

Draft Minutes - General Meeting

Time/Date: 8:30 am – 12:00 pm, Tuesday, September 23, 2025

Location: [8067 E Saanich Road, Saanichton, BC, V8M 1K1](#)

Participants (* via video):

Forest Genetics Council of BC:

Annette van Niejenhuis, Bevin Wigmore, Bob Johnson*, Dan Gaudet, Dan Mazerolle, David Jackson*, Frank Varga*, Juergen Ehling, Lise van der Merwe, Leith McKenzie, Katherine Spencer, Keith Thomas, Kona Van Diest, Shannon Jonasson*.

Guests: Albert Nussbaum, Hayley Tumas*, Brian Barber, Kerry McGourlick* and Sally John.

Proceedings:

The meeting was held in person and via video at Western Forest Products' Saanich Forestry Centre in Saanichton. The agenda and its attachments were shared in advance.

Summary of motions:

Motion: The minutes of FGC's June 19, 2025, meeting are hereby approved.
Dan M/Kat. Carried.

Motion: SelectSeed may spend up to \$7,500 to complete a forest genetics poster.
Annette/Bevin. Carried.

Motion: FGC and SelectSeed adopt and pursue Option 4 in the briefing note "Support Options for the Forest Genetics Council of BC" dated September 16, 2025.
Annette/Kat. Carried.

Summary of action items:

Person(s)	Actions	Status
FGC committee	Prepare draft strategic plan for FGC review	Next Q or special meeting
Brian, Annette and Kat	Prepare a draft terms of reference for the provincial seed supply project ASAP.	ASAP
Brian	Solicit and record extension activities.	Quarterly
FGC members and others	Forward links to new publications to Brian to share in FGC newsletters.	As available

Keith, Annette, Kerry, and Brian	Prepare a funding and services agreement that clarifies the scope of FGC activities requiring support and an estimated annual budget, and a draft call for proposals that outlines the FGC secretariat's qualifications and duties for FGC review.	Oct. 31
Keith, Annette, Kerry, and Brian	Post a call for proposals for FGC secretariat services	Nov. 30
Brian	Identify suitable dates and send invitations for next meeting(s)	ASAP

1. Agenda

There being adequate notice served to members, and a quorum being present, Keith called meeting to order at 8:35 am, confirmed attendees and the agenda. Annette also provided a safety orientation for the Saanich Forestry Centre.

#	Time	Min.		Topic	Lead
1	8:30	5		Intros & agenda	Keith
2	8:35	5		Welcome new FGC members	Keith/Annette
3	8:40	5	A	Minutes and action items from June meeting	Brian
4	8:45	5		Safety updates	All
5	8:50	5	B	FGC and SelectSeed dashboards	Brian
6	8:55	20		Ministry updates	Keith et al
7	9:15	5		FGC strategic plan 2026-2030	Keith
8	9:20	5		Economic benefits of tree improvement	Kat
9	9:25	10		New seed planning dashboard	Brian
10	9:35	25	C	Provincial seed supply strategy	All
	10:00	20		Coffee break	
11	10:20	20	D	Landscape level genetic diversity project	Hayley Tumas
12	10:40	20	E	FGC Extension	Brian
13	11:00	20	F	FGC Support Options	Brian
14	11:20	10		CFGA Forest Genetics 2025	Brian
15	11:30	5		News and announcements	All
16	11:35	5		Next meetings	Brian
17	11:40	5		New business	
18	11:45	10		<i>In camera</i> session	Keith
19	12:00			Adjournment	

Motion: The agenda for this meeting as amended is hereby approved. Annette/Juergen. Carried.

2. FGC Membership

On July 14, the chief forester appointed the following industry reps to council for a three-year term:

Frank Varga, RPF, General Manager, Burns Lake Community Forest

David Jackson, RPF, Silviculture Forester, Kootenay Division, Interfor

Keith welcomed Frank and David, who introduced themselves to council. Welcome aboard!

3. Minutes and Actions from June 19, 2025, meetings.

Draft minutes of the meetings held on June 19, 2025, were included as attachments A1-3.

