

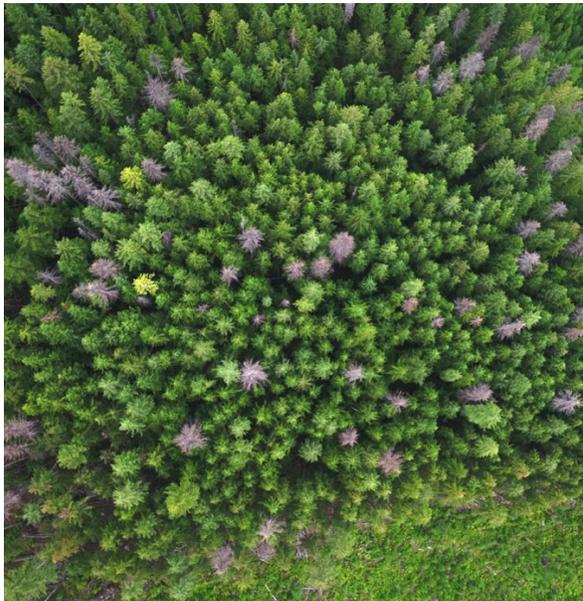


British Columbia
**Community
Forest**
Association
local people, local forests, local decisions

COMMUNITY FOREST INDICATORS 2024

10 YEARS

OF MEASURING
THE BENEFITS OF
COMMUNITY FORESTRY



Community Forest Indicators 2024

Measuring the Benefits of Community Forestry

September 2024

Front and back cover montage photos by George Brcko, Gord Chipman, Mike Crone, Carly Dow, Erik Leslie, Susan Mulkey, NACFOR, Evan Dux, and Harrop Procter Community Forest

Graphic design by Nadene Rehnby and Pete Tuepah, Hands on Publications



Mailing address: 101 – 3319 Radiant Way
Victoria, BC, Canada V9C 0N4

e: info@bccfa.ca

bccfa.ca



@BC_CFA



@bccommunityforests



@bc_cfa



OUR THANKS.

We extend gratitude to our members who dedicated time and effort to participate in this year's Indicators Survey, which marks the 10th anniversary of our Indicators Report. This report has become our most important tool in sharing the stories and successes of community forestry across the province. Our heartfelt thanks also go to the BC Community Forest Association Board of Directors for their unwavering support and commitment.

We deeply appreciate the productive and inspiring partnerships we have established with our diverse government, industry, and academic collaborators. Through effective communication, mutual understanding, and common goals, we have fostered opportunities and addressed challenges together. We look forward to continuing these successful collaborations in the future.

This report provides an overview of community forestry initiatives in BC over the previous fiscal year for the organizations that participated in the survey, as well as special analysis to highlight 10 years of data collection. Community forests have consistently demonstrated leadership through innovation, adaptive management, and commitment to long-term strategies. The BCCFA is honoured to work with and support this exceptional community of organizations and individuals.

— Jennifer Gunter, BCCFA Executive Director;
Susan Mulkey, Senior Manager and
Governance Specialist; and Carly Dow,
Manager of Communications and Outreach



UBC MASTER OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT CLASS OF 2023/2024 AT SIFCO FIELD TOUR, SUSAN MULKEY PHOTO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / 5

- First Nations Collaboration / 6
- Jobs and Economic Contributions / 7
- Healthy and Resilient Communities / 8
- Environmental Stewardship / 9

**COMMUNITY FORESTS
IN BC: THE CONTEXT / 10**

**2024 ROBIN HOOD
MEMORIAL AWARD / 18**

2024 CONFERENCE / 19

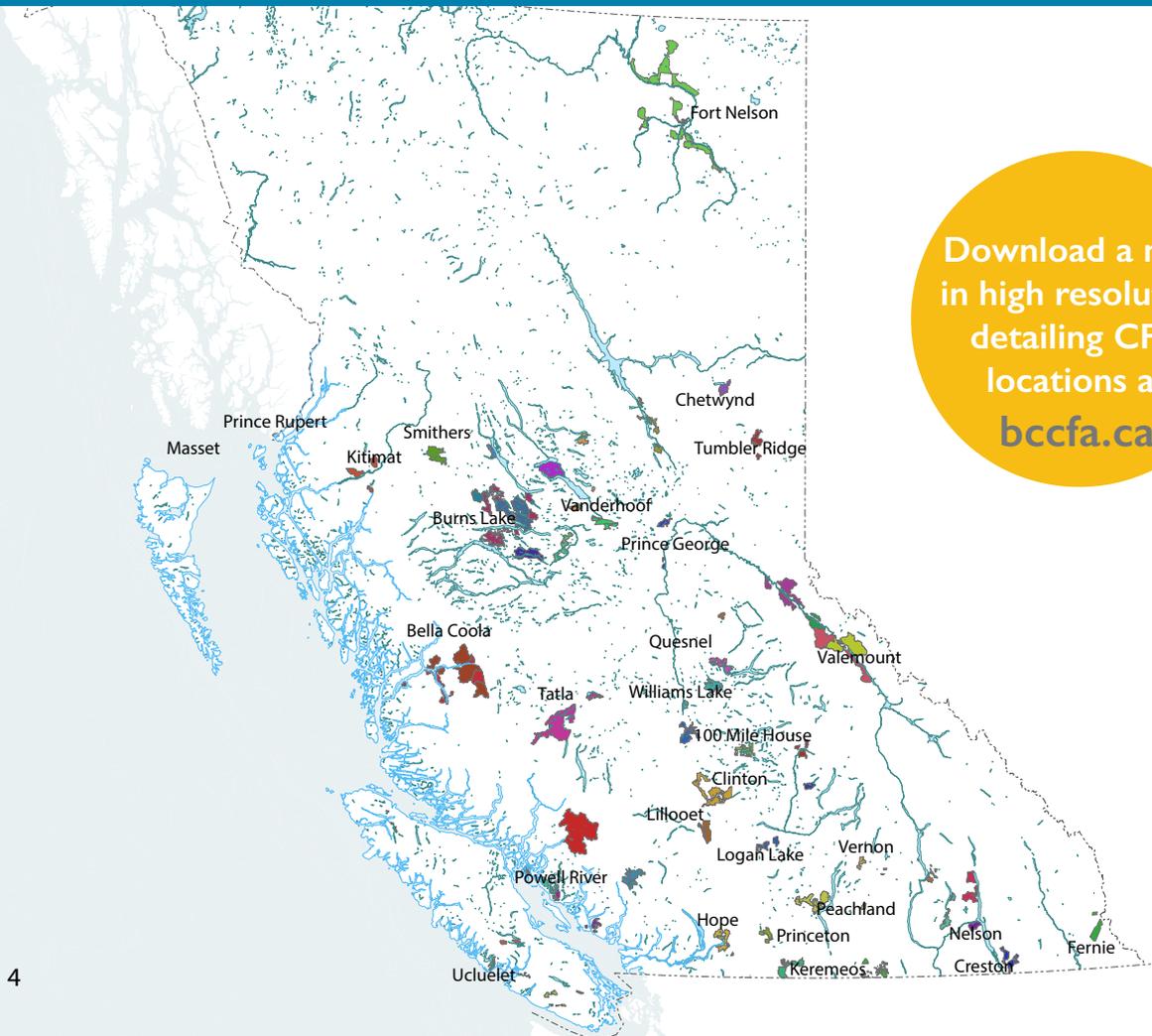
INDICATORS

- ① Number of Jobs..... 12
- ② Total Economic Activity..... 14
- ③ Community Contributions..... 15
- ④ Funds Leveraged 16
- ⑤ Cut Control..... 17
- ⑥ Distribution of Log Sales..... 20
- ⑦ Investments in Intensive Silviculture 21
- ⑧ Economic Diversification..... 22
- ⑨ Community Accountability..... 23
- ⑩ Public Engagement 24
- ⑪ Investments in Community Education..... 25
- ⑫ Investments in Recreation..... 26
- ⑬ Proactive Management of Wildfire Hazard 27
- ⑭ Forest Worker Safety 28
- ⑮ First Nations Collaboration 29
- ⑯ Management of Sensitive Areas 31
- ⑰ Investments in Forest Stewardship..... 33
- ⑱ Compliance with Environmental Standards..... 34

