Chinook Business Area News

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BRITISH COLUMBIA
BCTS
BC Timber Sales

The BCTS Chinook Business Area acknowledges the territories of First Nations around B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands.

We acknowledge the rights, interests, priorities and concerns of all Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – respecting and acknowledging their distinct cultures, histories, rights, laws and governments.

Legislative Changes Support BCTS' Evolving Role

Following the Province's decision to expand the mandate of BC Timber Sales (BCTS), recent legislative changes mark an important next step in putting that into action.

In March 2026, the Province introduced amendments to the *Forest Act* and *Forest and Range Practices Act* that strengthen BCTS' ability to improve access to fibre, support jobs and enhance stewardship across B.C.'s working forests. These changes directly respond to recommendations from the BCTS Review's Task Force and reflect feedback from industry, First Nations, communities and forest sector partners.

The legislative updates expand the range of timber sale licences and contract opportunities that BCTS can offer, allowing for greater flexibility in how work is planned and delivered. This includes new opportunities related to forest stewardship activities such as commercial thinning, wildfire risk reduction and the salvage of damaged timber.

By enabling BCTS to move fibre more efficiently and match tools to local conditions, the changes are expected to increase fibre availability, support logging contractors and value-added manufacturers, and help ensure local logs supply local mills.

The amendments also reinforce BCTS' stewardship role by supporting longer term, integrated forest management approaches that consider multiple values over time. Importantly, they create additional opportunities to deepen partnerships with First Nations and community partners, supporting shared priorities around forest health, economic resilience, and local benefits.

Together, these changes mark a shift from planning to implementation—equipping BCTS with the tools needed to deliver on its expanded mandate and support a more resilient, sustainable forest sector for the future.

To learn more about the legislative changes and how BCTS is strengthening fibre access, stewardship and partnerships, read the Province's news release:

BC Timber Sales to increase fibre access, strengthen long term forest outcomes, protect jobs

The BCTS Chinook business area newsletter highlights for industry, contractors, Indigenous communities and interest holders the work we are doing in the forest sector.

It's an opportunity to draw attention to important topics and keep you informed of any updates or changes over the last several months.

Should you have any questions, our team is always available. Please contact us at:

P: 604-702-5700
E: Forests.ChinookTimberSalesOffice@gov.bc.ca

Upcoming Chinook External EMS/SFI Audit

The Chinook Business Area will undergo an external Environmental Management System (EMS) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) full-scope audit by KPMG from October 6 - 9, 2026. Specific business area field teams and Timber Sale Licence areas will be confirmed closer to the audit. While this is a full-scope audit, recent 2025 audits in other BCTS Business Areas identified common focus areas:

- Adherence to cut-block, road, riparian and reserve tree boundaries.
- Respect of Machine Free Zones (MFZs) and harvest plan requirements.
- Fuel handling compliance and spill preparedness.
- EMS/SFM training completion and record keeping.
- Pre-works, inspections, corrective actions and documentation.
- Protection of water resources and soil stability.

These topics align with the EMS Schedules, included in Timber Sale Licences and BCTS contracts, that describe the environmental management requirements applicable to work carried out under those agreements. The EMS Schedules address elements such as applicable environmental procedures, training, documentation, pre-works, inspections, incident reporting, emergency preparedness and the availability of EMS documents required on site. These schedules apply to licensees or contractors and those working on their behalf within authorized areas and form the basis for internal and third-party audit review.

If you have questions or need support preparing for the audit, please contact your local BCTS representative.

Stewardship in Action – Protecting Coastal Giant Salamanders

Chinook Business Area recognizes licensee MWB Forestry Ltd. for their commitment to protecting a species at risk, specifically a Coastal Giant Salamander, identified within TSL TA1781 in the Chilliwack River Valley. The Coastal Giant Salamander is a red listed (threatened/endangered) species in British Columbia. It was identified by MWB Forestry Ltd. field crew during routine forestry operations and reported promptly to Chinook Business Area staff, in accordance with established Species of Management Concern (SOMC) procedures.