Action items from the June 19, 2025, FGC meeting included:

Person(s)	Actions	Status
Keith	Bring forward the nominations for two industry councillors to the chief forester for consideration and appointment.	Completed See item #2
Annette and Keith	Issue the TAC chairs letters of expectations in Fall 2025.	TBC
Brian	Share new seed planning dashboard and 2025 orchard cone crop forecasts in FGC newsletter by June 30.	Crop forecasts sent Aug 5. See item #9
Annette, Kat, Juergen, Lise and Brian	Complete the forest genetics cycle poster. – fall 2025	In progress See item #12
Brian	Enable editing of extension log posted in FGC Dropbox folder and share link with FGC and TAC members (via chairs) to record extension activities.	Completed see item 12
Keith and Kerry	Circulate options for on-going FGC support for discussion.	See item #14
Keith, Annette, Kat, Lise and Brian	Strategic plan committee to share draft plan.	See item #7
Brian	Send calendar invitations for FGC fall meeting on Tuesday am, Sept. 23 at WFP's Saanich Forestry Centre.	Completed

Motion: The minutes of FGC's June 19, 2025, meeting are hereby approved. Dan M/Kat. Carried.

Note: Minutes of the Society 's and SelectSeed's AGMs will be approved at next year's AGMs.

4. Safety

Kat reported the Ministry's Kalamalka and Bailey Rd. seed orchards underwent an internal Safe Certification audit and received a passing score of 92%. New measures to reduce risks associated with the spread of rodent viruses have subsequently been implemented.

WFP Saanich Forestry centre also underwent a WorkSafe BC audit. Brian reported a time-loss injury (ladder accident) occurred during cone harvest at PRT Armstrong. WorkSafeBC conducted an investigation and its outcomes will be conveyed when available.

5. FGC and SelectSeed Dashboards

The FGC and SelectSeed dashboards were included as attachment B. Updates for most FGC action items listed are included in today's agenda and were not reviewed in detail at this time.

Annette requested FGC reporting be added to FGC's quarterly dashboard. Brian said once the methodologies for determining the performance measures in FGC's strategic plan are confirmed by the Ministry (e.g. additional cubic meters of wood), a report can be prepared.

Brian also provided the following SelectSeed updates.

- Tolko's Pli 339 and the VSOC Quesnel Pli seed orchards were pruned by Rick Hansinger using the company's Kirgon pruner in August. Cones from the pruned sides and tops were subsequently picked on the ground. Some seed losses occurred at Tolko due to downed cones opening in the extreme heat.
- Crops were collected at PRT (Fdi 321 & 354, & Pli 338 & 339), Kettle Pli 237 & 238, and Tolko Pli 339. No crops were collected at Sorrento (Pli) nor in Tolko's Sx orchards. Cones are now being processed at the tree seed centre and VSOC.
- The following table includes estimates of SelectSeed's share of the 2025 crops:

Spp	2025 Crop Forecast - March				2025 Crop Estimates - Sept			
	cones (hl)	seed (kg)	est. seedlings (000s)	est. value (\$000s)	cones (hl)	seed (kg)	est. seedlings (000s)	est. value (\$000s)
Pli	630	130	20,438	\$ 1,284	324	71	11,120	\$ 698
Fdi	235	121	5,567	\$ 593	180	90	4,146	\$ 442
Sx	0	0	-	\$ -	0	0	-	\$ -
Total	865	251	26,006	\$ 1,877	504	161	15,265	\$ 1,140

The smaller crop will result in lower harvest costs and lower potential revenue.

- SelectSeed hired two seasonal staff at its Quesnel Pli seed orchards to assist with orchard establishment and maintenance. Planter boxes and mulch were applied to ramets in Pli comandra resistant orchard 417 for weed control. Pesticide and fuel sheds were erected. Construction of the cone shed was deferred to next fiscal. An exception permit to CRD's construction permit will be obtained in advance.

- Approximately 1200 ramets including seedlings will be planted in remaining vacant positions in Pli 417 in October, subject to Nick Ukrainetz confirming relatedness of seedlings provided. Additional rootstock and grafts are being grown at Landing Nursery to complete establishment of Pli 413 and Pli 417 next year.
- A geohazard assessment report of the Quesnel property was completed as a condition of the subdivision application (cost \$19k). MoTT subsequently requested clarification of several items in the report. A revised report is now being prepared at an additional cost. MoTT staff are currently on strike so review of the revised report, a subsequent survey, and the application approval may not occur until next spring.

6. Ministry updates

Keith and Lise provided an update to government staffing and budget restrictions. The fiscal constraints imposed are significant as government projects a +\$10B deficit this fiscal.

Budget allocations for fiscal 2025/26 were recently finalized. The forest genetics program was reduced from \$1,665K to \$1,319K, so funding for all breeding programs and external funding for GCTAC activities were significantly reduced.