COMMUNITY FORESTS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE 2024 INDICATORS SURVEY

Alberni Valley Community Forest Corporation
Bamfield Huu-ay-aht Community Forest Society
Barkley Community Forest Corporation
Cheakamus Community Forest Ltd. Partnership
Cherry Ridge Management Committee
Cheslatta Carrier Nation Community Forest
Chinook Community Forest Ltd.
Clinton & District Community Forest of BC Ltd.
Creston Valley Forest Corporation
Dungate Community Forest
Dunster Community Forest Society
Eniyud Community Forest LP
Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative
HFN Forestry LP
Kaslo & District Community Forest Society
Khowutzun Community Forest

Likely-Xat'sull Community Forest Ltd.
Little Prairie Community Forest Inc.
Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society
Nakusp and Area Community Forest, Inc. (NACFOR)
Powell River Community Forest Ltd.
Qala:yit Forestry Ltd. Partnership
Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative (SIFCo)
Spelkúmtn Community Forest
Squamish Community Forest
Sunshine Coast Community Forest
Tumbler Ridge Community Forest Corporation
Wells Gray Community Forest Corporation
Wells-Barkerville Community Forest Ltd
West Boundary Community Forest Inc.
Westbank First Nation Community Forest
Wetzin'kwa Community Forest Corporation





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year's Indicators Report marks the 10th annual compilation of results from the BC Community Forest Association's (BCCFA) Indicators Survey. A decade into measuring the benefits of community forestry in British Columbia, trends in the data have highlighted increased time and financial investments in community values like education and recreation, continued partnerships and collaboration with First Nations, ongoing job creation, and growing efforts in wildfire risk reduction around rural areas. Community forests have consistently been at the forefront of positive change in the forest sector through sustainable practices, engagement with their local communities, and maximizing forest resource value.

Quantitative data was collected for 18 indicators outlined in the report, alongside stories detailing community forest activities and experiences over the past reporting year. Thirty-two operating community forests, 67% of the BCCFA membership, participated in the 2023/2024 survey to contribute data for this report.

JEFF REYDEN PHOTO

10 YEARS OF DATA COLLECTION

Below are highlights from Indicators Survey data spanning the past 10 years. Although the data has varied year to year with the number of respondents and which respondents participated, the trends provide compelling evidence of the persistent success and importance of the community forest program in BC.

Community forests have consistently been at the forefront of positive change in the forest sector through sustainable practices, engagement with their local communities, and maximizing forest resource value.



SUMMIT LAKE, JEFF REYDEN PHOTO

First Nations Collaboration

 **Over half**

of BC's community forests are held by or in partnership with First Nations.

As we recognize and work to uphold the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, community forests are striving to create deep and enduring relationships with local Indigenous communities.

Throughout the past decade of measuring the various relationships and involvement with First Nations, there has been a general trend of increasing cooperative planning with First Nations and supporting capacity building activities such as training and education.



SINIXT CONFEDERACY OF THE COLVILLE CONFEDERATED TRIBES SIGNING A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WITH NACFOR, SUSAN MULKEY PHOTO

Jobs and Economic Contributions

Community forests have consistently provided **more jobs** than the industry average in forestry, logging and support services over the past decade. In this reporting period, they created 0.56 full time jobs/1,000m³ in forestry, logging, and support services, which is approximately **107% greater** than the industry average.



Total harvest among survey respondents in the reporting year was 590,228 m³ with an average harvest of 18,445 m³.



Community forest financial contributions have shown an **upward trend** over time, demonstrating their ongoing commitment to supporting their local communities.



BADSHOT CABLE HARVESTING, NACFOR PHOTO

The average economic activity of individual respondents, measured by their expenditures over the past decade, has remained relatively steady, with the highest annual average reaching over

\$2.2 million

cycled back into the community.

AVERAGE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



Community forests diversify the **sales and benefits** derived from the community forest agreement area, often in the form of services such as wildfire mitigation activities, or value-added products from operating their own sawmills.

Over \$14.4 million

in diversified sales has been reported over the past 10 years of Indicators Surveys.

Total harvest in the reporting year:

590,228 m³

Healthy and Resilient Communities



Community forests prioritize multiple objectives on the land base, beyond timber sales, which include community values and social benefits.

Community forests have taken a leading role in wildfire mitigation efforts around rural communities in BC. Over the past 10 years, they have invested **\$11 million** of their own funds and managed larger sums from sources like the Forest Enhancement Society of BC. During this period, over 9,000 hectares have been treated for wildfire.

CFA WILDFIRE MANAGEMENT AND RISK REDUCTION CONTRIBUTIONS



During the past decade, more than **30,000 staff and volunteer hours** have been dedicated to delivering educational programs. These include field tours, classroom presentations, and National Forest Week activities for K-12 students.

Over 2,400 kilometres of trail have been built and maintained by community forests over the past 10 years. In this reporting period, over half a million dollars was invested into recreational features.



BEAVERS, LOWER NORTH THOMPSON COMMUNITY FOREST PHOTO

Environmental Stewardship



Community forests actively manage for ecologically and culturally sensitive areas, guided by the priorities and values of their local communities.

Since 2014, community forests

have reported that at least one-third of their operating area is considered sensitive, and special management considerations have consistently been in place to steward these areas.

Over the past decade, community forests have invested **over \$11.4 million** into stewardship activities, beyond legal requirements.

Over 149,500 ha were treated for enhanced stewardship during this time.

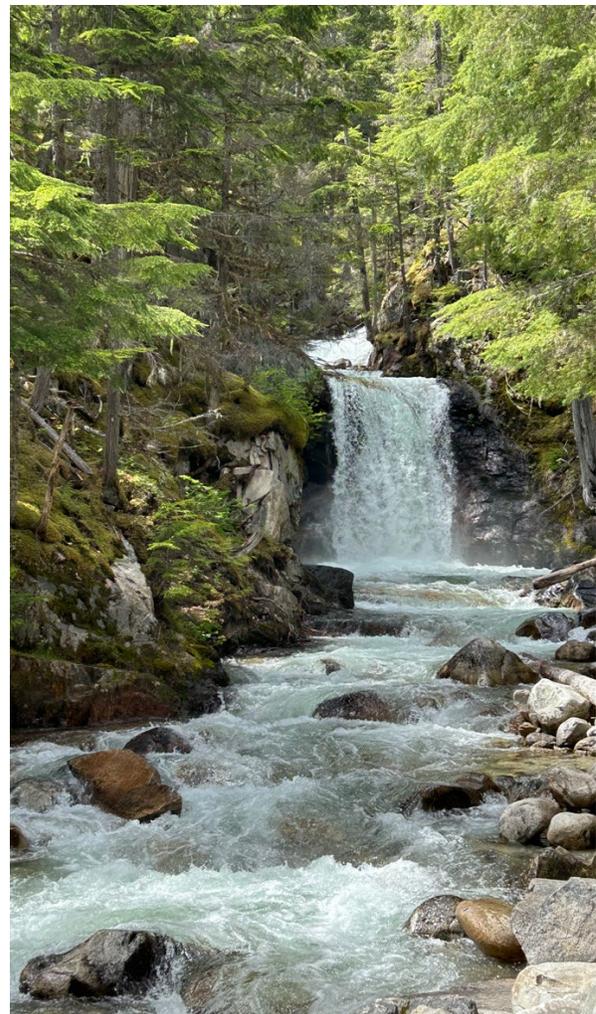
An estimated

7 million trees were planted.



