



BURNS LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST LTD.

General Manager *Christmas Message*

As we come to the end of the 2022 year, we love to look back at this year's challenges and accomplishments at the Community Forest.

With things returning closer to normal we are proud of the growth that BLCF has achieved in this calendar year. From our communication, prescribed burn, educational opportunities, donations, and so much more. We would like to express our deepest gratitude towards our community for their understanding and support during these recent strides that the BLCF has taken this past year.

With the growth of the BLCF we have focused on maintaining our core values and deepening our understandings of land management, reconciliation, and environmental stewardship. We have maintained our Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification and have been using any opportunity to educate and share the work of the FSC and why we choose to maintain certification with them.

Our growth in 2022, brought continued accomplishments for our community. We continued our investment in sound stewardship of forested land- completing a landscape level martin and habitat assessments, followed by a multi-year field assessments of this habitat in collaboration with UBCO, lead by a Burns Lake Local, Brooklyn Maher. We have over 100 game cameras throughout the community forest examining the habitat use. We continue to focus our operational activities to utilize the dead fiber. This approach has helped us defer the commencement of our 5 yr green harvest plan, supporting our efforts to set a strong mid-term timber supply for Burns Lake Community Forest.

This past September we completed our first ever Prescribed Fire activity. A milestone in the province of BC and for the Burns Lake Community Forest. We worked with an amazing team from Shifting Mosaics and Northern Fire WoRx, and our local contracting team to complete this project. A prescribed fire takes a huge team of professionals to bring to fruition, fire specialists, fire fighters, forest

professionals, and statutory decision makers. This team creates detailed planning for all aspects of a prescribed burn, site prep, ignition, mop – up, and post – ecological studies.

I want to acknowledge that such activities may bring about emotional strains in community members, and we want to assure everyone that we complete these activities with the intent of creating community safety and ecosystem resilience. As some of you may recall Burns Lake is #5 out of top 20 small communities in British Columbia at extreme risk due to hazardous fuels in around the community, and so this is top of mind for us at Burns Lake Community Forest. Collectively we need to recognize that we live in a fire-based ecosystem, and as such our day-to-day life, and our forest management must reflect strategies that support this frequent landscape disturbance.

It is important to re-emphasize that these efforts are for more than just the opportunity to harvest dead pine! It is about actions that bring about community safety, ecosystem restoration, and long-term community forest sustainability. At the core, it is a delicate balancing act between providing social and economic opportunities while ensuring we maintain and enhance ecosystem values.

This past year we have really pushed to make education and communication a priority of the BLCF. We hired our first Journalism student and have been working on growing our public relations via social media and planning events to bring up student engagement and awareness of the opportunities that exist in a career in natural resources management. Our first annual forestry themed job fair at our local high school was a huge success! We spoke to many students about the different aspects of forestry as well as giving them ideas on planning their futures. Joining us was Free Growing Forestry and Tahtsa Group!

Continuing our efforts in public communication and engagement we held our 9th Annual Public Information Open House/

Community BBQ. This event has grown from an opportunity to learn about community forest proceedings to a celebration of community successes. Thank you to everyone who attended and brought community spirit to the event. If you did not get the chance to attend, I want to encourage you to attend in future years.

There is a dedicate team of volunteers; your Board of Directors, coming from diverse backgrounds that represent all aspects of our community. I encourage you to meet them and discuss the strategic direction of BLCF. I continue to emphasize our efforts towards focused long-term strategic goals “beyond the beetle”. These goals are meant to support the long-term prosperity of Burns Lake Community Forest and all the benefits it brings to our communities. My goal is to continue emphasizing and demonstrating the important social fabric that BLCF has in our communities.

I want you all to join me in celebrating our successes and in helping to manage the upcoming challenges. I encourage all community members to explore all that BLCF does in our community and support BCLF stay on the path of success. I believe as a community forest; we are a top performing community forest in the province.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us via info@blcomfor.com or via phone (250) 692-7724 to schedule a specific time to discuss matters that are important to you. Or follow us on all Social Medias @BurnsLakeCommunityForest to learn more!

On behalf of the Board and staff of Comfor Management Services Ltd. and Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd., I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Frank Varga RPF
General Manager
Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd
COMFOR Management Services Ltd*