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## BC Forestry Revitalization Trust

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### Report of the Trustee as of June 30, 2009

#### General

In March 2003 the province of British Columbia established the BC Forestry Revitalization Trust (BCFRT) and funded it with \$75,000,000. The mandate of the BCFRT was to provide mitigation to forest workers and replaceable contractors that are negatively impacted by timber reallocations resulting from the Forestry Revitalization Act (FRA).

In April 2004 the province appointed Eric van Soeren as Trustee. Shortly after that he appointed a seven member Advisory Board, as required by the Trust Deed. That Board developed draft Forest Worker Mitigation Guidelines and Contractor Mitigation Guidelines.

Utilizing the best estimates of industry, seniority estimates obtained from the IWA pension plan, seniority estimates obtained from contractor industry associations, and the proposed guidelines, the Trustee determined that the BCFRT likely required approximately \$50,000,000 more than what was available in the BCFRT accounts, plus what the BCFRT was likely to earn in interest while holding mitigation funds in trust.

The Trustee and the Advisory Board approached the province and received a commitment for the additional funds, so the BCFRT Advisory Board finalized the Contractor Mitigation Guidelines and the Forest Worker Mitigation Guidelines. The Guidelines, as well as extensive supporting documentation, are posted on the BCFRT website at [www.bcfrt.com](http://www.bcfrt.com).

#### Roll over of the BCFRT

The original BCFRT was slated to terminate effective March 31, 2008. However, for a variety of reasons it was not possible to mitigate all the eligible beneficiaries of the BCFRT by that time. Further, estimates at that time suggested that even once all the existing beneficiaries receive mitigation, there would still be funds left in the BCFRT. Therefore, it was agreed by the Trustee, the Province and the Advisory Board members that the BCFRT should be extended, the group of potential beneficiaries be expanded, and the Trustee be given limited discretion to deem that individuals who would not otherwise be eligible beneficiaries of the BCFRT be included. The Minister of Forests and Range and the Trustee signed a new Declaration of Trust, and all assets and obligations of the BCFRT were assumed by the new BCFRT II. A copy of the Declaration of Trust that created the BCFRT II is posted on the BCFRT website. The new trust is essentially a rollover of the original BCFRT, but with slightly expanded beneficiaries and no fixed termination date. It also allows for mitigation to be made available to workers and replaceable contractors that might be negatively affected by future land use decisions.

## Account Balances as at June 30, 2009

### Account Balances

Administration Account	\$4,512,700
Contractor Mitigation Account	\$3,888,586
Forest Worker Mitigation Account	\$4,807,575
Funds held in reserve by Ministry of Forests and Range	<u>\$10,000,000</u>
<b>Total market value of BCFRT accounts</b>	<b>\$23,208,861</b>

### Distributions to Beneficiaries to date

Contractor Mitigation	\$68,189,640
Forest Worker Mitigation	<u>\$42,723,092</u>
<b>Total Distributions to Beneficiaries</b>	<b>\$110,912,732</b>

**Total available funds plus distributions** **\$134,121,584**

### Administration Account

When the BCFRT was created, \$5,000,000 was allocated to administration. To date, most of the administration expenses of the BCFRT have been covered by the interest earned on the Administration Account balance, so the initial principal has been reduced by approximately \$487,000. A significant portion of the Administration Account will be able to be transferred to one of the Mitigation Accounts at a later date, and on an as needed basis.

### Contractor Mitigation Account

The principle used for contractor mitigation is that contractors who lost their replaceable contracts as a result of Forestry Revitalization Act (FRA) restructuring received mitigation that approximates what the contract might reasonably have been worth at the time it was reduced or eliminated. This was usually based on a per cubic metre value, but contracts that were based on some other measure were treated accordingly. A detailed description of the calculation that was used is contained in the Contractor Mitigation Guidelines.

As of June 30, 2009, Forestry Revitalization Proposals (FRPs) have been presented and accepted by the affected contractors, or the default condition of proportionate reduction has been imposed, for all the reallocated volume in the Province. The long standing dispute between Teal Jones and its major contractor has now been resolved, so mitigation of the affected workers and contractors can proceed.

As of June 30, 2009, \$68,189,640 had been paid in contractor mitigation related to 301 affected contracts. Discussions are underway with other replaceable contractors whose contracts have been or may be reduced or eliminated. Approximately 25 more contractor mitigation payments should be made in 2009.