.Bevin and Lise reported Mosaic has offered to pay a portion of measuring Jon Degner's Fdc realized gain trial (30 year) to help expedite orchard parent tree selections.

Albert stated that the forest genetics and forest inventory programs have fared better than most others. Approval to fill the vacant coastal cedar breeder position was also recently granted by the deputy to the premier's office.

Albert and Leith summarized the Ministry's recent organizational changes. Leith's Forest Investment and Reporting Branch was moved from the Office of the Chief Forester to a new Provincial Operations Division, along with BCTS. They also outlined the Minister's "Path to 45" (i.e. 45 million cubic meters harvest target) and potential impacts of the BCGEU/PEA strike on BC's reforestation programs.

7. FGC Strategic Plan 2026-30

Keith reported on status of the draft strategic plan. Further clarification of the proposed performance measures is required. Linkages to government initiatives and priorities, including the Path to 45, are also being incorporated.

The Ministry was asked when CBST v 2.0 will be released and if temperature projections under CSBT v. 1 had been observed (e.g. met or exceeded). Timing of the former is critical for planning and investments as changes to orchard deployment areas could result in some 'stranded assets' and seed supply gaps. Maintaining a supply of good quality seed was also deemed important for sustaining the provincial AAC, even if the latter will be reduced.

Keith stated CBST will undergo a thorough review and practical operational decisions will be made. No timelines, however, were offered.

Action: FGC committee to prepare draft strategic plan for FGC review at the next quarterly or special meeting.

8. Economic benefits of tree improvement

Kat reported a committee is preparing a white paper outlining the economic benefits of tree improvement in BC. Several Pacific Forestry Centre staff are involved in determining the methodology, which incorporates the costs of breeding and seed orchards, and benefits in additional wood and carbon sequestered. Preliminary results will be shared at the TAC meetings in the winter. Final report is due at the end of March 2026.

9. Seed planning dashboard

Brian reviewed the new dashboard, and some of its features including orchard contacts. <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/forsiteanalytics/viz/SeedNeedv25/Main>

The dashboard is undergoing final review and will be shared with seed users in October.

10. Provincial seed supply strategy

The above dashboard can soon be used to inform provincial seed supply strategy. The objectives of this CF endorsed project are 1) to compare current and forecast seed needs with current orchard capacity, and 2) to identify gaps: quick wins and longer-term solutions.

Brian suggested TAC committees review each species, and criteria be established to identify priorities and decision-making. He also identified several initiatives that may influence seed supply and demand in the short- and mid-term. These include reduced AACs, META analysis of the breeding programs, and release of BEC 13/14.

FGC recommended the scope of the project should be limited to current available data and practices (e.g. CBST v1).

Action: Brian, Annette and Kat to prepare a draft terms of reference for the provincial seed supply project ASAP.

11. Landscape level genetic diversity project

Hayley Tumas presented some preliminary findings from her post-doc project and subsequent work with the Ministry.

In brief, orchard seedlots were found to contain more genetic diversity than reported in SPAR (e.g. a higher effective population size (N_e) based on DNA analysis) due to external pollen contamination. Orchard seedlots also contain the same level of heterozygosity (+95% of population) but contain a significantly lower N_e compared to wild seedlots. Natural regeneration and pollen flow continue to maintain genetic diversity across the

landscape. These preliminary results remain subject to scientific peer-review, and further research will be conducted.

12. FGC Extension

Brian reviewed a draft diagram under construction. A quote was received from Fuse Consulting to complete the diagram and create some unique icons representing the various steps.

Motion: SelectSeed may spend up to \$7,500 to complete a forest genetics poster. Annette/Bevin. Carried.

Brian also reviewed the FGC extension activities log created and shared in June. See log posted in this [Dropbox folder](#). Few additions have subsequently been made. The question of adding publications was also raised. It was concluded quarterly reminders for the former and notice of the latter in FGC newsletters should suffice.

Members were also reminded of other extension needs and priorities included in the FGC extension map included in attachment E. These include engagement with FNs. Extension will remain a standing agenda item.

Action: Brian to solicit and record extension activities quarterly.

Action: FGC members and others to forward links to new publications to Brian to share in FGC newsletters.

13. FGC Support Options

Keith, Annette, Kerry and Brian met in early September to discuss FGC support in advance of Brian's planned retirement at the end of fiscal. Brian explained the options and recommendations included in a paper circulated as attachment F. The recommended option (#4) read:

Option 4: SelectSeed pays for FGC support.

