



ABC FP kicks off its Conference with a Panel of Chief Foresters

By Kelly McCloskey, Tree Frog News Editor

The Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABC FP) kicked off their annual conference with two workshops, a plenary of chief foresters and a public lecture on the future of wildfire in BC. The three-day conference promises to be an outstanding event given the attendance of more than 400 delegates and high profile speakers such as Minister George Heyman (Environment and Climate Change) and Doug Donaldson (Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development) still to come.



Al Gorley (the Host Committee Chair) and Diane Nicholls (BC's Chief Forester) introduced the first plenary "Charting the Path for Truly Sustainable Forest Management". Gorley and Nicholls spoke of the forest professional's management challenge given the need to balance 'expectations and realities'—effectively the conference theme. According to Nicholls, "charting the right path requires professional foresters to do some stargazing", which in part is why she created the Chief Foresters Leadership Group. "As professional foresters,

we are the face of forestry and thus we need to talk openly about how best to manage our forests for the future".

Three of BC's company chief foresters were asked to comment on a range of topics and a stimulating Q&A followed. Domenico Iannidinardo (TimberWest) spoke on how public expectations and sustainable forest management are integral to the thinking of a private land owner. "Contrary to what some people think—compared to public lands—the rules are largely the same but the referee is different". Jeff Mycock (West Fraser) talked positively about how landscape-level planning could make a difference during catastrophic fires such as those faced in 2017. "However, this will require more ecosystem data on the severity and values at risk so that trade-offs can be made".



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Managing Forests: Expectations Vs. Realities

Shannon Janzen (Western Forest Products) spoke on the Coast's fibre utilization challenges and in particular the loss of chips from Interior mills closed due to the fires. "Although in the short-term it created business tension, longer term it helped create awareness of our new normal and the importance of connecting what's on the ground with company operations and the AAC".



Discussion on whether sustainable forest management on volume based tenures is possible (yes but it's more challenging), how professional foresters can balance their professional obligations and their employers' interests (it's about relationships and advocating for change when required) and how Indigenous reconciliation fits into sustainable forest management (it's about listening and understanding First Nations' higher status).

The plenary session was proceeded by two workshops. Rob Ballinger, Jacques Marc, Garnet Mierau and Del Williams talked about the challenges of balancing public and legal requirements for visual management on the ground; while Steve Gordon, Molly Hudson and Sue McDonald focused on the challenges of balancing timber harvesting with species management, using the Coastal Northern Goshawk as a case study.

