

Practice Review Summary 2015

Once more this year, practice reviews were focused on an area where the impacts of members' activities could have far reaching impacts. In 2014, the Forest Practices Board identified significant concerns with forest road stream crossings. The ABCFP and the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC undertook a number of initiatives in response to the identified concerns with the intention of improving the practices of our members. The decision to focus ABCFP practice reviews on stream crossings was a part of the suite of initiatives.

The ABCFP chose to focus its 2015 reviews on members who were actively involved in at least one aspect of road activities – including design, installation and ongoing maintenance of stream crossings. We have over 600 members who have self-identified as being involved in some activity associated with roads; however, that group includes people who are involved in policy development, overall administration and enforcement. Our intent was to reach members who were truly 'on the ground practitioners' and this meant that a number of members who were contacted did not meet practice review criteria. In these cases, members were instructed to complete peer reviews instead. For the members who did indicate that they were actively involved in one of the areas of stream crossings that were of concern, we focused on members involved in the larger crossings (i.e. crossings where the structure to be installed was at least 1.2 metres in diameter).

Two consulting firms with appropriate expertise were engaged, one on the coast and one in the Interior. We undertook 13 reviews - five on the coast, and the remainder in the Interior. Additionally, 16 peer reviews were scheduled for members initially contacted because of their involvement in road activities.

We discovered that many of our members had taken the workshop, *Regulatory Background for Roads and Crossings in the Forest Sector*, which was offered last year and were familiar with the revised crossings guidelines. We also learned that on the coast, most large crossings were being designed by professional engineers, rather than forestry professionals, and this practice had been going on for some time. In the Interior, most large companies had changed their practices and were also looking to professional engineers for large crossings designs. Many of the people we reviewed were managing crossings but were contracting out the design to professional engineers. There were fewer 'hands-on' practitioners than anticipated. Generally, members were meeting their professional obligations and complying with current guidelines for stream crossings. The areas where members needed to improve their practice fell into two general categories: activities and practices related to stream crossings; and activities and practices associated with general knowledge/record keeping.

Related to Stream Crossings:

- Two of the 13 members reviewed had not taken the training in crossings guidelines. All members involved in roads and stream crossings are urged to make sure that their training is up to date and that they are practising according to current existing guidelines.
- Two of the 13 members reviewed did not establish signed off assurance statements prior to the crossing being used. Neither of these members had taken the training offered.
- One of the two members mentioned above was also unable to produce the Professional of Record documents for crossings.

It is important to note that ALL of the issues related to stream crossings could be tracked to members who had not taken the training that was available. It is equally important to note that the actual installations were acceptable with standards. It was the supporting documentation, including proof of professional responsibility and assurance statements, which was not sufficient. In both cases, the installations themselves met both environmental and road-use safety standards. The failure is that there was insufficient documentation to confirm that due diligence had been both considered and applied throughout the process.

Related to General Knowledge/Record Keeping:

- Three members were unfamiliar with Bylaw 10 and the requirements for proper identification of professional work.
- Two members needed to improve their professional development plans and improve their documentation of training taken.
- Four members needed to improve their record keeping, either through the implementation of offsite storage, the transfer of important phone call and e-mail decisions to permanent records, or improved filing for their professional forestry documentation.

The general knowledge/record keeping issues identified are common to many aspects of professional practice – not just roads and stream crossings. They tend to reflect the need for ongoing diligence on the part of our membership to stay current in their practices, and keep safe, organized, and retrievable work records for their activities. Record keeping can be tedious, with no immediate benefit to the member, but they can be critical when a concern arises. Members are reminded that proper record keeping is essential.

Resultant Actions:

- A follow-up review has been initiated with one member to ensure compliance with the requirements.
- Practice reviews for 2016 will expand from stream crossings to other forms of road activities.