NOT SO CLEAR CUT:

Transforming Gender-Based Violence in British Columbia's Tree Planting Industry

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Tree planting has the potential to be an empowering opportunity for women and gender-diverse workers who take part in a work experience often touted as a "Canadian rite of passage" (Ekers and Farnan 2010). And yet, gender-based violence in British Columbia's tree planting industry is pervasive and has historically gone unaddressed (Trumpener 2020). Anti-violence advocates estimate that gender-based violence has affected at least "one person, per camp, per season. And that is only the people who have reported" (Eva). Given the approximately sixty-five camps that operate in British Columbia each season, that means hundreds have been affected over the last five years alone. And, given estimates that only 6 percent of sexual assaults in Canada are reported, that means the numbers are likely much higher (Canadian Women's Foundation 2022). Survivors of gender-based violence shared with us that planting "is a dangerous industry and you are not valued, other than for putting trees in the ground" (Diana). Such survivors understand better than anyone the vulnerabilities particular to women and gender-diverse people who live and work in isolated and male-dominated spaces. This study centres survivor voices in order to bring solutions forward, from the ground up.

Tree planting represents the end of the forestry harvesting process and the beginning of the reforestation process. Due to this "liminality," and in conjunction with the remoteness of the work, tree planting is essentially an invisible, or "edge," industry (Sweeney 2009b; Bumstead 2020; Walby and Evans-Boudreau 2021). Likewise, the voices of women and gender-diverse tree planters who have experienced harm within the industry have also been rendered invisible. We seek to counter this invisibility by engaging the lived experiences and reflections of women and gender-diverse tree planters in British Columbia to offer insights into the gendered power dynamics of tree planting and to consider how survivor narratives can be mobilized for industry-wide change.

Because the Canadian province of British Columbia claims to be a world leader in sustainable forest management (BC Gov News 2017, 2021), we focused the majority of our twenty interviews on women and gender-diverse planters who have worked for at least one season in British Columbia in the last three years. Because forestry is so integral to the BC economy, it has long been a reforestation hotspot. Indeed, a significant slice of the existing academic literature on tree planting is centred on the experiences of planters in British Columbia (Ekers 2013, 2014; Ekers and Faran 2010; Ekers and Sweeney 2010; Clark 1996). We seek to build on this literature by engaging the experiences and knowledges of women and gender-diverse planters to see what they can teach us about transforming gender-based violence in the industry.

The bulk of academic tree planting research has been conducted by, and ultimately centres around, the experiences of male planters (Ekers 2009; Sweeney and Holmes 2008; Walby and Spencer 2018; Sweeney 2009a, 2009b). Interestingly, the only academic study that focuses on the lived experiences of planters who are not men is also the oldest, a public health thesis by Jocalyn Clark (1996), "Do Tree Planters Live on the Edge? Health Risk-Taking among Reforestation Workers in Northern British Columbia." Clark (1998) published a separate article detailing her disturbing findings of widespread sexualized violence in the industry and concluded her thesis by urging for further investigation: "the issue of sexual harassment requires immediate attention as more women become members of the tree planting workforce and no mechanism exists in tree planting camps for the resolution of harassment issues" (Clark 1996, 117). Clark's calls for more investigation, and for a solutions-focus, have largely been ignored from within the academic literature. There have been studies of gendered dynamics within tree planting labour (Ekers 2013; Ekers 2014), but no recent research has focused on the problem of gender-based violence or centred survivor stories to forge solutions.

As the #MeToo era continues to evolve, however, the tree planting industry has been forced to take notice of gender-based violence. In 2017, the Western Forestry Contractors Association (WFCA), an organization representing most BC tree planting companies, issued a report acknowledging that "sexism is more prevalent in the tree planting industry than is generally recognized … [and] although the overall demographics of the industry show we are approaching a gender balance at the worker level, the sector remains male-dominated" (WFCA 2017). Moreover, at the WFCA's 2020 annual conference, data were presented by a feminist social services organization, the Northern Society for Domestic Peace (NSDP),

showing the extent of gender-based harm in the industry (Trumpener 2020). The NSDP had created an anonymous survey and shared it across three prominent planting Facebook groups. It found that "only 13% of survey respondents had *never* experienced sexual harassment/assault in camps [emphasis added]" (Northern Society for Domestic Peace 2020).

Despite growing interest from industry, workers have found that responses to gender-based violence are shaped more by profit considerations than by attentiveness to survivor care (TWIG 2020). In this analysis, we centre survivor voices and follow their lead in informing solutions. The primary solutions we heard from interviewees were: (1) the development of company anti-violence policies and procedural follow-through; (2) the intentional increase in gender representation among industry leadership; and (3) an increase in anti-oppression training for all, but especially for management. These solutions were aimed overwhelmingly at the company level.