MWB Forestry Ltd. worked collaboratively with BCTS, biologists and partners to ensure measures were put in place to protect the salamander and its habitat. This example demonstrates how the SOMC process works in practice and how proactive actions in the field contribute to broader conservation outcomes. Such efforts help protect species while setting a positive example for the broader forest sector.

Protecting species is a shared responsibility, and success depends on everyone remaining observant in the field and taking appropriate action. Early identification, timely reporting and cooperation among licensees, contractors and BCTS staff are essential to responsible forest management.

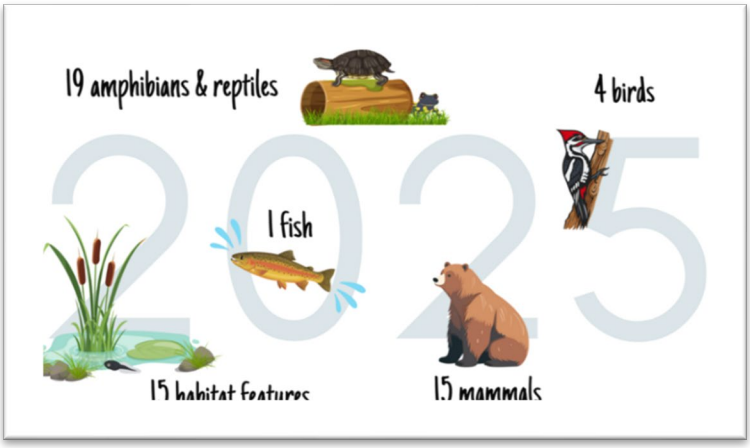
BCTS thanks MWB Forestry Ltd. for their diligence and partnership in supporting sustainable forest operations.

Additional Resources

Chinook's SOMC program provides guidance for identifying and managing species, habitats and ecological values that may require additional consideration during forest operations, including At-Risk Ecological Communities (AREC). SOMC and AREC are key components of Chinook's external certification framework and support BCTS' commitment to sustainable forest management under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) certification. Licensees and contractors can access SOMC and AREC documents, procedures and reporting guidance at BC Timber Sales - EMS and SFM - Province of British Columbia.

A Record Year for SOMC Reporting

Last year marked Chinook's highest year of reporting in the history of the SOMC program. It was a milestone year, with several first-time observations also recorded.



Notable highlights include the first reported Painted Turtle breeding habitat (Jeremy Goddard) and the first reported Cutthroat Trout observation (Sydney Wagner). In total, 52 incidental observations of species of management concern were reported in 2025 by our Business Area crews, including both species and habitat features.

Congratulations 2025 SOMC reporting champions!

- Megan Laing – 11 reports (nearly 30% of Sunshine Coast field team's observations)
- Colton Govorchin – 8 reports
- Gino Amato – 6 reports

Thank you to everyone who contributed observations in 2025. Early identification and consistent reporting are essential to the conservation of species and demonstrate how individual actions in the field support responsible forest management.

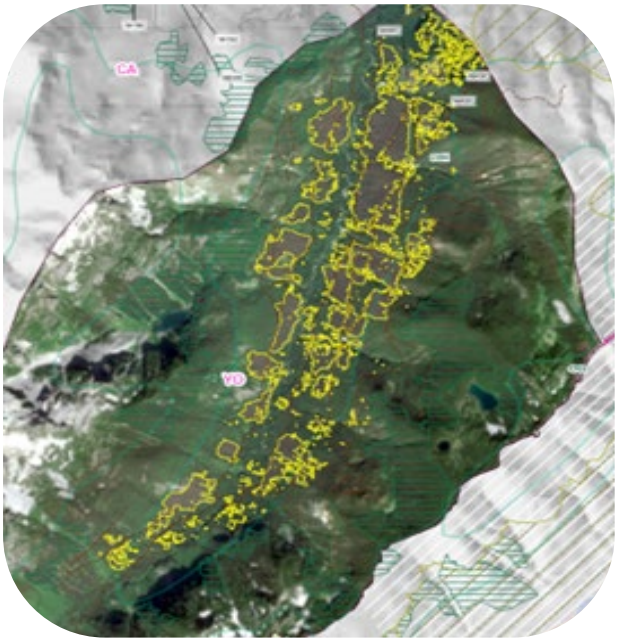
GIS: Supporting Planning, Field Work & Improved Outcomes

