



NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION

THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

17-19 November 2021¹

REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF ALTERNATES

Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:

**NAFC Secretariat
Forestry Division**
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PERIOD: September 2019 – July 2021

1. BUREAU OF ALTERNATES COMPOSITION

Chairperson	Country	Organization
Luciana Ludlow Paz	Mexico	CONAFOR
Members	Country	Organization
Val Mezainis	USA	US Forest Service
Jeffrey Biggs	Canada	NRCan
Peter Csoka	Italy	FAO

¹ Rescheduled from 13-15 September 2021

2. LIST OF ACTIVITIES COMPLETED DURING THE PAST 2 YEARS

Meetings	Location	Date
BOA Meeting - Conference Call	<i>Virtual</i>	<i>April 2020</i>
BOA Meeting - Conference Call	<i>Virtual</i>	<i>August 2020</i>
BOA Meeting - Conference Call	<i>Virtual</i>	<i>December 2020</i>

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report of the Bureau of Alternates (BOA) covers the period from October 2019 to September 2021. The BOA was chaired by CONAFOR's Head of the International Affairs and Finance Promotion Unit representing Mexico; from October 2019 to October 2020, by Taryn A. Sánchez Montesinos, and from November 2020 to September 2021, by Luciana Ludlow Paz.

2. The BOA met three times via conference call since the last NAFC meeting in September 2019 in Montana, USA, and worked together to advance the priorities of NAFC as set forth by the 30th Session. This period presented many challenges for the Commission and its working groups due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Specific areas of emphasis include:

- Discussions and mutual support with the various working groups in the face of the challenges caused by the pandemic which have greatly impacted the forest sector, and which have had various implications for the NAFC working groups. Lockdowns and travel restrictions have resulted in modifications and delays in the groups' activities.
- Participation on a conference call of NAFC's Commissioners with the objective of exchanging views related to the recovery of the forest sector from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Participation in a series of four webinars on a new area of collaboration for NAFC: combating illegal logging.
- During this period emphasis was given to Gender and Diversity. However, it was agreed that, rather than creating a new working group, gender equality would be mainstreamed in each of the working groups to secure that each could identify potential gender barriers and design specific activities to tackle them and secure equal participation.

II. WORKING GROUP GUIDANCE

4. The BOA continued to play a key role in supporting the NAFC working groups, providing guidance and direction. Specific support and guidance was provided as follows:

- Support for exploring a new potential collaboration regarding illegal logging;
- Review of plausible ways to implement gender equality strategies within the established working groups;

- Support in the recruitment process of new Mexican members for the Silviculture Working Group;
- Support and participation in the various meetings of the Urban Forest Program Working Group.
- Support for and facilitation of streamlined information sharing, between the working groups and the BOA, so that the information is received and uploaded into a Google Drive folder in a timely manner.

III. LIAISON

5. The BOA has continued to support Rick Scott as liaison to the working groups. Mr. Scott continues to communicate with each group and attend working group meetings to provide information and feedback. He updates and informs the BOA regarding working group questions or concerns.

IV. FUNDING REQUESTS

6. The BOA has continued to review funding requests of the working groups and provide funding for selected requests. During this period, the BOA considered the following requests:

- The Fire Management Working Group requested funding (USD10,000) for the development of workshops aimed at developing the North America wild land work fire science blueprint mostly for travel.
- Funding provided by FAO for the organization of a Gypsy Moth Prevention and Early Detection Knowledge Transfer Workshop, which had to be rescheduled, given the impossibility to carry out meetings in-person due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. During the 30th Session (5.10 Potential thematic areas for future working group activities), Commissioners requested that the BOA consider potential approaches to illegal logging and present a recommendation.

The significance of the impacts of illegal logging, whether viewed from trade, scientific or regulatory perspectives was well demonstrated by multiagency participation and engagement in the webinar series. Illegal logging continues to increase in volume and can be expected to grow in significance globally in the coming years. Given the emphasis on combatting deforestation and illegal logging globally, the capacity to track the origins of wood products and their legality, in coordination amongst North American trading partners, will become increasingly important. With this context in mind, the BOA recommends that the Commission consider the formal adoption of a Working Group on Illegal Logging.

V. CLOSING REMARKS

8. Since the 30th Session of NAFC, the BOA has worked to address the recommendations raised at the meeting within the confines of restrictions and changes caused by the pandemic. The BOA has continued to provide guidance and feedback to the working groups and to the Commissioners. The BOA looks forward to discussing and exchanging ideas about emerging issues and challenges at the 31st Session.