Community forests regularly exceed environmental compliance standards with practices such as maintaining larger than legislated riparian protection and exceeding leave-tree requirements.

During this reporting period, **71%** of respondents exceeded or significantly exceeded compliance requirements.



GARDNER WATERFALLS, SUSAN MULKEY PHOTO

Background on the Community Forest Indicators survey questions and methodology as well as pdf of this report are at bccfa.ca/indicators-report/

Community Forestry in British Columbia: **The Context**

THE COMMUNITY FOREST tenure, called a community forest agreement (CFA) was developed to give local communities the opportunity to manage local forests for the benefit of those communities, in a manner consistent with locally defined objectives and values.

The community forest agreement is an area-based licence between the provincial government and the agreement holder that provides the exclusive right to harvest timber within the community forest area, and the right to manage forest products. Licences are long-term, 25 years, and replaceable every 10. Since the development of the community forest tenure in 1998, BC has issued 61 community forests and another three have received a formal invitation to apply. These licences are held by a variety of community-based legal entities, including limited partnerships, societies, co-ops, Indigenous Nations, and local governments.



LITTLE PRAIRIE COMMUNITY FOREST, SUSAN MULKEY PHOTO

Collectively, over 100 Indigenous and rural communities are involved in community forestry in BC. Half of the operating community forests are held by First Nations or a partnership between an Indigenous and non-Indigenous community. Most public land in BC is unceded traditional lands and territories. Aligned with the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, the BCCFA is committed to advancing forest management that respects First Nation rights and cultural values, and fosters understanding and cooperation between rural communities and First Nations. Active inclusion and incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and values into forest management will help lead the way to innovative, forward-thinking stewardship of the land base.

The community forest tenure is unique in the province for several reasons:

1. The ownership of the tenure is exclusively local, and the organization that holds the licence must represent the local community. Profits do not leave the community to benefit distant shareholders.
2. There is a comprehensive application process that includes the requirement to demonstrate local community engagement and support.
3. The Licence Document and Management Plan must:
 - Contain the broad social, economic and resource management goals proposed for the community forest;
 - Identify the linkage between the community forest goals and the provincial Community Forest Program goals (below); and
 - Include a plan for annual reporting to the community.

The tenure is further set apart by the provincial government's goals for the Community Forest Program:

1. Provide long-term opportunities for achieving a range of community objectives, values and priorities.
2. Diversify the use of and benefits derived from the community forest agreement area.
3. Provide social and economic benefits to British Columbia.
4. Undertake community forestry consistent with sound principles of environmental stewardship that reflect a broad spectrum of values.
5. Promote community involvement and participation.
6. Promote communication and strengthen relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and persons.
7. Foster innovation.
8. Advocate forest worker safety.

Community forests reflect the ecological and cultural diversity of our province. They exist in many types of forests and terrain. They range in size from 361 to 184,682 hectares, with a current annual harvest from 860 to 194,226 m³. Sixty four per cent are under 30,000 m³/year, with only 7% harvesting 100,000 m³/year or more, while the majority are under 50,000 m³/year. The average is 37,006 m³/year.

Range of community forests based on annual allowable cut (m ³)	*calculated on 61	
	#	%
<10000	6	10%
10,001-20,000	17	28%
20,001-30,000	16	26%
30,001-40,000	7	11%
40,001-50,000	5	8%
50,001-60,000	2	3%
60,001-70,000	1	2%
70,001-80,000	1	2%
80,001-90,000	2	3%
>100,000	4	7%

Community forests work under the same rules as the rest of the forest industry. They are governed by the Forest Act and the Forest and Range Practices Act, and all other applicable statutes and regulations. They pay stumpage (fees paid for harvesting timber from Crown land) based on a tabular rate system that recognizes the Community Forest Program goals and the unique conditions under which they operate. ■

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

AAC = Allowable Annual Cut
CF = Community forest*
CFA = Community forest agreement
Ha = Hectares
PY = Person Year of Employment. One PY, considered 1 full time job = 1,750 hours.
M ³ = cubic metres of wood

*Note: We often use the term "community forest" to refer to the organization that holds a community forest agreement.

Data shown infographically in this report is from the reporting period, with averages based on those that participated in the measure.

Background information on the Community Forest Indicators survey questions and methodology as well as an electronic copy of this report can be found on our website at: bccfa.ca/indicators-report

Learn more about the BCCFA and community forestry in BC at bccfa.ca/community-forestry/





Number of Jobs

During the reporting period, **347 direct full-time jobs** were created in forestry, logging and support, trail building, firefighting, and research activities by community forests.



BADSHOT CREW FIRST LOAD, NACFOR PHOTO

Number of people who derived all or part of their income from the community forests surveyed during the reporting period:

Total: 1,445 workers

Average per community forest: 47

COMMUNITY FORESTS GENERATE EMPLOYMENT opportunities in rural areas throughout BC. The “person year” (PY) metric is used to measure employment for every 1,000 m³ of timber harvested. As harvest volumes differ among community forests, this metric is useful because it determines the number of jobs created relative to the volume of timber harvested.

Person years ^a of employment based on reported harvest of 590,228 m ³				
Employment	Forestry, logging and support ^b	Trail building, firefighting, research etc.	Milling ^c	All activities ^d
Person years /1,000 m ³	0.564	0.023	0.441	1.028
Average person years per community forest	10.35	0.42	8.10	18.87
Total person years	333	14	260	607

Notes: Analysis completed by Peak Solutions Consulting Inc. ^aIn accordance with BC Stats, one person year (PY) is 1,750 hours; this replaces full time equivalent (FTE) of 1,820 hours used in previous reports. ^bIncludes forest management, logging, hauling, road building, silviculture (planting, spacing pruning etc.), administration and accounting. ^cMilling employment is based on jobs with one job representing one person year in this report. ^dSum of person years for forestry, logging, support services, trail building etc., and milling.

Spanning a decade of reporting on this indicator, the data show that community forests have consistently created more full-time jobs in forestry, logging, and support services than the industry average, despite challenges such as mill closures and decline in harvest levels. In this reporting year, community forests created 0.564 PYs/1,000 cubic metres in forestry, logging, and support services, which is approximately 107% greater than the industry average.

Spanning a decade of reporting on this indicator, the data show that community forests have consistently created more full-time jobs in forestry, logging, and support services than the industry average.

Community forests involve community members in their planning. To gain the approval and trust of community members, they invest heavily in outreach, including engaging, consulting, and partnering with First Nations, local communities, and stakeholders. This inclusive approach and focus on sustainability can lead to more jobs per cubic meter in forestry and related services.



The crew has been reliable, enthusiastic, and safe, excelling at managing the smaller blocks typical of community forests.



Nakusp and Area Community Forest Support for Startup Logging Operation

“In 2023, NACFOR facilitated the startup of a new cable logging operation in the West Kootenay region, led by Badshot Enterprises Ltd. The company employs five full-time workers, all under 30 years old, differing from the typical logging contractor demographic. The crew has been reliable, enthusiastic, and safe, excelling at managing the smaller blocks typical of community forests. In July, when a provincial Fire Danger Rating shut down operations, Badshot established their own weather monitoring station and generated localized Fire Danger Ratings in cooperation with BC Wildfire Service, allowing them to continue operations. NACFOR supported Badshot with their initial three blocks, provided cash advances, and letters of support for financing, helping to ensure the success of the new venture.” — Mike Crone, Nakusp and Area Community Forest (NACFOR)

BADSHOT CREW CABLE HARVESTING, NACFOR PHOTO



Total Economic Activity

COMMUNITY FORESTS CONTRIBUTE to the growth of local economies throughout the province. This unique type of forest tenure not only creates local jobs but also enhances local economic stability and resilience through direct economic activity in the community. This indicator calculates the total annual value of sales and expenditures of respondents within the reporting year.

