

GET THE DIRT

Issue 2 // October 2025

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Event in October 2026*

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THE
FALL ISSUE



BC INSTITUTE OF
AGROLOGISTS
Cultivating Natural Resource Professionals

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ABOUT US

The BC Institute of Agrologists regulates
the profession of agrology in British
Columbia to protect the public by ensuring
safe, competent, and ethical practice.

*BCIA acknowledges that our office is located on the lands of the Lekwungen
(Songhees) and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) ancestors and families.*



FEATURE

Land Acknowledgements: Performative or Powerful?

*By Janis Brooks, Guest Contributor
Owner and Principal Consultant, Salishan Solutions Inc.*

In the field of agrology, we learn that what happens above ground is only part of the story.

The true health of the soil, the ecosystem, and the harvest depends on what is happening beneath the surface. The same is true in reconciliation, where the real work begins below the surface in reflection, relationship, and repair.

Across Canada, more organizations and professionals are including land acknowledgements in meetings, conferences, and events. These statements recognize the First Nations,

Inuit, and Métis Peoples whose territories we live and work on. For many, this practice comes from a place of respect and good intent. Yet, like soil left untilled, the practice can become compacted over time. The words may be there, but they sit on the surface without creating room for growth.

As agrologists, you already understand relationship to land. Your work is literally grounded in it. You study how systems interact, how balance is restored, and how care over time leads to regeneration. A meaningful land acknowledgement operates in that same spirit. It is not a performance, but a practice of relationship. It asks us to consider not just where we stand, but how we show up.

Long before colonization, many Indigenous Nations had their own protocols for honouring the land and its original caretakers. These were practices of gratitude, respect, and reciprocity that affirmed the relationship between people, place, and community. Those traditions remind us that the land is not a resource to manage, but a relative to be in relationship with.

When we read a scripted land acknowledgement without reflection or follow-through, the intent may be good, but the impact remains shallow. It is like testing soil pH without ever planting. We have measured, but not tended. Acknowledgement without action risks centering comfort instead of accountability.

So how do we move from performative to powerful? Through Critical Self-Location, the practice of understanding who we are in relation to the land and how history, privilege, and power shape that relationship. Before writing or offering a land acknowledgement, pause to reflect:



What does it mean to dedicate my career to the land while working on Indigenous territories?



How have Western systems of science shaped how I understand, or overlook, Indigenous knowledge?



What responsibilities come with the benefits I have received from this place?

That reflection can transform a statement into something meaningful, personal, and alive. And when we speak from relationship instead of routine? Our words begin to carry weight. Rather than reciting geography, consider sharing what the connection means to you, what you are learning, noticing, or committing to.

You might say something like, *"I am still learning about the lands I work on and the Nations who have cared for them since time immemorial, and I recognize my responsibility to deepen that relationship."* Or, *"This place continues to teach me about respect, reciprocity, and the kind of stewardship that extends beyond my professional role."*

Language that names learning, responsibility, and gratitude invites honesty instead of performance. It reminds us that reconciliation is not about perfect words. It is about how we show up once the words are spoken.

When those words are paired with tangible steps such as learning about the Nations connected to your region, building relationships with Indigenous communities, or weaving Indigenous knowledge systems into your professional practice, land acknowledgements become more than a moment of ceremony. They become a living practice of relationship, reciprocity, and respect.

Because in agrology, as in reconciliation, depth determines growth. And the more willing we are to get below the surface, the more life, learning, and connection we will find there.



ARTICLE

Where Our Practices Meet

Professional Intersections in B.C.

Practice intersections among natural resource professionals in B.C. are a lot like the Fraser River Basin.

As the Fraser links the Fraser-Fort George region to the Lower Mainland, our work spans the province—touching private, municipal, Crown, and First Nations reserve lands, as well as the transportation corridors that connect communities. Just as water, land, and air shape one another, agrologists, biologists, engineers, geoscientists, and foresters routinely share knowledge and collaborate as the practice environment evolves. At the same time, each professional

practices only within areas that match their education, experience, and abilities. Just like when two rivers converge, the waters can become turbulent and murky, so too can defining scope and the appropriate professional when practice areas meet.

We know that the public and the environment is best served when professionals work together, valuing each other's expertise, knowledge and perspectives. There are better outcomes when effective and appropriate collaboration happens, particularly when practices are closely aligned or even intersect. Our regulatory philosophy at BCIA is to ensure that policies, structures and supports are in place to ensure the right professional is doing the right work at the right time in the public interest.

