

Improving Forest and Range Stewardship Planning: A Multi-Year Initiative in British Columbia

The Office of the Chief Forester in the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) is leading work on behalf of the Province of British Columbia to make improvements to the *Forest and Range Practices Act* legal framework.

What is the Province's approach?

Through the Office of the Chief Forester, initial work is underway to review and contemplate changes to the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, or FRPA, and its regulatory framework. This work is purposed to support the following outcomes over several years:

- ❖ Support reconciliation with First Nations
- ❖ Restore the social contract and public trust in forest management
- ❖ Support the certainty of log and fibre supply
- ❖ Ensure that land managers have clear ability to promote and protect natural resources
- ❖ Improve and streamline range planning

Why do we need change?

The *Forest and Range Practices Act* is a provincial law that helps land managers to balance the economic, social and environmental values of British Columbians on provincial lands.

FRPA was developed almost twenty years ago under circumstances that are different than those faced by today's land managers. Many have expressed a desire for changes to FRPA in order to be more responsive to new opportunities and challenges, both now and into the foreseeable future.

1. ***The B.C. Government is committed to meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples*** in the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Change that recognizes the role of Indigenous nations in the stewardship of forests and rangelands can help bring these commitments into action.
2. ***Coordination at the landscape-level*** to establish planning certainty, security of access and development, and to collectively demonstrate a coordinated response to emerging landscape-level challenges such as climate change, the needs of wildlife species, and other unforeseen challenges of forest management.
3. ***Communities have expressed a strong desire for greater transparency and involvement*** in the development of forest and range resources. The Ministry is committed to an ongoing partnership with communities and stakeholders to work together on identifying opportunities to strengthen local engagement within and around BC communities.

What might policy change look like?

Changes to FRPA will occur over several years, beginning with initial improvements in early 2019. Improvements would include:

- Better forest stewardship plans (FSPs) content by requiring that the approximate locations of proposed roads and cut blocks be made publicly available
- More frequent and reliable opportunities for interested parties to provide input into operational plans such as FSPs
- A more responsive FSP that addresses emerging concerns, such as catastrophic timber damage, within 6 months
- Strengthening the management of visual quality by making it a practice requirement
- An improved planning framework that promotes Indigenous collaboration in forest management and improves government's ability to manage landscape-scale disturbances, such as forest health and wildfire

The Province has heard the views and concerns of many industry professionals through recent engagement in the 2016 Forest Stewardship Plan Workshops and in the 2018 *Review of Professional Reliance in Natural Resource Decision Making*, and from past and ongoing engagement sessions on initiatives such as improving wildlife and habitat management, timber supply review, species at risk legislation and caribou recovery. The Province of BC has also received significant feedback from the Forest Practices Board, Union of BC Municipalities, community initiatives, government reviews and others.

What's next?

The Ministry is working with representatives of BC's interest groups and affected parties in various ways. Our goals are to determine how best to engage and communicate over the course of this initiative, and to gather insights and perspectives on the nature of improvements.

Contacts:

The Forest and Range Practices Advisory Council to the Minister is a critical team that advises the Ministry on FRPA. Members are informed and available to receive and convey input to the Ministry.

UBCM contact:

Councillor Brian Frenkel, UBCM's representative to the Forest and Range Practices Advisory Council to the Minister - bfrenkel13@gmail.com

**Specific questions can also be sent directly to Resource Practices Branch at:
Forests.ForestPracticesBranchOffice@gov.bc.ca**