Our interviewees were strikingly disinterested in broader regulatory processes as part of their solutions. This is perhaps because they didn't see external regulatory bodies as being either safe or accessible (Lorenz, Kirkner, and Ullman 2019; Hastie 2019). Moreover, interviewees focused solutions on their company because its inaction or failure of management often left them feeling doubly harmed. Survivors often experienced "institutional betrayal" (Gorask 2019; Crocker, Minaker, and Neland 2020) and were re-traumatized after their company failed to help keep them safe or address their concerns. Company-level solutions were felt to be the most straightforward pathway to beginning to imagine change as these potential impacts could be more immediate and significant for survivors and future planters.

Despite this, without external oversight it is difficult to imagine robust solutions happening voluntarily across all tree planting companies. It should also be pointed out that state- or industry-subsidized financial aid to help individual companies to implement anti-violence initiatives could contribute to meaningful change. We hope that future research will investigate how regulatory incentives or government interventions might increase company accountability and solutions-implementation in a manner that is sensitive to the industry's unique labour conditions. In the sections that follow we explain our methodology, provide additional context pertaining to the tree planting industry, and then further unpack the solutions prioritized by our interviewees.

METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework informing this study is feminist political ecology. This framework is attentive to how larger social structures shape everyday life and how everyday praxis can have its own structuring effects. Feminist political ecologists have identified "care" as a core concept in the field (Bauhardt and Harcourt 2018). Care is defined as "looking after and providing for the needs of human and nonhuman others; it is about the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance and protection of humans and the more-than-human world" (3). In order to conduct research with care, our work seeks to "legitimatize women's lived experiences as sources of knowledge. The ordinary and extraordinary events of women's lives are worthy of critical reflection as they can inform our understanding of the social world" (Campbell and Wasco 2000, 775).

In order to amplify the knowledge of a range of women and gender-diverse planters from companies across British Columbia, we conducted semi-structured interviews with current and past planters during the planting "off-season" (all interviews were conducted by Jennie Long). Upon receiving approval from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (19-0573-01), we leveraged pre-established industry contacts to reach participants. Long spoke with friends, and friends of friends, in order to build a feeling of trust, accountability, and care with each individual. In the end, we spoke with seventeen women and non-binary people who had worked across twenty different BC companies in various capacities. We also spoke with three men who occupied leadership roles in the industry.

As we struggled with the risks of asking survivors of violence and harm to share painful experiences with researchers, establishing personal relationships based on trauma-informed principles was important to us (Knight 2019; Gorsak 2019, 17). Furthermore, previous research indicates that "trauma-*focused* studies with survivors of sexual assault often result in participants feeling distressed or upset, and in some cases regretting their participation in the overall process" (Rogers 2020, 41; emphasis added). Because of this, our research questions were not designed to "dig" for traumatic stories but, rather, to gently open a conversation about feelings, experiences, and perceptions relating to oppression and violence. Any painful or graphic detail shared in interviews is explicitly excluded from this work. While acknowledging the potential bias in mobilizing pre-established networks, we believe snowball sampling, and

prioritizing trauma-*informed* (not trauma-*focused*) relations, has allowed us to build fruitful and caring researcher-participant relationships.

We began conducting interviews in January 2020 and conducted the last interview in November 2020. The interviews were conducted over Zoom, by telephone, or in person. This range was due not only to complications pertaining to the global COVID-19 pandemic but also to the transient, geographically disparate lives of tree planters during the non-planting months. All interviews were conducted with informed (and ongoing) consent. We emailed interview transcripts to each participant, allowing them ample time with their stories to make redactions or corrections.

Following this correspondence period, we began coding the transcripts, highlighting emergent themes (Williams 2008). Overall, we adopted a narrative approach to sexual violence research and advocacy "that emphasizes the story within institutionalized forms of oppression" (Hippensteele 1997, 3). Our hope is that this narrative approach allows our interviewees to live in this analysis as "subjects in their own right" rather than being made into "mere victims of an overarching patriarchy" (DeVault and Gross 2012).

A central focus of our research design, and indeed of participants themselves, was to protect the identities of interviewees to ensure their safety and general well-being. We used code names to identify and personify interviewees. In any anti-violence feminist research, "the political is indeed personal" (Stanko 1997), and the conversations we held, transcribed, coded, analyzed, and wrote about are all deeply personal. As such, the stories and quotes shared in this article are not dated, but they took place sometime between 2000 and 2020. Interestingly, the older stories of multi-season veteran planters closely resemble those of rookies in the 2020 season. This is indicative of an industry slow to change. The individuals we interviewed occupied a range of roles in the industry, from tree planter to crew boss to company manager. This is detailed in the "Table of Interviewees" in Appendix A, along with the pronouns belonging to each individual.

