
- Monitor and assess whether regulatory agencies and licensees have adequately implemented recommendations for improved practices, following up as necessary to ensure responses are adequate.

## Performance Measures

Performance Measures	2006/07 Benchmark	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target
Proportion of participants that will be provided an opportunity to comment on the fairness, objectivity and relevance of complaint investigations	100%	100%	100%	100%
Proportion of recommendations from complaint investigations that will be monitored to assess adequacy of implementation	100%	100%	100%	100%
Completion and implementation of revisions identified through the review of the complaint investigation process	N/A	Implementation of revised complaint investigation process	Continued implementation of revised process	Continued implementation of revised process

### **Goal 3:** *Independent, objective analysis of significant forest and range practice issues of public importance.*

**Objective:** *Government, regulatory agencies and forest and range licensees are addressing important practices issues affecting the sustainability of forest and range values.*

#### **Strategies**

- Assess prevailing trends and conditions to annually identify issues of major public importance.
- Regularly discuss strategic issues with the heads of regulatory agencies, industry licensees, researchers and interested non-government organizations to determine those worthy of investigation.
- Conduct and publish special investigations where appropriate, which may include recommendations for improving forest practices.
- Provide experts and potentially affected parties an opportunity to comment on reports before they are finalized.
- Monitor and assess whether regulatory agencies and licensees have adequately implemented recommendations for improved practices, following up as necessary to ensure responses are adequate.



## Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2006/07 Benchmark	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target
Completed and published special investigations dealing with issues of major public importance	3	3	3	3
Proportion of recommendations from published special investigation reports that will be monitored to assess adequacy of implementation	100%	100%	100%	100%

# Resource Summary

Core Business Areas	2006/07 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2007/08 Estimates	2008/09 Plan	2009/10 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>3,682</b>	<b>3,761</b>	<b>3,808</b>	<b>3,854</b>
<b>Full-time Equivalents (Direct FTEs)</b>				
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Board Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>				
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>

<sup>1</sup> Amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2007/08 *Estimates*.