



SOUTHERN INTERIOR SILVICULTURE COMMITTEE

# 2026 SISCO Winter Workshop

Grand Okanagan Hotel, Kelowna

February 23- 25, 2026

## *BC Forests' Future Pathways ...*

*Exploring Pathways to Expand Our Wood Markets*

*Looking for Pathways Through the Barriers to Innovation*

*Exploring Stand Development Pathways for New Objectives*

*Exploring Concepts of and Ideas About Our Resilient Landscapes*

Registration Evening: Monday, February 23rd

Complete Your Registration Check-In

Grand Okanagan Hotel, Kelowna

Grand Hall Foyer

4:00 – 6:00 pm

Social Time Reception

Location tba at Reg Desk

6:30 pm – 10:00 pm

# 2026 SISCO Winter Workshop

## BC Forests' Future Pathways

Day One: Tuesday February 24, 2026

- 8:20 Welcome & Opening Remarks  
John Karakatsoulis, Associate Teaching Professor, Forest Ecology & Silviculture, Thompson Rivers University  
2026 SISCO Chair
- 8:25 Plenary Panel 1 Exploring New Initiatives to Expand Markets for our Wood  
*BC's forest sector is undergoing a significant transformation driven by economic challenges, climate impacts, policy reforms and evolving public expectations. Despite the challenges the sector is shifting from a story of decline to one of innovation and growth. This panel will present some of the recent efforts to expand and develop new markets for our forest products both internationally and locally. New partnerships, noteworthy changes in tenure and the growing role of First Nations in the sector will be explored.*  
Moderator: Deborah DeLong MSc RPF, Senior Project Forester, BA Blackwell & Associates  
Keynote Speaker Market Diversification: BC's Existing and Emerging Markets  
Sonya Zeitler Fletcher, Vice President, Market Development, Forestry Innovation Investment  
Panelists' Presentations (25 mins each including questions, plus additional Question Period at end of the panel as well)
- 8:50 1. Community Forest Tenures –Market Opportunities  
Jenifer Gunter, Executive Director, BC Community Forests Association  
Casey Macaulay, General Manager, Wells Gray Community Forest
- 9:15 2. Being in Business for 70 Years Serving Niche Markets for Specialty Wood Products  
Greg Smith, Gilbert Smith Forest Products, Barriere
- 9:40 3. Provincial Modular Standardization for More Homes and More Jobs  
Gordon Rattray, Senior Director, Modular BC
- 10:05 Q&A
- 10:15 Refreshment Break
- 10:55 Plenary Panel 2 Finding Pathways Through Common Barriers to Innovative Plans and Practices  
*Forestry is a challenging business these days. Forest practitioners need to navigate complex policy, regulatory and economic landscape to implement forestry plans, site treatments, silviculture activities, or simply get timber to markets. There are many barriers and challenges, some are systemic and may require institutional change to overcome, while others may simply require improved communication and collaboration. This panel session explores common barriers and diverse perspectives to find pathways through this complex landscape.*  
Moderator: Doug Lewis, Landscape Ecologist, BC Ministry of Water, Lands, and Resource Stewardship  
Keynote Speaker Provincial Forestry Advisory Council Discussion Paper  
Garry Merkel, Co-Chair, Provincial Forestry Advisory Council  
Panelists' Presentations (25 mins each including questions, plus additional Question Period at end of the panel as well)
- 11:25 1. Stselxmēms r Stselxmēm Management Plan  
Brad Arnouse, Councillor, Neskonlith Indian Band  
Jamie Skinner, Forestry Superintendent, Indigenous Relations & Sustainability, Tolko Industries  
Colin O'Leary, Principal, O'Leary and Associates
- 11:50 2. Connecting High Value Supply Chains: Spearhead Timberworks and Harrop-Procter Community Forest  
Ben Hall, Partner, Spearhead Timberworks  
Erik Leslie, Forest Manager, Harrop-Procter Community Forest
- 12:15 3. The Administrator's / Decision Maker's Point of View  
Jennifer Reid, Regional Executive Director, Thompson Okanagan Region, MOF
- 12:40 Q&A
- 12:50 Lunch