A deep limit of our sampling is that all participants are white or white-presenting. We ourselves are white settlers. The intimate nature of the stories we heard meant that relations of trust were paramount to the research process. This led us to prioritize personal relationships when initiating the snowball sampling, and these choices undoubtedly limited the diversity of our interviewees. Once we noticed this pattern, we did not feel it appropriate to seek out certain identities to remedy the

problem in an ad hoc way. While tree planting is generally represented as a white occupational domain, Black, Indigenous, and other people of colour are also tree planters. It is necessary to explore the experiences of BIPOC planters (who labour at overlapping intersections of power) in a manner that is culturally informed and attentive to the needs of marginalized communities. Indeed, further research is needed to explore the whiteness of tree planting and other outdoor fields – such as adventure guiding, conservation, and indeed, forestry more broadly – to better understand how these spaces come to be overwhelmingly "green insider clubs" (Graham 2020; Taylor 2014).

The bulk of our interview data comes from ciswomen, both straight and queer, and two non-binary people. We did not reach any trans people in our sampling, nor did we speak to any gay men. The primary focus on ciswomen is not intended to diminish the experiences of queer planters, but it does miss the important lived experiences of trans people, who are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence in any field. We hope that further research builds on this study to inform more just, safe, and fulfilling outdoor workspaces for trans and other planters from the queer community. Throughout this work, we refer to our research participants generally as women and gender-diverse planters.

THE BC TREE PLANTING INDUSTRY: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

British Columbia as a province, and Canada as a country, is built upon the extraction of natural resources from unceded or traditional Indigenous territories (Gobby and Gareau 2019; Veltmeyer and Bowles 2014). Broadly speaking, "Canada is an example of a resource-rich country that has lived off its inheritance" (Marchak 1995, 83), an inheritance that was stolen from Indigenous peoples who have stewarded their lands since time immemorial. Today, around 95 percent of the forests in British Columbia are publicly owned, and nearly a third of the province's total exports are from the forestry industry (BC Forestry Innovation Investment 2019). Forestry remains a cornerstone of the province's economy and is pivotal to British Columbia's extractivist project.

The complex political, economic, and historical processes of BC forestry have been governed by "finance capital, settler-colonial enclosures, and deregulation" (Ekers 2019, 271). In practice, the neoliberalization of forestry processes in British Columbia allows for wide profit margins for state and corporate actors alike – at the expense of sustainability. This extends to replanting, which has been treated as a "cheap as possible"

way to fulfill the companies' legal obligations, with minimal oversight from the state to ensure that reforestation contributes to sustainability or that companies fulfill basic labour requirements (Heyman, Parfitt, and Bercov 2010).

The BC government allocates rights to harvest or manage forest lands to private parties through a complicated system of licences, or timber tenures (Clogg 1999). In return for harvesting rights, the BC government legislated reforestation as a corporate responsibility of the harvest licensee itself in 1987 (Forest Act, RSBC 1979; BC Gov News 2017). Therefore, companies have a legal obligation to replant the land from which they profit. Tree planting companies are subcontractors charged with reforestation under a system that necessitates cost-minimization so as not to diminish wide profits margins from the "green gold" of timber harvesting (Marchak 1983). Corporate timber licensees and the state alike award reforestation contracts to individual planting companies based upon a lowest bid model whereby "cost is the primary consideration in awarding a contract" (Harris 2011, 4).

The tree planting industry's evolution reflects a process of gendered neoliberalization. The earliest reforestation efforts in the 1960s and 1970s were the financial responsibility of the state. These early "small-scale" efforts were actually women-driven as the first tree planters in British Columbia were white and Indigenous women living in rural communities. At this time, women were excluded from timber harvesting; yet, by labouring as tree planters, women challenged gendered assumptions about forestry work and communities (Ekers 2014, 2). However, as the replanting of logged cut blocks became a legislated corporate responsibility in 1987, the forestry labour force faced dramatic changes. Running parallel to a downturn in the logging industry, women reforestation crews were "phased out" by professional male-dominated labour contractors who "blew the women's productivity out of the water" (2). The modern model of replanting ensued, wherein "the introduction of a piece-rate wage scheme and a series of other innovations individualized the labour process and refined the practice of planting trees" (1).

Although the province estimates that reforestation contracts employ roughly five thousand workers annually (BC Gov News 2021), more concrete statistics are difficult to obtain owing to the transient, seasonal nature of the industry labour force (WFCA 2020). According to the industry, the average age among employees in the field is approximately twenty-five years old, and 36 percent of workers are students. Tree planting is an intensely physical job that most often requires workers

to live proximally to cut blocks in remote bush camps of varying states of isolation and comfort for the length of their contract (WFCA 2020). Although there have been some attempts to organize tree planter labour unions for economic and health and safety–related protections, obstacles to this have included: "a young seasonal workforce with no long-term commitment to the industry, remote and dispersed work sites, a lack of organizing resources, and a ubiquitous spirit of libertarianism that permeates the workforce and contractors alike" (Ekers and Sweeney 2010, 93). The piece-wage system also inhibits many of the traditional bases of collective action and solidarity as it individualizes workers' material interests while simultaneously aligning them with those of their managers or employers.

