

CIF/IFC, Silver Ring Ceremony

Revised Aug 2015

Welcome to the Canadian Institute of Forestry – Institut Forestier du Canada Silver Ring Ceremony here at *school, section etc.* I am *XXX* of *Section or National* representing the Board, Executive and, indeed the membership of the Institute. It is an honour to participate in this Ceremony

This evening is a very special one- it is *not* a graduation ceremony (although it assumes that you will all graduate); it is not about your registration with a professional registering body (although you may attain RPF status at some time in the future); it *is*, however, about you - the students - the CIF, and the Silver Ring. It's about the CIF officially welcoming you to the professional practice of Forestry and most importantly charging you to practice your profession within the Institute's Code of Ethics. We will present the Silver Ring that you have earned.

These ceremonies have been a wonderful tradition for many decades and held every year across Canada.

Since many of those gathered here this evening may be wondering what this is really all about, I give you the story behind the Silver Ring...

Visualize, if you will, a committee room in the Montreal Board of Trade building the evening of March 12th 1908...a group of “foresters” from across the country meet with the intention of creating a nationwide “professional” organization ***whose objectives would be to share and discuss technical subject matter relating to the theory and practice of forestry and to cultivate an “esprit de corps” among members of the profession.***

In those days there were very few foresters and some may have thought a forester was synonymous with being a lumberjack; in any case, following a great deal of discussion, the word engineer was substituted for the word forester and ***The Canadian Society of Forest Engineers*** was initiated. The name of the organization was changed to the Canadian Institute of Forestry in 1950, which reflected a change in perspective about forests and foresters, and which can be attributed to the work of the Institute.

Since its inception in 1908, the Institute has been the official spokesperson for Canadian ‘forest practitioners’ across the country. Eventually the word

'forest practitioner' broadly included foresters, forest technologists and technicians, ecologists, biologists, geographers, educators, scientists and many others with a professional interest in forestry.

The Institute's mission is to...

- provide national leadership in forestry,
- promote competence among forestry professionals,
- foster public awareness of Canadian and international forestry issues,
and
- promote the true nature of the profession.

The Institute serves a significant role in...

- forestry continuing education,
- outreach and mentorship
- acting as a conduit between and for all forest professionals across
the country and
- establishing a world wide network and reputation as the organization
of record on Canadian forestry issues.

Over the years the CIF has influenced federal and provincial forest management policy and practice and has been influential in the establishment of many provincial registering bodies - the most recent being the Association of Registered Professional Foresters of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Every year the CIF recognized worthy forest professionals and practitioners with a variety of awards.

Section to choose which to mention

In 1953, the Vancouver Section of the CIF decided that it should recognize graduating foresters from the recently created UBC Faculty of Forestry which had been created just two years earlier. As such, the first Silver Rings were presented to the 1954 graduating class from the UBC Faculty of Forestry.

As with the engineer's Iron Ring from which the traditions of the Silver Ring Ceremony and traditions derive, the CIF Silver Ring is intended to be a welcoming gesture to the profession, an acknowledgement of a student's

scholastic achievements and serve as a visual sign of the bond that exists among Canadian Forestry practitioners - a bond that overrides differences in levels of responsibility, employment status, province of residence, and language. Over the years, the Silver Ring has also become a symbol of the CIF, its principles and what it stands for, as embodied in the Code of Ethics.

Responsibility to Maintain the Public Good - including Forest Stewardship, Public Confidence, Public Understanding and Public Welfare and Safety

Responsibility to the Profession including improving the practice of forestry and ensure competency

Responsibility to the Employer or Client with consistent, professional and dedicated service; understanding the consequences of actions; maintaining confidentiality and avoiding conflict of interest

and Responsibility to Other Professionals with fairness and support and the reporting of questionable practice.

These ethics are paramount in your professional lives.

The ring represents our commitment live by the Code of Ethics, certainly, but it also represents our commitment to work together within a broad and open professional society that recognizes, and is inclusive of, the true and interdisciplinary nature of forestry. Everyone who wears one of our Silver Rings should know that regardless of position, rank, differing responsibilities or organizational affiliation – that they are part of a group that has received rigorous education at a CIF recognized program.

Since 1954, when the first rings were presented, other CIF Sections and forestry schools across the country followed suite in adopting the Silver Ring program, including the universities of Toronto, New Brunswick, Alberta, Moncton, Northern BC, Lakehead, Winnipeg and Laval.

In 1967, as a Centennial project, the national headquarters of the Canadian Institute of Forestry officially adopted the administration of the Silver Ring program and, in 2001; a new Silver Ring was created for graduating forest resource technologists. Today some 500 students from 8 universities and 25 colleges from across the country are presented with the Silver Ring every Spring. The list of approved programs now also includes professional master's programs at UBC and UofT. Silver Rings are also

granted to forest practitioners without a formal forestry degree or diploma but through their education and a rigorous assessment process are eligible to wear the Silver Ring.

So – for the past 59 years the Institute has presided over these ceremonies and has managed the distribution and presentation of these Silver Rings.

Tonight we will be presenting each of you with your very own Canadian Institute of Forestry Silver Ring, and we ask that you wear it with a unique and conscientious combination of pride and humility... your Silver Ring should symbolize your commitment to do everything ethically, and always with professionalism, first and foremost. Your Ring should never manifest in any way, shape or form – some kind of symbol of elitism, special status or exclusivity.

Wearing the Ring itself also involves some very specific traditions. It is always placed on the little finger of your working hand – with the base of the leaf pointed toward your heart and the tip of the leaf pointing out – symbolizing the potential for growth within you... and of course your willingness to always grow. It symbolizes your commitment to life-long

learning and continuing education and professional development and most importantly, your commitment to live by the Code of Ethics of the Institute.

I would like to offer my sincere congratulation to all of you - on behalf of the National Executive, Board of Directors and membership of the Canadian Institute of Forestry from across the country. The membership of the Institute charges you now, to practice your chosen profession in an ethical and upright manner as represented by your Silver Ring. Wear it with pride and humility.

Welcome to the exciting, complex, fascinating, demanding, and ever evolving profession and practice of everything forest-related.

Thank you and congratulations to all the Silver Ring recipients.

