

Fact Sheet: Forest Stewardship Plans in BC



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What is a Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP)?

Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP) are complex forest planning documents that are required under the *Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA)*.

A FSP is the broad regional plan that describes the way an area will be managed for a variety of resources including the harvesting of trees. Through legislation and regulation the FSP must address the objectives set by government for the land, for example, objectives for soils, wildlife, water, biodiversity, timber etc. The FSP is produced for specific areas by 'agreement holders' who have acquired long-term rights for harvesting trees sustainably. The agreement holder writes the plan to achieve the objectives and submits the plan to government for approval. The FSP is a document that shows how an agreement holder is going to ensure that their operations on the ground are consistent with the objectives set by government.

What Role do Forest Professionals Play in FSPs?

Forest professionals provide the judgement and advice related to the practice of professional forestry within the FSPs in several ways:

- **For agreement holders:** the forest professional may provide options and advice regarding how a result can be achieved in the plan;
- **For the government decision maker:** the forest professional may provide options and advice regarding whether the result should be approved;
- In some instances the agreement holder and the decision-maker are also forest professionals who can apply their knowledge of the science to the location.

In each example forest professionals apply their science knowledge and expertise to the circumstance in question. They do so with an independent mind toward the objectives that the government has for the land.

Forest professionals are competent, independent professionals dedicated to sustainable forests.

The government, as a representative of the public, defines the objectives for the land and provides additional orders for resource values over specific areas of land.

The Individual Forest Professional and Professional Reliance as a Foundation of FRPA

The forest professional is in a difficult position regarding the FSP because good stewardship has a multiple of different possibilities and outcomes. We recently asked our members about their professional judgement in their employment circumstance. Forest professionals do generally understand that it is the government and the industry that has the final stewardship decision regarding what will happen on forest land. While their advice and judgement will often form the direction in the management of forest resources, we also heard that in many instances that advice was not followed, was constrained to cost-neutral options only, or did not form the basis of the eventual management decision. There are many

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different reasons why this occurs. However, it is important to note that where professional judgement is not followed, then professional reliance ceases to exist.

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Ensuring BC's Forests Are In Good Hands