Tree planting is a subsector of globalized forestry processes in British Columbia. It is an industry characterized by a neoliberal approach to regulation, meaning that the state and corporations alike focus on profit maximization at the expense of environmental and social well-being (Collard, Dempsey, and Rowe 2016). As such, subcontracted planting companies themselves are under-regulated and are resistant to further regulation. In addition, despite legal obligations that employers have to take all reasonable steps to prevent harm in the workplace, there are practical, cultural, and logistical challenges with gaining access to reporting, justice, or safety for planters who do experience gender-based violence. Many of our interviewees described tree planting as "a place where there aren't really any rules. You witness that rules don't exist" (Diana). Regarding this topic, it is worth quoting the planter Dana at length:

> Tree planting camps are so isolated from regular society and we are not at all regulated like other places are. Every time I go planting, I honestly feel like I have gone back in history, like I have regressed twenty or thirty fucking years, because that is the mentality. It just is. It's the lawless wild, wild West about safety, sexism. It is just so backwards in so many ways. And it is hard to explain, but it is a sink-or-swim place. There are not people there to make regulations. And when you're there you just have to get with the program. And saying you're a feminist, don't fucking say that in camp, you're asking for it.

The remoteness of camps, the prioritization of profit over people, and the resulting limited regulations and adherence to existing rules create what one planter (Eva) called a "perfect storm" for high rates of gender-based violence.

To adequately address violence in any industry, anti-rape scholar Tanya Sersier envisions a response that not only "concedes the inevitability of that violence, but [also] seeks to ameliorate it, and one which forces open the social, legal and cultural *differends* [or intersections of power] revealed by women's narratives to imagine a different world" (2018, 212).We take up Sersier's call by engaging the solutions imagined by our research participants. Trauma-informed practitioners insist that survivors "are the experts of their own lives" (Knight 2019, 82). To be survivor-centred, sexual violence prevention initiatives should be informed by "survivors who have expressed interest in contributing" and should place the people who are most vulnerable to harm at the centre and listen to their voices (Crocker, Minaker, and Neland 2020, 25).

In each conversation we held, interviewees imagined and analyzed possible solutions. Three major recommendations emerged in our conversations not only with women and gender-diverse planters but also with industry leaders. First, most companies lack a comprehensive and well-communicated policy on sexualized violence, including sexual harassment. The women and gender-diverse planters with whom we spoke shared that not only is the existence of a solid policy and accompanying procedures important to them but also that such a policy offers an opportunity for a company to "walk the talk" regarding its stance on workplace violence and the safety of all planters in the bush. The second major recommendation is to increase gender diversity in the management and leadership of camps and companies. The third major recommendation is not only to improve workplace training, including sexual assault and harassment training, but also to offer other forms of anti-violence education, such as consent training for planters and anti-oppression training for management. This would help to shift the "persistent culture of hegemonic masculinity" (Walby and Evans-Boudreau 2021) or, as my participants called it, "cowboy culture" (Eva, Dana), to one that is more caring towards experiences of sexualized violence.

SOLUTIONS IN WORKPLACE POLICY

At their best, workplace policies demonstrate an employer's commitment to anti-violence and serve as a tool to which both workers and companies may refer for their own protection. There are three problems with current anti-violence policies in the industry: (1) they are either nonexistent or inadequate; (2) they lack adequate, comprehensive elements to ensure

the survivor will be safe, believed, and supported; and (3) they do not signal a cultural shift and are not enforced by decision-makers in camps.

Most of our interviewees did not seem to be aware of any policy at their company, despite, under division 4 of the Workers Compensation Act, 2019, bullying and harassment policy implementation being a long-standing legal requirement for all workplaces in British Columbia. In our seventeen interviews with women and gender-diverse planters, only once was an effective policy mentioned. Diana remembered that in this policy the company provided definitions of unacceptable workplace behaviour, explained multiple reporting options, and established its commitment as a management team to safer workplaces.

Unfortunately, most interviewees simply did not know whether their company had a policy or not. In Harley's experiences, before 2019 she had never heard of any company having a sexual harassment or assault policy. She noted that "tree planting is so far behind in so many ways" (Harley). Similarly, Abby said that "2019 was the first year we had a respectful workplace policy that had any kind of teeth to it." Susie's perceptions mirrored those of other planters. In 2019, she was involved in policy creation at her company and was "super upset to see" that,

> during the drafting of the policy, the owner, his attitude … it was like, back in my day we just called it common sense to not assault people. It's this older generation mentality about taking things too far, and this and that, but no, you really have to spell it out. You really have to spell out consent, because the worst-case scenario did really happen in our camp.