“Chinook Community Forest exceeds industry standard rates when awarding contracts to First Nation crews by providing 10–15% rate increases to help them gain capacity and experience.” — Ken Nielsen, General Manager, Chinook Community Forest



Value of sales:
\$77,676,218
Average: \$2,505,684



Value of expenditures:
\$53,351,541
Average: \$1,721,017

In 10 years of collecting data for this indicator, community forests have, on average, consistently contributed over \$1.5 million in economic activity to their communities, with totals generally showcasing an increasing trend over the years. Nearly 70% of respondents have an average population of only 5,000 people or less, with an average annual harvest of just 18,445 m³, demonstrating that community forests can have a large impact on their local economies while operating on relatively small tenures.



HARROP-PROCTER COMMUNITY FOREST PULP LOG DESK, ERIK LESLIE PHOTO



Community Contributions

COMMUNITY FORESTS PROVIDE FOR their communities through dividends, donations, grants, special projects, and various other forms of support. As active members of their respective communities, community forests understand the unique needs of their local people and places. Community forests contribute both money and resources, focusing on benefits that go beyond the local economy—they also aim to achieve environmental, social, and cultural goals.



The Nakusp and Area Community Forest is proud to be a member and financial supporter of the Arrow Lakes Caribou Society, who provides a local voice in caribou recovery efforts and decision-making for the Central Selkirk herd of Southern Mountain woodland caribou. ALCS operates the Central Selkirk Caribou Maternity Pen near Nakusp, with the goal of increasing adult female and calf survival to achieve a stable or increasing caribou population in the Central Selkirk herd range.



Cash contributed to the community:
Total: \$19,624,538
Average: \$613,267



In-kind contributions to the community:
Total: \$424,178
Average: \$13,683

One hundred per cent of respondents made cash and/or in-kind contributions in their communities in the past reporting year. Looking back to the first Indicators survey in 2014, we see that community forests are giving more to their local communities as time goes on.



The Bamfield Huu-ay-aht Community Forest — the smallest CFA in BC with an AAC of 860 m³ — contributed wood from the community forest for the new community centre. The wood was milled on site and after two weeks of hard work, 70 Timber Framers Guild volunteers and 70 locals celebrated the raising with a big party featuring a live band. DAVID PAUL PHOTO



Funds Leveraged

Nearly one third of the reporting community forests leverage their profits as seed funding to grow larger local projects. A total of over \$3.1 million was raised from outside sources during the reporting period, a significant increase from the \$1.9 million of the previous reporting period.

COMMUNITY FOREST FUNDS can be used as seed money to kickstart larger projects that bring more benefits to the community. These funds often help attract additional money for local projects, such as creating recreational areas that benefit both residents and tourism. Many community forests also have legacy funds to directly support larger local initiatives.



\$ raised from outside sources for community projects leveraged by CFA profits: \$3,100,333

Average of those that leveraged: \$310,033



Legacy Fund Grants – BC Conservation Foundation

Funds from the Sunshine Coast Community Forest Legacy Fund supported the development of a kelp nursery and laboratory which in turn leveraged \$1,028,750 in federal funds granted to the BC Conservation Foundation to work with the shíshálh and Tla’amin Nations to restore and enhance kelp forests along the Sunshine Coast. The project aims to restore over 67,000 square meters of kelp at 25 sites. DISTRICT OF SECHELT PHOTO



Cut Control

AS FORESTRY OPERATIONS, BC community forests must adhere to provincial cut control requirements. Over the past 10 years, most community forests have dependably met their annual allowable cut.



66% of community forests reported being on track to meet their cut control

Over the past four years, an average of 75% met their cut control targets. However, this reporting period marks the lowest percentage to date of those on track to meet it. While most of the reporting community forests are still successfully harvesting the volume of timber allocated to their tenure, several face challenges including timber losses due to wildfire, difficult market conditions, operational constraints, and permit process delays. In addition, a few community forests have determined that the AAC originally set for their tenures is not sustainable and are in the process of setting a new rate.



Wells Gray Community Forest group selective cut in ESSFWC. GEORGE BRCKO PHOTO

“It is important to recognize that our AAC needs to be the outcome of our planning, a process that is community driven and puts a new emphasis on forest health. Our AAC of 20,000 m³ is too high due to community watersheds and old growth values. We understand the significance of social license, and it has become clear that an AAC of 20,000 m³ would not allow us to keep the community’s trust and support.”

— Warren Hansen, Manager, Sunshine Coast Community Forest



ROBIN HOOD, long-time Manager of the Likely-Xat'sül Community Forest and president of the BCCFA, was an avid champion of community forestry in BC. He is remembered every year at the BCCFA conference through an award presented in his name, which includes a \$10,000 grant to the selected community forest. While it is never an easy decision amidst many strong candidates, the selection committee rests assured that Robin would be proud to see his legacy continued in the outstanding work of each recipient. Presented this year by Deputy Minister Rick Manwaring, Chinook Community Forest received the 2024 Robin Hood Memorial Award for Excellence in Community Forestry.

Showcasing admirable collaboration and co-management, Chinook is a partnership of six First Nations and two municipal governments: Lake Babine Nation, Wet'suweten Nation, Tsil kaz koh Nation, Cheslatta Carrier Nation, Nee Tahi Buhn Indian Band, Skin Tyee Nation, the Village of Burns Lake and the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. Chinook Community Forest has taken a leading role in sustainable forest management and wildfire mitigation in the Burns Lake area and has supported local events and organizations with \$600,000 in donations during the past five years.

Showcasing admirable collaboration and co-management, Chinook is a partnership of six First Nations and two municipal governments

"The people who manage and operate the Chinook Community Forest provide a great example of how community-based forestry enriches rural towns and economies," said Bruce Ralston, Minister of Forests, in a press release. "By making their community safer from wildfires and their rigorous sustainable forestry practices, the Chinook Community Forest has truly showcased excellence in community forestry."

"Despite their land base being severely impacted by beetles and wildfires, they are committed to resilience in their forest management and governance," said Randy Spysma, president, BC Community Forest Association. "The Chinook Community Forest board and their manager, Ken Nielsen, exemplify the innovation and dedication required to govern a partnership between six First Nations and two local governments. This award is well deserved."



OVER 150 DELEGATES GATHERED IN MACKENZIE BC IN JUNE 2024 FOR THE ANNUAL BC CFA CONFERENCE & AGM





Distribution of Log Sales

61% are shipping pulp or other low value fibre at a loss that would otherwise be waste, to achieve environmental or social benefits.

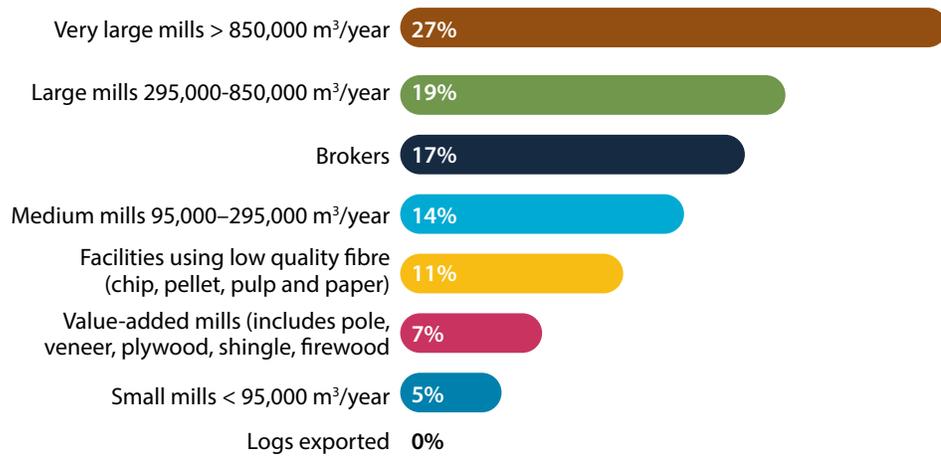
42% accessed external funding to help pay for shipping residual fibre. FESBC has been a primary funder in supporting community forests' efforts to manage residual fibre.

