

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### 2020 Spring Tree Planting – COVID-19 Measures

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

Office of the Chief Forester - *Caring for BC's Forests*

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#### **Why is the Province going ahead with its 2020 tree planting operations, given the current situation with COVID-19?**

- Tree planting is a crucial part of making sure B.C. can meet global demand for wood products, build a resilient and sustainable forestry sector, and address the impacts of climate change and wildfires.
- Under the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, there is an obligation on Licensees to reforest areas which have been harvested.
- Forestry and silviculture were included in the list of essential services as part of the Province's response to COVID-19 because they provide a continued supply of items like wood, pulp and paper, and soft-pulp products like those used to make medical supplies such as protective masks, drapes, and screens.
- Business operators in forestry and silviculture must follow the orders and guidance provided by the Provincial Health Officer to protect the health and safety of workers and the surrounding communities.

#### **Forestry and Silviculture as an Essential Service**

##### **1. Why are forestry and silviculture considered an essential service?**

- On March 26, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General announced he is using extraordinary powers of the Emergency Program Act under a state of emergency to maintain essential goods and services and support the province's ongoing response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Forestry and silviculture were included in the list of essential services because they make sure global continuity of supply of items like wood, pulp and paper, and soft-pulp products like those used to make medical supplies like protective masks, drapes, and screens.
- Replanting harvested areas and areas ravaged by wildfire and pests is essential to keeping B.C.'s forestry industry sustainable, and to reducing the impacts of climate change on the environment.

##### **2. What are the economic impacts if the season is cancelled?**

- The economic impact would be considerable. This is to be B.C.'s most ambitious planting year, to help recover areas devastated by wildfires in 2017 and 2018 and to contribute natural solutions to climate change (forest carbon sequestration).

- Many hectares of deforested areas have been fertilized, and more than 310 million seedlings have been nurtured and are ready to be planted, including 235 million in the Interior.
- After sites have been surveyed and silviculture prescriptions have been made, it takes two years from sowing the seeds to growing to prepare a tree for planting in the wild.
- Along with costs for surveys, seeds and growing seedlings in previous years, the Province has invested \$75 million in contracts with members of the Western Forest Contractors' Association and other silviculture operators to plant trees this year.
- Planting investments have also been made through the Forests for Tomorrow (FFT) program, the Forest Carbon Initiative (FCI), the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) and include the federal low carbon economy funded projects
- The workforce consists of:
  - An estimated 4,500 planters this spring. Of these, two-thirds will use planting camps
  - Approximately half of the planters come from B.C.
  - Approx. 55 individual planting contractors are preparing to carry out planting across the province,
  - 85% of the planting workforce is under 30 years of age.

### **3. What are the impacts to the environment if cancelled?**

- Trees are valuable for carbon sequestration – they hold carbon from the atmosphere and mitigate climate change.
- Replanting is also the foundation of our strategies for supporting a host of environmental benefits including biodiversity and wildlife habitat.
- Along with other benefits, trees contribute to mitigating the effects of flooding, as soil in cleared areas is less able to hold water.

### **4. Why not scale back tree planting operations this year to reduce the risk, like Site C and Coastal GasLink have done?**

- Lands scheduled for planting this year have been surveyed, and sites have been prepared where needed, seed has been sown and seedlings have been grown.
- More than 310 million seedlings are ready to be planted, and the Province and industry have set up contracts to have them planted this year.
- Most areas scheduled to be planted this year are wildfire areas impacted in 2017 and 2018. The areas to be planted will not easily reforest naturally – it would take decades for them to reforest themselves without planting.
- We are focused on the challenge before us keeping worker and communities safe in the context of COVID-19. But we are also considering the mid- and long-term view for our economy and climate. Reforesting is part of building a better future.
- Planting operations are an outdoor activity where planters are necessarily physically distant from one another. Extra precautions are being put in place for COVID19 requirements

## **What Measures are Being Taken by Tree Planting Operators?**

### **5. Tell me about the Provincial Health Officer's order for industrial camps – what does that entail and how are businesses impacted?**