Here Susie problematizes a common flaw in policy documents, wherein the document not only lacks comprehensive detail but also fails to "clearly condemn sexual violence" let alone "convey belief of and support for survivors, and outline the institution's intention to hold perpetrators accountable for their behaviour" (Crocker, Minaker, and Neland 2020, 24). When companies are unwilling to acknowledge the possibility of gender-based violence in their camps, accountability is impossible.

Rebecca pushed to establish a workplace harassment and assault policy at her company, but the response from management was: "Well that's never really been a problem here, but to me that is the problem. If there isn't a policy set in place, it is creating potential for a problem." The wilful ignorance adopted by her company creates vulnerabilities wherein harm can occur. The inadequacy, or sheer absence, of a policy also means that, when an incident does occur, there are limited ways for survivors to find

support as well as few resources to guide companies through a reporting or investigation process.

According to current anti-violence literature, for an organizational policy to be effective it should outline the document's scope as well as include definitions relevant to gender-based violence; disclosure and reporting options for survivors; safety planning for survivors; investigation processes; and privacy, cultural, and legal considerations (Ending Violence BC 2019, 16–27). However, it appears that many industry leaders have not adopted such a framework. Even basic sexual assault and harassment policies are relatively novel to the industry. Many companies were nudged to begin policy development following the 2017 WFCA report on workplace harassment (WFCA 2017).

And yet, despite the recent rush to develop policies, Robert said that most companies have just adopted "a one sentence zero-tolerance statement." Indeed, the issue of inadequate, limited, or unclear policy was common across our interviews. Dana had this to say about her company's limited policy stance:

> In my second year, I was in a 150-person camp. It was huge and crazy. And we had a big meeting, and they handed out beers ... They talked about [policy] and said we have zero-tolerance for harassment and come talk to us, like management. And I always felt weird about that being the only option. I didn't know if I would be able to go to talk to management about harassment or sexual assault.

In alignment with the anti-violence literature, Dana highlights how the lack of options for reporting actually discourages survivors from disclosing (Ending Violence BC 2019). Moreover, it is often members of management who are openly tolerant of, or actually perpetrating, gender-based violence in camp. Therefore, a policy that only has one reporting option, and that claims "zero-tolerance" without procedural systems in place or a culture that supports it, is not a solution (Roehling 2020; Ending Violence BC 2019, 53). Inadequate policy creates a guise of safety, allowing companies to profess that they are safer than they actually are (Rogers 2020, 92; Gorask 2019, 97).

While robust, survivor-focused policies are a critical piece of creating an "environment of intolerance" (Robert) towards gender-based violence in planting, a cultural overhaul in industry management is ultimately needed. Our interviewees regularly indicated that there needs to be a "culture that cares" (Lisa). For policy and procedures to actually be effective in preventing violence, and in providing support for survivors,

they need to be created and implemented with a cultural sense of care. Unsurprisingly, research participants were angry about the lack of care, and the total lack of consequences, that they routinely encountered within this negative culture. After witnessing individuals get away with "bad behaviour" season after season, Monica commented:

> I have seen it over and over and over again, and I've heard so many stories, of people doing bad things and there are no fucking consequences. I don't care what companies say about these new fucking policies or whatever they have into place, but they're not making sure that their foremen and supervisors and management are actually taking these things seriously and actually doing something about it. In my opinion, up to this point, this has not happened.

The profit-centric, individualized "grin-and-bear it … hyper-masculine" (Emma) cultural ethos of industry leaders in the face of gender-based violence further silences survivors and discourages open reporting and accountability. As Monica underscores, it is the power-holders and decision-makers in camps – crew bosses, supervisors, and owners – who are responsible for this failure. While the lack of anti-violence policies and procedures in tree planting camps is a structural vulnerability for women and gender-diverse planters, the cultural failure of tree planting camp management to communicate and uphold its anti-violence policy must also be addressed.

SOLUTIONS IN GENDER REPRESENTATION AMONG LEADERSHIP

The WFCA and planting companies claim to generally strive for a "50/50" gender balance at a worker level, yet the planters with whom we spoke often described being the only women on their crews or even in their camp. Gender parity is even more distant among company leadership, which remains intensely and visibly male-dominated. This leadership tends to reproduce itself by promoting men to primary roles and by discouraging women and gender-diverse planters from seeking such roles by silencing them, not offering them the same opportunities, and/or making their jobs distinctly more difficult. When our conversation turned to solutions, Emma reflected:

> I think, at bottom, it's having women in management positions. I think that's a huge part of why [my first company] sucks so much to work for, and why [my second company] felt so much better … because

> the culture fucking sucks … it is hard to break that culture and that cycle unless you have a real intentional discussion about the kind of camp culture you want to have.

Cameron, a non-binary crew boss who, for personal safety reasons, presented as a woman during the work season, noticed similar trajectories over their seasons. As the management composition moved from "boys' club" to a more inclusive, "women"-friendly team over the course of three seasons when Cameron was crew bossing, women felt increasingly safer and happier both in their leadership role and in the workplace generally. According to Cameron:

> [My fourth season] it was me and her and two other dudes [who were the camp crew bosses]. So now it was even. I felt a huge change. The meetings and the dick talk, all of that changed. It was awesome … [Then] my last year, we had three women foremen and one dude … And you can't even compare [the culture in management]. Still stressful, still hard sometimes, but no dick jokes, no rape jokes. They were nice. It wasn't a boys' club anymore … paying attention to gender ratio to management and the camp as a whole is a huge solution … I think that having oppressed people and minority groups put into leadership and staff positions helps so much. If we need to hire more women, hire more women. It's not that hard.

Just as Emma drew positive parallels between increased gender representation and increased feelings of safety, Cameron noticed a difference in the management culture of their camp as gender representation increased season after season. However, "trailblazers" like Cameron bear the burden of breaking into a hostile environment that often provides them with no support. Therefore, while it is "not that hard" for companies to intentionally "hir[e] more women" (Cameron), it is also true that this solution is not quite so simple. A number of interviewees reported that women and gender-diverse planters in leadership roles are not given the same levels of respect, care, or appreciation as their male counterparts. Broadly, studies of women in forestry in British Columbia note that "masculinist organizational cultures may appear to invite women in, but express their distrust of equality and/or implicitly threaten those who seek to change the 'rules'" (Reed and Varghese 2007, 517).

As noted by many interviewees, tree planting culture is "ruled" by its distinct lack of rules, often allowing productivity to trample other labour concerns, like health and safety protections. Having non-men in industry leadership is perceived as threatening to this status quo. As a

result, women and gender-diverse planters in leadership positions face feelings of distrust or even violence as they attempt to make changes within the industry. For example, Taylor problematized the "band-aid solution" of putting women in positions of power:

> Putting more women in leadership positions is always a helpful thing, but then the problem is that you are exposing them to violence and then they are on the frontlines. So the women who choose to be in leadership positions, they are now facing these attitudes even if they are in a power position and it's still affecting them as they battle with that in the industry. All of the normal answers, like women in leadership and education, are helpful, but I just don't know.

Taylor was the only "woman" in the entire camp, let alone in management. The interviewees' above assessment speaks to the vulnerability of "trail-blazing" planters who face harmful, deeply entrenched industry cultural attitudes. Similarly, Emma noticed that women in leadership positions at her camp were forced out by the harmful workplace culture:

> So many women at [my first company] left or didn't continue because they just hated the environment. Not because they couldn't handle the work, or because they weren't capable of planting, or because they didn't like the job. It is because the culture fucking sucks. And I think that is really unfortunate … fewer women see it as a possible career. Then the people that end up in positions of power are men.

Another dimension of this "boys' club" phenomenon is the gendered division of labour, with certain types of jobs expected to be undertaken by particular genders. Frances discussed how within companies and camps she has worked for, employers appeared to be opening the gates to more women in leadership, but in practice employers were engaging in tokenism. Employers gave women what Frances considered "soft roles" as opposed to "harder" bush-skilled or decision-making roles that carry more tangible power within camp life. For Frances, not only should companies believe women when they come forward about gender-based violence but they should also *believe in* women, trusting them with the same roles and responsibilities as men. Cameron discussed this as well, noting that training non-men with "hard" industry bush skills such as those involving machinery or driving "would be a huge solution."

Diversifying representation across roles and responsibilities in companies is a solution with numerous cascading effects. When women were

in management or even engaged in "hard" skill roles, the workplace culture felt significantly safer, as was evident in narratives shared by interviewees. Josie noted that having a woman supervisor for her first few seasons made the experience extraordinarily positive. Josie's woman supervisor was a key reason she returned annually to the same camp and eventually became a crew boss herself. The supervisor was described as attentive to workplace issues and not just profits: "I feel like every year I was with her, there was a conversation [about sexual harassment, assault and consent] because she made that a big part of her camp and awareness in the crews" (Josie).

Josie described planting as a positive life-changing place for her. Indeed, our few interviewees who worked for women or gender-diverse supervisors said that it was a generally positive experience, one that "shielded" them from the potential dangers of "wild, wild West" culture in this male-dominated realm. There are well-documented cultural benefits to increasing gender diversity among leadership, including the creation of safer spaces as well as increasing open reporting, role modelling, and generally improving workplace culture (Larasatie, Barnett, and Hansen 2020). As Lisa said, "We need more [women] … [I]t would be solidifying the culture we need. It would be moving in the right direction, and it's what we need."

SOLUTIONS IN WORKPLACE TRAINING

The final major solution discussed at length by our interviewees involves improved anti-violence workplace training. Participants not only discussed the importance of sexual assault and harassment training but also emphasized other forms of anti-violence education that could be culturally beneficial in planting companies, such as consent training for planters and anti-oppression training for management. This section does not provide a finished blueprint for survivor-centred, trauma-informed training delivery for tree planting camps, but it does highlight some aspects of "solid" training that were important to interviewees.

Training was the first solution that Hana proposed when we discussed addressing gender-based violence in camps. To her, training offers an opportunity to provide the same baseline understanding of acceptable behaviour to the camp's entire planting community at the start of a season. Tree planting camps are often small, isolated, and transient communities, geographically and logistically far removed from any external support, whether police or third-party resources. Most often, there are limited

internet or phone communication options, and "getting out" of camps can prove logistically challenging. Individuals in management are the ultimate decision-makers and gatekeepers within these communities, and training can promote safety from within. Thoughtfully designed, in-house anti-violence awareness training would provide camps with practical tools to address incidents of gender-based violence and "remind people that we are a small, remote community. We need to be respectful of everyone's privacy, feelings, sexuality, whatever, and promote that good community" (Brenden).

However, once the season has begun, the priority is placed on planting trees, leaving insufficient time, money, and/or energy for these community-wide conversations. Current training programs in many camps were described as "very minimal … [not] in depth" (Emma) or as something online that you just click through (Frances). For her part, Taylor both wanted, and was justifiably skeptical towards, increased training. Despite the mandatory and basic sexual harassment training developed by her company at the beginning of the season, Taylor was still made to feel unsafe by the inadequate responses from management when she sought support after having been daily targeted with sexual harassment from men on the crew. She explained how the language and skills taught in anti-violence training needed to be embodied and enacted by the camp's decision-makers.

Conversely, after planting for several companies in which there was no training, discussion, or awareness of sexualized violence in planting, Diana moved to a company in which the season began with a camp-wide discussion of safe spaces and gender-based violence in camps. She felt grateful for this change, and she felt noticeably safer:

> [The company representatives] instantly were, like, we recognize the #MeToo movement, we want our camp to be a safe environment, we have a woman, our cook, who is a safe person to come speak to [if you don't feel comfortable coming to management] and they have actually been trained as a safe space person. And then also all of their crew bosses had to do some sort of training or discussion about how they were going to acknowledge sexual assault, all given right off the bat on day one. That was so refreshing.

Diana's positive experience with training brings to light several essential aspects of effective and trauma-informed approaches to gender-based violence. Her company emphasized survivor believability and highlighted multiple resource options available to people who might experience

harm during the season. An independent, supportive person was given extra training and help to function as a safe person to whom those experiencing harm could disclose or report. Also, the entire management body engaged in additional pre-season training pertaining to anti-violence prevention. Overall, Diana felt her company addressed the issue with clarity, believability, action, and care.

Abby, a camp supervisor, also discussed how updated and ongoing training would be an essential part of her leadership strategy when dealing with gender-based violence in seasons to come. She highlighted her understanding that, for training to be effective, it must be ongoing throughout the season, not just a one-off, "ticking-the-box" conversation. She stated: "After [a sexual assault occurred in our camp], we felt like it was important to go over training and policy again because there is so much information getting thrown at you at the beginning of the season. And so the more it can be circled back to, and be planter-specific throughout the season, the safer it can be." Lisa, now a company manager, was also hopeful that implementing more rigorous and recurrent training would help make her camp a safer space, especially after she received multiple disclosures from former employees who hadn't come forward when their incidents actually occurred. Lisa views recurrent training as an opportunity to have conversations that could nudge all individuals in camp to care about this issue and to feel comfortable coming forward, thereby creating a safer, more caring culture.

Overall, the planters with whom we spoke believe that anti-oppressive training and workplace sexual assault training would be key to violence prevention in camps. They felt that in-house training would be an especially good opportunity to begin enacting a culture shift. Training must become more than merely "good branding" or something you are forced to click through. Instead, our interviewees found that thoughtful, company-delivered, community-based training that involved discussing consent and care culture was what was most effective and what felt most safe. Training should focus on the responsibilities of decision-makers and gatekeepers in camps, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to prevent, minimize, and and/or respond to gender-based violence. The tenets shared in training must be embodied by camp leadership. Training for planters at the beginning of their contract can contribute to reshaping a culture and creating safer spaces for all. Just as everyone is trained and expected to "plant good trees," planters, crew bosses, camp supervisors, and company owners alike should be trained to practise accountability, community safety, and care.