# 2026 SISCO Winter Workshop

## Day One continued

1:45 SISCO AGM

John Karakatsoulis 2026 SISCO Chair

1:55 Plenary Session Graduate Students' Research Projects Presented in Three Minutes

*This plenary is styled after the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competitions held at universities around the world. The 3MT competition assists current graduate students with fostering effective presentation and communication skills. Participants have just three minutes to explain the breadth and significance of their research project to a non-specialist audience. The popularity of the competition has steadily increased and 3MT competitions are now held in over 350 universities across 59 countries worldwide. This is one of the first times a 3MT competition has been held at a practitioners' conference, as far as we know! Enjoy!*

Moderator: Deb Delong

*Students' Presentations* (3 mins each followed by Question Period for all at end of the panel)

Evaluating Partial Cutting Systems for Drought Resilience: Species-Specific Responses in BC's Southern Interior  
Sara Leslie

Analyzing the combined stress of forest disturbance and glacier melt on river discharge in a large-scale watershed  
Tay Powrie

Fuel treatment effectiveness in interior-wet fire weather zone of British Columbia: 2024 Slocan Lake Fire Complex  
Aeron Westeinde

In the Wake of Wildfire: New Forest Pollinator Baselines for Central British Columbia  
Mackenzie H.W. Howse

Modifying Stand-level Growth under a Changing Climate using a Model Fusion Approach  
Kirk Johnson

Can eco-cultural restoration reduce high-severity wildfire and enhance mule deer habitat  
Carson Lopatka

Development & Evaluation of Open-Source Generalized Tool for Machine Scheduling in Forest Operational Planning  
Rosie Jaffray

Assessing treatments of complex surface and crown fuels for fire risk reduction and economic recapture using lidar  
Sadie Russell

2:25 Q&A

2:35 Concurrent Discussion Sessions 1 – 5

1. *Graduate Students' Research Poster Session – Concurrent Individual Presentations*

2. *Cheakamus Community Forest Climate Change Adaptation Plan*

Nicholas Soverel, Principal, Frontera Forest Solutions, Inc.

3. *RESULTS: Focus on Treed Retention Reporting*

Ellery Tetz, RPF, Silviculture Reporting Specialist, Harvesting & Silviculture Practices, MOF

4. *Whitebark Pine and Silviculture – Forestry's Role in Saving an Endangered Species*

Randy Moody, President, Whitbark Pine Ecosystem Foundation of Canada

5. *Fireside Chat with John and Doug – Do We Need a Major Rethink of Forest Management in BC?*

John Karakatsoulis, Associate Teaching Professor, Thompson Rivers University

Doug Lewis, Landscape Ecologist, Land Use Planning and Cumulative Effects, BCMWLRS

3:25 Short Break

3:30 Concurrent Discussion Sessions 1-5 Repeated

4:20 Adjourn for the day

5:00 Cash Bar Opens

6:15 Banquet, Presentation of Speaker Gifts

Graduate Student 3MT (Three Minute Thesis) Competition Winner - \$500 Award

# 2026 SISCO Winter Workshop

## BC Forests' Future Pathways

Day Two: Wednesday February 25, 2026

8:20 Announcements,  
2026 SISCO Chair

8:25 Plenary Panel 3 Stand Development Pathways

*This panel brings together leading voices from BC's forest sector to address the challenges and opportunities shaping the industry as we develop pathways through stand development for multiple objectives, such as biodiversity, old growth, wildlife and resiliency. It is important to be aware of the many tools that exist and the considerations we need to make in order to manage our stands for short term and long term goals. The new Silviculture Systems Handbook outlines how to design pathways for diverse objectives on the landscape using a range of selection and retentions systems, while tools such as the Tree And Stand Simulator (TASS) may be used to model a range of potential outcomes over time various values.*

Moderator: Kari Doyle RPF, Team Lead, Silviculture&Forest Stewardship Thompson Okanagan Region MOF

Keynote Speaker Vision for a New Approach to Stand Development

Taisa Brown, Silviculture Performance Assessment Specialist, Harvesting & Silviculture Practices, MOF