- The Provincial Health Officer has provided a new order regarding industrial camps – that includes workers in the agricultural, aquacultural, forestry and resource sectors, including mines, and applies to both work sites and worker accommodations.
- This order, and the delegation that accompanies it, provides some clarity regarding steps that the employer as well as their appointed infection prevention and control coordinators must take.
- It also provides clarity for workers around their personal responsibility to help minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19 within their place of work and their community.
- The delegation allows for provincial enforcement officers and other public servants to be designated as provincial infection prevention and control officers.
- This could be park rangers, conservation officers, natural resource officers, transportation inspectors, regional agrologists, agri-food or fisheries inspectors, or other public servants, as required.
- The order now requires that employers develop a COVID-19 infection prevention and control protocol, to prevent and control the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among workers in their place of accommodation, at the worksite, and when travelling between the worksite and their accommodation.
- That protocol must be posted prominently on the worksite, and must also be made available when requested by a health officer or Provincial infection prevention and control officer.
- The order also requires that the employer appoint an Infection Prevention and Control Co-ordinator, who will act as a liaison between the employer and the health officer or Provincial infection prevention and control officer, and will oversee the implementation of the Protocol.
- It's important to note that the construction projects and mines that are currently operating in B.C. under the previous PHO directives for construction sites and industrial work camps are still able to operate.
- They will need to make arrangements as soon as possible to have a health officer or a Provincial infection prevention and control officer inspect the accommodation, worksite and the vehicles used to transport workers to and from their accommodations to the worksite, as well as the vehicles used to transport workers throughout the worksite. The inspection will also evaluate that the protocols are sufficient and can be implemented in a manner that prevents the risk of transmission of COVID 19 amongst workers.

### **6. What are these additional measures that tree planting operators must follow?**

- The Provincial Health Officer has issued an order for the silviculture sector referencing the BC Centre for Disease Control guidance document: *Protecting Employees, Contractors, and Employers Working in the Silviculture Sector During the COVID-19 Pandemic*.
- The document will support the silviculture sector to follow the BCCDC and the BC Ministry of Health guidelines for operators to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 in work camps in, *COVID-19: Interim Communicable Disease Control Guidelines for Industrial Camps*.
- As part of a workplace risk assessment, creating day-to-day plan that follows the guidance in this document will result in a COVID-19 Infection and Prevention and Control Protocol (Protocol) that will protect people working in this sector.
- Employers are required to appoint a Co-ordinator(s) to contribute to and understand the Protocol to prevent and control the transmission of COVID-19.
- Measures include:
  - reducing the number of social interactions amongst workers and employers and nearby communities,
  - physical distancing or enhancing protection via masks where physical distancing is not practical,
  - good hygiene practices,
  - and cleaning and disinfecting high touch point areas at the start and end of each day.
- Ministry compliance and enforcement staff will inspect forestry camps, accommodations and work sites to make sure all required health and safety measures are in place
- Any worker testing positive for COVID-19 or displaying symptoms must follow current provincial health guidelines and self-isolate.

**7. How are these different from the *COVID-19: Interim Communicable Disease Guidelines for Industrial Camps* and who developed them?**

- The Provincial Health order and the BCCDC silviculture guidance document support the silviculture sector to follow the BCCDC and the BC Ministry of Health *COVID-19: Interim Communicable Disease Control Guidelines for Industrial Camps*.
- The additional silviculture guidance document addresses specific needs related to tree planting operations, and were developed with collaboration from the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, BC Timber Sales, forest licensees and the Western Forestry Contractors' Association.

**8. What about silviculture companies that aren't part of WFCA? Will they be required to make these changes?**

- The Provincial Health Officer has issued an order for the entire silviculture sector referencing the BC Centre for Disease Control guidance document: *Protecting*

Employees, Contractors, and Employers Working in the Silviculture Sector During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**9. How can camps have up to 75 people? Didn't the Provincial Health Officer ban groups of more than 50?**