Under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA), each regulatory body has defined a regulated practice that broadly sets out the scope of practice. The regulations themselves also reflect that real work does not fall into tidy boxes; intersections are expected. For example:

- **Agrologists Regulation** – “Practice of agrology” includes advice or services based on agricultural or natural sciences or resource economics that relate to:
 - a. cultivation, production, improvement, processing, marketing, or management of aquatic or terrestrial plants or animals;
 - b. classification, management, use, conservation, protection, or enhancement of ecosystems that affect—or have potential to sustain—such cultivation or production;
 - c. restoration, reclamation, or remediation of aquatic, terrestrial, or atmospheric ecosystems.
- **Forest Professionals Regulation** – “Practice of professional forestry” includes advice or services related to trees, forests, forest lands, forest resources, forest ecosystems, or forest transportation systems.
- **Engineers and Geoscientists Regulation** – Engineering disciplines span a wide range, including agricultural, environmental, food, forest, geomatics, and many more.

Across these professions, registrants are expected to work only where they are competent, and to exercise integrity, objectivity, and professional judgment at all times.

Where overlaps become complex (examples)

- **Multispectral crop imaging** (engineers, agrologists)
- **Terrestrial ecosystem mapping** (engineers, biologists, foresters, agrologists)
- **Genomic testing for pathogens** (biologists, agrologists)
- **Parkland / urban forest / silvopasture management** (foresters, agrologists)

Registrants who find themselves at a tricky practice intersection are encouraged to pause and frame the work through a public-interest lens: clarify the outcomes and key risks, identify which parts are within their competence and scope versus those that require different expertise. Best practice is to engage with colleagues or mentors to work through the intersection. As the work progresses, it is vital to retain proper documentation outlining the reasoning, boundaries, and any referrals or co-reviews. Registrants can also contact BCIA for practice and regulatory insight.

These intersections are a frequent topic among PGA regulators. What we hear consistently is that practitioner insight is essential: nuanced descriptions of real projects help clarify where one profession leads, where another contributes, and how shared work products are best delivered to the public. BCIA's role is to ensure that registrants are practicing competently and ethically within their area of practice and engaging in professional collaboration. BCIA works collaboratively with other regulators to establish clarity on regulatory structure, ensuring tools are in place to support both registrants and the public to navigate practice intersections.

As these discussions continue, a range of communication tools is in development and refinement that include plain-language guidance, decision aids, and examples that reflect real-world scenarios. Like the Fraser, our shared path **ebbs and flows**: informed by established channels, shaped by new information, and moved forward by professionals who respect each other's expertise while staying within their own scope of practice.

A group of people, mostly seen from behind, are standing on a grassy hill. They are looking out over a body of water and distant mountains under a clear sky. A red vehicle is partially visible on the right side of the frame.

