



## WESTERN SILVICULTURAL CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION

*36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and Tradeshow*

*February 1 – 3, 2017*

*Inn at Laurel Point – Victoria, BC*

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*John Betts*

#### **2016 Activities and Accomplishments Synopsis**

**WSCA advocacy reflected in good news forestry announcements:** Influencing our government's forestry policies and priorities often involves years of patient advocacy and ongoing work. Last year a series of provincial government forestry commitments were announced addressing challenges and opportunities long-advocated by the WSCA:

- The establishment last year of the **Forest Enhancement Society of BC** with initial funding of \$85-million over three years will require the operational support of silviculture contractors to fulfill its mandate including in part forest fuels management and ecosystem restoration.
- The **Canadian Wildland Fire Strategy** review released in 2016 by the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers amounts to a call to action reflecting key themes promoted by the WSCA through its two past international wildfire conferences (2004 and 2013) and ongoing lobbying of all levels of government.
- Our provincial government renewed its commitment in 2016 to the **Forests For Tomorrow** program including an increase of \$12-million to the Land Base Investment Plan bringing it to \$75-million on track to plant 28-million seedlings by fiscal 2019/20.
- Our government's **Climate Action Leadership Plan** announced in the summer includes a forest carbon initiative and the promise to restore 300,000 hectares of forestland over the next five years. This could involve growing and planting hundreds of millions of seedlings and other related forestry work for contractors and consultants.

**WSCA lobbying leads to Forest Service Providers Compensation Fund Regulation amendment** providing compensation for contractor non-payment in the event of a licensee going bankrupt for silviculture contracting, seedling production and certain forestry consulting activities. This two-year effort was led by the WSCA with the cooperation of the Forest Nursery Association of BC and the Consulting Foresters of BC.

**The WSCA initiative to join the Consulting Foresters of BC and the Western Silvicultural Contractors' Association** will occur this year following a supporting vote at the WSCA AGM. This will create a stronger and more coherent industry organization, the new **Western Forestry Contractors' Association**, better able to advocate for forestry and forestry businesses.

**The Western Silvicultural Contractors' Association was awarded the prestigious Green Timbers Award by the Forest Nursery Association of BC for 2017** for its years of promoting reforestation benefiting the province and the forestry industry.

**WSCA Collaboration with BC Timber Sales has led to ongoing improvements in the tendering and administrating of BCTS silviculture contracts** including:

- The introduction of a **standing bid deposit scheme** relieving pressure on contractor cash flows and separating bid deposits from performance deposits;
- The introduction of a pilot **contractor rating scheme** to recognize exceptional contractors;
- The **revival of the BCTS Contractor Advisory Committee (BCAC)** to deal with emerging contracting issues including improving accuracy of site information provided in bid tenders, consistent practices regarding release of bid results, addressing access and emergency response problems due to road deactivation, working in aging MPB-attacked stands, ensuring contractor compliance with Employment Standards Silviculture Regulation, joint training for contractors and BCTS staff etc.

**The WSCA has maintained work place safety strategy funding from the BC Forest Safety Council for 2017** ensuring silviculture employer contributions continue to be directed at effective workplace strategies through the industry-led BC SAFE Silviculture Program. *For more information on accomplishments and plans see the BC SAFE Silviculture 2017 Work Plan.*

**WSCA work with the Canada BC Jobs Grant Program bridged last year's federal electoral fiscal gap** making training subsidies available to silviculture contractors during last critical spring training time. Ongoing WSCA work with program managers ensures silviculture employers can benefit from this program.

**WSCA discussions on stocking standards with industry and ministry planners** has assisted in the development of a proposed enhanced basic silviculture designation recognizing licensees that exceed regulatory requirements for certain sites and stock types. This may lead to planting at increased densities in appropriate circumstances.

**WSCA talks with BC Chief Forester Diane Nicholls will lead to establishing a Forestry Contractor Leadership Team** to advise her on forestry policy from the silviculture perspective. The first meeting is planned for this spring.

**WSCA has begun discussions to bring BC seedling nurseries back into the federal Agristability fund.** Bureaucrats currently interpret the rules of this agriculture income stability plan as excluding forest seedling nurseries.

**The WSCA continues to participate on forest sector initiatives to better train forestry workers.** These include working with the industry-led BC Forest Worker Initiative Steering Committee, the Industrial Training Authority Forest Sector Advisory Committee, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Skills Training.

**WSCA continues good relations with other industry groups, professional organizations, and government.** Both the Truck Loggers Association and the Interior Loggers Association support bringing forestry contracting into the Forestry Service Providers Compensation Fund and continue to work with the WSCA on common contracting concerns. The WSCA spoke at the Association of BC Forest Professionals annual conference, the Forest Nursery Association of BC annual conference and the FP Innovations Demo Conference. The WSCA is one of the long-standing directors of the BC Forest Safety Council where union, industry and government executives cooperate on work place safety. The WSCA meets regularly with Cabinet ministers, MLAs on both sides of the Legislature, and executives in the provincial bureaucracy advancing the insights and interests of the forestry contracting sector.

**The WSCA published 22 editions of the often factual Rumour Mill and RoundUpDate in 2016.** Articles in this forestry blog-style newsletter (should it be a *flog* if it is a *blog* about forestry?) are often picked up by provincial media. Cards and letters continue to come in from readers.