



Professional forestry in Canada

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The New Zealand Institute of Forestry has started a registration process for its membership. Circumstances in New Zealand have brought about a particular form of "professional" designation for those involved in forestry which differs from that generally found in Canada. While the structure of the forestry profession in Canada may not be a template for New Zealand, it may be interesting for those involved in the new New Zealand system to look at what is done in Canada and how it influences forestry activities.

The Profession at the National Level

The Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF) is the national organisation for foresters. Its membership is not restricted to provincially-designated professional foresters. There are about 2200 members. The national office is in Ottawa and the national forestry publication is the "Forestry Chronicle". The CIF has sections across the country. In Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, the CIF sections represent the provincial registration bodies for forestry. The CIF deals with national, international and some provincial issues. It does not define forestry, nor does it offer right-to-title or right-to-practise. The CIF membership is low in BC and Quebec, which have developed strong provincial registration bodies. Of the approximately 6000 foresters in Canada, a large portion do not receive the national forestry journal.

Forests Canada, the Federal government department, does not manage forests. Its activities are in research and the national and international aspects of forestry. Many of its employees are not foresters, but are scientists of various disciplines.

The CIF is really not an exactly parallel organisation to the US Society of American Foresters (SAF). The SAF defines forestry and, in the absence of state registration in most states, represents nearly all US professional forestry inter-

est. Certification is offered by the SAF.

The Provincial Registration Bodies

Under provincial Acts forestry is recognised as a profession in BC, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. This means that association members have the exclusive right to use the title of "professional forester" (RPF) or "ingénieur forestier" (if) in Quebec, as defined by the Acts. Only in BC and Quebec do association members have right-to-practise. This means that forestry, as defined in the Acts, can only be practised by "RPFs" in BC and "ifs" in Quebec. In reality, it is not possible to work as a forester in most jobs unless one is an association member in BC and Quebec. Forestry in Quebec is conducted in French and a working knowledge of French is essential. Since most foresters outside Quebec are not functionally bilingual, there is little movement of foresters into Quebec. Most Quebec foresters are graduates of the Laval University forestry school. In both BC and Quebec there is a clear distinction between forest technicians or technologists and professional foresters in work responsibilities and hiring practices.

In provinces with registration, registered status is required to sign forest management plans. In BC and Quebec registered status is required for other areas of practice, e.g. silviculture prescriptions in BC; consultants must be members.

The relationship between the provincial professional engineering associations and foresters regarding "engineering" works in the forests has been awkward historically. In BC an accord has been reached between the engineers, the geoscientists and foresters on responsibilities. Table 1 gives the statistics for the profession in Canada.

Self-regulation responsibilities

Professions are required to be self-regulatory. This means that the professions control admission (entrance level academic and experience qualifications). They also control the behaviour of their members in terms of continuing competence, discipline and ethics. In practice, the academic entrance requirements strongly influence university forestry school curricula in for-

est resource management programmes at the eight Canadian schools.

Continuing education is still voluntary for foresters across the country. Continuing education credits are offered by the CIF and by the Quebec and BC Associations. Professional inspection of a percentage of members each year is required by law governing all professions in Quebec. It has been in place for 15 years. It has not been implemented voluntarily in other provinces, but is under discussion.

Self-regulation requires a large volunteer effort by members not only on an elected council, but also on various committees and boards. This effort, plus administrative support, plus considerable involvement with government planning agencies, means the provincial bodies need large budgets financed from membership dues. Currently dues range from \$250 to \$450 per year. Although they are tax deductible, there has been considerable resistance by members to dues increases. The current budget of the BC association is over one million a year based on 3700 dues-paying members. Expenses of discipline and ethics violation cases which go to court can be substantial; this requires reserve funds.

The increasing public awareness of environmental issues and controversies over public land use and logging have placed professional foresters in a much more public role.

Since most of Canada's forests are leased and since provincial budget deficits are leading to reductions in provincial forest service staffing levels, increasing reliance is placed upon professional foresters to be accountable for their work. In essence, provincial government roles in forestry are becoming more oriented to policy direction and monitoring and auditing the performance of industrial foresters' actions. This downloading of responsibility onto the shoulders of professional foresters means that the provincial professional forester associations must pay more attention to the continuing competence and performance of their members.