Professional Development: Beyond the Checkbox

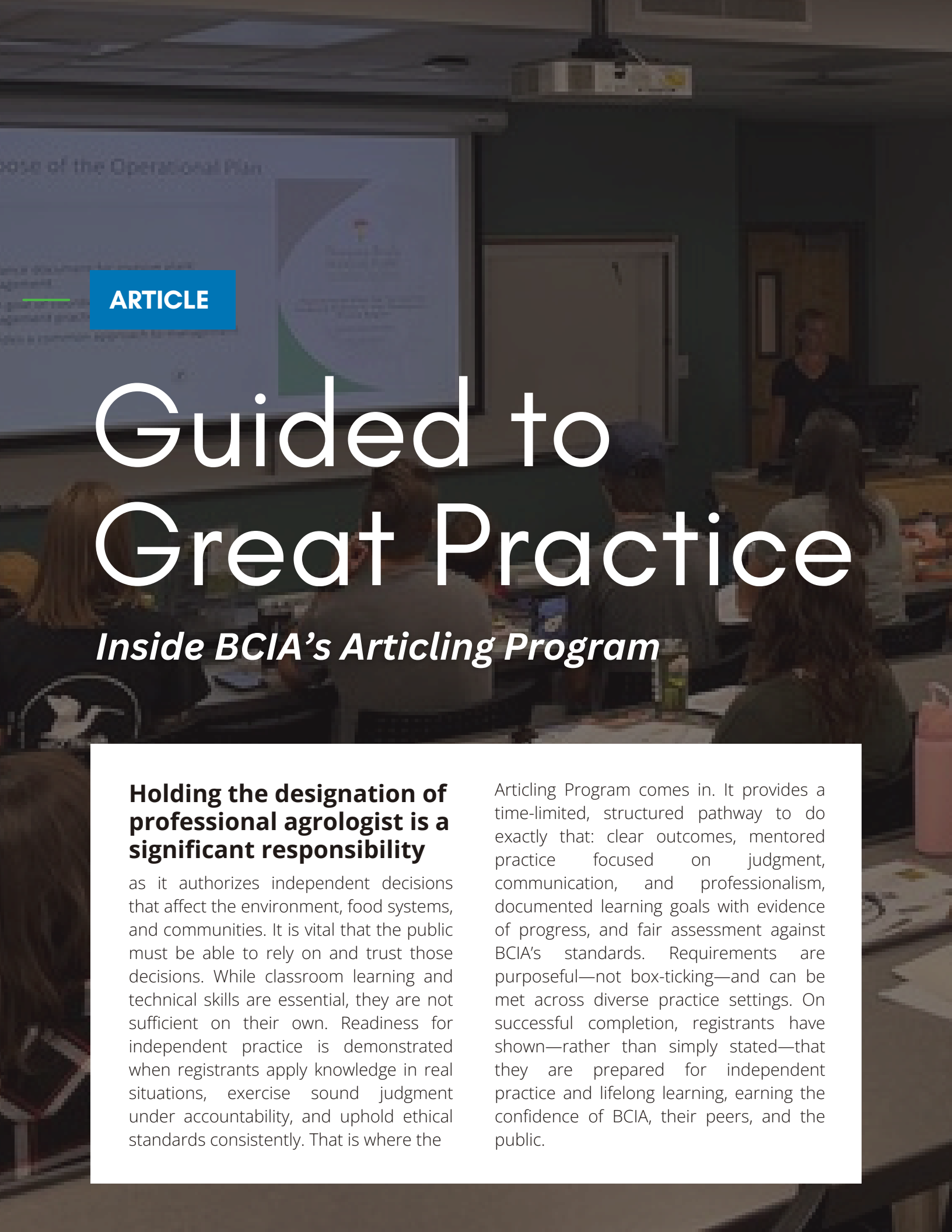
Professional development is both a regulatory obligation and a professional promise. As registrants under the *Professional Governance Act*, there is great trust placed in you to always act in an ethical and competent manner; maintaining competence through purposeful, evidence-based learning is one way you honour that trust.

Professional development (PD) is more than just earning credits or meeting requirements; it's a reflective practice. It's about growth and becoming the kind of professional who thrives in a changing world. It asks you to set clear learning goals, engage with new science and diverse perspectives, including Indigenous knowledge, apply what you learn to real work, and share insights with colleagues.

At BCIA, the philosophy of PD is one that drives registrants to continually stretch themselves, both personally and professionally. It's the spark that keeps the profession vibrant and evolving. PD should challenge you to sharpen your skills, build new ones, and carry yourself with the highest standard of professionalism.

The world of agrology doesn't stand still. New science, groundbreaking research, emerging technologies, and shifting environmental challenges mean that what was known yesterday may not be enough for tomorrow. PD ensures that you stay adaptable and innovative, ready to respond to complex issues that impact not just your own practice, but also the communities and landscapes you serve. Sure, your area of practice is where you sharpen your technical edge, but the real magic happens when you balance that with learning in professionalism such as ethics and indigenous education which will expand the way you see your role, your impact, how you interact with others and your responsibility.

When you invest in learning, you're not just enhancing your own career, you're strengthening the very foundation of the profession. Just as you evolve, BCIA is evolving too, updating programs that reflect the realities of our profession today. PD shouldn't feel like a chore; it should inspire, challenge, and prepare you for the future. So, here's the challenge, don't just tick the box. Choose PD that stretches you. Seek out sessions that ask hard questions, open new doors, and deepen your practice. Because at the end of the day, that's what being a professional is all about.