- Silviculture (reforestation) and forestry activities were designated as essential services on March 26.
- The Provincial Health Officer's order and the BCCDC silviculture guidance document asks employers to designate employees to small working crews or "work pods" for as long as practical during the planting season to reduce social interactions.
- Like a family unit, this work pod will make sure close contact only occurs within a select small crew.
- Employers are asked to consider actions to decrease crowding and social interaction, such as staggering mealtimes and opening additional dining areas.
- Employees must practice physical distancing as directed by the BC CDC while on breaks.
- Where possible, employees should be assigned to individual workstations or an area of the field that provides 2 metres of separation from other individuals.
- Where 2 metres separation is not possible, workers should wear masks, and a physical barrier may be constructed in collaboration with the occupational health and safety committee (where one exists).
- Tree planters work requires them to work outdoors and is distributed throughout the planting area.
- Planters are usually given their own "transects" to plant in order to simplify planting quality checks.
- Many planters can occupy a single cutblock, but they rarely work close to each other.
- Planting is by design, a fairly "isolated" work environment where maintaining a safe distance can be maintained easily.

**10. How many tree planters and contractors are coming from outside B.C.? Aren't many coming from Quebec, which is experiencing much higher rates of COVID-19? Couldn't that increase our risk and overwhelm our health system?**

- Planters come from B.C. and throughout Canada. About half are from B.C.
- About 4,500 to 5,000 tree planters, working for about 55 contractors, are expected to work in the Interior this spring, with about two-thirds of them staying in camps.
- 85% of them are under the age of 30, and half are university students.
- It would be great to see more of B.C.'s out-of-work university and college students hired, as long as safety and training supports are there for an increased number of new recruits.
- Contractors are required to follow the *COVID-19: Interim Communicable Disease Control Guidelines for Industrial Camps*, as well as additional silviculture guidelines to safe guard their workers.

- The additional guidelines require them to self-isolate at home for 14 days before travelling, travelling to B.C. by vehicle only, and to be screened before they can be deployed to work camps.

#### **11. Will tree planters from out of province have to self-isolate for 14 days?**

- Following the Provincial Health Officer's order and guidance, employers will be responsible for screening tree planters before admission to field camps or community accommodations.
- Any worker testing positive for COVID-19 or displaying symptoms must follow current provincial health guidelines, and self-isolate for at least 10 days.
- Self-isolation procedures are specifically referenced in both the *COVID-19: Interim Communicable Disease Control Guidelines for Industrial Camps* and the silviculture guidelines.
  - Under the Provincial Health Officer's order for workers and employers, it's mandatory that anyone arriving in B.C. from outside of Canada self-isolate and monitor symptoms for 10 days upon their arrival, and complete and register a self-isolation plan. For details, visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/returningtravellers](http://www.gov.bc.ca/returningtravellers) and <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/self-isolation-on-return>.
- The WFCA has asked tree planters to self-isolate prior to deploying for their camps if they are showing symptoms before they travel.

### **Health Risks**

#### **12. Aren't there concerns about the risk of transmission between tree planters and to communities?**

- Business operators in forestry and silviculture should follow the orders and guidance provided by the Provincial Health Officer to make sure the health and safety of workers and the surrounding communities.
- These include *COVID-19: Interim Communicable Disease Control Guidelines for Industrial Camps provided by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and the Ministry of Health*, March 30, and the BCCDC silviculture guidance document ([Ministry Link](#)).
- These additional guidelines have been developed to address the unique work and camp environments of tree planting operations and protect the communities they work in and near, in partnership with the Western Forest Contractors' Association.

#### **13. How can the transmission of COVID-19 be reduced in camps when tree planters work and stay in proximity, often in rustic camps with limited facilities?**

- The Provincial Health Officer has issued an order for the silviculture sector referencing the BC Centre for Disease Control guidance document: *Protecting Employees, Contractors, and Employers Working in the Silviculture Sector During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Measures include:

- reducing the number of social interactions amongst workers and employers and nearby communities,
- physical distancing or enhancing protection via masks where physical distancing is not practical,
- good hygiene practices,
- and cleaning and disinfecting high touch point areas at the start and end of each day.
- These protocols are in place to protect everyone, the public and the tree planters. Providing access to WIFI will help tree planters stay in touch with families and friends while they remain in isolated camps. Physical distancing measures include guidelines on forming work pods and travelling.
- Coastal planting contractors have been operating for almost four weeks now. They have operated without any COVID-19 incidents by adhering to the orders and guidance provided. Now that crews have been together for 14 days (and counting) daily travel to and from the planting sites, camp operations and planter accommodations are easier to manage and maintain.
- The goal is to maintain that “virus free” status.