It is interesting to note that as forestry industry accepts more financial responsi-

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Table 1: Professional Forestry Associations in Canada 1996

Association of British Columbia Professional Foresters

1130 Pender St. W. Suite 201
Vancouver, BC V6E4A4
Phone: (604) 687-8027
Fax: (604) 687-3264
Contact: Jerome M. Marburg, LLB
Registrar & Manager, Professional Standards
Membership with exclusive right to title and practise 2788

Alberta Registered Professional Foresters Association

Northern Forestry Centre
5320 122nd St
Edmonton, AB T6H 3S5
Phone: (403) 432-1171
Fax: (403) 432-7046
Contact: Douglas Krystofiak, R.P.F., Registrar
Membership with right to title: 382

Ordre des ingenieurs forestiers du Quebec

2750, rue Einstein
Bureau 380
Sainte Foy, Quebec G1P4R1
Phone: (418) 650-2411
Fax: (418) 650-2168
Contact: Magella Morasse, ing.f.
President-Directeur general
Membership with right to title and practise: 1633

Canadian Institute of Forestry/Institut Forestier du Canada

151 Slater St. Suite 606
Ottawa, ON K1P 5H3
Phone: (613) 234-2242
Fax: (613) 234-6181
Contact: Roxanne Comeau, R.P.F., Executive Director
Membership 2231: By provinces: BC 646, AB 534, SK 54
MB 42, ON 524, PQ 140, N.B. 147, N.S. 89, NF 51, PE 2

Ontario Professional Foresters Association

Suite 102-27 West Beaver Creek Rd
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1M8
Phone/Fax: (905) 764-2921
Contact: John Ebbs, R.P.F.
Executive Director
Membership with right to title: 727

Association of Registered Professional Foresters of New Brunswick

Hugh John Flemming Forestry Centre
RR10
Fredericton, NB E3B 6H5
Phone: (506) 452-6933
Fax: (506) 450-3128
Contact: Tom E. Sifton, R.P.F.
Executive Director
Membership with right to title: 232

bility for forest management, stumpage appraisal and payment systems recognise the management costs, thus financing and guaranteeing the salaries of foresters hired to do the work. Rising lumber prices and rising real stumpage values have led to much better financing of forest management and a big improvement in job opportunities for foresters. This in turn has led to rapid growth of professional forester associations, particularly in B.C. This trend to more professional accountability and reduced civil services may lead to foresters in Alberta and Ontario eventually obtaining exclusive right-to-practise, as well as title, provided they regulate their numbers.

The distinction between professional foresters and technicians

Canada has eight university or college-based forestry schools which offer degrees which are designed to meet the entrance requirements of the provincial professional forester associations. There are also many technician or technology or ranger programmes in forestry. In Quebec and BC, where foresters have exclusive right-to-practise, the foresters Acts clearly define what is the practice of forestry. In other provinces the roles of professionals and technicians are more blurred with professionals signing management plans. In practice, many Ranger Districts or Forest Districts have managers who are not RPPs. Some provincial forest administrations are heavily "professionalised",

others are not. In practice, there are ceilings on career advancement for forestry non-professionals. There are independent associations to represent forest technicians or technologists.

It is possible for foresters' technicians to become professional foresters in BC, provided they take required courses and pass the policy examination. Some decide to enrol in university forestry schools to make up required exams.

Recognition of the profession

Forestry is a very small profession in Canada. In a very urbanised society of 30 million people, the 6000 foresters are not well known. Foresters have traditionally not been very active in politics; very few

have advanced to senior executive levels in the major forest corporations. Current education of foresters recognises the need for a greatly expanded curriculum to embrace sociology, conservation biology and First Nations values. With complex and difficult land-use planning and zoning decisions being made, and with more local environmental controversies, foresters are playing a much stronger role at all levels in society. Enrolment in forestry schools has rapidly expanded to almost overwhelm the ability of forestry schools to handle the number of students. With better financing for forestry and new roles for foresters to play, the future of the professional is very bright.

CONSULTANT RECOGNITION

The following have applied to become Registered Forestry Consultants.

George Frederick Platts
Dennis Albert Neilsen

Invercargill
Rotorua

The following have applied to become Registered Members.

Gordon Phillip Hosking
Michael Ian Fulcher

Rotorua
Whangarei

Under the NZIF constitution, any members of the Institute may send objections in writing within 40 days of Journal publication to the Registrar, NZIF Consultants Committee, PO Box 1340, Rotorua.