



The Month in Review

JANUARY 2006



Unsafe is Unacceptable

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JANUARY PLUS: This note covers the period from December 15th to January 31st. We now have completed one full year of operation and our first annual report, for 2005, is out. Most of you will have received copies of the report, but if you would like it electronically, it is on our website at <http://www.bcforestsafe.org/pdf/forestsafetycouncil-annualreport-2005.pdf>.

FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES: First things first. To date in January, the Forest Sector had incurred **no fatalities and 6 serious injuries**. The injuries involved three manual tree fallers, two skidder incidents and one in a mill.

This is the first fatality free month for some time and it occurred in the month which, historically, has the highest rate for both fatalities and injuries. We should take some quiet satisfaction for this beginning and remind ourselves of all the work that lies ahead.

The details on the incidents can be viewed on our site at: http://www.bcforestsafe.org/fatality_injury.asp.

In our Annual Report for 2005, we have included an *in memoriam* section with the names of the 43 workers who died that year. This was part of our commitment to “take note” of the fatalities that occur in our industry.

LOOKING BACK/LOOKING FORWARD: As we ushered out 2005 and welcomed 2006, we had little time to catch our breath. With the launch of SAFE Companies, our first annual report, and the announcements around the development of the Forest Safety Ombudsman and Safety Advocates, the continued implementation of the Fallers Certification Program, the follow-up on the Forestry TruckSafe Initiative and everything else that we have become involved in, everyone at the Council was literally run off their feet. We did not have the time to reflect on how much had occurred and how much had been accomplished in the last 12 months.

If we had taken the time we would have certainly thought “What a difference a year makes!” We could not have imagined, 12 months ago, the profile that forest safety now has, nor the many events, large and small, that have served to put safety well up on the agenda of industry, government and the public generally.

Nor could we have foreseen the enormous progress we have been able to achieve in starting to build the

safety infrastructure so necessary to effecting the lasting cultural change that we know is required. To echo our theme at the TLA Conference, “There’s No Turning Back”.

This is going to be a big year for the Council. We will see the continued maturation of the organization as programs progress from development to implementation. This will have implications for our structure and how we do business in the future. There will be a number of changes worth noting.

We have operated largely through the use of consultants and secondments. This gave us flexibility and allowed us to bring on personnel reasonably quickly. As we move forward, we need to consider which functions need to become part of the structure of the Council, and which we should continue on a contractual basis.

In the same way, we will need to consider our governance structure. Currently we are operating with one committee other than the Board itself. While this has ensured that all Council members have been included in our discussions, as we move forward, we will need to revisit our committees and how they function.

I would like to acknowledge all of the hard work that has brought us to this point and the dedication of our Board Members and staff. Our meetings are frequent and well attended. The commitment of all members to make a difference is seen in so many ways.

A NEW CO-CHAIR: **Lee Doney** is now officially our Co-Chair. He will serve alongside Jim Shepherd until the end of Jim’s term in March of this year.

Lee brings a wealth of experience to the Council. He has been involved with the forest industry in many ways including his current position on the Board of Western Forest Products, as a consultant and as Deputy Minister of Forests. He had a distinguished career in public service and held many senior positions. He is also known as a problem solver who can deal with difficult issues. I know that you will join me in welcoming Lee to the Council.

A FOREST SAFETY OMBUDSMAN: Of the announcements in January, the creation of an industry Ombudsman has been attracting attention. Ombudsman type functions are fairly common in industry and are used both to provide an independent voice for citizens/consumers and to deal with internal issues within the sector. It is this second area where we expect our Ombudsman to be active.

The position of the Ombudsman is part of the Council's commitment to ensure that the changes required to ensure safety in the industry are applied fairly and that all voices are heard. A short paper setting out the nature of the position and the functions of the position is on our website at <http://www.bcforestsafesafe.org/pdf/Forestry%20Safety%20Ombudsman.pdf>.

GETTING THE WORD OUT: Traffic on our website continues to grow. In January we had over 10,000 visitors who, on average, spent 14 minutes on the site. We are also experiencing significant downloads of documents from the site, with the Western Fallers Report, The Council's Work Plan, Forestry TruckSafe, SAFE Company information and various safety alerts, leading the pack. In total, there were over 4,000 documents downloaded in January.

IN JANUARY: The Council was active on a number of fronts throughout January and was involved in a major way in a number of conferences. These include:

- **Meeting of the Shared Responsibility and Accountability Sub-committee of the SAFE Companies Initiative on January 10th, Vancouver.** This was further to the meeting in November and took us to the next level in terms of understanding the respective safety roles of Owners, Licencees, Contractors, Primes, workers, etc.

- **Western Fallers Association (WFA) 3rd Annual Meeting, January 14th, Nanaimo.** The Western Fallers had a very successful AGM. Bill Bolton and I were in attendance and spoke at the meeting. The organization appears to be gaining strength and is becoming the spokesperson for the independent fallers.
- **Announcement of the SAFE Companies Program, Safety Advocates and Safety Ombudsman, January 17th, Press Conference, Vancouver.** The Council's Chair, Jim Shepherd announced this major program. Also present was Rich Coleman, Minister of Forests and Range who supported the program and the initiatives. Information is available on our site at <http://www.bcforestsafesafe.org/pdf/SAFE%20Qualified%20Companies%20NEWS%20RELEASE-FINAL.pdf>
- **Policy and Programs Committee Meeting, January 17th, Vancouver.** This was a substantial meeting of the Council and focused principally on the SAFE Companies Initiative.
- **Truck Loggers Association Conference and Trade Show, January 17-20th.** This is one of the major industry events of the year and the Council was a Gold Sponsor. The event was used to showcase the SAFE Companies Program. Several Council staff were presenters, including myself, Bill Bolton and Keith Rush. Our booth was in an ideal location and we made a number of excellent contacts and distributed a good deal of information on the Council.
- **Lee Doney named Co-Chair of Council, January 25 Press Release.** Details of Lee's appointment and background can be seen at http://www.bcforestsafesafe.org/press_releases.asp.
- **Western Silvicultural Contractors Association (WSCA) Annual Meeting and Trade Show, February 1-3rd, Victoria.** Keith Rush and MaryAnne Arcand presented at the conference on SAFE Companies and Forestry TruckSafe respectively. John Betts also presented to the Conference on the progress of BC Safe Silviculture.

COMING UP:

The Council will be active in February and March, with a series of meetings and other events. The Policy & Programs Committee will be meeting in Vancouver on February 15th and we anticipate the first Board meeting of the year on March 15th.

Of note is the first of a series of "Forestry Supervisor" training courses, first focusing on "Bull Buckers". These are being piloted at North Island College. We will also be convening our first joint safety meeting with the oil and gas sector in the Fort St John. ENFORM and the Council are sponsoring this first meeting with the focus being on the sharing of roads and related safety matters.

We anticipate that "**Shared Responsibility and Accountability for Safety in the Forest Sector**" will be ready in February, along with several other publications related to the SAFE Companies Program.

Also in March we anticipate the appointment of BC's first Forest Safety Ombudsman and the engagement of several Safety Advocates.

The **Council of Forest Industries (COFI)** will be holding its Annual Convention and AGM in Kelowna, April 5-7 and the Council will be participating.