



RNTFC

JULY | 2026

ROBSON NORTH THOMPSON FORESTRY COALITION

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the second edition of the Robson and North Thompson Forestry Coalition newsletter!

When we launched our first newsletter, we introduced the Coalition and our vision of strengthening the local forest economy through collaboration. Since then, we have continued to build momentum by bringing together First Nations, communities, industry, manufacturers, and government to work on practical initiatives that strengthen local businesses, improve fibre flow and utilization, and support a resilient regional forest economy.

This edition highlights several examples of the Coalition's work in action. You'll read an update on Wood First Wednesday, hear about local Community Forestry, learn about our work supporting local manufacturers and fibre flow opportunities, share market connections, and see what other Fibre Flow Forums are doing across British Columbia. Together, these stories demonstrate how local collaboration can strengthen supply chains, encourage innovation, and help ensure more of the benefits from timber harvested around our communities remain here at home.

The Coalition's work continues to be guided by a simple belief: healthy forests and healthy communities go hand in hand. By improving communication, building relationships, and identifying practical solutions, we are helping create the conditions for a resilient forest sector that supports local employment, value-added manufacturing, sustainable timber harvesting, and strong rural communities.

One thing I'm particularly excited about is our new online member directory and interactive map. They're designed to help businesses, organizations, and supporters connect with one another and showcase the strength of our regional forest sector. Now we need your help. If your business or organization isn't listed yet—or if you'd simply like to show your support for the Coalition—I encourage you to [visit our website](#) and sign up. I did, and it only takes a couple of minutes! [Sign up here.](#)

We hope you enjoy this edition and I encourage you to stay involved. If you have a story, project, event, or photo that showcases the people, businesses, or organizations contributing to our regional forest economy, we'd love to hear from you. Your ideas and participation help make this Coalition much stronger!

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Paul Rasmussen

On behalf of the Robson and North Thompson Forestry Coalition



ADVOCACY FOR THE LOCAL CEDAR SPLIT RAIL FENCING SECTOR

Did you know that 3 out of 4 Canadian manufacturers of cedar split rail fencing operate within the Coalition's service area? This local manufacturing sector provides 42-44 direct jobs and \$2.2 million annually in wages within the communities of McBride and Valemount, which is 10X the employment from the same log sent out of region.

Despite utilizing what most others see as low value or waste, securing input fibre is a constant challenge for the operators in this sector, and is the main limiting factor for business continuity and growth. Speaking as a united voice through the Coalition, we have been advocating with

government tenures and timber sales staff for creative options to increase access to fibre and reduce the volume of suitable fibre that is simply left as waste. Meetings with major licensees have increased awareness of the log profile required by this sector, with the potential to improve B2B opportunities for fibre access.

Commenting on our work to create and circulate a one page sector information document, Raj Basran of BKB Cedar Manufacturing had this to say:

"Thank you very much for the work done on this project. This is a great step forward and I'm glad to be a part of the growth in this sector."

BUILDING CONNECTIONS WITH INDUSTRY

This spring, Coalition representatives Paul, Kim, and Aurora had the opportunity to present at both the North and South Area Operations Issues Forums.

These regional forums, hosted by Ministry of Forests teams, bring together major licensees to discuss operational challenges and emerging opportunities.

These presentations provided an overview of the Coalition's work and highlighted the importance of the value-added sector in the Robson-North Thompson area, including the cedar post-and-rail industry.

The discussions were positively received and opened up some new conversations and connections with larger manufacturers.

These connections are important to increase awareness and help build relationships across the forest sector and could create opportunities for future collaboration to benefit smaller manufacturers and fibre users.

Mission

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Vision

Thriving economy, people, communities and environment.





WOOD FIRST WEDNESDAY

Our inaugural Wood First Wednesday event was held May 6 in Clearwater with 15 representatives from businesses, community forests and local government throughout the Coalition service area – from Barriere to McBride and all points in between. There was lots of mingling, catching up and making new connections – many thanks to Gateway Grill and the Quality Inn for hosting our group!

July 8 found us connecting in Barriere for our second WFW event, hosted by Simpcw Resources Group at the Teniye Market. Huge thanks to SRG for the generous donation of the meeting room space and the thoughtful set-up by Teniye staff to infuse the room with a variety of the local woodcraft products carried in the store. We were happy to welcome a broad swath of interests from across the wood value chain – Woodlot owners, sawmill operations, small scale artisans, even a surprise visit from a BCIT rep who shared a focus on bringing educational and training opportunities into the communities where people live. We are looking forward to our next WFW event in Valemount in September – put it on your radar and stay tuned for details!

For more information on the Wood First Wednesday concept check out [The Wood Innovation Group's website](#), as well as the [RNTFC branch page](#).



