

design, similar to other rings, but with the class year included. The pinky ring could be ordered in gold or silver, as the individual preferred. Alas, Forestry didn't have a crest for their UNB jackets, so the Class designed one for their year—copying the good old standard design of the US Forest Service. The first version unfortunately included an inscription which was not pleasing to everyone (the

Latin translates to “Always in Deep Shit”), so subsequent crests of UNB Forestry stayed with the basic design. Since then, the crest has stuck and members of that graduating Class of '60 cannot help but grin when they see present-day UNB jackets with “their” crest still being highlighted!

It is extremely evident that the Class of '60 took pride in their school and

their profession through all of the initiatives they led in order to preserve the history of their time at UNB. Subsequent graduating classes have benefited greatly from their effort and dedication.

Ken Plourde, Class of '60
 Edited by **Laura Pickering**
 Historian and Archivist,
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LETTERS ✦ LETTRES

To the Editor:

October 4th, 2011

Is Wildland Fire Research Paying Its Way?

This is a fair question to periodically ask I think. There is surprisingly very little on the subject to be found in the literature. This short communication will serve to recap one such study that I was involved in several years ago.

A Case Study

Over a two-year period (1987-1988) I served as a technical advisor as part of a larger assessment dealing with an evaluation of the impacts and effects of past Canadian Forestry Service (CFS) research activities undertaken by the Audit and Evaluation Division of Agriculture Canada's Program Evaluation Branch. At the time, the CFS fell under Agriculture Canada.

My role was to provide advice on matters related to the two major subsystems of the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System (CFFDRS)—the Canadian Forest Fire Weather Index (FWI) System and the Canadian Forest Fire Behavior Prediction (FBP) System (Taylor and Alexander 2006). At the time I was a forest fire research officer with the Government of Canada. My involvement was as a direct result of having been part of a case study analysis of the CFFDRS in Alberta the year before (Kiil and others 1986).

The Bottom Line

According to the study conducted by the Program Evaluation Division of Agriculture Canada (1988), it was estimated for the period 1971-1982 that at least \$CAN 750 million (1988 dollars) of benefits (i.e., in terms of a reduction

Box 1 – What is a “Benefit-Cost Ratio”?

According to contributors to Wikipedia (<<http://www.wikipedia.org/>>): “A benefit-cost ratio (BCR) is an indicator used in the formal discipline of cost-benefit analysis that attempts to summarize the overall value for money of a project or proposal. A BCR is the ratio of the benefits of a project or proposal, expressed in monetary terms, relative to its costs, also expressed in monetary terms. All benefits and costs should be expressed in discounted present values.”

Jules Dupuit, an engineer from France, first introduced the concept of BCR in 1848. Alfred Marshall, a British economist further enhanced the formula that became the basis for benefit cost ratio. However, the formalized development of it did not occur until the Federal Navigation Act of 1936 was introduced. This act required that projects that were carried out by the U.S. Corps of Engineers have a higher benefit to the general public than the total investment in the projects.

in fire suppression expenditures) could be considered as directly attributable to the CFFDRS on a nationwide basis. The benefit-cost ratio or BCR (Box 1) was conservatively estimated at ~3:1 (Moore and Newstead 1992).

Martin E. Alexander, PhD, RPF

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