BC's Best Managed Forests

Report on British Columbia's Woodlot License Program

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1.0 Introduction

This report is a compendium of the most recent information that the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations could reasonably obtain from its members and/or publicly available sources. It is not an annual report. Readers are asked to take note of the dates and time frames for the information presented.

Questions regarding this report or about the woodlot licence program can be directed to gen_manager@woodlot.bc.ca

2.0 About the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations

The Federation of BC Woodlot Associations (FBCWA) promotes the economic and social interests of woodlot licensees, private forest landowners, and others involved in small-scale forest management in British Columbia. The FBCWA's mission is for all its members to practice exemplary forest and natural resources management in a socially, economically, and environmentally responsible manner.

3.0 What are woodlots and woodlot licences?

The term *woodlot* typically refers to a plot of privately owned forest land. In BC, there are an estimated 20,000+ woodlot owners.

A *woodlot licence* is a form of area-based forest tenure which is unique to BC. In effect, they are partnerships between the license holder and the province of BC to manage public and private forest lands.

A woodlot licence is a family forest. It has a 20-year term but this is "replaceable," meaning it can exist in perpetuity, providing the holder fulfills all the management obligations and responsibilities. In addition, woodlot licences are considered intergenerational tenures, meaning that they often get passed on from generation to generation within a family.

Figure 1: The Harold Macy woodlot family

The maximum amount of Crown land in a woodlot licence is 1200 hectares in the Interior and 800 hectares on the Coast. Most woodlot licences include some private land. In exchange for being granted exclusive rights to harvest timber, a woodlot licensee assumes responsibility for managing the entire woodlot licence area. These responsibilities include reforestation, caring for the forest, protecting cultural and resource values, and maintaining roads.

When it comes to forest and resource management, private and Crown lands are managed to the same high standard.

4.0 A brief history of BC's woodlot licence program

The origins of BC's woodlot licence program date back to 1948 when the *Forest Act* was amended to allow farmers to acquire farm woodlots. In those days, a farmer was limited to an area that could sustain production of about 283 cubic meters, or about 40 hectares on the Coast and 100 hectares in the Interior.

In 1956 the Sloan Royal Commission found that the program was slow to develop and only 37 licensees had been issued. Commissioner Sloan concluded that the many requirements placed upon licensees such as data collection, inventories, sustained yield planning, reforestation, and harvesting made the program "not worth the trouble."

In 1976, or 20 years after the Sloan Commission, the Pearce Commission found that there were still only 37 licences in existence. Changes resulted from the commission's recommendations, which included the following:

- Maximum size increased to 400 hectares

- Removal of the requirement to be a farmer
- Removal of the mandatory inclusion of private land
- Term of licence extended to 15 years with a 5-year replacement provision.

Not much happened until 450 woodlot licences were issued between 1984 and 1989 as a result of a conscious effort by the BC Forest Service to do so.

In 1988, J. M. Bakewell conducted a study of the woodlot program for the Ministry of Forests and concluded the following:

- Low volumes created problems regarding economy of scale;
- Large contractual obligations limited opportunity for profitability;
- High initial development costs, high operating costs, and non-competitive markets threatened woodlot viability;
- Woodlot licences were at a disadvantage due to a timber pricing system that was inappropriate to the tenure; and
- Extension services (training and education) were urgently needed to help address woodlot-related problems and help licensees make informed decisions.

In July 1989, the Minister of Forests announced that 450 woodlot licences would be added to the existing program, the AAC would be increased from 420,000 to 850,000m³ per year, and extension services would be expanded.

In September 1990 yet another study was conducted, which concluded that the woodlot licence had many benefits, but that the Ministry lacked the financial and staff resources to effect the announced expansion.

In 1994, the Minister of the day announced his intention to increase the number of licenses to 1,000 and allocated 1,000,000 m³ to the program. Along with the announcement came $24 million in funding from Forest Renewal BC.

In April 1996, the Ministry realized that the goal of 500 new woodlot licences would not be achieved and set a revised goal of advertising 350 new woodlot licences by December 31, 2007. For the most part, this goal was achieved, as 338 licenses were advertised by that date. By June 1999 there were 784 woodlot licences in the province.

Between 1999 and March 2003 a few new woodlot licences were created, bring the total to 811.

In March 2003, as part of its *BC Heartlands Economic Strategy for Forests – Forestry Revitalization Plan,* the provincial government announced the woodlot program would be doubled in order to create opportunities for new entrants with innovative forest management and wood processing ideas, which would result in new jobs and spinoff benefits for communities.

Woodlot licences, while small in stature, were recognized as an integral and important component of BC's forest sector – which they are!

Today (July 2007) there are 826 woodlot licences throughout BC. The promised expansion has not occurred. Once again, as was the case back in 1990, the Ministry lacks the staff and resources to achieve government's goal.

Furthermore, the issues cited by J. M. Bakewell back in 1988 continue to plague the program; primarily, onerous contractual obligations limiting profitability, and a timber-pricing system that is inappropriate to the tenure.