35% have a multi-year management or fibre contract with a fibre processing facility.

67% reported that all logs are sold to mills considered local.

COMMUNITY FORESTS PROVIDE WOOD to the open market, serving major industry as well as small and medium-sized mills and value-added manufacturers. This means they engage with a wide range of milling and manufacturing facilities. Data from the past decade's Indicators Survey shows that community forests play an active role in diversifying the log market by consistently supplying locally harvested logs to various markets, and highlights their efforts to minimize post-harvest waste.

Distribution of log sales to...



Log sales were opened to an average of 4.7 bidders, and logs were sold to an average of 3.3 different buyers, which is consistent with the averages from previous reporting years. Respondents were asked about their procedures to sell logs, with 50% reporting that they have direct sales to local, small mills and/or value-added enterprises. Sixty-five per cent reported that they sort their logs for sales to get the highest value.

Community forests face many challenges in their efforts to utilize residual fibre (left over on a site, such as smaller and poorer quality logs, branches, and other woody biomass). Primarily, the economics of handling waste and long distances to markets means many sell pulp at break even or a loss. Further, limited contractor availability, transportation challenges, and lack of market add to the obstacles of managing for residual fibre.

“We conducted two operational trials with a local green waste facility to grind wood waste for soil creation, but the cost was five times higher than burning. Our best strategy remains our commercial firewood program and an in-block permit program for cutting firewood. In 2023, over 100 permits were granted, typically taking three months to clear all possible firewood from a block, which lowers fire danger and reduces the need to burn slash piles.” — Warren Hansen, Manager, Sunshine Coast Community Forest



KASLO BRIGGS 2022 CREEK FIRE SALVAGE, JEFF REYDEN PHOTO

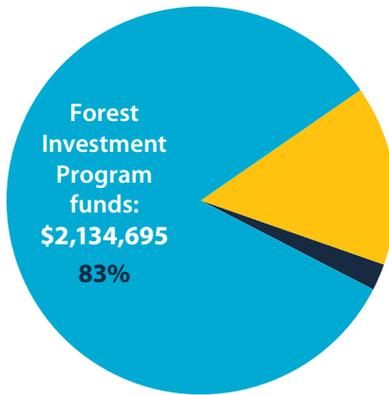


Investments in Intensive Silviculture

COMMUNITY FORESTS PLAN for the future by investing in the long-term productivity of their area-based tenures. By focusing on intensive silviculture beyond legal requirements, they make investments aimed at enhancing the forest’s capacity and future economic return. Over \$400,000 of community forest’s own funds and in-kind contributions was invested in incremental silviculture by respondents and a total of 1,589 hectares was treated. Over the 10 years of reporting on investments in silviculture, trends show an increase in community forest participation and funding through the Forest Investment Program.

Value and source of investment in intensive silviculture

Total: \$2,457,283



Community forest funds: \$370,485 15%

Community forest in-kind: \$56,344, 2%

Over one-third of reporting community forests made investments in incremental silviculture past the *free to grow stage*. This is steadily demonstrated in the past decade of incremental silviculture data, showcasing the commitment of many community forests to go above and beyond legal requirements.



With climate change expected to make the Nakusp and Area Community Forest drier and hotter, they have started planting yellow pine on suitable sites as a climate adaptation strategy. Yellow pine is well-suited to both current and anticipated growing conditions. Experimental plantings in older stands (20–30 years old) have been successful. Regeneration surveys of recently planted yellow pine show healthy growth on sites where they are part of the planting mix, alongside Western larch, Western hemlock, Western red cedar, Douglas fir, and white pine. NACFOR PHOTO



Economic Diversification

22% of respondents reported that they diversified their revenue.

ONE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOALS for the community forest program is to diversify the use of and benefits from the community forest agreement area. While log sales remain the greatest source of revenue, over the past 10 years of reporting on economic diversification in community forests, data trends display a steadily increasing total value of diversified sales, creating more opportunity in local economies¹.

Community forests are utilizing their expertise and capacity in wildfire mitigation activities by offering their crews and skills to support other licensees and local governments. Some community forests enhance their revenue streams beyond log sales by running small sawmills and selling firewood. One community forest derives diversified revenue through carbon offset sales.² Over \$3 million was generated through activities that contributed to economic diversification during the reporting period.



Total value of diversified sales: \$3,017,472

Average of those with revenue from diversified sales: \$431,067

SIFCo has recently renovated a local hall with the goal to provide a space for the community to gather and to have access to essential community resources during local emergencies such as wildfires or floods. The Resiliency Centre is also available for rentals and provides a diversified source of revenue. RESILIENCY CENTRE, SIFCO PHOTO



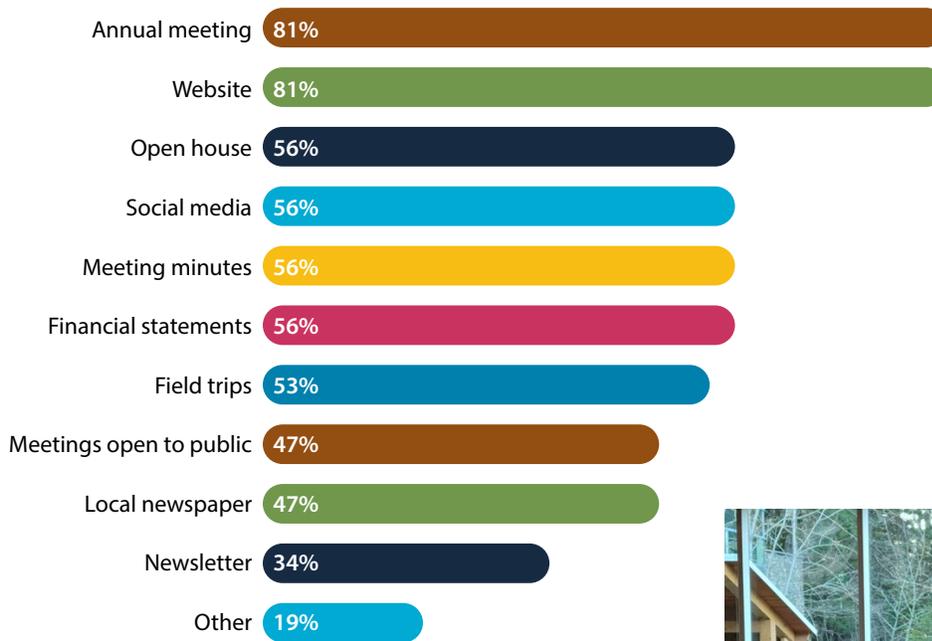
- ¹ BC forest legislation gives community forests the right to manage for the development of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs). However, with no regulation in place, to date community forests are generally not involved in commercial activity of NTFPs. Instead, they have taken on the role of facilitating access to resources such as berries, mushrooms and medicinal plants for the community and adapting the timber harvesting approach to protect non-timber resources. Respecting the traditional use rights of First Nations, community forests have left commercial NTFP management undeveloped on their tenures.
- ² Managing for carbon is not available to additional community forests under current government policy.



Community Accountability

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING meaningful relationships and trust within local communities is at the centre of community forestry. Accountability is a key measure of success for the community forestry program and is an important attribute that sets community forests apart as a unique type of forest tenure in BC. Community forests are mandated to provide annual reports to residents as outlined in their licence agreement with the province. This indicator shows how they often exceed these requirements by engaging with their communities through social media, events, and monthly newsletters.

Data trends over the years show an increase in the use of digital tools such as websites and social media to share information and connect with local communities, displaying the commitment of community forests to improve and adapt their communication strategies.



Those who reported “Other” noted using communication methods such as hosting tables at farmer’s markets, offering presentations to local stakeholder groups, and participating in local FireSmart Resiliency Committees.

100% of survey respondents reported annually to their community.

