

2026 BCCFA CONFERENCE & AGM

June 3-5, 2026

Vernon, BC

Conference Summary Report

The BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA) hosted its sold-out 2026 Conference and Annual General Meeting in Vernon, on the ancestral and unceded territories of the Syilx and Secwépemc peoples. The three-day gathering brought together community forest leaders, First Nations partners, industry representatives, and supporters from across the province to connect and explore the challenges and opportunities of community forestry in the years ahead. This year, the Monashee Community Forest, a partnership between the Village of Lumby and the Splat sin First Nation, were our welcoming hosts.

Day 1 included the largest field tour ever hosted at a BCCFA conference, located in the Monashee Community Forest above Lumby, BC, to showcase their Silvopasture work. Silvopasture is a forestry management practice that combines multiple values to achieve a few different objectives. The area that Monashee Community Forest showed us created grazing pasture for cattle, and integrated wildfire risk reduction for the community of Lumby. The treated area also supports good recreation opportunities. A special thanks goes out to the intrepid local bus drivers who drove three full school busses of over 150 attendees up steep forest roads for the field tour!



Field tour hosts from the Monashee Community Forest



All attendees of Monashee Community Forest Field Tour above Lumby, BC.

On this day, we heard from Kyle Runzer, Nick Barry, Frank Joe, Courtney Strassburger, and Nicole Williams from the Splat sin First Nation, Trish Balcaen from Coldstream Ranch, Rick Fairbairn (Area D RDNO Director), and Rob Dinwoodie, an agriculture consultant.

We are grateful to the support team for their efforts to transport and feed the crew in the field, and to our field tour hosts from the Monashee Community Forest for the warm welcome, valuable insights into their Silvopasture work, and for generously sharing their culture, practices, and community contributions.

Day 2 was started off in a good way by Trina Antoine from the Splatstin First Nation. Thank you, Trina, for your storytelling!



Storytelling by Trina Antoine, Knowledge Keeper from Splatstin First Nation.



Session 1 Panel Members

In the first session of the day, we heard from Patrick Russell, RPF, Director of the Tenures, Compensation & Business Analysis Branch (Ministry of Forests), Amanda Fouty, RPF, Director of the Timber Pricing Branch (Ministry of Forests), and Jennifer Gunter, Executive Director of BCCFA. The session explored the Province's strategic direction and opportunities to expand the Community Forest Program while aligning with government priorities, sector realities, evolving accountability expectations, and the new Community Forest Agreement (CFA) Program goals. Attendees had the opportunity to review the goals and brainstorm actions they could take in their own CFAs to work towards meeting these goals. During this session, attendees were primarily interested in stumpage frameworks that reflect community investment and provincial metrics to quantify non-timber values, including water quality and wildfire mitigation.



Session 2 Panel Members



Session 3 Panel Members

Next, a panel about Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) and Timber Supply spoke to how AAC is determined for various licensees in B.C.. Two community forests shared their experiences with adjusting their AAC, and we heard interesting perspectives on strategic growth, practical management, and long-term sustainability. Moderator Casey Macaulay led the session featuring Coulter Roberts, Erik Holbek, Albert Nussbaum, and Hugh Scolah.

The panel "Community Forest Showcase: Defining and Delivering Benefits" gave us an interesting deep dive into four CFA's governance structures and how they determine annual benefits. Thanks to the Nakusp and Area Community Forest, Williams Lake Community Forest, Sunshine Coast Community Forest, and Wetzin'Kwa Community Forest. During this session, attendees sought guidance on balancing community financial distributions with reinvestment for business growth and local economic success.

On Day 2, we also heard from H  l  ne Marcoux from the UBC Malcolm Knapp Research Forest as our keynote speaker. H  l  ne's engaging and energizing talk focused on strengthening public understanding of forestry. With inspiring ideas for engagement, her key theme was "lean into stories, be real, be vulnerable, and don't use so many acronyms." At the Research Forest, located near Maple Ridge, several different programs and initiatives exist to educate the public and bring people to the forest for tours, talks, and events. This important work has fostered incredible partnerships and opportunities for diversification. Thank you, H  l  ne, for sharing your ideas and inspiring us to continue our work with impactful community engagement.



Keynote speaker, Hélène Marcoux.



Session 5 Panel Members

The last session of the day was an interactive panel with the BCCFA's three regional wildfire liaisons. After brief presentations from wildfire experts, Shelagh Pyper from Fuse Consulting and Angela French from the BCCFA, attendees had the opportunity to network, answer guided questions, and brainstorm innovative wildfire risk reduction techniques.

