

NEWS RELEASE



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ABC FP Presents Top Honours

The Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABC FP) presented five awards to six individuals and a group who have made significant contributions to the profession and study of forestry. The awards were presented last night in special ceremony that was part of the ABC FP's annual conference.

"We congratulate all of our award winners," says Jonathan Lok, RFT, the ABC FP's president. "They represent the best of our members. Their expertise, dedication to the profession, and passion for forestry is a reflection on us all and will inspire the next generation to do as well or surpass their efforts."

The winners are:

Climate Change Innovator Award Frank Varga, RPF, of Burns Lake Barry Jaquish, RPF, of Vernon

Frank and Barry were separate winners of the Climate Change Innovator Award. This award is presented to members who make significant contributions in practice or policy in response to climate change

Frank works an area of the province that was hit the hardest by the mountain pine beetle epidemic. He worked tirelessly to show the government that a change to the way the forest is replanted after devastation by the pine beetle or regular harvesting activities can have a huge impact. He was successful in getting new species planted in his area and then worked on several studies with practical applications with the College of New Caledonia. Frank also spearheaded BC Timber Sales' (BCTS') climate change action plan to ensure his area of the province is able to maintain a healthy, viable forest despite the expected effects of climate change.

Barry and a partner from the US Forest Service studied how the western larch species could mitigate the impacts of climate change by planting it outside of its natural range in a process called assisted migration. When the studies showed good results, Barry then worked with other practising forest professionals to implement the results in an operationally efficient way. This ground-breaking work has paved the way for other tree species to be planted outside of their natural ranges and will help keep BC's forests healthy for many years to come.

Professional Forester of the Year Joe LeBlanc, RPF, of Campbell River

Joe has been awarded the Professional Forester of the Year award. This award recognizes a member for outstanding recent service to the profession. Joe has been recognized for his dedication to the practice of professional reliance – a key factor in the success of the results-

based legislation that regulates forestry in BC today. By relying on the expertise of other professionals, great work is carried out in the forest and beyond. (Note: more information on [professional reliance](#) can be found on the ABCFP's website.)

Joe is also a dedicated volunteer who spends his time educating the public about forestry. He can be found at most public events staffing a forestry booth or at Carihi Secondary School where he is a regular guest speaker in the school's forestry program.

Award of Merit in Sustainable Forestry South Chilcotin Stewardship Plan

For the first time ever, the ABCFP opened up the Award of Merit in Sustainable Forestry to groups as well as individuals and this year's winner is a group of organizations referred to as the South Chilcotin Stewardship Plan. The award recognizes a group (or individual) for significant and sustained contributions to the advancement of sustainable forest resource management.

The organizations involved in the South Chilcotin Stewardship Plan include: The Tsilhqot'in Nation, Fraser Basin Council, West Fraser Mills, Tolko, BCTS, and the BC provincial government. The group had to work through some very sensitive and contentious issues in order to develop a stewardship plan that resulted in significant changes to forest management in the South Chilcotin area, while still allowing economic activity to occur.

Jim Rodney Memorial Volunteer of the Year Jason Hutchinson, RPF, of Campbell River

Jason received the Jim Rodney Memorial Volunteer of the Year Award which recognizes a member for significant volunteer contributions. Jason focuses his volunteer efforts on education of forest professionals and the public. He arranged an ongoing 'lunch and learn' series for his coworkers that sees regional experts sharing their knowledge with on-the-ground forest professionals. Jason also volunteers for events like National Forest Week to help educate the public – but especially kids – about BC's forest sector. In 2015, these events included a full-day forest tour that involved 25 other forest professional guides and 550 students.

Distinguished Forest Professionals Lorraine Maclauchlan, PhD, RPF, RPBio, of Kamloops Bruce Blackwell, RPF, RPBio, of North Vancouver

The highest honour the ABCFP can present to its members is the Distinguished Forest Professional Award. It is only presented to members who make outstanding contributions – usually over a lifetime – to the profession. This year there are two recipients.

Lorraine is well-known in Kamloops and around the province for her expertise in forest insects and how to mitigate the negative effects of insects on the forests. For her fellow forest professionals, she produces an annual booklet on the state of forest health in southern BC. This booklet is an essential tool to anyone practising in the area.

She is a sought-after speaker on forest health and will speak to any group – professional or lay – in any part of the province. In addition, she is sharing her enthusiasm for forest health issues with the next generation through her teaching position at Thompson Rivers University.

The second Distinguished Forest Professional award recipient also spends time sharing his knowledge with students – in this case, students at BCIT and the University of BC. Bruce's area of expertise is fire management and he has been featured in the media many times because of his ability to explain this complicated forestry topic in terms everyone can understand.

Bruce is the owner of a consulting company that, amongst other things, specializes in helping communities prepare for and mitigate the effects of forest fires by use of a community wildfire protection plan.

Bruce is also a dedicated volunteer with the ABCFP and has been a key driver of task forces studying forest fires and urban forestry. He is also the chair of the host committee that organized this year's annual conference.

Congratulations to all the winners.

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**Photos are available upon request.

*The **Association of BC Forest Professionals'** forestry conference and AGM, is held in different locations around BC each year. Attending are Registered Professional Foresters and Registered Forest Technologists who come to learn from the best, share ideas and best practices, and network with colleagues.*

*The **Association of BC Forest Professionals** is responsible for registering and regulating British Columbia's professional foresters and forest technologists. Today, it is the largest professional forestry association in Canada and the first to include forest technologists. Here in BC, the practice of professional forestry has been regulated since 1947 when foresters first agreed to help protect the public's interest in the province's forests in return for the exclusive right to practise forestry.*

For more information: www.abcfp.ca

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