Efforts to address these shortcomings have been ongoing, but progress has been slow. Recommendations for administrative efficiencies developed by the Ministry of Forest and Range's (MOFR) Woodlot Administration Review and Recommendation Team (WARRT) have yet to be implemented, and a more appropriate timber pricing system has yet to be developed.

5.0 The importance of woodlots and woodlot licences

Woodlots and Woodlot Licences are *family forests*. In addition to being a great source of personal pride and satisfaction, they are also small businesses, with over 1,000 BC families relying on woodlot licences for all or part of their livelihoods.

While most woodlot licensees are independent log sellers, many are involved in other businesses such as ranching, logging, consulting, milling, and manufacturing. In a 2006 survey, 88.4% of woodlot licensee respondents reported that their woodlot supplements other income.

By hiring locally and acquiring goods and services from local suppliers, woodlot licensees make significant contributions to local economies and nearby communities. They are also important sources of timber and wood for value-added and secondary manufacturers, i.e. meeting the needs of smaller producers who need wood in lesser quantities than major producers like to supply. Woodlot licences generate approximately $200 million of economic activity annually, and nearly 12,000 British Columbians (including contractors and consultants) make all or part of their living working on woodlot licences.

Compared to other forest tenures, woodlot licences tend towards 'personal' management on a small-scale, which is probably the main reason why so many woodlots are located next to communities and private property or over areas with sensitive resource management issues. A neighbourly approach that leaves a light footprint on the land is a characteristic of BC's woodlot licences.

Most woodlot licences include some private land. In exchange for being granted exclusive rights to harvest timber, a woodlot licensee assumes responsibility for managing the entire woodlot licence area. These responsibilities include reforestation, caring for the forest, protecting cultural and resource values, and maintaining roads.

BC's woodlot licence program is unique and successful. The Federation is unaware of any other jurisdiction in the world that has the foresight to promote small business, achieve societal benefits, and manage forests by joining private and public lands under a forest tenure.

Canada's National Forest Strategy, a plan and series of objectives aimed at increasing the long-term health of forest ecosystems and communities, does recognize the importance of woodlots. Objective #7 is to "increase the economic, social and environmental contribution by Canadian woodlot owners to Canadian society through a concerted effort by stakeholders to strengthen policies and services that encourage and support viable woodlot businesses."

6.0 The realm of woodlot management

6.1 Forests and ecosystem diversity and resilience

While achieving legislated requirements is essential, there are other features of woodlot management. Each licence holder or woodlot owner is distinct and applies knowledge acquired in his or her lifetime differently. A diversity of holders leads to a diversity of management approaches which is advantageous, particularly where the management approach has been adapted to the woodlot's setting, such as a community watersheds, high recreational use area, viewscape, urban-wildland fire interface zone, or community green space. Different approaches lead to a diversity of forests and stands, as well as high levels of stand complexity.

These various and innovative approaches to management will play an increasingly important role in the future as BC's forests face uncertainties associated with global warming. To combat the effects of global warming, the scientific community is calling for more diverse and resilient ecosystems; i.e., a woodlot style of management where ecosystems are under the care and attention of a practitioner who will nurture, not just grow, future forests. More diverse and complex forests and ecosystems are more resilient and able to resist the negative influence of global warming.

6.2 Communities and families

The current levels of diversity on BC's forested landscapes are a legacy of past traditional uses. Up to 200 years ago, First Nations regularly burnt off hillsides to reduce fire hazards, improve wildlife browse, and improve berry production. These practices were passed on from generation to generation, creating a cultural disturbance mosaic, which when combined with natural disturbance patterns, forms the framework of BC's forest practices. Today these forests are valued for their timber and other natural resource values. In the case of woodlots and woodlot licences, the intergenerational use patterns continue as the license and/or land is passed from one generation to the next. This forms the basis for future management and the next evolution in cultural disturbance patterns.

6.3 A light footprint on the land

Woodlots and woodlot licences strive to leave a light human footprint on the land. Timber is harvested in a manner consistent with principles of stewardship and sustainability. Woodlot operations are small-scale. Being efficient is essential, but so too is doing things correctly in the first place. The economy of scale leaves little room to fix mistakes or undertake costly remediation work.

Another important reason for leaving a light footprint is because woodlots and woodlot licences are at the forefront of public involvement. Their placement on the landscape is such that they are highly visible and accessible to the public, often being managed to conserve and protect important social values such as water flow and quality, or scenery and recreational activities. Woodlot activities are subject to a high level of public scrutiny which means if the public doesn't notice the footprint, then the job must have been well done!

7.0 The BC woodlot licence program

7.1 Woodlot licences vs. other forest tenures

With the exception of non-replaceable timber sale licences, which are essentially logging agreements and for which the holder does not bear forest management obligations, there are more woodlot licences in BC than any other forest tenure. Table 1, below, presents the details.

Tenure		#
Woodlot licences		812
Tree farm licences		34
Community forest agreements		11
Forest licences	Replaceable	168
	Non-replaceable	147
Timber sale licences	Replaceable	100
	Non-replaceable	1,357
Timber licences		621
Pulpwood agreements		10

Table 1: Tenures managed by the BC Ministry of Forests and Range
Source: MOFR 2005/06 Annual Service Plan Report

7.2 Distribution

As shown in Table 2, below, BC's woodlot licenses* are distributed throughout the province.