A total of **1,373** volunteer hours was devoted to community accountability in the reporting period.

Helena Edmonds, Lil’wat Nation, speaking to attendees at the Cheakamus Community Forest’s information session held at the Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre in November 2023. HEATHER BERESFORD PHOTO





Public Engagement

50% have developed formal agreements with one or more of their forest user groups.

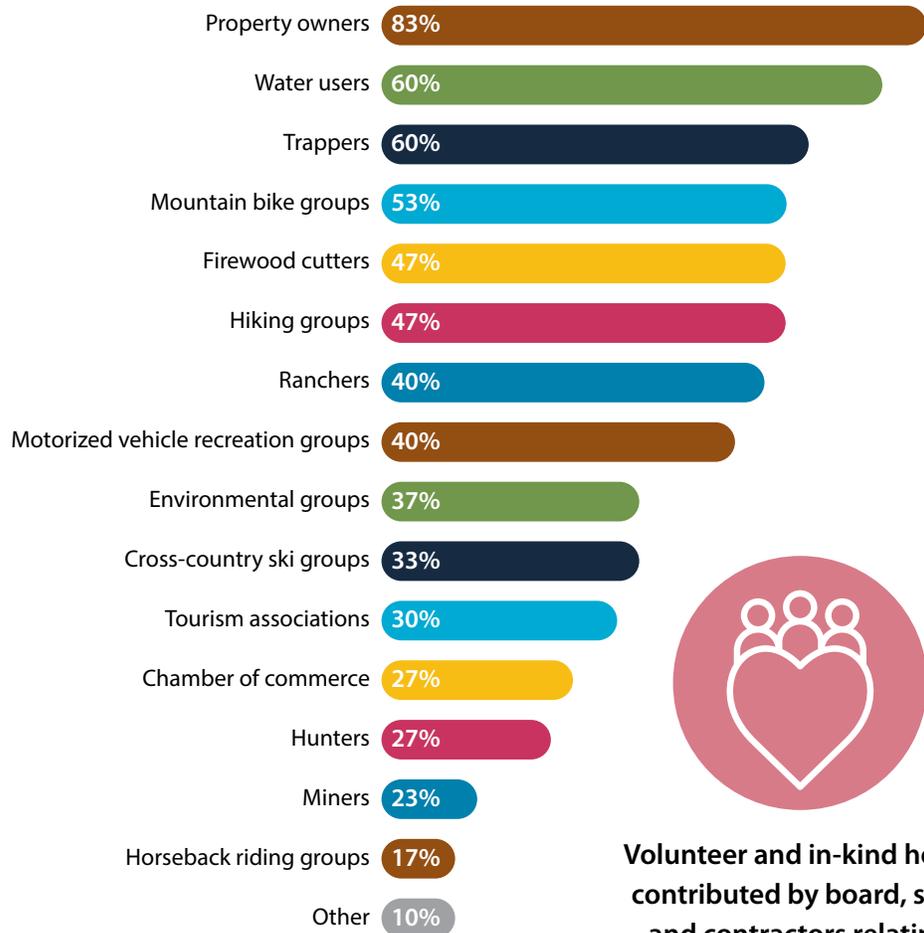
50% identified local land user relationships that have shared decision making or co-management.



A field trip in November 2023 on the Cheakamus Community Forest with the Forest & Wildland Advisory Committee.
HEATHER BERESFORD PHOTO

AS COMMUNITY FORESTS PARTNER WITH FIRST NATIONS and work toward reconciliation (as reported in Indicator 15), they also try to consistently engage with community and stakeholder groups that have varied interests in the use of local forests. The groups that were most often engaged with, during the reporting period and over the past decade, were property owners, water users, trappers, firewood cutters, and recreational groups including hikers and mountain bikers. Public engagement plays a crucial role in enabling community forests to make decisions that align with local values. It also serves to raise awareness about forest management practices and the objectives of community forests.

Engagement with community sectors



Volunteer and in-kind hours contributed by board, staff and contractors relating to public engagement:
1,082 hours



Investments in Community Education

COMMUNITY FORESTS ARE GREAT PLACES for forest education. As area-based tenures that prioritize local values and sustainability, they offer unique opportunities for community members to learn. By investing in education programs, community forests have become excellent resources for teaching about forest ecology and management. They regularly create ways to inspire and connect people, especially children and youth, to the land, showing a dedication to long-term stewardship of local forests for future generations.



Community forest investments in education: \$327,403
Hours invested: 8,551

Respondents invested a total \$327,403 of their own dollars into community education, an increase from the previous period and an overall upward trend in the past 10 years of data collection. Two-thirds of respondents invested in education during this reporting period, which included school presentations, field trips, canoe and hiking trips, and public events.

Over 8,500 hours were allocated to planning and delivering educational activities in the reporting period, an increase from the previous period. Thirty-four per cent of respondents conduct education activities with K–12 students and one-third of these conduct activities specific to National Forest Week.

BARRIER BEAVER SCOUT GROUP, LOWER NORTH THOMPSON COMMUNITY FOREST PHOTO



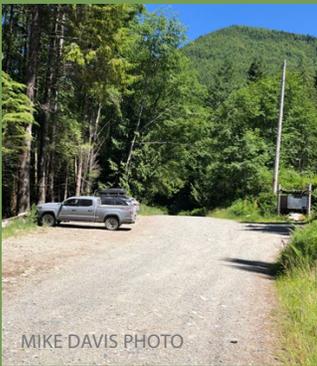
In the spring of 2023, Lower North Thompson Community Forest’s forest technician, Sky, joined up with Barriere’s local Girl Guides and Barriere 1st Scouts groups to host two community planting events. Youth participated in engaging discussions around the values and ecosystem services that forests provide. They also got to practice their tree ID and learned about proper seedling handling and planting techniques.





Investments in Recreation

70% of respondents invested their own funds into local recreation initiatives during the reporting period.



MIKE DAVIS PHOTO

Recreation parking constructed with support from Barkley Community Forest

The Barkley Community Forest (BCFC) contributed in-kind services and cash to the Ucluelet Mountain Bike Association to develop a parking area for the Mount Ozzard trail network. The Cumaata area is Yuułu?it?ath (Ucluelet First Nation) treaty settlement land, and the BCFC holds the road use permit for the Mercantile FSR which passes through this area. They also constructed a parking area at the trail head for a popular surf break in Barkley Sound.

OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAYS A VITAL ROLE in enhancing community resiliency by offering benefits that improve health, social inclusivity, connection to nature, and local tourism. Community forests not only provide a variety of recreational activities but also strive to maintain existing features and develop new trails and facilities, sometimes extending beyond their boundaries. These amenities include information kiosks, warming huts, cabins, scenic viewpoints, and trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and skiing.

Despite the relatively small size of community forest tenures, the effort to establish extensive trail networks and recreational opportunities reflects a dedication to community values beyond timber sales.

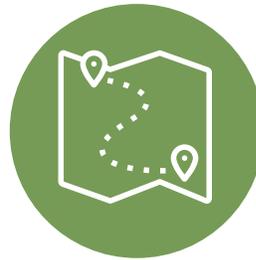
During the reporting period, with averages based on those that invested:



Investment in recreation:

Total: \$528,434

Average: \$25,164



Kilometres of trail:

Total: 113 km

Average: 9.4 km



Volunteer hours

on trails: 2,502

Average: 139

In 2023, NACFOR completed a 31.4 ha fuel treatment in the Wensley Creek Recreation Area, collaborating with the Arrow Lakes Cross Country Ski Club (ALCCSC). The ALCCSC was involved in planning to ensure the treatment occurred outside the skiing season and aligned with the Ski Trail Expansion master plan. As part of the treatment, 1.5 km of new ski trails were built, ready for the 2023/24 season. Roads with undulating grades and curves were designed for an enhanced skiing experience and the reduced canopy closure allows more snow to reach and improve trail conditions.