CONCLUSION

The solutions analyzed in this article emerge from a body of lived experiences with violence and oppression in the tree planting field. Interviewees primarily describe non-governmental solutions aimed at the company level precisely because they felt betrayed when their companies failed to believe them, failed to make space for their stories, and failed to keep them safe. Also not surprisingly, the insular, individualistic, and profit-driven culture of tree planting is so strong that there is a bias against any "outsider" structures that could limit the idealized "freedom" and profits that planting provides. However, increased regulatory protections could force lagging companies into action pertaining to workplace gender-based violence, having them implement the solutions offered in this work. Regulations that are appropriately designed (i.e., trauma-informed, survivor-centred, practically enforceable) could mitigate the worst effects of extractive capitalism that dually exploit both the human and nonhuman world in primary resource industries. Future anti-violence research in this industry should investigate how accountability and enforcement structures could help to mitigate the exploitation and harm felt by those who work within it.

There is a recent precedent for the industry responding quickly to crisis in collaboration with state decision-makers. When COVID-19 swept the province in March and April of 2020, right before the "biggest" planting season of all time, the industry was halted due to justified public health concerns raised by northern and First Nations communities (Parfitt 2020). During this stalled pre-season time, industry leadership worked to earn community and health authority permission to operate, and secured public funding to help it do so "safely." Operations went ahead, and camps looked radically different from previous seasons. Policies were made, rules were enforced, and the industry congratulated itself on its safety record once the season ended (Kurjata 2020). The scale of this effort and mass mobilization of a disparate industry to address COVID-19 demonstrates that tree planting companies and the various agencies that regulate them are indeed capable of reacting quickly to pressing social changes to keep people safe. What if this same collaboration and energy could be harnessed to address gender-based violence?

What were the specific solutions imagined by our interviewees? Company policy was a prominent theme, and interviewees insisted that policy was an important, if basic, first step. While an anti-violence workplace policy can take many forms, interviewees stated that a policy should be well-communicated, should avoid language that would

discourage open reporting, should provide clear definitions of violence and related topics, and, most important, should be embodied by management and the larger bush camp community. Another solution discussed at length concerned the importance of increasing gender representation in leadership positions in camps so as to avoid exposing "trailblazers" to harm. Overall, interviewees saw this as important for making spaces feel safer, for decreasing barriers to open reporting, and for cultivating a more caring industry culture that would encourage even more gender diversity in camps. The final major solution was to have more comprehensive anti-violence workplace training. This would involve training that is designed to be as engaging as possible and that targets companies' power-holders.

Planting may be a siloed industry in which corporate contractors operate largely independently from one another, but it is undeniable that the stories of harm shared by survivors, women, and gender-diverse planters can be generalized. As companies seek to change their culture, any response to gender-based violence needs to involve care. Lisa has become an industry advocate for gender-based violence justice. When we discussed the challenges that she faces while advocating for solutions, she commented:

> Hopefully, the culture catches up fast. We need them to understand that the language that they use and the decisions that they make count … These people keep telling me to slow down, but they don't understand that it's too late. It's too late. We have to run. We have to run now. We have to, because we missed our chance to keep people safe. We're, like, twenty years behind everybody else. There is so much to do. We need to move together in this direction now.

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APPENDIX A: TABLE 1 - TABLE OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Code name	Pronouns	Planting history at time of interview
Abby	she/her	planter/crew boss/camp supervisor, 10+ seasons, 1 company
Brenden	he/him	camp supervisor, 10+ seasons, 1 company
Cameron	they/them	planter/crew boss, 5 seasons, 1 company
Dana	she/her	planter, 5 seasons, 2 companies
Diana	she/her	planter, 2 seasons, 3 companies
Emma	she/her	planter, 2 seasons, 2 companies
Eva	she/her	planter, 7 seasons, multiple companies
Francis	she/her	planter/crew boss, 10+ seasons, multiple companies
Hana	she/her	planter/crew boss, 5 seasons, 1 company
Harley	she/her	planter, 5 seasons, 3 companies
Josie	she/her	planter/crew boss, 4 seasons, 1 company
Lily	she/her	planter, 4 seasons, 1 company
Lisa	she/her	planter/company manager, 10+ seasons, 2 companies
Monica	she/her	planter/crew boss, 10+ seasons, multiple companies
Rebecca	she/her	planter/crew boss, 4 seasons, 3 companies
Robert	he/him	industry representative, 10+ seasons, multiple companies
Robin	she/her	planter, 6 seasons, 9 companies
Steve	he/him	company manager, 10+ seasons, 1 company
Susie	she/her	planter/crew boss, 6 seasons, 3 company
Taylor	they/them	planter, 1 season, 1 company