Coast		Northern Interior		Southern Interior	
District	**# of WLs**	**District**	**# of WLs**	**District**	**# of WLs**
Chilliwack	9	Fort Nelson	1	Arrow-Boundary	45
Campbell River	23	Fort St. James	31	Central Cariboo	47
North Coast	1	Kalum	14	Chilcotin	5
North Island	7	Nadina	72	Columbia	15
Queen Charlottes	4	Peace	59	Cascades	39
South Coast	8	Prince George	94	Headwaters	23
South Island	18	Skeena-Stikine	28	Kamloops	33
Squamish	11	Vanderhoof	35	Kootenay Lake	14
				100 Mile House	32
				Okanagan-Shuswap	62
				Quesnel	65
				Rocky Mountain	28
	81		**334**		**408**

Table 2: Number of woodlot licences by MOFR Forest District (June 13, 2006)
Source: MOFR List of Woodlot Licences as of June 13, 2006

* Eleven new woodlots have been awarded since the MOFR's 2005/06 Annual Service Plan Report was released, which explains the difference between 823 and the total of 812 noted in Table 1.

7.3 Demographics

As shown in Table 3, below, woodlot licences are held by a diverse group of individuals, partnerships, First Nations and corporations which do not own timber processing facilities.

Licensee	% of WLs
Individuals, families or partnerships	65.9%
Limited or incorporated companies	25.9%
First Nations, Band or Band Council	6.2%
Clubs and societies	1.0%
Colleges	0.5%
Communities (not First Nations)	0.5%

Table 3: Percentage of woodlot licences held by licensee category
Source: MOFR woodlot listing – June 13, 2006.

As shown in Table 4, most (90.6%) woodlot licensees are male and almost 93 percent are over the age of 40. More than 1 in 4 woodlot licensees is over 60 years of age.

Age (years)	% of WLs
Less than 30	1.2%
30 – 39	6.1%
40 – 49	27.0%
50 - 59	39.9%
60 – 69	19.6%
Greater than 70	6.1%

Table 4: Woodlot licence demographics
Source: WPDC/FBCWA 2006 Questionnaire

This aging demographic is likely a function of the award criteria, which were based on education, experience and private land contribution – all factors which tend to favour older persons.

Given this demographic, the number of woodlot licences passed on to future generations within a family or to outside third parties is expected to increase. Solid extension and outreach services are going to be needed to ensure that new and younger licensees are well equipped to manage their woodlot licences.

7.4 Private land and AAC

BC's Woodlot Licence Program is unique in that it provides for the inclusion of private forest lands under the tenure. Eighty-five percent (85%), or nearly 700 of BC's woodlot licences, include private land, averaging approximately 130 hectares per woodlot (Table 5, below, provides details). The inclusion of private land helps to ensure that woodlot licences are held by local residents with experience and a vested interest in properly managing forest resources.

Region	# of WLs	AREA (ha)			AAC (m^3)		
		Private Land	Crown Land	Total	Private Land	Crown Land	Total
Coast	81	5,748	30,130	35,877	23,138	155,099	178,237
N. Interior	334	34,112	192,065	226,177	53,009	1,479,128	1,532,137
S. Interior	408	51,574	215,262	284,041	67,104	659,886	726,959
Total	**823**	**91,434**	**437,457**	**546,095**	**143,251**	**2,294,113**	**2,437,383**

Table 5: Description of woodlot licences issued in BC, by forest region
Source: MOFR List of Woodlot Licences as of June 13, 2006

Figure 2: A pond on private land in W1808 in the Cariboo-Chilcotin Forest District
The pond provides water for wildlife and cattle, diversity, and habitat.

The AAC figures are misleading. In March 2000, when there were 807 woodlot licenses, the woodlot program's AAC was approximately 1.148 million m^3. As of June 2006, it has more than doubled to over 2.4 million m^3. This is mainly the result of short-term increases required to address the expedited harvest of mountain pine beetle killed timber. The 2.4 million m^3 is not a sustainable figure. In fact, the woodlot program AAC will drop significantly once the beetle-damaged wood is gone and new sustainable AACs determined.

The woodlot program amounts to approximately 1.5% of the province's total AAC.

8.0 Socioeconomic contributions

Woodlot licences are socially and economically important to BC's heartlands. They support rural communities and residents by providing jobs, economic activity, and high-quality resource management. This section discusses contributions in the areas of economy, employment, forest management, and society, and also provides profiles of some representative licensees.

8.1 Economic

Based on 2004 and 2005 data (see Table 6, below), the woodlot program generates over $200 million of economic activity annually throughout BC.

	2005	2004
Interior	$ 173,172,191	$ 216,865,689
Coast	9,653,726	15,430,866
Total	**$ 182,825,917**	**$ 232,296,555**

Table 6: Total woodlot economic activity, 2004 and 2005
Source: MOFR log market reports and woodlot harvest volumes from MOFR Annual Service Plan Reports

Since woodlots are primarily independent log sellers, the amount of economic activity is directly related to the amount of wood harvested and price of logs. Figure 3, below, shows that there has been a significant decline in coastal log prices, while Interior prices have remained quite static.