NACFOR PHOTO



Proactive Management of Wildfire Hazard

COMMUNITY FORESTS ARE DEDICATED and well-prepared to lead ongoing efforts in reducing wildfire risks in rural areas. Based on a recent assessment of BCCFA members, 82% of community forests are already conducting this important work around their communities, and 68% have prescriptions that are ready for immediate treatment. Often situated in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), the forested zone between wilderness and communities, community forests have acted on their unique positioning to conduct proactive wildfire management. Over the years, community forests have showcased immense effort and dedication to make their communities safer from the risk of wildfire, promote reconciliation through collaborative cultural burning with Indigenous partners, and manage for long-term forest health and other values. As the province seeks to improve how the WUI is managed and demonstrates an effort to increase prescribed burning on the land base, community forests remain a critical tool in the implementation of wildfire preparedness, response, and recovery throughout BC.



Investment to reduce wildfire hazard:
\$1,275,328
Average: \$70,852



Wildfire-related volunteer hours: 537
Average: 77



Hectares treated for wildfire risk in the reporting period: 957



Collaborated with First Nations on planning: 61%

Community forests use their own dollars to contribute to building wildfire resiliency in their communities. Over \$1.2 million was invested in wildfire risk reduction activities during the reporting period, with an additional \$6.9 million managed from outside sources such as FESBC. Over 500 hours of volunteer time were allocated to wildfire-related work in the reporting period. Although these figures have varied from year to year over the past decade of reporting, the data shows general upward trends in the dollars and hours put towards wildfire risk reduction efforts, showcasing the long-term commitment of community forests in supporting wildfire resilient communities and forests.



CHERRYVILLE FIRST RESPONSE TRUCK,
WAYNE CUNNEYWORTH PHOTO

Building on the successful projects supported by the province's Economic Recovery Initiative from 2021–2024, the BCCFA has entered a long-term partnership with BC Wildfire Service to support community forests in their efforts to enhance wildfire resiliency in rural communities throughout BC. Visit bccfa.ca/wildfire-risk-reduction to learn more.

Over the past six years, the community forest in Cherryville has supported the training of 180 people in S100 wildfire fighting certification/re-certification. In 2023, they sponsored 10 people for additional wildfire fighting courses and purchased an F350 bush truck equipped for first response. They are now supporting the establishment of the Cherryville Fire Watch, an organization with the mandate to coordinate ongoing training for members to become accredited partners in combating wildfires, in collaboration with BC Wildfire Service and the Regional District of North Okanagan.



Forest Worker Safety

Number and severity of recordable incidents in the reporting period:

Minor: **19**

Serious (requiring attention): **1**

Fatality: **0**

Total: **20**

COMMUNITY FOREST ORGANIZATIONS prioritize safety not only for workers, but also the volunteers and stakeholders who make use of their tenures. One of the provincial government's objectives for the community forest program is to advocate for forest worker safety. Most survey respondents require their employees and contractors to have safety certification from the BC Forest Safety Council or a similar program. Those who don't make it an official requirement still prefer to hire certified contractors over non-certified ones. This preference for safety certification has been steadily observed in community forests over the past 10 years of survey data.

66%

require certification

Of the total recorded incidents during the reporting period, 95% were minor. The single serious incident that required attention was related to a strain injury to a sawmill worker, and no fatalities were recorded in this reporting period.

Those who don't make safety certification an official requirement still prefer to hire certified contractors over non-certified ones.

16%

do not require certification

15%

other

NACFOR hosts an annual contractor training day for their Environmental and Safety Management System (ESMS). In 2023, fourteen workers from nine local companies attended. The training ensures contractors understand their responsibilities, enhances knowledge on safety and sustainability, and encourages collaboration. Topics covered included WorksafeBC regulations, prime contractor responsibilities, hazard assessments, watershed work, and wildlife reporting. A hands-on session focused on using spill kits to contain a simulated spill in a waterway. The outdoor training was well-received for its direct application to daily operations. NACFOR PHOTO





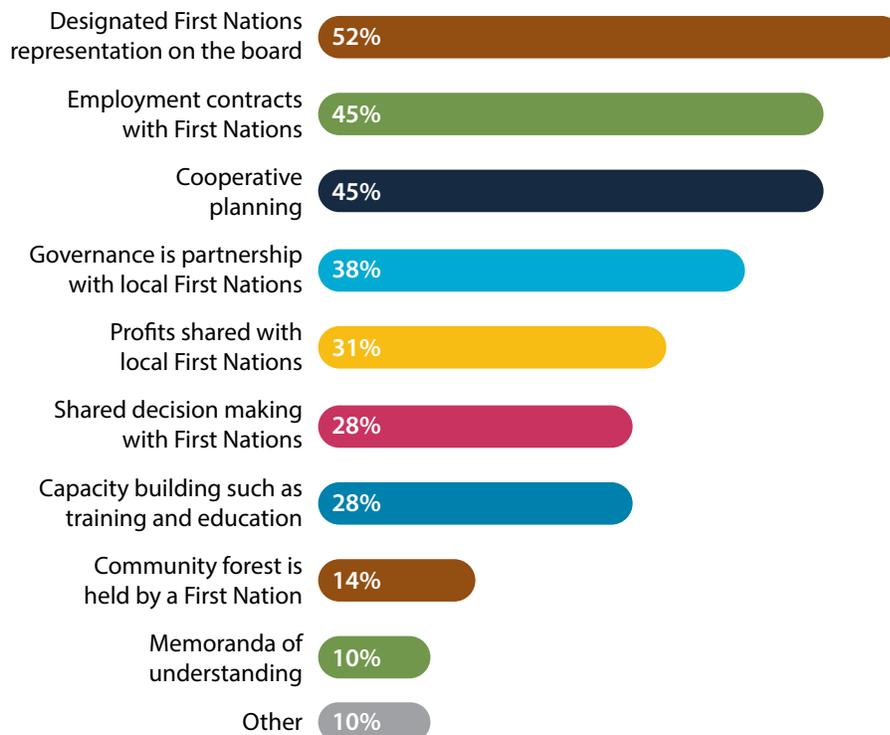
First Nations Collaboration

COMMUNITY FORESTRY CAN BE a meaningful tool for working towards reconciliation. Over half of BC’s community forests are held by First Nations or in partnership with First Nations. Community forests endeavour to undertake forest management that honours First Nation rights, cultural values, and fosters strong relationships that are built on respectful knowledge exchange and trust. Human relationships, like the ever-changing landscape, are dynamic and evolving. Community forests are constantly learning and striving to improve these connections as they progress towards reconciliation.

As reconciliation comes to the forefront of land management considerations in BC, community forests stand apart as working examples of how these essential relationships can be nurtured over time and implemented in practice. Sixty-nine per cent of participants for this year’s survey have taken action to respond to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) with a variety of commitments, including co-ownership, co-management, and shared decision making.

Over the past decade of measuring this indicator, there has been a general trend of increasing cooperative planning with First Nations and supporting capacity building activities such as training and education.

First Nations Involvement



914 volunteer hours were contributed to working on collaboration with First Nations during the reporting period.

“Our Procurement Policy, and other policies, include “Economic Reconciliation” among the guiding principles. Selection of bids includes consideration of Indigenous participation, and the definition of “local” is framed in the context of Squamish Nation Territory.”

