



## **Notice to all RPFANS Members**

### **Regarding Changes to the CFE Requirements**

*The document was approved at the AGM on March 21, 2013 (wording made consistent 2014)*

The following is a summary of proposed changes to the Continuing Forestry Education Program requirements which are proposed to be effective retroactive to October 1, 2012:

- The first three-year period to be effected by the recent changes shall be from October 1, 2012 until September 30, 2015
- At the time of membership renewal for 2014, each member shall have acquired a minimum of 50 credits; 20 of which shall be in Category 1; Structured Learning.
- In 2014 and every year after, a minimum number of credit hours within any given year is not required.
- By September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the first 3-year period will require each member to have accumulated enough credits to satisfy the minimum requirement of 150 hours (60 Category 1; Structured Learning).
- Every year after 2015, members shall satisfy the minimum CFE requirement annually and shall submit annually by using the current year as well as the previous 2 years to support minimum requirements.
- Annual submissions shall not require supporting documentation. However, members can be audited for such upon receiving notice from the Registrar.
- A Special Provision has been created that requires elected RPF and CIF Council members, the Registrar, the Treasurer, the CFEC Chairperson, and the Examiner to meet the structured learning requirements only.
- The CFE Credit Reporting Form will be available online ([www.RPFANS.ca](http://www.RPFANS.ca))



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## **CONTINUING FORESTRY EDUCATION**

### **PREFACE**

In 2003, a Continuing Forestry Education accreditation program was adopted for use by the Registered Professional Foresters Association of Nova Scotia (RPFANS) as a mandatory aspect of membership. The program is, in most respects, aligned with a program developed in 1994, by both the Canadian Federation of Professional Foresters and the Canadian Institute of Forestry. It is the intention of the RPFANS to use the CFE Program to ensure its members are maintaining the intellect required for professional responsibility and to remain aware of current government policy and regulation. There have been two previous revisions in 2006 and 2008 affecting; Standardization of the Reporting Timelines and Credit Hour Rules, respectively. This version of the program was approved at the AGM in 2013.

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## **1. GENERAL**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the CFE Program is to ensure all members remain informed and current with respect to the practice of forestry in Nova Scotia. Members are held individually responsible for understanding the continual learning that is necessary to maintain competency in their professional practice. Members are also expected to take the necessary steps for acquiring and maintaining personal education plans.

### **1.2 Provision**

The Executive Director will ensure the information on the Continuing Education program is made available to all members of the Association in a timely and regular fashion.

### **1.3 Mandatory Requirement**

Every member, unless exempt (By-Laws, Appendix C) of the RPFANS, is required to fulfill the continuing education requirements as set out in By-law 7.03

### **1.4 Professionalism and Ethics**

Members shall maintain competency to all established standards affecting the member's professional practice, otherwise practice in that area is not condoned by the RPFANS (Code of Ethics).

Members who fail to maintain competency to the standards affecting the member's professional practice, or those that are reasonably necessary to conduct work in a specific area of practice, shall not to practice in that area (Code of Ethics).

Where competency standards have been already approved by a recognized or governing agency for a specific area of practice (e.g. scaling, auditing, forest ecosystem classification, forest management planning), the member engaged in such practice must ensure they are knowledgeable of the applicable standards.

Where competency standards have not been established, the member shall be familiar with the specific area of practice to the extent that the member is adequately aware of:

- a) The competencies required to work successfully in that area of practice

b) The degree to which their own competencies meet all expected requirements.

### **1.5 Continuing Forestry Education Committee (CFEC)**

The CFEC is comprised of two representatives; Chairperson and Assistant to the Chairperson. Both representatives shall be members of Registered Professional Foresters Association of Nova Scotia. The Chairperson is appointed by Council and the Assistant to the Chairperson is appointed by the Chairperson.

The function of the CFEC is to verify member compliance to the program, which includes the validation of all CFE declarations submitted, The Chairperson is also responsible for: 1. Development of appropriate procedures and mechanisms for monitoring member credits, 2. Auditing member compliance and 3. For making recommendations to the RPFANS Council regarding required changes to the program.

## **2.0 CONTINUING EDUCATION COMPLIANCE**

### **2.1 Investment of Time**

Members, unless exempt by the By-Laws, must accumulate a minimum of 150 credit hours over a rolling period not longer than 3 years. There is neither a minimum nor a maximum education requirement on an annual basis, only that the education requirement is fulfilled for a 3-year period. A minimum of sixty (60) credit hours in Structured Learning is required as part of the 150 credit hours submitted.

### **2.2 Credit Hour System**

A credit-based system shall be used to demonstrate compliance to CFE requirements. One credit-hour is equal to one hour, however, hours of learning may be worth more than one credit-hour and are allocated based upon the type of learning; Category 1, Structured Learning @3:1; vs Category 2, Non-Structured Learning @ 1:1. Credits not hours are used to evaluate the hours of learning submitted for compliance to the CFE Program.

## **2.3 Credit Allocations**

2.3.1 Learning - To encourage professional and personal development of our members, the Association recognizes a broad spectrum of learning experiences that qualify as continuing education for the purposes of maintaining competency in our profession.

2.3.1a) Category 1, Structured Learning - Each hour of Structured Learning time is valued as 3 credit-hours (3:1). Organized field trips workshops, courses, conferences, technical sessions and webinars/seminars are all potential examples of structured learning. Meal and break times are not admissible and shall be excluded from any submission. Structured learning often involves learning within a classroom setting. Therefore, structured learning is considered to be of higher value to the member because the member may benefit from the organized structure and the networking potential with other participants. Study in forestry, forest management and technology, particularly in relationship to the environment and society (Appendix 1) is automatically accepted as either Structured or Non-Structured Learning.

2.3.1b) Category 2, Non-Structured Learning - Each hour of Non-Structured Learning is valued at 1 credit-hour (1:1). Personal reading of technical journals, scientific papers, books, newspaper articles and viewing videos are all potential examples of Non-structured Learning. Study in Non-forestry subject matter (Appendix 1) may not satisfy Structured nor satisfy Non-Structured Learning depending on the value of the study for maintaining professionalism. When claiming non-forestry related learning the member must justify in writing how the activity is directly related to their professional development and area of practice.

2.3.2 Jurisprudence Exam - Writing the RPFANS jurisprudence exam is eligible for a one-time claim of fifteen (15) credits of Non-Structured learning.

2.3.3 Business Meetings - Only RPFANS and CIF (NS Section) AGM business meetings are eligible meetings for credit hours as Non-Structured learning. Credit hours are based on the length of the meeting @ 1:1.

2.3.4 Participation - An annual credit of 5 Non-Structured credit hours is permissible for serving on the Executive or Board of Directors of active related organizations; i.e. marketing boards, conservation organizations or other professional organizations may be eligible.

2.3.5 Special Provision - Notwithstanding other requirements in this program, in consideration of the time and effort required, elected RPF and CIF Council members, the Registrar, the Treasurer, the Executive Director, the CFEC Chairperson, and the Examiner will be credited with the annual requirement in non-structured learning during the years in which they are serving.

## **2.4 Record Keeping**

Members are required to maintain a record of CFE activity (Appendix 2) on an annual basis so that credits can be submitted and verified.

Members are expected to retain all pertinent documentation (agendas, course certificates, etc.) relating to attendance at courses, meetings, workshops, and field days. Members attending events that produce no documentation should have an Instructor Declaration (Appendix 3) completed by the instructor.

Members are required to keep these records for a minimum of five years for auditing purposes.

Failure to maintain appropriate records under this component may be considered an act of professional misconduct.

## **3.0 CREDIT ASSESSMENT**

Members are always expected to assess credit-hours using the procedure below.

Upon request, an organization may request the CFE credit rating in advance of learning from either the Executive Director or the CFEC Chairperson.

### **3.1 Procedure for Credit Assessment by Member**

Members shall take the following steps for assessing learning activities for CFE credits when members attend CFE activities that have no prior assessment by the RPFANS:

- a) Obtain a copy of the program outline or agenda

- b) Determine which portions of the program meet one or more of the subject areas and criteria
- c) Determine the number of hours spent in structured learning time (i.e. excluding breaks, meals, and non-qualifying activities)
- d) Multiply the number of hours x 3 credits
- e) Retain all documentation used to satisfy a) through d).

### **3.2 Procedure for Credit Assessment by the CFE Chair or Executive Director**

Credit assessment by either the CFE Chair or Executive Director requires that the organizer submit their program, by e-mail if possible, for credit assessment prior to the event. No organizer has the authority to unilaterally assign CFE credits to their events and should always apply to the RPFANS if pre-assessment is desired. Requests shall include a copy of the original program or agenda.

The Executive Director may consult with the CFE Committee in determining CFE credits. All submissions shall allow at least 14 days for credit assessment.

## **4. ANNUAL REPORTING**

### **4.1 Periodicity and Content**

Members will report to the RPFANS Registrar on CFE activities (Appendix 4) by October 15<sup>th</sup> each year. Activities listings are not required in annual reports.

An annual report shall be submitted in respect of the requirement to fulfill 150 credit hours over a 3-year rolling period. As such, the annual report shall include the credits being claimed for the current year as well as those being claimed for the previous 2 year period; fulfilling a rolling 3-year period annually.

Members not meeting annual learning requirements are required to submit an annual report. Although not required with annual reports, detailed documentation of all CFE activities shall be retained, as this documentation may be required for validation, audit and complaint investigation.

### **4.2 Allowable Exception and Recourse**

Members not meeting the compliance requirement for 150 credit hours over a rolling 3-year period shall submit, in addition to their annual report, a proposal requesting Council

approval of CFE compliance based on expected learning beyond the current reporting period. Such a proposal must be sufficiently detailed, that it will provide Council with a clear understanding of the CFE activities that the member is committing to undertake in the upcoming year, and that such activities will be sufficient to complete the reported deficiency. If approved, the member may have their membership renewed for the year in question without reprisal. If such a proposal is not submitted with a non-compliant annual report, the member shall face disciplinary action.

Failure to submit an annual report, and proposal if required, will result in RPFANS placing membership renewal in abeyance.

## **5. ANNUAL AUDITING PROCEDURE**

Although CFE requirements are met and reported annually, submission of the documentation for such compliance is not required, unless requested by the CFEC by way of an audit. As such, each year a minimum of 10% of the eligible membership will be randomly selected for a detailed CFE audit of the most recent 3-year period. In the case of an audit, selected members shall provide the documents used to support the years being audited in their Credit Report (Appendix 1). Selected members shall provide supporting documentation within 14 days of the end of a report period or 14 days after being notified of an audit; whichever is later.

RPFANS reserves the right to conduct audits at any time.

Members not meeting the audit requirements shall be reported to Council as not meeting minimum CFE requirements.

At the Council's discretion, members may be provided the opportunity to comply without consequence; however, an ensuing audit shall verify compliance. All members are subject to random audit selection each year, regardless of their audit history.

## **6. NON COMPLIANCE PROCEDURE AND CONSEQUENCE**

### **6.1 Criteria for Suspension of Certificate of Registration**

Members who fail to meet the minimum CFE requirements are subject to suspension. A member has failed to meet CFE requirements when:

- a) the member has failed to provide sufficient information on the Activity Report that reasonably satisfies the Registrar that the member has fulfilled the CFE requirements;
- b) the member has failed to provide sufficient information in response to specific inquiries from the Association to reasonably satisfy the Registrar that the member has fulfilled the CFE requirements or
- c) the member has provided false information to the Registrar about the member's fulfillment of the continuing education requirements.

## **6.2 Suspension Procedure**

Firstly, the RPFANS Registrar shall mail, or otherwise provide the member, written notice of apparent non-compliance with CFE requirements. As such, the member is put “on notice” causing the automatic suspension of membership. A Member On Notice is required to complete and submit an Audit Form (Appendix 4) to the Registrar, along with supporting documentation that satisfies the CFE requirement within 60 days of notification.

Secondly, the member is reported to the Council by the Registrar as a Member On Notice.

In the event that a member has not satisfied CFE minimum requirements within 60 days of being notified by the Registrar, the Registrar shall, by registered letter, instruct the member to contact the Registrar immediately to:

- a) Provide reasonable explanation for their failure to meet the CFE requirements, and
- b) Provide specific actions to be taken to meet the CFE requirements within a time period acceptable to the Registrar.

## **7. RE-INSTATEMENT, APPEAL, CRITERIA FOR SUSPENSION**

### **7.1 Criteria for Reinstatement**

A member is only reinstated when the Registrar is satisfied that member's CFE requirements have been met and given that there are no outstanding dues or other unmet obligations to the RPFANS.

