

November 14, 2019

*Our vision is to work and live in a society that values the services
of professional practitioners of applied biology.*

Dear Members of the APB,

The APB has embarked on an important mission and needs your continuing support. In 2019 we updated our constitution, bylaws, and vision in response to changes that have taken place with respect to professional reliance. This letter is designed to outline what the APB is doing to serve its members. We are also seeking assistance from our members to advance our mission. My goal as your president has been focused on creating a balanced budget, ensuring that we deliver the baseline services to our members, and on creating new initiatives. I recognize the importance of these activities for the APB, but there is more to be done in our rapidly changing world.

Mission Statement, 1st Sentence:

*As biologists, we recognize the value
of resilience and other services that
ecosystems provide as a vital part of
the economic and social well-being
of society.*

In 2019, the APB provided scholarships to students, created and hosted new courses for professional biologists, hosted a successful conference, welcomed new mentors and protégés into the Mentorship Program, and we remained active in delivering bio-worthy highlights through social media outreach¹. Our mentorship program is moving along stronger than ever and we need more mentors so please let us know if you would like to become involved. The Association has

invested in an Organizational Management System that was used to give our website an overhaul in 2019. The OMS has been used to manage our budgets, organize events, mobilize our strategies, and engage members through targeted marketing. Furthermore in 2019, our board members represented the APB through attendance and correspondence with other organizations as we engaged on issues that are applicable to our profession and in strategic line with the APB vision.

¹ LinkedIn = 5,972 connections: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/assocofprofessionalbiology/>, Twitter = 1208 followers: <https://twitter.com/BIOLOGYAPBWORLD>, NEW Facebook = <https://www.facebook.com/AssociationofProfessionalBiology/>

As APB president, I attended the 2019 Society for Ecosystem Restoration of BC's Annual General Meeting in Prince George. The keynote speaker, Dr. Jeffery Werner of BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development, gave a wonderful talk on moose forage in harvest blocks. His research has shown that plants with high sun exposure in cleared forests develop a host of chemical defenses (e.g., phenols, alkaloids, tannins). Moose are unable to digest these chemical defenses to access the proteins they require for survival. Unable to meet their protein requirements, moose are facing decline by starvation.

We must work together to help policy makers understand that there is a common link of resilience that binds ecosystems and economics into one.

Natural resource sectors are facing difficult economic times with the closure of mills across the province. Pine and spruce beetle infestations coupled with changes to the climate and forest fires are adding stress to our resource base. As biologists we have an important role in guiding the future of natural resources in this province. Unfortunately, our voice has not always been heard or understood in terms of

economics of nature and how this relates to the social well-being of society. The science leaves me to believe that biologists can help, and we need a network of support in our profession. We must work together to help policy makers understand that there is a common link of resilience that binds ecosystems and economics into one.

Resilience and heterogeneity in land management can be achieved using adaptive management strategies. However, the methods are not being realized in the way that biologists have envisioned or communicated in the literature. Many of us might have envisioned that right-to-practice would have brought biologists deeper into the foray of professional land management so that we could better advance and integrate ecological science into practice. It appears this is not the way things are unfolding through draft legislation of the Professional Governance Act (PGA).

The APB has engaged in the PGA process and we have outlined some of our concerns². A primary concern is that our government seems to have overlooked the importance of our organization. We at the APB believe that government has a responsibility to recognize and support both sides of our practice. This includes the College of Applied Biology (CAB) as a regulator for the public interest and the APB who serves as a representative of its members. The APB is the founding organization for professional biology in this province, but the APB is at a disadvantage relative to the CAB. CAB receives larger revenues from membership fees which have increased in recent years and will be required for professional practice under the PGA. In contrast, the APB has held membership fees constant, and is reliant on optional registration and volunteerism. We are very grateful for the many hours of volunteer

² Presidents Blog: https://professionalbiology.com/APB/Advocacy/President-s-Blog_April_2019.aspx
APB Letter to Honorable George Heyman regarding Proposed Professional Governance Act <https://professionalbiology.com/common/Uploaded%20files/Advocacy/20190304%20-%20APB%20Letter%20regarding%20PGA.pdf>

work that help us advance our mission, and hope to build greater support for advocacy initiatives on behalf of our members.

Mission Statement, 2nd Sentence:

Of great importance to our mission is the advancement of science in policies, decisions, and execution of projects that affect natural resources, species, organisms, and ecosystems in our areas of practice.

Certainly, as professionals, we understand the importance of regulations, governance, and rules. The CAB has this jurisdiction over our members, but as citizens, as directors, and as fellow professional biologists the APB board of directors is concerned and wary about the process of disciplinary action that has been put into action. We would like to see an independent constitutional review of the process. I was in attendance at the 2019 CAB meeting and was not impressed by the one-sided focus on regulation and discipline as a means to keep our members in line with our ethics. Other professional members have shared this concern, which is why we must speak-up.

We are biologists because we are passionate about the beauty and wonder of the natural world. It is rare that we would find a member among us that would want to take advantage of a situation to further their own agenda. Surely, this is a concern that we must attend to, and I believe that we can be more effective in leadership terms by providing a network of support for those who are trying to advance their practice as biologists and as good stewards of the environment. This is why the APB was founded more than 40 years ago.

Mission Statement, 3rd Sentence:

Our mission is to communicate and advocate on issues and values that are important to practitioners of biology and foster a public understanding of impacts of human and other activities on natural resources.

Our directors are working to craft a new framework to engage APB members on advocacy. Moving forward, we plan to host a series of workshops at each AGM covering different topics for advocacy. Topics might cover conservation biology, climate change, ecosystem services, or issues related to politics. Should the APB become a political voice on some topics? These advocacy issues are very difficult to navigate, but as a scientific organization we must be involved. It is our goal to better engage members on advocacy so that we can represent on these important issues.

It is hoped that some of the recent highlights of the APB have not gone unnoticed. Please spread the word about the APB and the important work we do. This year we are launching an inaugural wildlife survey and tracking course that involves helicopter flights and on-the-ground tracking with professional trainers. On Nov 5th, 2019 we hosted a course on “Designing Avoidance and Mitigation for Migratory Birds and Species at Risk Critical Habitat”. These are the types of courses and training that we want to offer our members: Practical hands-on experience that leads to real world applications in our profession.

We want our courses and training to be affordable, to stand-out, and present challenges in terms of critical thinking and pushing the status quo of provincial standards.

The board of directors have met regularly this past year and held a full-day retreat to discuss APB business. We are a dedicated bunch and so I believe that we will continue to thrive through the dedication of our volunteers. It is my hope that you will continue supporting the APB and renew your membership for 2020. We have worked hard to balance our budget and

we anticipate expanding our team and bringing a new line of services and actions in the upcoming year. The APB is working to become a stronger voice on topics that are important to you as biology professionals. Renew your APB membership and let's continue to move forward on our mission.

Thank you,



Mark Thompson, MSc, MEd, RPBio, CPESC

President



#300 – 1095 McKenzie Ave.
Victoria, BC V8P 2L5
T: 250 640 8460
F: 250 483 3439
E: info@professionalbiology.com
E direct: president@professionalbiology.com