**New Fire Hazard Assessment Template for Woodlot Licence Harvest Areas**

By Alan Waters, RPF# 1495

Many woodlot licensees are strong on field work, and less so in completing government paperwork. So it comes as no surprise that Forest Practices Board audits have shown that although the vast majority of woodlot licensees do an excellent job of fire hazard abatement, some do not complete a written fire hazard assessment for each area they harvest. To help woodlot licensees who are not forest professionals complete their own fire hazard assessments, your Woodlot Product Development Council funded a project to produce a simple and efficient fire hazard assessment template.

As part of this project I prepared a document entitled “**Fire Hazard Assessment and Abatement on Woodlot Licence Harvest Areas**”to explain the legal requirements for completing fire hazard assessments on woodlot licence harvest areas and suggest best practices for associated fire hazard abatement. The fire hazard assessment template and accompanying report is professional advice under the *Foresters Act.* The report has been signed by me as a Registered Professional Forester. By signing the report and template, experienced woodlot licensees who are not forest professionals can fill in the template in accordance with the instructions to produce fire hazard assessments for harvest areas on their own woodlot licences. The woodlot licensee who uses this template is still ultimately responsible for accurately assessing the information they enter into the template and for recommending fire hazard abatement treatments that will effectively reduce the fire hazard and protect nearby values at risk from wildfire. There is no way my signature as an RPF on the blank template can certify the accuracy and suitability of individual fire hazard assessments for areas I have never seen.

This process of using a fire hazard assessment template designed by a forest professional is described on page 10 of the BC Wildfire Service’s 2012 publication “**A Guide to Fire Hazard Assessment and Abatement in BC**”. This document indicates:

**“Qualified holders may retain a forest professional to develop an assessment strategy or operating procedure for assessment of fire hazard at the site(s) of their industrial or prescribed activity within their operating area(s)** **or they may also use this guide.”**

A qualified holder as defined in Section 1 of the Wildfire Regulation includes a woodlot licensee who has paid their annual rent.

The fire hazard assessment template has been reviewed by several woodlot licensees, industry foresters and the Association of BC Forest Professionals and is believed to be suitable for guiding licensees through an assessment of the fire hazard on typical woodlot licence harvest areas. The document and fire hazard assessment template are available on the WPDC page of the website [www.woodlot.bc.ca](http://www.woodlot.bc.ca)

Anyone who has questions, requires clarification or has suggested improvements to the fire hazard assessment template can call Alan Waters RPF at 250-747-0649 or email: alanwaters@quesnelbc.com A woodlot licensee who is not a forest professional and wants to modify the template may email me and I will review and confirm the modifications, (at no cost), if I feel the modifications are acceptable. Alternatively a woodlot licensee who is not a forest professional can use their local professional forester to prescribe a modified version of the fire hazard assessment template that the woodlot licensee can then use to assess the fire hazard on their woodlot licence harvest areas.