## **7.2 Procedure for Appeal**

A member may, through written request, directly to the President of the RPFANS Council to conduct a review of the Registrar's decision for membership suspension. the grounds for such a review and any supporting documentary information must be provided to support the request. The suspension shall not start or be halted if it has already started, upon receipt of the request and shall remain halted until a final decision is rendered by the RPFANS Council.

The RPFANS Council shall evaluate the request for a review and any supporting information from the member as well as any documentary information provided by the Registrar. The RPFANS Council shall confirm the suspension, set aside the suspension, or set terms, conditions and limitations that lift the suspension which, if not met in accordance with such conditions, will result in the automatic commencement of suspension.

# **Appendix 1**

## **Category 1; Structured Learning**

### **(Forestry and Non-Forestry)**

#### **Forestry Subject Area**

This subject area focuses on maintaining, updating and improving members' forestry awareness and knowledge. The purpose is to ensure that all members remain informed regarding, and current on, forestry practices and policies with respect to the development, management, conservation and sustainability of forests and forest related resources.

The forestry subject area includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Forestry legislation and policy in Nova Scotia, Canada, and internationally
- Classification, inventory, and mapping of forests
- Silviculture
- Wood products manufacturing and marketing
- Wildlife management
- Managing for and marketing of non-timber forest products
- Watershed management
- Landscape ecology
- Forest road and bridge construction, and culvert installation
- Forest protection
- Forest health and genetics
- Socio-economic issues related to the forest industry
- Alternative forest uses and values

The objective of the course/training may be a general overview, or to provide a specific level of awareness or knowledge. The course/training may include linkages to other subject areas and/or discuss impacts, or influences, on other aspects of forestry; or the social aspects thereof.

### **Non-Forestry Subject Area**

This category will capture professional development that, while not apparently directly related to forestry topics, **is essential knowledge** to maintain and improve management skills and techniques that members require to effectively carry out their responsibilities. All courses that are a regular, and recurring, part of employment (e.g. first aid refresher, WHMIS refresher, safe driving renewal, etc.) are no longer eligible for CFE claims.

The Non-Forestry subject area includes but is not limited to:

- Financial management, auditing, and budgeting
- Health and safety training
- Personnel management
- Leadership development training
- Public speaking
- Computer skills
- Business management

The objective of the course/training may a general overview, or to provide a specific level of awareness.

## Appendix 2

### Annual Continuing Forestry Education Program Personal Activity Record/Audit Form

<b>Annual Continuing Forestry Education Program Personal Activity Record/Audit Form October 1, 20__ to September 30, 20__</b>						
<b>Member Name</b> _____						
Dates Attended	Location	Name of Course/Activity	Instructors	Credit Hours (by Category)		CFEC Approval
				1	2	Initials
<b>Total Credit Hours (round down to nearest third of an hour)</b>						

This form is to be completed annually by the member and retained in their file, should an audit be requested / required.

## Appendix 3

### Continuing Forestry Education Instructor Declaration

#### *Continuing Forestry Education Instructor Declaration*

The undersigned participant is credited \_\_\_\_\_ classroom hours and \_\_\_\_\_ field hours, having completed structured learning in the topic of:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(print course name / subject)*

*Structured learning includes technical courses, study by correspondence, seminars, short courses, and workshops that meet the following five criteria: organized program of learning; primarily related to the career and practice of forestry; conducted by suitable instructors; suitable educational setting; and, applicable to forestry practitioners in general. Other activities not specifically related to forestry which benefit an individual in their profession or position can be included, such as computer science, personnel management, public speaking, and others.*

Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date(s) of Instruction

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Instructor / Facilitator

## Appendix 4

### Annual CFE Credit Report – Individual Members

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

RPFANS Registration Number: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Continuing Forestry Educations Credits Earned:

	Structured	Non-Structured
October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013:	_____	_____
October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014:	_____	_____
October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015:	_____	_____
Total earned in current three-year period:	_____	_____

\*Note that typing of member's name above the signature line will be sufficient for signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Submit completed form **annually** by October 15 to RPFANS Registrar.

Email: [contact@rpfans.ca](mailto:contact@rpfans.ca)

Regular Mail: PO Box 1031, Truro, NS, B2N 5G9