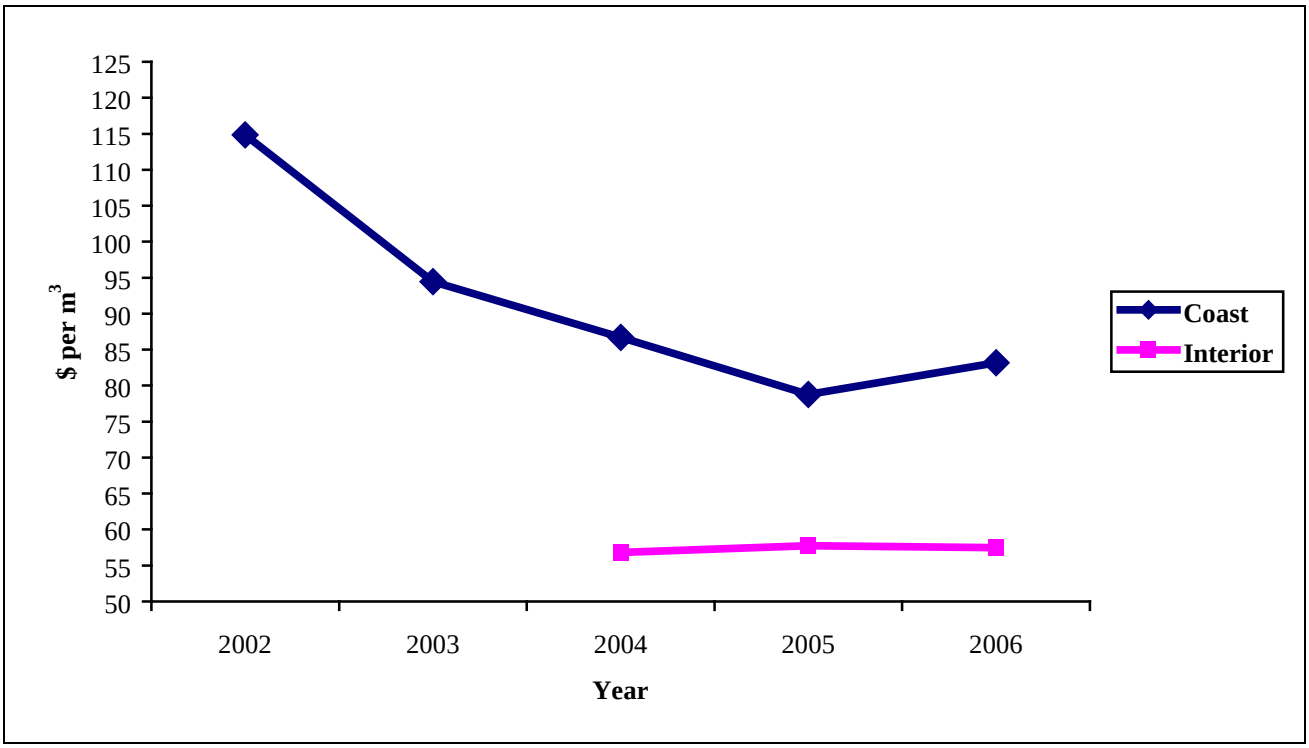

Figure 3: Coast and Interior log prices
Source: MOFR Log Market Reports.
Note: Log price data collection for Coast began in 2002 and for the Interior in 2004.

Figure 4: Some woodlot licensees own and operate small mills. Others supply logs and lumber to local timber processing facilities.

As shown in Figure 5, below, the rate of harvesting from woodlots fluctuates annually, usually in response to log prices or events such as blow-down or insect attack which necessitate harvesting for management reasons. The steady increase in volumes harvested from woodlot licences from 2001 to 2004 is largely attributable to the mountain pine beetle (MPB) epidemic.

