
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2022FOR0031-000756
May 13, 2022

Ministry of Forests

Forest employment program provides jobs, supports communities

KAMLOOPS – Forestry workers and communities in the Thompson Okanagan region are benefiting from economic opportunities created through the Province’s Forest Employment Program (FEP).

In the past year, the Province has invested \$1.87 million in 22 projects in the B.C. Interior, employing local contractors and workers and focusing on wildfire risk reduction and improving outdoor safety and accessibility.

“Building more resilient communities while addressing the impacts of climate change is a key part of the StrongerBC economic plan,” said Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation. “These projects help drive economic recovery in the region, bolster recreation and tourism opportunities, reduce wildfire risks and provide jobs for people.”

FEP was created in 2019 to provide short-term employment opportunities for contractors and workers in the Interior. In 2020, as part of the Province’s COVID-19 economic recovery plan, FEP was expanded throughout the province and contractor and worker eligibility requirements were adapted to ensure those affected by the pandemic would be eligible for support.

“As someone who has worked in the forestry sector, I know personally how important forestry is for rural communities across our province,” said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests. “The Forest Employment Program is creating family-supporting jobs for forestry contractors and their workers, while reducing wildfire risk and improving road infrastructure.”

Since its creation in 2019, FEP has delivered \$30 million in funding, which has supported 317 projects and created more than 840 short-term jobs. While the primary objective of FEP is to create jobs, its projects also benefit communities by supporting wildfire risk reduction, forest enhancement and conservation, road safety and community access, capacity-building and training for Indigenous communities, and the development and maintenance of recreation sites and trails.

In the Thompson Okanagan, six completed FEP projects have supported recreation and trail improvements and 16 have supported safety and accessibility enhancements on forest-service roads.

“This program benefits not only the region, but also the hundreds of people and families who have been supported through these short-term employment opportunities,” said Roly Russell, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development. “These employment opportunities simultaneously make our backcountry safer and more enjoyable. Through our StrongerBC Economic Plan, we are supporting rural communities that are navigating economic downturns and transitions by making sure that locals have a chance to work on and enjoy enhancements

to our forests, trails and parks.”

Budget 2022 provides a further \$185 million over three years to provide co-ordinated and comprehensive supports for forestry workers, industry, communities and First Nations who may be affected by new restrictions on old-growth logging. This includes funding for short-term employment opportunities for contractors and their workers, rural economic diversification and infrastructure projects, bridging to retirement for older workers, education and skills training, and on-the-ground economic-development and community-support services.

Learn More:

For examples of FEP-funded programs in the B.C. Interior,
visit: http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/2021_22_Interior_FEP_projects.pdf

Contact:

Ministry of Forests
Media Relations
250 896-4320

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect