



The Earl of Lunch Lake



Beautiful timber custom-cut at Earl's sawmill on Woodlot Licence #1658 in the Chilcotin.

By SARA GRADY

There was an orchardist in my neighbourhood we dubbed "The Peach Lady". Every single day of peach season she and her workers would painstakingly comb the trees for only the ripest peaches. Then she'd sit at the roadside and sell them until the 20lb boxes of fuzzy gold were all gone and start the whole process over again the next day.

It's a strategy often used by market-garden farmers, and they build a loyal following as a result. It never occurred to me that someone might manage their woodlot the same way. But I hadn't talked to the 'Earl of Lunch Lake' yet.

A lifetime logger who came into woodlotting late in his forestry career, Earl Schuk - who manages Woodlot Licence #1658 near Tatla Lake in BC's scenic Chilcotin region - talks about his trees like they bear fruit. And I suppose they do.

Earl's parents were homesteaders in the 1940s.

They raised seven kids on a self-sustaining ranch with cattle, chickens, and a big garden. Earl's dad was a trapper and guide for other hunters and sold firewood for extra income.

He admits he doesn't consider himself a rancher - he's a logger at heart who followed the work in and around Williams Lake for 25 years. But when the opportunity arose to buy the family ranch 20 years ago he and his wife Laura seized it, and now his grandkids are enjoying the same remote farm paradise he had growing up.



Three generations of the Schuk family take care of a precious Crown resource, Woodlot Licence #1658 near Tatla Lake, BC

Like a market-gardener, Earl picks only the trees he believes are ready to fell and will fulfill the needs of his customers. He's never logged a cutblock on his 600 hectare woodlot, even while dealing with the fir bark beetle (the next scourge to attack BC's forests after the pine beetle infestation). All of his logging is strategic and selective. One tree here, one tree there. It's time consuming, but Earl isn't in a hurry. Like a typical woodlotter, he knows everything is for later. He's looking far down the road.

His grandson, Rylan, has expressed a strong interest in following his grandfather's footsteps. At the age of 13 he's already had experience in the bush splitting logs, driving a forwarder, running the excavator, learning chainsaw safety and lending a hand at the sawmill. Earl is dedicated to making sure the woodlot is self-sustaining, like his parents' ranch, so that his grandson has something to harvest when he's old enough to take over.

The sawmill on their property provides a niche product for builders in the area. Earl will painstakingly mill 'oddball sizes' for timber

frame homes, decorative or structural projects, and he takes great pride in seeing the fruits of his labour in a window frame, vaulted ceiling or sprawling deck.

With the fourth generation waiting in the wings, the Earl of Lunch Lake is caring for his part of the province's forest like a precious resource, upholding the values of the Woodlot program while ensuring security for future generations of the Schuk family.



Earl and his son Lorne create all sorts of unique features from the timber on their woodlot, including this rustic gate.

Announcing Scholarship Winners

The FBCWA is dedicated to nurturing future generations in forestry. Every year the Federation awards a post-secondary scholarship to a young person who is related to a Woodlot Licensee or Private Forest Land Owner. We're pleased to be handing out scholarships to two very worthy recipients this year.

Jared Sexsmith is receiving a \$2000 scholarship. An active member of the 4H Club in Lumby and an accomplished athlete, Jared has firsthand experience on his grandparents' Woodlot Licence #1865. He plans to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Forestry at UBC Vancouver, where he will also compete on the varsity track & field team. He plans to return to Lumby as a Registered Professional Forester and join the local forest industry.

Sierra Despot is receiving a \$1000 scholarship. Her grandparents Greg and Sharon Lee and parents Stacey and Roger Despot are co-owners of Woodlot Licence #2074 in Greenwood. She has spent a great deal of time on her family's woodlot, talking to foresters and loggers, learning how to protect the rivers and creeks and ensure environment benefits from harvesting and planting of trees. An avid athlete, Sierra also volunteers at the Kamloops SPCA and Therapeutic Riding Association. She plans to complete her Bachelor of Science at Simon Fraser University.



FEDERATION OF BC WOODLOT ASSOCIATIONS

381 Pheasant Road • Williams Lake, BC, V2G 5A9
Tel: (250) 398-7646 • Toll Free: 1-866-345-8733
Email: gen_manager@woodlot.bc.ca • www.woodlot.bc.ca

WOODLOT PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

P.O. Box 23011 Plaza 33 Postal Outlet
Kelowna, BC V1X 7K7
Phone: (250) 961-0271 • Email: cjmclary401@gmail.com