— Sarah Weber, Squamish Community Forest, a partnership of Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and the District of Squamish



Elder Eloise Charet-Calles teaches the traditional practice of harvesting and weaving cedar barks – see *In Focus* on page 30. ISAAC CARTER PHOTO



INTERIOR SALISH TERRITORY

Video captures teaching of cedar bark process to Nakusp Secondary students

Eloise Charet-Calles, a local First Nations elder, has been working with NACFOR and School District 10 since 2011 to teach students the traditional practice of harvesting and weaving cedar bark into baskets. To preserve her knowledge, NACFOR and SD10 created a documentary video featuring Eloise’s life, community involvement, activism, and a step-by-step demonstration of the cedar bark process. The video, produced by a local videographer and featuring Nakusp Secondary School students, premiered in March 2024. This initiative reflects NACFOR’s commitment to incorporating Indigenous perspectives and values in forestry. youtube.com/watch?v=1fR7ADieIG8



WATCH ONLINE

ISAAC CARTER PHOTOS



Management of Sensitive Areas

WATERSHEDS, CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES, AND OLD GROWTH are just a few examples of sensitive areas that receive special management considerations on the land base. The stewardship of these habitats is often a top priority for rural communities. Community forests are mandated to incorporate community values into their operations and planning, as well as values critical for biodiversity and ecological health.

Data from the past decade shows that community forests have consistently managed and maintained sensitive areas within their tenures. Since 2014, community forests have reported that at least one-third of their operating area is considered sensitive, and distinct management considerations have regularly been in place to steward these areas.

Sensitive areas may include any of the following:

- Domestic and community watersheds;
- Visually sensitive areas;
- Areas with archaeological or cultural heritage values;
- Critical wildlife habitat;
- Fisheries sensitive watersheds and riparian areas; and
- Areas identified as sensitive by the community.

Of the combined tenure area of respondents, 43% is considered sensitive, 17% sensitive and operable, with 26% of the area designated as community watersheds.

Community forests are actively working to comply with provincial old-growth deferrals. Among respondents, 91% have areas designated for temporary deferral that are not already included in an Old Growth Management Area or other long-term reserve. Additionally, 88% have portions of their operable areas identified in an old-growth deferral.

- 39% are collaborating with First Nations on a new plan for old growth;
- 35% are voluntarily deferring harvesting in the areas assigned by the provincial Technical Advisory Panel (TAP);
- 29% have their own plan for the management of old growth that exceeds legal requirements;
- 19% await direction from First Nations; and
- 16% are using the field verification guidance to find replacement deferral areas.

Percentage of total area that is **sensitive: 43%**

Percentage that is **sensitive & operable: 17%**

Percentage that is set aside in **reserves: 15%**

Percentage that is part of community **watershed: 26%**



AMERICAN DIPPER,
NACFOR PHOTO

“NACFOR needed to perform maintenance on a forest service road bridge but first had to confirm if an American Dipper nest built under the bridge was being used that breeding season. Bridge workers were very interested to learn that the unassuming clump of moss on the steel bridge span was in fact a nest that can be reused by American Dipper breeding pairs each year. The workers will now be able to identify nests on other crossing structures during their work in the future.” — Mike Crone, Manager, NACFOR



“In block HM64, we identified its wetland status, proximity to fish streams, painted turtle habitat, and ecosystem support.”



Involving forest ecologists to prioritize wetlands and riparian ecosystems

“We prioritize the importance of wetlands and riparian ecosystems in our community forest by involving forest ecologists early in our planning. In block HM64, we identified its wetland status, proximity to fish streams, painted turtle habitat, and ecosystem support. Guided by specialists, our forest professionals implemented protective measures that exceed standard requirements to preserve these areas’ ecological integrity. By understanding and innovatively addressing ecological challenges, our approach embodies the essence of a community forest.” — Warren Hansen, Manager, Sunshine Coast Community Forest

PAINTED TURTLE, ALISTAIR BINNEY PHOTO



Investments in Forest Stewardship

AS LONG-TERM, AREA-BASED TENURES, community forests are dedicated to sustaining the health of local forests. One of the eight goals of the provincial community forest program is to practice forestry in alignment with sound environmental stewardship principles that reflect a broad range of values. This indicator assesses the investments community forests are making in their forestry operations beyond legal requirements, focusing on the long-term well-being of the forests. Healthy forests are crucial for fostering strong communities and robust local economies. Over the past decade of surveys, community forests have shown significant financial investments and volunteer contributions to stewardship activities, enhancing the state of their forests for future generations.

Forest stewardship investments include monitoring programs and inventory tools such as LiDAR, implementing biodiversity management strategies, detailed bark beetle mapping, conducting prescribed burns for ecological purposes, and managing for sensitive areas including old growth. In addition to the dollars dedicated to stewardship activities from community forests' own funds, they managed over \$3 million from outside sources.

Community forests are investing in tools to develop reliable, long-term forest inventory information.

Respondents that have invested in LiDAR: **77%**

Monitoring programs in place: **50%**



Investment in enhanced or modified management for ecological or social reasons:

Total \$443,412
Average: \$40,310



Value of investments from outside sources

Total: \$3,012,540
Average: \$1,506,27



Area treated within and outside the CF boundary

Total ha: 757
Average ha: 126



Volunteer hours on stewardship activities

Total: 310
Average: 44

CHALKED SEEDLINGS IN WELLS GRAY COMMUNITY FOREST, GEORGE BRCKO PHOTO



In the Wells Gray Community Forest, where about 200 ha are planted annually, tree planters traditionally use plastic flagging ribbon to mark each planted tree, aiding in meeting tree spacing standards. This practice raises concerns about plastic pollution, with planters using 2–3 rolls daily, leading to approximately 252,000 feet of plastic littering forests and waterways each season. To combat this, the 2023 spring planting program utilized a blue dry clay powder to mark seedlings. This method significantly reduced plastic use while maintaining planting quality and allowed planters more flexibility in tree spacing, improving overall planting efficiency, and reducing errors.



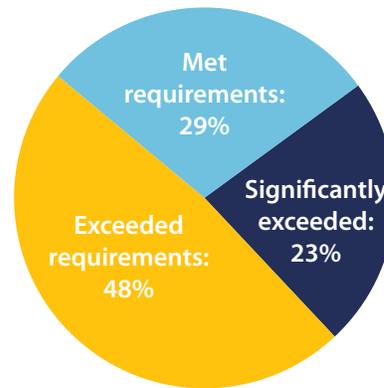
Compliance with Environmental Standards

Total compliance and enforcement inspections conducted: **10**
Determinations issued against the CF: **0**

During the reporting period, 71% of respondents exceeded or significantly exceeded the standard provincial requirements for compliance.

OVER THE PAST DECADE OF REPORTING on this indicator, community forests have consistently met requirements for compliance with environmental standards, and in most cases have exceeded or significantly exceeded the requirements. No determinations were issued against community forests during this reporting period. Community forests strive for excellence in all aspects of their operations, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.

CFA management practices met (29%), exceeded (48%), or significantly exceeded (23%) requirements outlined in legislation.



Examples of how community forests exceeded standards include:

- Exceeded legal requirements for the management of biodiversity;
- Maintained larger than legislated riparian buffers and protection;
- Enhanced wetland management through assessments and rare plant evaluations;
- Exceeded post-harvest retention in Visual Quality Objective (VQO) polygons and ungulate habitat; and
- Non-herbicide vegetation management to meet public and First Nations values.

“We plant at a high density, aiming for optimal growth rather than just meeting minimum standards. To ensure successful establishment, we apply fertilizer at the time of planting. We also use hand brushing to maximize the beneficial relationships between deciduous and coniferous trees.”

— George Brcko, Manager,
Wells Gray Community Forest



Join us.



2024 CONFERENCE, EVAN DUX PHOTO

To learn more about joining the BCCFA membership, visit bccfa.ca/join-us/ or scan the QR code below.





10 YEARS OF MEASURING THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY

The BC Community Forest Association is a network of rural community-based organizations engaged in community forest management, and those seeking to establish new community forests. We represent over 90 rural and Indigenous communities across our province. We share a vision of a network of diverse community forest initiatives, where local people practice ecologically responsible forest management in perpetuity, fostering and supporting healthy and vibrant rural communities and economies.



Mailing address: 101 – 3319 Radiant Way
Victoria, BC, Canada V9C 0N4

e: info@bccfa.ca
bccfa.ca

@BC_CFA @bccommunityforests @bc_cfa