In this option, SelectSeed would pay for FGC secretariat and support costs. An FGC committee, with support from SelectSeed's CEO and directors, would select a suitable consultant to serve as FGC's part-time secretariat. The contractor would be selected a few months prior to the CEO's retirement to facilitate cross-training. SelectSeed's 2025/26 business plan includes an \$8k budget for this purpose.

The FGC co-chairs would assign and oversee the secretariat's duties and confirm receipt of goods and services. SelectSeed would administer the secretariat's contract, reimburse approved project costs and provide administrative services (e.g. bookkeeping, insurance, and legal fees for the Society). An annual budget for FGC support should be determined in advance and be included in SelectSeed's annual business plan.

Perceptions of conflict of interest would be diminished as the secretariat is not an employee or representative of SelectSeed. A SelectSeed officer or director could be appointed as an ex officio FGC member to maintain communications with FGC, present and report out on SelectSeed's annual business plans, and help prepare FGC's annual budget.

Kerry confirmed the company can no longer support a full-time CEO with orchard contracts expiring and seed sale revenue declining. Keith also confirmed the Ministry cannot support an FGC secretariat, neither in-house nor via contract, due to current fiscal constraints.

Motion: FGC and SelectSeed adopt and pursue Option 4 in the briefing note "Support Options for the Forest Genetics Council of BC" dated September 16, 2025.
Annette/Kat. Carried.

Action: A committee consisting of Keith, Annette, Kerry, and Brian prepare a funding and services agreement that clarifies the scope of FGC activities requiring support and an estimated annual budget, and a draft call for proposals that outlines the FGC secretariat's qualifications (e.g. selection criteria) and duties to share with FGC by October 31, 2025.

Action: The committee posts a call for proposals for FGC secretariat services by November 30, 2025.

14. Forest Genetics 2025

Brian provided an overview of the Canadian Forest Genetics Association's biennial meeting Forest Genetics 2025, which was held in Ottawa, Aug 11-15. The conference included a seed and seedling workshop co-hosted by Dave Kolotelo. The proceedings will be posted on [CFGA's website](#) in the weeks ahead.

The next CFGA meeting will be held in Halifax in 2027. BC may host the Western Forest Genetics Association (WFGA) meeting the same year.

15. News and announcements

Dan G. attended the [International Seed Federation Tree and Shrub Working Group's](#) conference held in Dehra Dun, India, August 26-28. A request to review spruce seed germination test protocols will be sent to the International Seed Testing Association ([ISTA](#)). The next ISF working group meetings will be held in Spain in 2026 and Vernon in 2027.

Leith attended the Western Forestry Contractors Association business summit meeting in Kamloops on Sept. 17. Minister Parmar attended and outlined his Path to 45 agenda.

Concerns were raised at the WFGA meeting about the potential impact of the BCGEU and PEA strikes on seed processing, registration and sowing requests. Keith confirmed the Ministry has contingency plans in place to continue seed shipments to nurseries should tree seed centre staff go on strike.

16. Meetings Fall/Winter

- Sept 23 (pm) Charlie Cartwright, UVic Centre for Forest Biology seminar
- Sept 24-26 [Forest Nursery Association of BC](#), Sidney.
- Oct 6-8 [Southern Interior Silviculture Committee](#), Williams Lake.
- Oct 16-18 [Woodlots BC - 2025 AGM & Conference](#), Osoyoos. (Brian speaker).
- Oct 29 & Nov 26 [Northern Silviculture Committee](#). On-line webinars.
- Jan 14-15, 2026 ITAC extension and business meeting. On-line
- Jan 28-30 Western Forestry Contractors Association. Victoria.
- Feb. 4-6 Forest Professionals BC. Vancouver.
- June 2026 BC Seed Orchard Association. Quesnel and Prince George.
- June 2026 North America Forest Genetics Society. Quebec City.

Commented [AV1]: Was that Sept 25?

Action: Brian to identify suitable dates and send invitations for next meeting(s).

17. New business

No new business was identified during the meeting.

18. In camera session

No motion to move meeting in camera was made.

19. Adjournment

Annette was thanked for hosting the meeting. Participants were invited to tour WFPs seed orchards and nursery, and Mosaic's seed orchards after lunch.

Motion: the meeting is hereby adjourned at ~12:00. Annette/Kat. Carried.

The meeting will be followed by lunch and tours of WFP's Saanich Forestry Centre and [Mosaic's Seed Orchards](#) on Mt Newton X-Road. Further details will be provided.

Draft minutes by B. Barber, Oct 6, 2025.

Approved on January 19, 2026