ARTICLE

Guided to Great Practice

Inside BCIA's Articling Program

Holding the designation of professional agrologist is a significant responsibility

as it authorizes independent decisions that affect the environment, food systems, and communities. It is vital that the public must be able to rely on and trust those decisions. While classroom learning and technical skills are essential, they are not sufficient on their own. Readiness for independent practice is demonstrated when registrants apply knowledge in real situations, exercise sound judgment under accountability, and uphold ethical standards consistently. That is where the

Articling Program comes in. It provides a time-limited, structured pathway to do exactly that: clear outcomes, mentored practice focused on judgment, communication, and professionalism, documented learning goals with evidence of progress, and fair assessment against BCIA's standards. Requirements are purposeful—not box-ticking—and can be met across diverse practice settings. On successful completion, registrants have shown—rather than simply stated—that they are prepared for independent practice and lifelong learning, earning the confidence of BCIA, their peers, and the public.

The Articling Program is designed to support the transition of new registrants into the agrology profession by fostering a strong foundation in professional practice, ethics, and engagement within the regulatory framework. Key objectives include:

- 01 *Introducing new registrants to the British Columbia Institute of Agrologists (BCIA) and its role as the provincial regulatory body.*
- 02 *Promoting an understanding of the responsibilities, ethical obligations, and standards of conduct expected of an agrologist.*
- 03 *Encouraging active participation at the district, branch, and provincial levels to support professional growth and community engagement.*
- 04 *Facilitating networking and mentorship opportunities by connecting new registrants with experienced professionals and peers.*
- 05 *Providing structured professional development opportunities to enhance the competencies and readiness of registrants for full professional status.*

Helpful Tips and Suggestions for a Successful Articling Experience:

- **Stay Organized:** Keep track of key deadlines, meeting dates, and required activities in your calendar to avoid last-minute stress.
- **Update Your Profile Regularly:** Enter activities and progress into the Articling Program section of your BCIA account as they occur—don't wait until the end.
- **Connect Early with Your Mentor:** Establish a meeting schedule early in the process. Regular check-ins help keep you on track and allow for meaningful mentorship.
- **Engage in Your Community:** Attend BCIA and branch events. These are great opportunities for networking, learning, and demonstrating professional engagement.

- **Ask Questions:** Don't hesitate to reach out to your mentor, branch Articling Coordinator, or BCIA staff if you're unsure about any part of the process.
- **Keep Professional Development in Focus:** Seek out workshops, webinars, and learning opportunities that align with your agrology interests and competencies.
- **Document Everything:** Keep a personal log of meetings, events, and learning activities. This will make final reporting easier and more accurate.
- **Start Your End-of-Program Requirements Early (within 1 month of the earliest date):** Review the End of Program document requirements in advance so you're prepared to submit them promptly upon completion.
- **Points to Note:**
 - An extension fee of \$60.00 will be added to the articling registrant's renewal fee—bringing it in line with the full status annual fee—if the articling period exceeds three (3) years.
 - Articling registrants must have full-time employment in agrology for the equivalent of their articling term, or an equivalent of full-time work at the end of the program. A minimum of 30 hours per week is considered full time.

The BCIA staff are readily available to support you and your success throughout your journey as an articling registrant in the Articling Program! Carol Lebreux, Registration and Administrative Assistant, is pleased to assist with any specific questions or concerns you may have at admin@bcia.com.

Key Resources

- [Articling Checklist](#) - to track progress
- [Mentoring Directory](#) - to secure a mentor, if required
- [Mentoring Agreement](#) - to confirm the mentor
- [Mentor/Mentee Talking Points](#) - to facilitate discussions
- [Articling Journal](#) - a detailed overview of the Articling Program
- [FAQs for articling registrants](#) - to answer those common questions



2026 FEE NOTICE

Advancing Strategic Priorities and Financial Stability

A 3% adjustment to deliver BCIA's strategic plan and safeguard long-term stability under the PGA.

The Board has approved an approx. 3% adjustment to registrant fees for the 2026 fiscal year. This modest change supports BCIA's statutory duty under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA) to protect the public through reliable, proportionate regulation and enables steady progress on our strategic plan. It also reinforces BCIA's financial resilience in a climate where several professional regulators have faced financial risk resulting in fee increases ranging from 10% to 40%.¹ Our objective is straightforward: maintain reliable, high-quality regulation today while ensuring the organization remains strong and sustainable for the long term.