**14. What will be done in case of an outbreak and do local health facilities including hospitals have capacity to deal with one?**

- The Provincial Health Officer’s Order and the BCCDC guidance document requires self-isolation of any employee who has symptoms of a cold, influenza or symptoms compatible with COVID-19.
- The duration of isolation will be determined by the PHO self assessment tool or direction from their medical provider.
- If an employee has common cold or influenza like illness or symptoms compatible with COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath) and are hospitalized, or the employee is identified by public health as a person who is part of a cluster or outbreak, arrangements will be made for a COVID-19 test:
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, they must self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days from symptom onset AND make sure their symptoms, including fever, have completely resolved.
- B.C. requirements for who must self-isolate must be followed.
- People who are contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case, meaning they have been, or could have been, exposed to the virus, but do not have symptoms, are required to self-isolate.
- We know that the best way to keep from overwhelming our health system is to reduce the spread of COVID-19. That’s why it’s crucial we follow the Provincial Health Officer’s orders, including the Industrial Camp Order and the additional BCCDC silviculture guidance document.

**15. What medical facilities/personnel are available at tree planting camps to deal with injured or infected workers?**

- WorkSafe BC requires every silviculture/planting contractor to have the appropriate first aid resources based on the number of persons working or residing in the camp – these health and safety standards are non-negotiable.
- WorkSafe BC also requires planting camp operators to have an appropriate vehicle for transporting injured workers to a medical facility – most contractors have decommissioned ambulances or similar vehicle to accommodate a stretcher.

**16. The *COVID-19: Interim Communicable Disease Control Guidelines for Industrial Camps* does not really address the out-of-province travel questions. So, we are wondering what is the process?**

- There are public health measures in place to address the potential spread or transmission of COVID 19:
  - Under the federal *Quarantine Act*, it's mandatory that anyone arriving in B.C. from outside of Canada that are symptomatic, will be quarantined by the federal government for 14 days upon their arrival.
  - Under the Provincial Health Officer Order "[Travellers and Employers Order](#)", it is mandatory that anyone arriving in B.C. from outside of Canada that are asymptomatic self-isolate and monitor symptoms for 14 days upon their arrival, and complete and register a self-isolation plan (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/self-isolation-on-return>).
  - The new PHO Industrial Camp Order also includes measures on workers coming into BC to provide essential services.

**Public, First Nation & Community Concerns**

**17. What about community and First Nation concerns?**

- The Provincial Health Officer's order and the BCCDC guidance document provide direction to make sure silviculture operators are in contact with First Nation health centres and local health authorities before arriving to be advised of any current precautions being taken in the region.
- Because Indigenous populations face heightened health risks due to lower health outcomes compared with non-Indigenous Canadians, all employees must respect any precautions being taken to avoid carrying this virus into First Nation communities. It's also recommended they do not seek medical care from First Nation health centres, which have inadequate resources to deal with an influx of external cases.
- Employers should also provide facilities and services such as meals and communication systems, and arrange for laundry and personal purchases so tree planters can avoid visiting nearby communities.
- Traveling to a grocery store or other necessary public establishment should be limited to one person per group who will also buy food and essentials for others.



- We are engaging with community leaders and working collaboratively to make sure the 2020 planting season can be undertaken as safely as possible.
- The Ministry will continue to work with UBCM and municipalities, forest licensees, contractors and Indigenous communities to make sure that unfolding guidance and information related to our reforestation efforts is being shared.

**18. How is the Province supporting the health care needs of Indigenous people during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

- A new collaborative framework will help to make sure people living in rural, remote and Indigenous communities in B.C. have access to critical health care they can count on to meet their unique needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and into the future.
- The framework was developed through a partnership between the First Nations Health Authority, Northern Health and Provincial Health Services Authority. The work is guided by the principles of cultural safety and humility, and adds to work underway by the Rural Coordination Centre of BC.
- As part of this initiative, BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) has prepared significant additional resources to its fleet. This amounts to an additional 55 ground ambulances throughout the province, including six in Northern Health. In addition, BCEHS has prepared seven fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters for medical transport.