Our GIS team continues to support planning and operations across the Chinook Business Area (TCH) by applying spatial data, remote sensing and digital tools to improve efficiency, consistency and decision-making. The projects noted below are just a few examples that highlight how our GIS team is contributing to forest health planning, operational transparency and field-based data collection.

Budworm Planning Using Remote Sensing

In response to the recent Western Spruce Budworm outbreak in the Fraser Timber Supply Area, the GIS team combined remote sensing data with stand modelling software to help identify priority areas for proposed harvesting. Daily satellite imagery was used to provide current stand condition information, which was then incorporated into Area-based Vegetation Analysis & Simulation Tool (AVAST) modelling. AVAST generates reports and classifies polygons based on tree species, volume and age, while still allowing user input to reflect preferred harvest targets.

This integrated approach has created a more efficient and consistent planning process, improving understanding of budworm impacts across BCTS operating areas and supporting informed decision-making during plan development.



Yola Creek Operating Area – Chilliwack field team remote sensing budworm imagery.

TCH Referrals Portal – Annual Operating Plans

Now live for its second year, the TCH Referrals Portal continues to support Annual Operating Plan reviews through an interactive, web-based mapping platform.

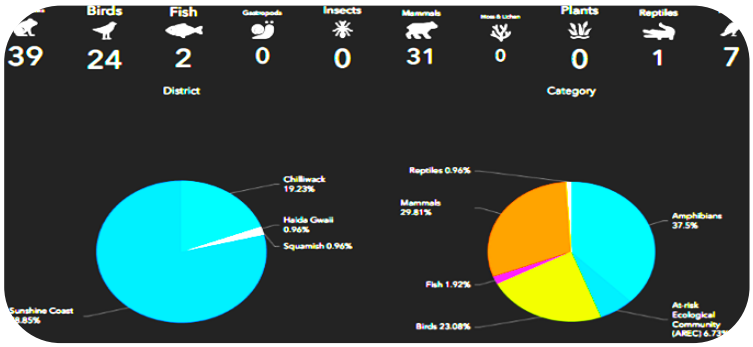
Originally developed by the BCTS Provincial GIS team, the portal is now managed and maintained locally by Chinook Business Area GIS staff in collaboration with the Chinook Planning team. The platform allows users to view planned BCTS operations alongside a range of relevant spatial data layers, improving transparency and accessibility for both internal and external reviewers.

Ongoing updates and refinements are planned as feedback is received, ensuring the portal continues to evolve and meet user needs.

Species of Management Concern (SOMC) Survey123 Field Form

The SOMC Survey123 mobile data collection tool supports quick and efficient field reporting of wildlife observations, wildlife habitat features and species at risk. This tool supports BCTS' SOMC program and the AREC program, which are requirements under our SFI certification — Objective 4: Conservation of Biological Diversity.

Developed by Chinook GIS staff with input from the Planning team, the Survey123 form and accompanying dashboard improve data consistency, accessibility and real-time reporting. The success of this platform led to its adoption by BCTS Provincial Operations and subsequent rollout across all BCTS Business Areas and field teams.



Sunshine Coast Wildfire Resiliency

Wildfire resiliency is one of the many values BCTS is managing for when designing harvest plans. Recently, BCTS has been collaborating with other ministries, local governments and neighbours to design harvests in a way that promotes both landscape level and site level wildfire resiliency, while still representing economically viable harvest to support the BCTS mandate.