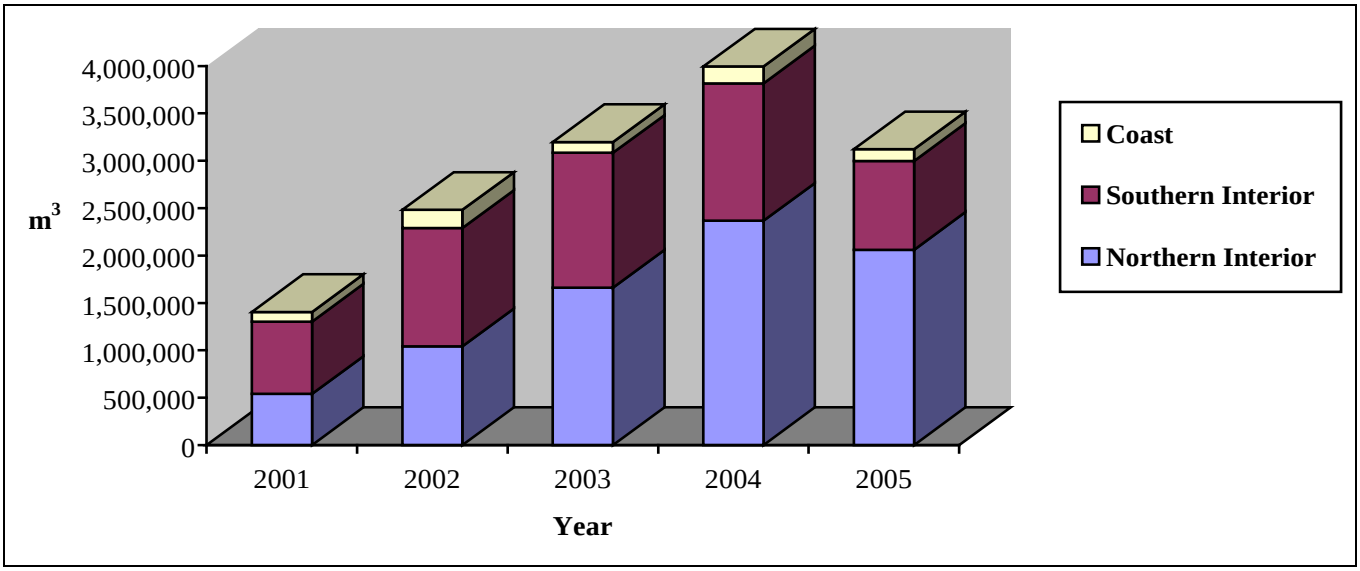

Figure 5: Annual woodlot harvest volumes by region (2001-2005)
Source: MOFR

Much of the increased harvest is concentrated in the northern Interior, commonly referred to as the MPB epicentre. An estimated 250 of 334 northern interior woodlot licences have been significantly impacted by the mountain pine beetle. The slight decline in harvest from 2004 to 2005 is due to policy changes with restricted the salvaging of beetle-damaged timber from woodlot licences.

8.2 Employment

Managing a woodlot or woodlot licence is not a full-time job. Most licensees will manage or administer the aspects of their woodlot business which they are good at, preferring to put the rest out to contract or consultants. For example, a licensee who is a logger will often have a consultant help with planning, while someone more adept at paperwork will contract out logging and road-building.

The Federation estimates that nearly 12,000 people make all or part of their living from woodlots and woodlot licenses. While this may sound like a lot, stop and consider all the expertise and knowledge that is required to manage forests and a forest tenure, including but not limited to management plans, woodlot licence plans, field work (surveys, assessments, timber cruising, etc.), forest management decisions, mapping, appraisals, road building, road maintenance, logging, trucking, scaling, stumpage, logging taxes, reforestation, reporting, and the list goes on.

8.3 Management (harvesting and silviculture)

Table 7, below, presents area harvested on the Crown land (Schedule B lands) in woodlot licences during 2005 – 2006 by silviculture system and by forest region.

Silviculture System	**Crown Land (ha.)**				**Description**
	Coast	N. Int.	S. Int.	Total	
Clearcut	25	105	65	195	Areas greater than 1 ha. where the entire stand of trees is harvested.
Clearcut with reserves	9	102	835	947	As above but with individual or small groups of trees retained for the long term to provide for other values.
Patch Cut	5	0	18	23	Openings that are no greater than 1 ha. in size and designed to manage each opening as a distinct even-aged opening.
Retention	8	0	0	8	Individual or groups of trees left for structural diversity, dispersed throughout a cutblock such that greater than half the total area of the cutblock is influenced by trees.
Seed Tree	2	0	14	16	Selected trees left standing, singly or in groups, after the initial harvest to provide a seed source for regeneration.
Selection	1	9	166	176	Designed to manage the area as an uneven-aged stand, by the removal of individual or small groups of trees.
Shelterwood	4	0	44	48	Trees are harvested in a series of cuts designed to achieve a new even-aged stand under the shelter of remaining trees.
Not Specified	0	2	0	2	
Total	**54**	**217**	**1,143**	**1,414**	

Table 7: 2005 – 2006 harvesting activities

Figure 6: Selection harvesting on W1832 in southwest BC

Figure 7: A regenerated small clearcut on W1690 near Burns Lake, BC

Table 8, below, summarizes silviculture accomplishments on Crown land (Schedule B) within woodlot licences during 2005 – 2006 by activity and by forest region.

Silviculture	Crown Land (ha.)				Description
	Coast	N. Int.	S. Int.	Total	
Surveying	30	315	996	1,340	
Planting	20	0	61	81	Includes fill-planted or replanted areas
Brushing	41	70	490	128	
Forest Health	0	0	0	0	Includes dwarf mistletoe control, stem diseases and root diseases.
Spacing	0	0	14	14	
Fertilizing	0	0	0	0	
Pruning	5	0	0	5	
Total	**141**	**700**	**1,578**	**2,419**	
Seedlings planted	40,000	416,000	481,000	936,000	

Table 8: Summary of 2005 – 2006 silviculture accomplishments

Figure 8: Woodlot licensee John Helweg watches his grandsons plant seedlings. They are on the family woodlot in Fort St. James, BC

Figure 9: Tubing protects newly planted seedlings from deer browsing. The photo was taken on the Dawson woodlot near Nanaimo, BC

8.4 Profiles of selected woodlot licensees

The following are excerpts from articles written about different woodlot licensees. They illustrate the level of management and commitment that most licensees and landowners make to their woodlots.