Why this adjustment now

The Board considered a number of fee scenarios, prior year fee increases, economic realities and peer scans. Following careful consideration the Board determined a proportionate increase is necessary to:

- sustain and improve core regulatory capacity amid persistent cost pressures;
- fund priority initiatives in the strategic plan (advancing Truth & Reconciliation, enhancing regulatory processes, ensuring secure & stable IT infrastructure, etc); and
- uphold prudent reserves that reduce the risk of structural deficits and being prepared for large, one-time costs such as a costly discipline hearing

How this supports the strategic plan

Annual fees are the engine for measured, values-based progress across BCIA's priorities:

- **Operational stability & regulatory excellence:** complaints and investigations, practice reviews, standards and guidance.
- **Indigenous reconciliation & capacity building:** respectful engagement, training, and concrete actions aligned with our values.
- **Continuing competency:** evidence-based learning expectations and supports that strengthen competent, ethical practice.
- **Digital service & turnaround times:** secure platforms, registrant tools, and streamlined processes.
- **Partners & public engagement:** clear information for the public and effective collaboration with institutions, industry, and government.

Stewardship, risk management & solvency

BCIA continues to emphasize value for money and financial stability through:

- strategic and targeted cost controls;
- process improvements and digitization;
- reserve policies designed to weather volatility and avoid insolvency risk;
- transparent reporting to the Board and registrants.

What will not change: our commitment to **fair, timely, and consistent** decisions; transparent processes; and respectful service.

What will improve: incremental upgrades to the registrant portal/forms, clearer guidance materials, and continued attention to turnaround times in high-volume areas.

Closing

Thank you for your continued commitment to competent, ethical practice in the public interest. This measured adjustment helps BCIA deliver on its strategic plan and maintain the financial stability required for dependable regulation—now and in the years ahead.

At-a-Glance: 2026 Fees

Current annual PAG & TAg renewal fee: \$700

New annual PAG & TAg renewal fee (2026): \$720

[For a full listing of fees click here.](#)

Renewal window: mid-November 2025 to January 15, 2026

Receipts/tax info: Available in the portal; seek independent tax advice as needed.

Fee Increase FAQ: get your questions answered [here](#)

¹ College of Veterinarians of BC approved a 38% fee increase. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bc-veterinarians-insolvency-possible-2026-1.7615147>

College of Health and Care Professionals of BC: <https://chcpbc.org/2025/02/13/questions-and-answers-about-chcpbc-fees/>

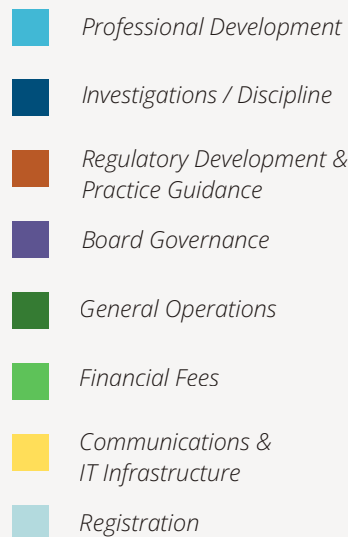
College of Complimentary Care Professionals of BC: <https://cchpbc.ca/cchpbc-announcements/the-college-of-complementary-health-professionals-is-updating-its-fee-structure-in-the-2025-2026-fiscal-year/>

Where Does a Registration Dollar Go?

This chart shows how a registrant dollar is allocated across BCIA's core regulatory functions and enabling services, based on the current budget. Percentages are estimates and may vary year to year.

- **Staffing:** Allocated across functions in proportion to where team members spend their time.
- **Professional Development (PD):** Includes registrant learning supports; branch funding is included here.

- **General Operations:** Office operations (Langford) and related overhead.
- **Financial fees** include audit, accounting, merchant, and banking costs.
- **Communications & IT infrastructure** covers the registrant portal, cybersecurity, software, website, and other outreach activities.



*Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

2025/26 BCIA BOARD

Working To Uphold The Public Interest

At BCIA, the Board of Directors works alongside committee members, staff and registrants to steward our mandate under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA). Guided by our Strategic Plan and values, the Board focuses on clear outcomes, thoughtful oversight, and supportive accountability—asking good questions, listening to diverse perspectives, and keeping BCIA’s public protection mandate at the centre of every decision.

Who serves on the Board

BCIA is governed by an 11-member Board, which currently includes the Immediate Past Chair. Directors are elected by district through our annual election process, and four Lay Board Members are appointed by the Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office (CABRO). This blend of professional and public voices helps ensure balanced, informed governance.

Meet the Board: Individual Board Member Biographies.