Learn more about our Sunshine Coast field team's wildfire resiliency planning: SC FSP wildfire resiliency planning info bulletin

First Aid Field Drills Strengthen Emergency Response Readiness

The Sunshine Coast District office completed a first aid field drill in November 2025, giving staff the opportunity to practice emergency response procedures. The scenario involved a simulated injury at Duck Lake, where a crew member tripped and sustained injuries.

The responding team initiated first aid, called their safety contact through Coastal Dispatch and requested additional support. After assessing the situation, the team determined evacuation using a spinal board was unsafe, due to terrain and staffing limitations, and escalated the response in accordance with the Emergency Response Plan by initiating TEAAM (Technical Evacuation Advanced Aero Medical).

Following the drill, documentation was completed including a first aid record and WorkSafeBC Form 7A. The team also practiced patient packaging and transport techniques with a spinal board and basket. The drill reinforced several important safety considerations:

- Survival equipment: Redirect resources to enhance survival bags rather than relying on spinal boards.
- Itineraries: Clear itineraries and pre-field discussions with safety contacts remain critical.
- Communications: Remember to scan repeaters to avoid missed check-ins.
- Emergency response: Generally, TEAAM should be used instead of 911, with weather and helicopter availability taken into consideration.
- Weather awareness: Remain alert to changing conditions that could increase risk of hypothermia.

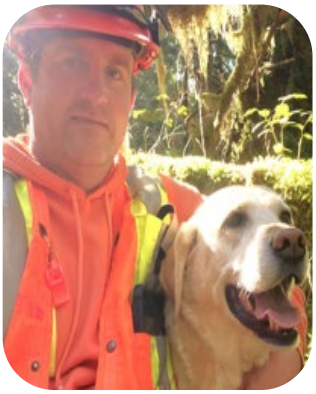
Field exercises like this ensure crews are prepared, and confident in remote locations. A sincere thank you to Matt Parker for organizing the drill, and Sydney Wagner, Pierre Aubin, Alex Roberts and Robin Sano for participating. Appreciation also to Chris Kahlmeier for his safety expertise and guidance before and after the drill.

Introducing the Chinook Road Building and Engineering Team

Trevor Shannon, Engineering Program Specialist for the Chilliwack and Squamish field teams, was born and raised in Terrace, B.C. He began his career with the Ministry of Forests in 1989, when a timber sale license was just a one-page document and a map. Trevor moved to Abbotsford in 2012 and joined the Chinook Business Area as a Conformance Tech, prior to shifting over to the Engineering team. Trevor has a deep passion for sports and enjoys spending his free time on the golf course or pickleball court.

Jim Hunter, RPF, is the Engineering Officer – DFAA, for the Chilliwack field team. Jim joined BCTS in July 2024, moving over from his previous Engineering Officer position with the Chilliwack Natural Resource District. A graduate of the UBC Forestry program, he spent the first 25 years of his career in road and block development for both industry and consulting operations in various locations throughout coastal B.C. Originally from the Lower Mainland, Jim is happy to be a part of the Chinook business area working alongside a great team of knowledgeable and dedicated forest professionals.

Gino Amato, RFT, has worked in an assortment of forestry roles over the last 36 years, starting with block development and co-owning his own forestry consulting firm. He's enjoyed the past 10 years with BCTS and is excited with his new role of Engineering Officer for the Sunshine Coast and Haida Gwaii field teams. Gino feels fortunate to work and raise his three children in Powell River, which has always been his home. Although he loves the Powell River area, he's always venturing to sunnier destinations and adventure.



Jeremy Goddard, Engineering Technologist, has lived in Powell River since 1999 and worked in the forestry sector since 2000. In 2015, he joined BCTS where he continues to apply his experience and local knowledge within the industry. Outside of his professional work, he is an avid mountain biker and enjoys fishing, golfing and playing hockey. Jeremy values time spent outdoors, particularly evenings up the coast or relaxing by the lake.

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