

Formative History of APB as recalled by S. Fredrik Sverre, RPBio. and edited by John Borden, R.P.Bio.
February 28, 2011

Summary - Evolution of the CAB Act

Formative Years:

- 1974 – First committee formed
- 1979 – APB of BC name formally accepted by the committee
- 1979 – First draft of the By-Laws, Code of Ethics and Board of Examiners were formulated and in place for our first Charter meeting on April 11, 1979 after the APBBC was Registered under the Society Act

Operative Years

- 1983 – Committee formed to draft Act
- 1988 – Granted rights to R.P.Bio. title
- 1992 – Looking good for legislation
- 2002 – CAB Act passed
- 2003 – April 2003 the Third Reading of the Legislation was passed into Law.

Formative Years

As a member of the Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists (CSEB), I met with the directors of the BC chapter of CSEB in 1974 to discuss the establishment of a BC registered society to develop professional accreditation for biologists working in BC. After two years as a consulting biologist, I was convinced that this might be the only way that the opinion of biologists would receive due credence in resource management decisions. My experience was that when dealing with registered professional Engineers and Foresters heading up the Federal and Provincial departments, crown corporations, mining and forestry companies there was insufficient credence and weight given to the opinions and findings of biologists.

Consulting biologists in Alberta had at the time been working hard to establish a professional society for biologists. However, they found little support for this concept among the government agencies involved, and therefore focused only on consulting biologists. There was at the time the Wildlife Society and American Fisheries Society that I was a member of and there were other societies for zoologists, botanists, microbiologists, entomologists, biochemists, etc. that all had their own association or societies, but there was no unifying society that dealt with the common interests of all biologists. As a consulting biologist, working closely within many of those disciplines in various renewable resource management projects I frequently worked alongside licensed professionals (Registered Professional Foresters and Registered Professional Engineers) mandated by BC legislation. It became clear to me. that biologists also needed to become Licensed Professionals under a BC Government mandate to be taken seriously.

There was declining interest in the CSEB society at the time. Discussing the above situation with the executives and other senior resource managers and scientists, they agreed that something had to change. Engineers were heading up the DFO and Foresters made range and forestry land use decisions with little consideration of input from biologists. We needed to get to a situation where biologically-based decisions would be made to protect, manage and enhance all the renewable natural resources of the province. We needed to protect the soil, water, air and habitat to conserve the great diversity of flora and fauna in BC. We needed more refined management decisions than elsewhere in Canada.

The local directors of our CSEB chapter had not been successful in seeking profession status for biologists, so they encouraged me to go forward. The BC chapter of the CSEB passed a resolution to transfer the funds in their bank account to our Committee a couple of years after we had formed the working committee.

The first Committee was formed by a few likeminded friends together who understood the importance of forming a professional association for biologists. This association would bring people together to improve the standing of biologists in the community and improve their ability to have a substantive input in the management of the diverse flora and fauna of British Columbia.

The initial Committee members included biologists from CWS, DFO, universities, colleges, consultants and industry. The initial committee consisted of Bob Ferguson, (BC Hydro), Dave Barrett (Fisheries and Ocean), Bill Morris (CWS) and S. Fredrik Sverre (ENTECH) who each took on various important tasks. The Committee conducted a historic review of the other registered professional groups in BC, and thereafter began to plan and implement the program required to reach our goal. We met every two weeks at the homes of the various committee members.

Together we canvassed a wide group of representation from the provincial and federal governments to bring onboard committee members representing the major sectors where biologists were employed, e.g. universities/colleges, provincial and federal agencies, crown corporations, and consulting companies. We agreed to establish the Association under the Society Act of BC, and to lobby for members to participate in forming the Association so it would be inclusive of all biologists in BC. We conducted a survey of potential members, and found that an estimated 900 biologists were working in BC at the time.

We contacted the Association of BC Professional Foresters and Association of Professional Engineers of BC and received copies of their by-laws and code of ethics and learned how their boards of examiners established the qualification criteria for becoming members. In this way we learned how to draft the regulatory framework for biologists for what we wanted to call the Association of Professional Biologists of British Columbia. Bob Ferguson wrote the first working draft of by-laws that we kept amending and updating until the charter meeting. John Borden joined the Committee in about 1977 and

finalized first Code of Ethics by bringing together elements of the codes of the Association of BC Professional Foresters and the American Registry of Professional Entomologists, of which he was a founding member.

I chaired the APB formative committee from 1974 to 1979 when the first charter meeting was held. Thereafter I served as the charter president for about 1.5 years from about 1979 to 1980. To ensure new fresh forces would carry on the association, Bud Graham took over as President in 1980, and knowing that APBBC was in good hands I stepped back my activities.

Some personal observations and experiences greatly influenced the establishment of the Association of Professional Biologists of BC. When lobbying senior officials of FOC to have their employees join our committee and become members, I was informed that employees of FOC may not be able to join our association because of a conflict of interest. They were required to uphold the Fisheries Act of Canada and could not also be responsible for upholding Provincial statutes, regulations, and the APB's by-laws, and code of ethics. When I asked what would be the difference between Registered Professional Engineers, and Registered Professional Biologists – the answer was short “it is different”. It was difficult to get a discussion going. In my mind the perceived difference was that engineers heading up senior management positions within FOC were responsible to the federal politicians and Fisheries Act, while Registered Professional Biologists would be governed under provincial statutes to protect and manage the unique renewable resources of BC. In spite of this dispute, some Salmon Enhancement biologists joined our working committee and provided valuable input in the early years. They also prevailed on biologists working within FOC to join the new Association.