**19. What happens if a community or First Nation closes its doors to outsiders?**

- We are working with community leaders and First Nations to make sure all precautions are in place and that things will be as safe as possible.

**20. Is any tree planting being done on First Nations land (federal) – do FN’s have concerns about this?**

- The province is not responsible for planting on reserves or title lands.

**21. Do the camps move around – from town to town?**

- Yes, in some cases the contractor will have contracts that start in the Southern part of the province, then move North. They do try to remain as central as possible so as not to have to move too frequently.
- The Provincial Health Officer’s order and the BCCDC silviculture guidance document asks employers to designate employees to small working crews or “work pods” for as long as practical during the planting season to reduce social interactions.
- Like a family unit, this work pod will make sure close contact only occurs within a select small crew.

**22. Do the planters access town for supplies?**

- Usually the planting camps provision prior to arriving at their locations. Easier to find all the various food items in a larger center than trying to buy everything in Ashcroft. If there is a need for fresh supplies, current guidance is that they order from a supplier

and have the groceries delivered out to the camp to avoid unnecessary contact in town.

**23. What about silviculture companies that are staying in communities?**

- Tree planters that stay in communities bring economic benefits – they stay in hotels, purchase food and other items.
- Economic benefits of the industry are estimated at \$400 million to \$500 million.
- The BCCDC guidance document directs tree planters to minimize interactions and maintain physical distancing when social interactions are necessary (i.e., grocery shopping, using laundromats).
- We will be working with communities to make sure adequate arrangements are made.
- Protocols to maintain physical distance between tree planters and community members can include delivery of food and laundry or having businesses like laundromats dedicate specific times to accommodate tree planters' needs, with sanitizing of facilities before and afterwards.

**24. How can the risk of transmission of COVID-19 be reduced when tree planters from camps come into town, grocery stores, laundromats and other facilities when on days off?**

- The BCCDC silviculture guidance document directs that traveling to a grocery store or other necessary public establishment should be limited to one person per group who will also buy food and essentials for others.
- In some cases, tree planters may have dedicated laundromats to use in town or services will be provided in camp.
- In other cases, protocols have been put in place to have business dedicate specific times to accommodate tree planters' needs, with sanitizing of facilities before and afterwards.
- Tree planters that are staying in camps will be supported by measures like food and laundry deliveries to limit their need to travel to communities.

**25. What about concerns from locals, including doctors like Fort St. James' Dr. Van Ryk, that saving lives are more important than planting trees?**

- The health and safety of British Columbians is paramount.
- Many community leaders want reforestation to take place to help rebuild B.C.'s forestry sector and mitigate the impacts of climate change – they want it to take place as safely as possible.
- Ensuring the health and safety of workers, and the nearby communities that they operate within is the priority.

**26. Rural and remote communities have expressed concerns, as have First Nations communities, with workers coming into or travelling through their communities at this time – why are we bringing in workers from outside of B.C.?**

- It's important to keep essential goods and services flowing, and government has designated essential service areas that are key to our economy and society – this includes forestry and silviculture.
- Tree planting typically occurs in remote areas and rural communities throughout the province – the province has identified and is responding to the need to make sure there are resources/services to protect those in rural/remote communities.
- A new collaborative framework will help make sure people living in rural, remote and Indigenous communities in B.C. have access to critical health care they can count on to meet their unique needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and into the future.
- The framework was developed through a partnership between the First Nations Health Authority, Northern Health and Provincial Health Services Authority. The work is guided by the principles of cultural safety and humility, and adds to work underway by the Rural Coordination Centre of BC.
- As part of this initiative, BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) has prepared significant additional resources to its fleet. This amounts to an additional 55 ground ambulances throughout the province, including six in Northern Health. In addition, BCEHS has prepared seven fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters for medical transport.
- BC is renowned for its commitment to prompt, science-based reforestation as it is an important step to ensure sustainable forest management, address climate change and the recovery of areas which have been devastated by wildfires.
- This year, the Province had planned its single largest planting program of over 310 million trees, with much of it focused on areas impacted by 2017 and 2018 wildfires. With the proper precautions in place, the resulting new forests will benefit all British Columbians.
- Seasonal tree planters are a crucial part of ensuring B.C. can meet global demand for wood products, build a resilient forestry sector, and address the impacts of climate change and wildfires.
- Every year, about 5,000 tree planters primarily from B.C. and other Canadian provinces travel from their homes to work in remote camps and communities throughout the province.
- Safety for workers and the public is always a priority in the forest sector that's why we are taking action and implementing orders and guidelines for contractors and tree planters to address COVID-19.