2025–2026 Board of Directors

At the May 7, 2025 AGM, we welcomed newly elected directors Julie Robinson, PAg (District 1), Theresa Loewen, PAg (District 2), and Faye Hirshfield, PAg (District 3). They join continuing directors Rebecca Martin, PAg (District 1, Immediate Past Chair), Catherine Hayes, PAg (District 2), Yasemin Parkinson, PAg (District 3, Board Chair), and Warren Mills, PAg (District 3, Vice Chair). Our Lay Board Members are Brock Endean, Guy Chartier, Betsy Gibbons, and Richard Simpson (appointed effective May 31, 2025).

Looking ahead

An election will be held in 2026 in District 3, as Warren Mills will complete the maximum number of elected terms. Results will be shared at BCIA’s AGM. We’re grateful to every candidate and to all registrants who take part—your engagement strengthens our governance.





UPDATE

Learning that Fits: A One-Day Virtual Event in October 2026

Survey results, what we heard from you, what we've learned from recent years, and how we're planning a practical, accessible learning day for 2026.

For many years, BCIA's annual conference was a chance to connect and learn.

The last five years have reminded us that one size doesn't fit all: cancellations during COVID, modest attendance at in-person events, and strong participation in virtual offerings, especially our 2025 online AGM, have reshaped how registrants want to engage. As we lean into our regulatory mandate under the *Professional Governance Act*, we remain committed to learning opportunities that are useful, accessible, and good stewards of our resources, both human and financial.

What we heard from you:

This fall we asked registrants about a 2026 event. 329 people responded to our survey. Here's the headline:

- Strong interest in participating, but no clear pull toward traditional, in-person conferences.
- Format preferences are mixed: 60% weren't sure about in-person or virtual; 18% preferred in-person and 22% preferred virtual.
- If in-person were considered, the Lower Mainland was the preferred location; October was the preferred month.
- Top topics: Use of AI, Disaster Mitigation/Climate Action, and Regulation & Professional Responsibility.

Thank you to everyone who responded, your input directly shapes our plans. We thoughtfully reviewed all the results, including the written comments. For those that didn't directly pertain to the idea of a symposium we hope you will find answers to those questions in other articles in this edition of Get the Dirt.

What we've learned from recent years

Our recent experience tells a consistent story:

- In-person attendance in 2022–2023 was modest
- Streaming was limited when events were in-person, which constrained access for many registrants across the province.
- By contrast, the 2025 online AGM drew ~550 attendees, suggesting strong appetite for high-quality virtual experiences that fit busy schedules, travel realities, and budgets.

These insights, combined with our strategic plan and a focus on financial stability, point to a measured path forward.

What we're planning for 2026

BCIA is planning a one-day, virtual professional development event in October 2026. Our goals are simple and values-aligned:

- **Accessible & affordable:** Reduce travel time and costs so more registrants can participate.
- **High-quality & relevant:** Focus on topics that registrants prioritized and that directly support our regulatory mandate (e.g., Indigenous cultural safety, ethics/professional conduct & documentation, AI in practice, climate action/disaster mitigation).
- **Good stewardship:** Lower operational burden and financial risk for BCIA while delivering strong learning outcomes.
- **Modern experience:** Use a robust platform with live Q&A, polls, and recordings to support meaningful engagement.

We'll use your location and timing preferences (Lower Mainland, October) to inform future in-person options as circumstances and interest evolve.

Why virtual (this time)?

Choosing virtual for 2026 reflects a balance of our values - integrity, collaboration, adaptability, balance, innovation, and enthusiasm - and our responsibilities as a regulator:

- It meets people where they are, including registrants with travel restrictions or limited PD budgets.
- It maximizes participation and reach, supporting consistent practice across B.C.
- It protects financial stability, avoiding the risk of low in-person attendance and high venue costs.
- It keeps the focus on learning that strengthens competent, ethical practice and public protection.

What this means for you

- Save the month: October 2026. We'll confirm the date and program details well in advance.
- Expect streamlined registration, session recordings, and practical takeaways you can apply immediately.
- Topics will directly support your responsibilities as registrants and align with BCIA's regulatory work.

Thank you and stay tuned

Your feedback continues to guide our choices. By planning a focused, virtual PD day for 2026, we're aiming for maximum value, broad access, and strong alignment with our mandate. We'll share updates on speakers, agenda, and registration in the months ahead.