One reason for my decision to become involved in forming the Association of Professional Biologists was that I and other consultants, as well as provincial and federal government biologists, were not taken seriously when we made recommendations regarding renewable resource management issues. Decisions made in Ottawa were often not the best for our BC salmon stocks. The biologists I associated with within Fisheries and Oceans tried to speak up against Ottawa-mandated large hatcheries and recommended that streams with decimated stocks needed their own small hatcheries to maintain production. However with decisions made in Ottawa, the engineers in charge built large production facilities, and ignored the advice from local professionals.

My company, ENTECH, was retained to conduct a detailed assessment of sediment suffocation of incubating trout and/or salmon eggs in a private hatchery in about 1974/75. The Municipality of Mission had removed gravel from a creek next to the water intake of the hatchery. We presented our findings as expert witnesses in the provincial court case: Schillinger and Ponderosa Trout Farm v. Williams 1977 BCSC. However, only the testimony presented by the Registered Professional Engineer from the Municipality was accepted, because biologists had no legal standing! As a result the 1977 judgement assigned no fault for the fish kill to the Municipality and Mr. Williams. We discussed the outcome of the court case with an independent legal counsel at the time, Bruce Johnstone with Hean, Wylie & Co. He recommended that in order to obtain legal status biologists

should first be incorporated in a professional association under the Society Act, while we worked to become registered professionals with rights equivalent to those of engineers, foresters, and other registered professionals.

The above experience and legal advice changed the focus of the APB committee toward establishing an Association that would operate and function like a BC registered professional Society, with a Board of Examiners that restricted membership only to those with acceptable education and practical experience. After incorporation in 1979, we naively thought that it might take 5 to 10 years to find an MLA to sponsor a Professional Biologist Act. The Board of Examiners was established, and the By-laws and Code of Ethics were in place and operational by April 11, 1979, the date of the charter meeting. The executives and the Board of Directors had their credentials grandfathered as qualified Registered Professional Biologists.

Several new Registered Professional Biologists assisted the first registrar Richard Sadlier of SFU and the Board of Examiners in establishing the course requirements for registration. Members from Simon Fraser University (SFU), University of Victoria (UVic) and University of BC (UBC) needed to agree to the establishment of core courses for the various fields the members wanted to practice. This was difficult for the universities to accept. However Richard Sadlier and John Borden were able to get the buy-in from SFU, and from UVic we obtained the acceptance from (??? _Derek Ellis is going through the Biology Department's records to see who approved our Association to set the core courses). Finally after three years of lobbying, Ian McTaggart-Cowan (who was at the time of the Dean of Graduate studies at UBC) called me and promised to allow us to select a curriculum that would enable UBC graduates to become members of the APB. This achievement was greatly aided by internal pressure exerted by Al Lewis, Ian Taylor and Roy Taylor, who kept lobbying various departments for their support.

Key members in the period of 1974 to 1979/80 who actively served in guiding the formation of the Professional Biologists Association were as follows:

David T. Barrett, Fisheries and Ocean Canada, Vancouver ^{o)}
Dr. John H. Borden, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby ^{o)}
Dr. C.W. (*Chuck*) Chestnut, BC Institute of Technology
Dr. Derek V. Ellis, University of Victoria, Victoria
Allan Edie, BC Fish and Wildlife Service, Smithers*
Dr. Robert G. Ferguson, BC Hydro & Power Authority ^{o)}
Dr. J. Bristol Foster, formerly with BC Provincial Museum, Victoria
Dr. Glen H. Geen, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby ^{o)*}
Colville C. (*Bud*) Graham, Fisheries and Ocean Canada, Vancouver ^{o)*}
Gordon T. Halsey, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Victoria
Dr. John P. Kelsall, Canadian Wildlife Service, Delta ^{o)}
Dr. Allan G. Lewis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver
Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan, University of British Columbia, Vancouver
William (*Bill*) A. Morris, Canadian Wildlife Service, Delta ^{o)}
Richard L. Morley, BC Fish and Wildlife, Victoria*

Bruce A. Pendergast, BC Fish and Wildlife, Victoria*

Ross Peterson, Howard Paish & Associate ^{o)}

Dr. Richard Sadler, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby ^{o)}*

William (*Bill*) J. Schouwenburg, Fisheries and Ocean Canada, Vancouver ^{o)}

S. Fredrik Sverre, Entech Environmental Consultants Ltd. ^{o)}*

Dr. Iain E.P. Taylor, University of British Columbia, Vancouver ^{o)}*

Dr. Roy L. Taylor, University of British Columbia, Vancouver

F.E. Allen Wood, Fisheries and Ocean Canada, Vancouver ^{o)}

Dr. Peter Wood, Selkirk College, Castlegar ^{o)}*

^{o)} Served on the Formative Years Committee

* Attendees of the First Directors Meeting among others, April 11, 1979