Several coastal contractors and a group of interior contractors felt that the Contractor Mitigation Guidelines do not fairly compensate them for the value of their lost contracts. The Advisory Board has reviewed all the claims that had been made. The view of the Advisory Board is that only two contractors have been able to substantiate their claims. One exception was a heli-logging contract that had a per cubic metre rate substantially higher than the rate paid for conventional logging. The other was a conventional stump to dump contractor that worked in an area that provided unusually high profits. Both contractors were mitigated using a rate above the cap.

The BC Ombudsman's office reviewed the claim of five interior contractors that felt they should receive a larger pay out and found it to be without merit. All of those contractors have now accepted mitigation as determined by the Contractor Mitigation Guidelines.

There were two cases where replaceable hauling contractors were able to demonstrate that, in their area, recent arms length sales of hauling contracts had been at a rate slightly higher than what the mitigation formula generated. Slightly higher compensation payments were made than would have been made based strictly on the formula.

As of June, 2009, contractor compensation payments, plus revised estimates based on pending applications, appear to be approximately 12.6%, or \$8.0 million, above the originally projected amounts. This is partially because a higher than projected proportion of replaceable contractors appear to be leaving the industry, partially because there will be some cost to the BCFRT related to stranded assets, and partially because redundant equipment payments are turning out to be higher than projected. Also, two licensees were able to get Ministerial Exemptions to allow them to eliminate more replaceable contractors than the original cap on replaceable contract eliminations would have allowed. These extra contractor costs will be balanced because it is now clear that employee severances will be lower than originally projected. In order to cover the higher than expected contractor mitigation cost, \$20,000,000 was moved from the Forest Worker Mitigation Account to the Contractor Mitigation Account. Based on current estimates, there are sufficient funds in the Contractor Mitigation Account to cover all outstanding expected contractor mitigation costs.

### **Forest Worker Mitigation Account**

The principle being used for forest worker mitigation is that workers who are severed by a Licensee or Replaceable Contractor because of FRA restructuring will receive severance from their ex-employer, and that severance will be funded by the BCFRT. The Advisory Board felt it was fair that all workers who lose their jobs as a result of FRA restructuring be treated the same. Because the Steelworkers' (previously IWA) contract mandates that employees affected by a permanent logging camp closure receive severance of 10 regular day's pay per year of service, plus 10/12<sup>ths</sup> of a regular day's pay per completed month of service, that standard was used. The detailed calculation and discussion appears in the Forest Worker Mitigation Guidelines, and can be found on the BCFRT website.

As of June 30, 2009, the BCFRT had provided funding for the severance of 845 workers, for a total cost to the BCFRT of \$42,723,092. The average severance per employee to date is significantly higher than originally projected (\$50,735 as opposed to an estimate of \$39,828). The average is high because a disproportionate amount of the severed workers worked for licensees on the coast, and they tended to be crews with above average seniority. Also, it is now clear that the total number of severed employees, especially in the interior, was lower than projected. A surplus of at least \$20,000,000 was previously expected in the Employee Mitigation Account to deal with employee severance according to the Guidelines. This was moved to the Contractor Mitigation Account to cover the shortfall in that Account. It now appears there could still be approximately \$4.5 million more in the Forest Worker Mitigation account than will be required. These funds will be made available at the discretion of the Advisory Board to provide mitigation for other forest workers and replaceable contractors that have been or will be negatively impacted by provincial government land use decisions.

### **Looking Ahead**

The third quarter of 2009 will likely include the following activity:

1. Contractors and workers affected by the Teal Jones Forestry Revitalization Plan (FRP) will finally be able to receive their mitigation.
2. Contractor Mitigation payments will continue to be made to other replaceable contractors who lost some or all of their contracts as a result of the FRA.
3. The BCFRT Trustee will continue to meet with licensee and contractor industry associations and organized labour, as well as with individual licensees, contractors, worker groups and their advisors, on an as needed basis, to ensure that the mitigation process progresses as smoothly, quickly and efficiently as possible.
4. The Trustee will meet with the Advisory Board to discuss how best to use the increased flexibility afforded in providing mitigation to workers and replaceable contractors that are affected by government land use decisions that have negative impacts on harvesting opportunities.

Eric van Soeren  
Trustee