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WGCFC HOSTS REGIONAL WILDFIRE MITIGATION SUMMIT

Written by Casey Macaulay MA RPF, Wells Gray Community Forest Corporation

Building on sessions hosted this spring by SFU's "mitigating wildfire initiative", Wells Gray CF Corporation hosted a Wildfire Mitigation Summit in Clearwater, July 6-7, with the following goals:

1. Guide WGCFC in the development of strategies for forest management in the Wildland Urban Interface (known as the WUI.)
2. Improve collaboration, coordination and consistency of practices between organizations operating in the North Thompson valley (and beyond.)

WGCFC invited 10 subject matter experts (SMEs) to participate and present to a diverse group of local organisations and professionals. Over 40 attended the event, which included a full day in the field, visiting 4 unique field sites, and a half day of lectures. The SMEs spanned topics inclusive of fire ecology, fire behaviour and prediction, forest stand management, forest pathology and root disease, biodiversity, invasive plants, species at risk, Indigenous partnerships, funding opportunities, examples of successful treatment and forest hydrology.

This event was important to inform local decision-makers and practitioners about the range of values that must be considered in the design of fuel treatments; and to highlight the urgency in the work. It is our hope that this event will carry a legacy in the ongoing discussions between landowners, municipal workers, forestry firms and parks staff. Ideally it will drive new efforts, partnerships and funding pathways to treat much more of the land in the local interface.

For more information about the Wildfire Mitigation Summit or WGCFC's wildfire mitigation initiatives, please contact Casey Macaulay at casey.macaulay@wgcfcc.ca.



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BC FIBRE FLOW FORUMS

Communities across B.C. are taking different approaches to improving fibre flow and supporting local and value-added manufacturing, with a shared focus on collaboration and regional solutions. As the Robson North Thompson Forestry Coalition continues its work, these examples offer valuable insights into how partnerships can help keep fibre local, attract investment, and strengthen regional economies.

Merritt: Building an Industry Cluster

The Merritt Fibre Flow Forum has taken an industry-cluster approach, bringing together First Nations, tenure holders, manufacturers, and forest-dependent communities from the Merritt, Kamloops, and Okanagan regions. Participants are focused on improving fibre flow, strengthening stewardship, and identifying opportunities to keep more fibre and manufacturing activity within the region. The group hosted an in-person session in March 2026 and continues to meet regularly, working through priority actions and exploring opportunities for innovation, investment, and stronger local supply chains.

100 Mile House Joint Community Economic Table: Turning Challenges into Opportunity

Following the closure of the West Fraser mill in late 2025, First Nations and local governments in the 100 Mile House region established a Joint Community Economic Table to explore opportunities tied to local fibre resources. To date the group has focused on gaining a better understanding of available fibre volumes and existing licence allocations while examining whether combined fibre opportunities could support future manufacturing investment and employment. Since its creation, the table has evolved into a community-led initiative, with leadership transitioning from Ministry of Forests staff to the District of 100 Mile House in 2026. Members are now working on a foundational document to support future funding applications and investment attraction efforts.

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SUPPORTING PEER GROUP CONNECTIONS FOR COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGERS

On June 30 we facilitated a meeting to connect Community Forest managers and provide a space to share discussion on operational issues, opportunities and challenges specific to managing a Community Forest tenure in the Robson North Thompson area.

Each manager shared what they are currently working on, as well as ideas for future programs, and possibilities for collaboration. Contractor contacts were exchanged. We hope to continue this informal space for sharing perspectives and ideas by reconvening the Community Forest manager group every couple of months on a regular schedule.

SHARING MARKET OPPORTUNITY CONTACTS

In July we were approached by a Coalition member for assistance in sharing a market opportunity with our local sawmilling community. The opportunity was summarized, and emailed out to members on our list with the appropriate capability. Whether this opportunity leads to a contract is yet to be seen, but the Coalition is pleased to be able to support connections between members.

“Look at this progress on helping the people working in the area...great job to you and the group!”

– Andy Hubbell, Valemount Specialty Mill

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NEW LOGO CHOSEN FOR RNTFC

At our inaugural Wood First Wednesday event, attendees had the opportunity to vote on a logo for the Robson North Thompson Forestry Coalition.

After the votes were tallied, there was a clear favorite. The winning design has since been adopted as the coalition's official logo and is now being used in our communications and materials.

Thank you to everyone who participated and helped choose the logo that will represent the coalition moving forward!



BCTS REVIEW UPDATE - BILL 14 CHANGES

Bill 14 (the Forests Statutes Amendment Act, 2026) expands the mandate of BC Timber Sales (BCTS) to improve fibre access for independent and value-added manufacturers, create new contract logging opportunities, and give BCTS greater flexibility to manage timber sales and forest stewardship activities throughout their full lifecycle.

The legislation introduces new tools for salvage harvesting, wildfire risk reduction, commercial thinning, and partnerships with First Nations, while streamlining access to fibre outside traditional timber sale models.

These changes are intended to support local mills, logging contractors, and forest-sector employment.

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