Lyle Wilson (Woodlot Licence 1676)

Lyle Wilson never planned to be a woodlot licensee. When he bought his scenic 600-hectare property in 1979, his goal was to start a rustic lodge. He succeeded. With the perfect location bordering Kootenay National Park in the Rocky Mountains, Nipika Mountain Lodge now welcomes clients from all of the world to enjoy cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding and more. The Wilsons – Lyle, his wife Dianne, and his son Steve – manage the woodlot for visual quality and to protect wildlife habitat. Logging does visually impact the pristine forest, but on the plus side, they have developed close to 20 additional kilometres of trails. They often design a logging trail with recreation needs in mind: twisting and turning, taking advantage of the views. All their woodlot activities relate to and enhance the recreational values of the land and the wildlife carrying capacity.

Peter Kokoska (Woodlot Licence 0001)

Peter Kokoska holds woodlot licence 0001, located in the Fraser Valley. The Kokoska family has been working in BC's forest industry since 1925. His woodlot is not for the meek or inexperienced, with the majority of the land steep-sloped and on the outskirts of urban areas. Much of it must be helicopter logged – no easy feat given the small annual harvest volumes. Yet

Peter's woodlot philosophies of sustainability and stewardship in a working forest have satisfied concerned friends, neighbours and citizens since W0001 was issued in 1959. As the editor of "Western Woodland Magazine" wrote in the Spring 2006 edition, "I had the pleasure of touring the woodlot with Kokoska and without a doubt you would be hard-pressed to find a better managed forest than that of woodlot 0001. From the well-placed roads and bridges to the well-managed cutblocks, Kokoska's woodlot easily demonstrates all the best aspects of a working forest."

Nechako Valley Secondary School (Woodlot Licence 1205)

Nechako Valley Secondary in Vanderhoof has been the proud licensee of W1205 since January 1993. The Forestry 11/12 program uses the woodlot for many learning labs and practical lessons such as pine beetle management, harvesting, silviculture, wildlife management and recreation considerations. Woodlot funds have paid for Career Prep students to attend short forestry courses at the University of Northern British Columbia, and the woodlot also provides bursaries for students graduating and going on to post-secondary education in forestry. Career Prep and Alternate students also help out with aspects of beetle detection, salvage logging, sanitation burns, and planting seedlings.

Dugan and Kathy Braisher (Woodlot Licence 0447)

Dugan and Kathy Braisher acquired their woodlot licence in 1985. However, Dugan is no stranger to woodlot management as his father secured a farm woodlot in 1956, which is now held by his brother John. Woodlot 0447 includes 141 ha. of private land to go along with the 600 ha. of Crown land, extending from about 6km south of Parson to Castledale in the East Kootenay. The woodlot is managed for timber, cattle grazing, domestic water, visuals, and ungulate winter range. It contains excellent examples of where shelterwood systems have provided the dual benefit of natural regeneration while providing grazing for cattle. As one member of the Columbia Woodlot Association noted, "It is obvious by Dugan's pride in good management of the woodlot that he intends to leave a legacy to his family. He is taking more time than is required and doing what is right for the land."

Bob Miller (Woodlot Licence 0305)

Bob Miller was a pioneer in the North Thompson Valley – a woodsman, hunter and trapper, park warden, fisheries officer, Christmas tree grower, tree nursery operator and woodlot licensee. To know his life's work is to appreciate his dedication to forest conservation, his pursuit of knowledge of how trees grow, and his ability to inspire others to tend trees. Bob acquired W0305 in 1985 and today the woodlot supports healthy, diverse forests of fir, cedar and pine as well as unique areas of 20-metre-tall pruned yellow pine and Norway spruce, which are the results of some of Bob's nursery and early experimentation. These forests were created through careful selection harvesting followed by spacing and pruning to ensure the next crop is in the best possible condition. Bob passed away in 2006 and now his son Pete manages the woodlot with the same passion and dedication.

8.5 Societal

As an example of the woodlot program's contribution to society, the Federation is proud to support young people. Since 2001, the Federation has annually awarded a scholarship to a young person attending a post-secondary institution. Preference is given to students entering a forestry-

related program, and awards are based on the evaluation of essays submitted by applicants. The scholarship is funded by monies raised each year at the Federation's Annual General Meeting via a silent auction of items donated by woodlot associations, licensees and private forest landowners. Scholarship winners are listed in Table 9, below.

2001	Kevin Steward	Chetwynd, BC
2002	Tera Blake	Williams Lake, BC
2003	Jake Daly	Smithers, BC
2004	Emily Muller	Germansen Landing, BC
2005	Katherine Backlund	Ladysmith, BC
2006	Katherine Backlund	Ladysmith, BC
2007	Nic Williams	Revelstoke, BC

Table 9: Winners of the Federation scholarship, 2001 – 2007

The 2006 scholarship recipient, Katherine Backlund, is the first two-time recipient. Katherine is the daughter of Gary and Teesh Backlund, private forest landowners of Managed Forest #127 in Ladysmith. She is currently enrolled in the Forest Resource Technologies Program at Malaspina College. She has been very involved in her family's managed forest land, and in particular with big leaf maple seedling growth and maple syrup production. Katherine has co-authored a book with her father entitled "Bigleaf Sugaring – Tapping the Western Maple."

