



## **Short Term Forest Employment Program**

*At a Glance*



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## Introduction

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British Columbia's interior forest industry is making a transition from high-volume Mountain Pine Beetle salvage operations to a smaller and more value-focused industry in balance with post-beetle timber supply. For many communities in the BC interior, the combination of declining beetle harvests, low United States lumber prices, and the devastating 2017 and 2018 wildfire seasons has led to a series of mill curtailments, shift reductions, indefinite closures and permanent closures. The impact on workers, contractors, suppliers, local small businesses and communities has been significant.

Government is taking action to address the near-term needs of workers, contractors and communities through \$69 million in programming, announced in September 2019. This programming includes:

- An early retirement bridging program for older forest workers;
- A new short-term forest employment program;
- Funding for workers to access skills training, and for employer and community grants for training;
- A job placement co-ordination office that will track the transition and employment of impacted forest workers; and
- Community support grants aimed to provide short-term assistance to communities impacted by the closure of a major forest employer.

## Program Overview

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The objective of the Forest Employment Program (the Program) is to create short-term employment opportunities for contractors and workers in interior BC that have been affected by indefinite and permanent closures in the forest sector.

Interior BC is defined as the North and South areas of the BC Natural Resource Regions and Districts ([see Appendix A](#)), including the following regions:

- Northeast
- Omineca
- Skeena
- Kootenay/Boundary
- Cariboo
- Thompson/Okanagan

The Program will create employment opportunities in areas most acutely impacted by indefinite and permanent closures, reducing the impact of job losses on communities. It is expected that funded projects will also result in benefits for impacted communities, through enhanced resilience, wildfire recovery and risk reduction, and forest enhancement.

The Program is administered by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD).

## Immediate Procurement Opportunities (Fiscal Year 2019/20)

Due to the time remaining in the current fiscal year, and the challenges in completing land-based projects in winter, a select number of projects will be completed in fiscal year 2019/20. Projects will be initiated immediately and will be focused on expediting short term work opportunities for contractors and their workers, near communities most impacted by indefinite and permanent mill closures.

### Timing

Short term employment projects will be identified by FLNRORD and initiated through government procurement processes beginning in November, 2019.

### Eligibility

Forestry contractors will be eligible to compete for contracts through the government procurement process, with a direct focus on those impacted by indefinite and/or permanent mill closures.

### Project Selection

Project have been identified by FLNRORD staff and will be reviewed by a technical committee of subject matter experts with final approval made by the FLNRORD Associate Deputy Minister.

## Moving Forward (Fiscal Year 2020/21)

A streamlined proposal process for the Program is under development by FLNRORD for launch early in 2020, in order to maximize the number of short-term forestry employment projects funded by the Program. Eligible projects will be focused on forest enhancement, community resiliency, and wildfire prevention, and have a significant portion of the project funding to be devoted to impacted contractors/workers wages.

## Eligible Activities

As noted above, the focus of the Program is community resilience, forest enhancement, and wildfire prevention. Target categories for projects are under development, but may include:

- Forest carbon – treating forests to improve the management of greenhouse gases,
- Stand rehabilitation – improving damaged or low value forests (e.g., spruce beetle mitigation),
- Fibre recovery – supporting the use of fibre from damaged and low value forests,
- Habitat enhancement – improving habitat for wildlife,
- Resource road maintenance, and
- Wildfire risk reduction – preventing and mitigating the impact of wildfires.
- Recreation trails – developing or improving trails and related infrastructure.

## Project Selection

Potential projects will be reviewed by a technical committee of subject matter experts with final approval made by the FLNRORD Associate Deputy Minister.

## Contact

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# Appendix A - Map: BC Natural Resource Regions and Districts

