



Doug Donaldson Grateful No Loss of Life During Worst Wildfire Season in History

By Kelly McCloskey, *Tree Frog News* Editor



Closing the three-day conference of the BC Association of Forest Professionals in Victoria, Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, provided an overview of his government's forest policy directions. This includes increasing jobs per m³ harvested, expanding BC's innovating wood-products sector, and improving wildlife management and land use planning. Although future actions related to how the province addresses wildfires will await the Chapman/Abbott review in April, the Minister expressed thanks and gratitude to all who helped ensure the 2017 wildfire season came and went without any loss of life.

In response to wildfires and the mountain pine beetle epidemic, Donaldson announced the formation of a five-member panel to review the province's forest inventory program. The panel includes: former UBC Forestry Dean Clarke Binkley; RPFs Bill

Bourgeois, Valerie LeMay and Ian Moss; and Nick Reynolds of Sangan Environmental Services. The objective is to ensure the program accurately reflects the changed nature of BC's forests.

In response to questions from the convention floor, Donaldson spoke of the need for forest professionals to work with government to "reinvigorate our social contract and earn the public's trust"; "update our land use plans to incorporate new priorities such as wildfire, caribou and carbon"; and "to engage First Nations using the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as our guide".

The Minister's plenary was preceded by three breakout sessions. Dr. Richard Hamelin spoke on the future of biosurveillance with insects and plant pathogens. Gerry McDougall, Rhonda Morris and Ray Schultz addressed the chal-



Robin Modesto, Doug Donaldson, Michael Armstrong and Christine Gelowitz



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lence of meeting public expectations versus legal requirements and how much discretion a professional has. And a feature panel [for us inquiring Frogs] addressed how to maintain professional accountability in your practice.

The latter, moderated by Garry Mancell, opened with clarification on the roles and responsibilities of the Forest Practices Board (by Dave Clarke), the Ministry of Forests' Compliance and Enforcement Branch (by Kevin Edquist) and the ABCFP (by Casey

Macaulay), how they interact and where they overlap. A lively Q&A session highlighted the professional's obligation to approach fellow professionals as a first step in resolving conflicts, the strategy of bringing in third-party advisors when significant power imbalances exist, and how and why all three entities may open investigations related to the same issue.