Nic Williams, the 2007 recipient, is graduating from Revelstoke Secondary School and plans to attend the University of Victoria in September. Nic is the son of Woodlot licensee Del Williams of woodlot 1834 and is an avid outdoorsman.

Figure 10: Timber frame walking bridge across the Kicking Horse River in Golden, BC. The logs were donated by Members of the Columbia Woodlot Association.

9.0 Management excellence and sustainability

The following sections illustrate the commitment by BC's woodlot licence program to the principles of forest stewardship, resource sustainability, and management excellence.

9.1 WPDC Forest Stewardship Recognition Program

Each year, woodlot licensees who have practiced exceptional management and stewardship are acknowledged through the Forest Stewardship Recognition Program. The 2006 honourees were

- Larry Coleborne, Clearwater
- The Omineca Ski Club, Burns Lake
- Tony Benskin, Quesnel
- Darryl and Dawsha Hunt, Grand Forks

These licensees exemplify the excellent standards of management being practiced on woodlot licences throughout BC.

9.2 Compliance and enforcement statistics for woodlots

As shown in Table 10, below, between April 1, 2004 and March 31, 2005 there were only eight enforcement actions against woodlot licence holders[1] – a significant improvement over the previous two years, especially in light of the increased volumes harvested.

	2005 (Apr. 1, 2004 to Mar. 31, 2005)	**2004** (Apr. 1, 2003 to Mar. 31, 2004)	**2003** (Apr. 1, 2002 to Mar. 31, 2003)
Inspections	981	878	963
Compliance actions	179	115	67
Enforcement actions	8	29	17
Volume billed (m^3)	3,972,537	3,298,436	2,043,899
Enforcement Actions (EA) – Notes	8 infractions: • 1 licensee with 2 EAs • 6 licensees with 1 EA	29 infractions: • 1 licensee with 11 EAs • 1 licensee with 3 EAs • 1 licensee with 2 EAs • 13 licensees with 1 EA.	17 infractions: • 1 licensee with 11 EAs • 1 licensees with 3 EAs • 11 licensees with 1 EA

Table 10: Woodlot compliance and enforcement statistic, 2003 – 200
Source: MOFR Compliance and Enforcement Annual Reports

From 2003 to 2005, the number of woodlot compliance actions has increased, albeit somewhat proportionately to the increased volumes of timber being harvested. This trend is unacceptable but is expected to be reversed as woodlot licensees better understand the Forest and Range Practices Act and learn to adapt to less support from Ministry of Forests and Range staff in avoiding compliance issues. In the past, woodlot holders have relied heavily on guidance and consultation

[1] Ministry of Forests and Range, Compliance and Enforcement Program Annual Report 2005.

with woodlot foresters. Following downsizing and a redefined business plan, the MOFR no longer offer these services to the same extent.

In comparison to other tenures (see Table 11, below), woodlot licences had the fewest enforcement actions per million m³ in 2005. Woodlot compliance actions were comparable to the BC Timber Sales Program, but nowhere near those of major licensees.

Woodlot licences significantly outperformed other licensees and non-tenure holders, which is significant because, like woodlot licences, these other licence holders do not have full-time staff dedicated to management of their tenures.

Actions per million m^3	**2005**	
	Enforcement Actions	Compliance Actions
Woodlot licences	2.0	45
Timber sale licences	3.2	35
Major licences	2.6	11
Other licensees & non-tenure holders (Licences to cut, special use permits, free use permits, Xmas tree permits, private lands, road use permits, log salvage, small-scale salvage & non-tenure holders)	49.8	237

Table 11: Comparison of enforcement and compliance action by forest tenure
Source: MOFR Compliance and Enforcement Annual Reports

9.3 Small Tenures Program, Forest Investment Account

The Forest Investment Account – Small Tenures Program provides funding to woodlot licences and community forests for activities aimed at fostering sustainable forest management and improving public forests. Three main strategies are employed:

1. Acquiring and providing access to science-based information about forest resources;
2. Ensuring that forests have sustained value production; and
3. Restoring and enhancing site productivity, recreation features, and damaged ecosystems.

The FBCWA has administered the Forest Investment Account - Small Tenures Program since its inception four years ago. Table 12, below, lists some noteworthy accomplishments.

Activity		**2005/06**	**2004/05**	**2003/04**	**2002/03**
Resource information - terrestrial ecosystem, vegetation resource inventory and archaeology		127,550 ha	40,259 ha	97,976 ha	74,000 ha
Stand establishment and treatment - spacing, pruning, fertilization, etc.		276 ha	149 ha	6,900 ha	470 ha
Seedlings purchased		13,000	21,164	52,700	N/A
Recreation site repair, maintenance and/or expansion		7 sites	35 sites	4 sites	N/A
Training and extension workshops	Participants	301	350	570	300
	Workshops	17	16	17	N/A

Table 12: Accomplishments – Small Tenures Program, Forest Investment Account
Source: MOFR Annual Service Plan Reports

Figure 11: A spaced lodgepole pine stand on W0475 in the West Kootenays

9.4 Agroforestry industry development initiative

Beyond being just log sellers, woodlot licensees also support the development of the emerging agroforestry industry in BC. Agroforestry is the integration of agriculture and forestry onto the landscape, or in simple terms, growing trees and agricultural products on the same sites.