### **Contractor Concerns**

**27. What if these aren't workable on the ground or add to planting costs for contractors – will tree planting contractors be subject to compensation?**

- Government is looking at measures to support planting operations to make sure safety precautions are met in a consistent manner.
- We're also working to make sure adequate resources are available.

**28. What happens if communities refuse to provide accommodation?**

- The Province is working with municipal leaders and First Nation communities to help everyone understand the importance of a successful and safe planting season.
- We are working with the PHO and our government partners at the ministries of Health, Energy Mines and Petroleum Resources, Finance, Jobs Economic Development and Competitiveness, Infrastructure, Tourism and Culture, Emergency Management BC, and BC Timber Sales, to develop health and safety protocols to prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- With all these measures in place and full recognition of the socio-economic importance of this spring's reforestation program, I'm hoping that we can work together to get those 300 million trees planted.

**29. How many employees and contractors will be affected if the season doesn't go ahead as planned?**

- We estimate close to 5,000 planters will be employed to deliver this season's more than 300-million tree program.
- Planters are paid by piece work with the amount dependent on the contractor. On average, a tree planter can earn over \$300 for a 10-hour day (survey 2014).
- The supply chain to support and maintain these numbers of workers, staying in camps and hotels/motels would impact hundreds of related businesses and their employees.

**30. Do all of them already have contracts with government?**

- Planting contractors traditionally bid on a variety of planting contracts the year before planting is due.
- It is not uncommon for one planting company to have contracts with the forest industry, provincial government and in some cases, small private companies like woodlots and community forests.

**In Event of an Outbreak**

**31. What if a worker arrives in B.C. sick? What are the self-isolation requirements?**

- A worker will undergo an assessment for symptoms of illness that includes dry cough, fever, shortness of breath, sore throat, and gastrointestinal signs such as vomiting and diarrhea. If they present with any symptoms, will be required to go into self—isolation for a minimum of 10 days until symptoms resolve or otherwise directed by a health care provider.
- There will also be a requirement for daily monitoring of workers for symptoms with the same expectation to self isolate if they become symptomatic.

### **32. Aren't there concerns that an outbreak could happen like the one in West Kelowna with migrant agricultural workers?**

- As our Provincial Health Officer has told us, all of us in every community in B.C. are at risk but limiting exposure to others through physical distancing can help reduce that risk.
- Tree planters are historically drawn from college and university students across Canada on summer break – they are not international travellers.
- Under the federal Quarantine Act, it's mandatory that anyone arriving in B.C. from outside of Canada that are symptomatic to be quarantined by the federal government for 14 days upon their arrival.
- Under the Provincial Health Officer Order "[Travellers and Employers Order](#)", it is mandatory that anyone arriving in B.C. from outside of Canada that are asymptomatic self-isolate and monitor symptoms for 14 days upon their arrival, and complete and register a self-isolation plan: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/self-isolation-on-return>.
- Many planters return to this type of work year after year and derive most of their annual income from this employment
- Some planters live near the communities close to the planting activity.
- Some planting contractors and company owners have been in the business for over 30 years and started out as tree planters.