The day ended with a silent auction, which collected collected over \$2000 thanks to the generosity of our attendees, and the annual banquet awards. This year, the Nakusp and Area Community Forest (NACFOR) was recognized for outstanding leadership in community forestry, receiving the 2026 Robin Hood Memorial Award for Excellence in Community Forestry.

Additionally, the Forest Enhancement Society of BC presented its inaugural Community Forest Project of the Year Award to the Kaslo & District Community Forest Society for its Jimi Crack Corn Wildfire Risk Reduction Project.



Inaugural Community Forest Project of the Year award to the Kaslo & District Community Forest Society.



The Nakusp and Area Community Forest received the 2026 Robin Hood Memorial Award for Excellence in Community Forestry.

The third and final day of the conference began with our Annual General Meeting (AGM). Congratulations to our newly elected Board members, Donna Brochez (Burns Lake Community Forest), Brian Frenkel (Vanderhoof Community Forest), and Francis Johnson (Esk'etemc). We also extend our sincere thanks to outgoing Board members Dan Macmaster and Steve Lorimer for their many years of dedicated service and leadership.

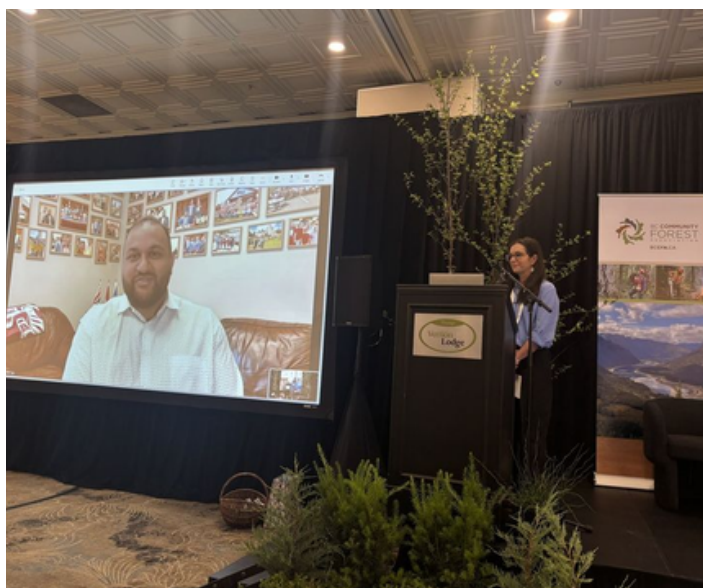
Following the AGM, attendees heard from Laura Stanton, Alana Clason, and Jodi Axelson of the Silviculture Innovation Program at the Bulkley Valley Research Centre on the importance of storytelling in forestry. Their presentation highlighted how relatable, authentic stories, can help communicate complex ideas and inspire action.



Session 6 Panel Members.

Later that day, we were honoured to welcome British Columbia's Minister of Forests Ravi Parmar virtually to the conference. Minister Parmar spoke about his commitment to expanding the community forest program in B.C., answered questions from attendees, and acknowledged the important work that community forests are doing across the province. Thank you, Minister Parmar, for taking the time to join us and share your perspectives.

The conference concluded with our "Big Ideas" panel, focused on innovation, creative thinking, and challenging conventional approaches in forestry. Moderated by Jason Fisher, the panel featured Erik Leslie, Dan Macmaster, Kyle Runzer, and Trish Balcaen, who shared perspectives on how community forests are uniquely positioned to manage for a broad range of social, economic, cultural, and environmental values alongside timber management.



The Honourable Ravi Parmar, Minister of Forests, addresses conference attendees.



Session 8 Panel Members.

Our team at the BCCFA extend our heartfelt gratitude all conference attendees, dignitaries, delegates, speakers, panelists, moderators, sponsors, exhibitors, volunteers from Monashee Community Forest, our emcee Molly Hudson, the BCCFA Board, the staff at the Prestige Vernon Lodge, photographer Ash Simpson, and New Horizons Productions for helping make this year's conference such a success. We are especially thankful to our wonderful sponsors who helped make this event possible.

The energy and ideas shared throughout the conference have left us inspired to continue advancing community forestry in support of healthy forests and thriving communities. We look forward to sharing details about next year's conference as we prepare to celebrate the BCCFA's 25th anniversary.





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