Panelists' Presentations (25 mins each including questions, plus additional Question Period at end of the panel as well)

8:50 1. Mixed Retention Case Study – Managing for Old Forest Attributes

Melissa Steidle, Chair, Resilient Ecosystems Committee, Woodlots BC

9:15 2. A Silvicultural System Case Study: Uniform Shelterwood with Dispersed Retention at Gavin Lake

Ken Day, Consulting Forester, Ken Day Forest Management

9:40 3. TASS and Stand Development Modeling - Modeling For Other Values and Different Objectives

Eleanor McWilliams, Analyst, Forest Biometrics, J&E McWilliams and Associates

10:05 4. Stand Structural Pathways - Maintaining & Recruiting Habitat Structure Over Time for Biodiversity

Doug Lewis, Landscape Ecologist, Land Use Planning and Cumulative Effects, BCMWLRS

10:30 Q&A

10:40 REFRESHMENT BREAK

11:05 Concurrent Discussion Sessions 6 - 10

6. Provincial Monitoring Web Applications: Assessing Forest Inventory and Timber Supply Review Assumptions, and More!

Dan Turner, Team Lead, Inventory Analysis and Reporting, MOF

Hyeyoung Woo, Inventory Data Scientist, MOF

7. Commercial Thinning as an Intervention in a Stand Development Pathway

Ken Day, Consulting Forester, Ken Day Forest Management

Manuela Arnold, Beaumont Timber

8. Are our Forests Degraded? Stand Management Pathways to Recover Our Forests

Doug Lewis, Landscape Ecologist, Land Use Planning and Cumulative Effects, BCMWLRS

9. Facilitating Climate Resilience Through Operational Fuel Reduction And Post-Wildfire Intervention

Peter Flett, MSFM, RPF, Head of Forestry Operations, Nk'Mip Forestry LLP Osoyoos Indian Band

Eden Hardcastle, MSFM, FIT, Nk'Mip Forestry LLP Osoyoos Indian Band

10. Upper Penticton Experimental Watershed-Thinning as an Adaptation Tool for a Changing Climate

Adam Wei, Professor, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UBC Okanagan

11:55 SHORT BREAK

12:00 Concurrent Discussion Sessions 6-10 repeated

12:50 Lunch

# 2026 SISCO Winter Workshop

## Day Two continued

- 1:35 *Plenary Panel 4 Exploring Elements of the Resilient Landscape*  
*The term resilience is now widely used in fields ranging from human health to disaster management to forest management. In forest management, the term is often used as a management principle or paradigm, much as “sustainable forest management” was used in the past. That broad approach has much appeal as a unifying framework that brings diverse perspectives together. However, underlying the concept are important distinctions about what resilience means and significant differences in the scale and scope of the system being managed. These all influence how resilience principles are applied to planning and management.*
- Moderator: Doug Lewis, Landscape Ecologist, Land Use Planning and Cumulative Effects, BCMWLRs
- Keynote Speaker Applying Resilience Thinking to Wildfire - How Socio-Ecological Resilience Principles Can Be Applied in British Columbia to Manage Wildfire Resilience at a Landscape Scale*  
Kevin Kriese, Senior Wildfire Analyst, POLIS Wildfire Resilience Project
- Panelists’ Presentations* (25 mins each including questions, plus additional Question Period at end of the panel as well)
- 2:00 *1. Forest Resiliency to Wildfire in the Landscape*  
Dr. Lori Daniels, Inaugural Koerner Chair, Centre for Wildfire Coexistence, Faculty of Forestry UBC
- 2:25 *2. Resiliency From a Biodiversity Perspective*  
Dr. Rachel Holt, Veridian Ecological Consulting
- 2:50 *3. West Kootenay Climate Adaptation in Action*  
Erik Leslie, Forest Manager J&E McWilliams and Associates
- 3:15 Q&A
- 3:25 *Food for Thought on the Drive Home: Reconciling a Flawed Legacy with a Brighter Future*  
Casey Macaulay, General Manager, Wells Gray Community Forest
- 3:45 Adjourn