### **33. What will be done in case of an outbreak?**

- Workers who test positive and are unable to return to home will be immediately assigned to mandatory isolation in a facility provided by their employer according to BCCDC guidelines and the additional silviculture guidelines.
- Employees that have come into close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19 on the advice of local public health officer, should call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 or their medical provider to determine any necessary next steps.
- Employers must make sure that the following employees do not come to work and begin self isolation.
  - Workers who are ill, whether or not the illness has been confirmed as COVID-19.
  - Workers with COVID-19-like symptoms must begin self-isolation and be reassessed for when they can return to work.
  - Workers who share a residence with a person who has been exposed to COVID-19.
- We know that the best way to keep from overwhelming our health system is to reduce the spread of COVID-19. That's why it's crucial we follow the Provincial Health Officer's orders, including the Industrial Camp Order and additional silviculture guidelines.

## **Enforcement**

**34. Who is policing tree planters and contractors, and ensuring they are adhering to provincial guidelines for industrial camps and extra guidelines for tree planting contractors?**

- Inspection Teams organized by FLNRORD will visit with the camps to make sure they have the tools they need to safely support tree planters at work.

**35. What happens if they don't follow the guidelines?**

- Should a violation of the PHO Order or adherence to the guidelines be observed by the inspection teams, a health official will be assigned to enforce the order.
- Additional inspections will be conducted throughout the planting season.

**36. How will tree planting operations be inspected to make sure that they are following guidance on COVID-19?**

- Inspections related to planting operations are part of any season's planting program. This year will have an additional focus to inspect compliance with the relevant COVID-19 Prevention and Control measures that will be required by the Provincial Health Officer.
- Inspectors are provincial Natural Resource Officers or B.C. Timber Sales staff already checking on planting compliance. These inspectors live and work in the communities near where they would be inspecting. They are under the umbrella of "essential service workers".

**37. Other provinces require people arriving from other provinces to self-isolate. Why not B.C.?**

- Provinces are experiencing COVID 19 differently. Every province, including BC, is managing the COVID 19 response according to the number of cases, the evidence and the epidemiological data and are implementing public health measures to address the transmission or spread.
- BC is taking a thoughtful and cautious approach. The evidence was carefully considered, with heightened measures and controls being required for work camps to continue to receive out of province workers and prevent the transmission of COVID 19 within the work camps and to local communities.
- Work camps will be required to do a risk assessment and develop an infection prevention and control protocol that addresses risks with measures to increase hygiene, for physical distancing, monitoring workers for symptoms, and requiring workers to self isolate during non work hours, and if they become ill.
- Any worker that shows symptoms of illness will not be allowed to work in the camp, and will be required to go into self isolation for a 10 days or until symptoms resolve or otherwise directed by a health care provider.

### **38. Why isn't B.C. closing its border/shutting down tree planting**

- Silviculture and forestry have been listed as an essential service in B.C.
- B.C. is taking a thoughtful and cautious approach to managing workers coming into the province to work.
- The evidence was carefully considered with heightened measures and controls being required for work camps to continue to receive out of province workers and to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 within work camps and to local communities.
- The Provincial Health Officer would work with other provinces and the federal government should the need to close border was deemed necessary to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. If this is required, we will re-examine related tree planting program decisions.

### **Delaying the planting season**

#### **39. Why can't the cold storage facility and nurseries hang on to spring trees until next season, or out plant so we can plant them next season?**

- Seedlings have a certain amount of food reserves that are depleted during cold storage. Holding trees in storage will deplete these reserves and essentially kill the tree.
- There is a large seedling order for the next three years (2020-2022). Nurseries do not have the space, the staff or the resources to maintain the 2020 trees (out plant them) outside of cold storage.

#### **40. Why can't we extend the spring planting season past June 21?**

- Trees are very responsive to the length of day and are affected by other environmental conditions. They must be planted when conditions will support their survival.
- The longer trees are planted after June 21, the more diminished is their chance of surviving and thriving.

#### **41. Why can't we shift a portion of our planting program to the fall?**

- Spring trees and fall (hotlift) trees react to the different seasons, based on how they are stored and raised.
- Spring trees are kept in cold storage and remain dormant before being thawed and planted. They respond to the environment as if they were coming out of winter, by establishing shoot and root growth during the growing period.
- Fall hotlift trees grow in response to being planted in fall conditions. They establish roots but have no shoot growth.