Agroforestry is of interest to woodlot owners and licensees, as it presents an opportunity to diversify by doing more with the land and also provides a source of additional income. For example, agroforestry might include growing trees for gums, resins, or latex products, instead of just timber. It might involve growing trees for medicines, fruit, or for their ability to provide nitrogen to a site.

The Federation has administered the Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative since its inception in 2003. Some examples of projects and demonstration sites which have been created include the following:

- **Tapping Big-Leaf Maple**: The project's goal is to form a maple syrup industry where one does not currently exist. (Big-leaf maple has a lower sugar content than eastern maples and was not originally considered desirable.)
- **High-Value Hardwoods and Cedars**: Planting Western red cedar and high-value hardwoods such as maple, walnut, chestnut and oak provides environmental and economic value. The planted trees act as windbreaks, provide buffers along riparian areas and urban interfaces and provide wildlife habitat. Cedar boughs will become part of a new industry for the Christmas decoration market (wreaths, centerpieces, etc.), with the option to extract cedar oil as well. The hardwoods will provide shade and be visually appealing in an urban setting and, if well

maintained, eventually be harvested for veneer or lumber production. Maple, as noted above, can be used for syrup production.

- **Hawthorn Farm Trials**: This project aims to determine the economic viability of hawthorn as a medicinal species and to better understand how to establish and manage it.
- **Operational Mulching Trials**: In order to address forage accessibility in dense aspen stands and livestock damage to regenerating trees, operational mulching is being investigated as a management regime to integrate and actively manage both the agriculture and forestry crops in a manner that minimizes negative and maximizes positive interactions. Mulching machines create alleys in dense, regenerating aspen stands. Mulching, as opposed to simply cutting the tree down, eliminates the aspen as an impediment to cattle movement and reduces fire hazard. The alleys are grass seeded to promote forage production. Keeping livestock production concentrated within the alleys should also minimize unintended browsing and trampling damage to trees elsewhere in the blocks.
- **Silvopasture: Christmas Trees and Forage**: This project is demonstrating the feasibility of using agroforestry to manage for Christmas tree production and enhanced forage availability in a low-intensity silvopasture system.

10.0 Growth of the woodlot program

On March 31, 2001, there were 811[2] Woodlot Licences in BC. In March 2003, as part of its Forestry Revitalization Plan, the provincial government committed to doubling the AAC allocated to the woodlot licence program. Despite this promise, as of February 28, 2007 there were 826[3] woodlot licences. The additional 15 licences were direct awards to First Nations under S.47.3 of the Forest Act, usually as part of a treaty-related measure. Ministry downsizing has been cited as the principal reason why the woodlot program has not been expanded as announced, with the proviso that expansion will not occur until administrative efficiencies are identified which will free up time to do the new advertising and awards.

In preparation for expanding the program, a new Woodlot Licence Regulation was brought into effect on March 31, 2006. This regulation sets out the three criteria which make up the new award process: a lump sum monetary payment, private land contribution, and the proximity of the applicant's principal residence to the woodlot area.

In addition, the woodlot regulation brought into effect two other significant changes: first, the maximum Crown land area in new woodlots was set at 800 hectares on the Coast and 1200 hectares in the Interior, doubling the old limits. Second, a person may now hold two woodlot licenses. This was a way to allow existing licensees to expand their holdings if they so desired. The intent of these regulatory reforms was to address issues associated with older woodlots around economy of scale.

While program expansion has been slower than expected, there remains strong interest from people wanting to acquire woodlot licences.

[2] Source: Annual Report on Woodlot Licence Program 2001-2002, Ministry of Forests
[3] Source: MOFR Monthly status report on Woodlot Licence Plans – Provincial FRPA Implementation Team

11.0 Summary

"Small but significant" might be the best way to describe BC's woodlot licences. Despite being small in terms of area and the amount of timber harvested, woodlot licenses make significant economic, environmental, and societal contributions.

Woodlot licences feature a high standard of sustainable forest management. They are often located in hard-to-manage, even controversial areas, where personal attention to management and leaving a light footprint on the land are necessary. Some examples of where they are likely to be found include viewscapes, watersheds, high recreational use areas, urban-wildland interfaces, critical wildlife habitat, and in areas adjacent to private property.

Furthermore, most woodlot transactions (i.e., buying or selling goods and services), take place in the area in which the woodlot licensee resides. As a result, woodlots are well known for supporting local communities by creating employment, generating economic activity, and providing wood fibre to local mills and manufacturers.

The woodlot licence program has been an integral part of BC's forest sector for over five decades. Despite constant and ongoing changes within the forest sector in recent years, the one constant has been the fact that woodlot licences continue to provide the kind of socio-economic benefits and environmental management expected by the people of BC from its forest resources.