



THE WOODLOT COMMUNICATOR



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Minister Conroy presents the 2020 Provincial & Southern Interior Woodlot Award to the Sahlstrom brothers, Greg and Bob, Castlegar, Oct 14th. From L.-R. Greg Sahlstrom, Bob Sahlstrom, Minister Conroy, Tom Bradley (West Kootenay WL Ass President), Stu Deverney (Selkirk College Instructor, RPF for W0403).

Old Growth Deferrals & Minister Recognizes Innovation and Excellence in Woodlot Management

By SARA GRADY

It's been a time of change in forest policy over the past several months. The provincial government has been navigating the challenge of preserving old growth forests while balancing the economic imperatives of the stakeholders who rely on a constant supply of timber.

The recent proposal for Old Growth Deferral and Recruitment has prompted lively discussion about the management of the province's Crown forests.

It's reassuring that, during this time of transition in forest policy, our 800+ woodlot licensees remain committed to the principles that have guided their practices since the Woodlot License program's inception, many which are aligned with the province's intention paper Forest Policy in British Columbia.

This was borne out last month when Katrine

Conroy, the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development, gave the annual Awards of Excellence to three woodlot licensees. It was confirmation of the care and diligence practiced by all licensees across the province.

We hope you'll join us in congratulating these three exceptional stewards: Ben Wilson; the British Columbia Institute of Technology, under the guidance of Jonathan Smyth; and, the Sahlstrom family, in partnership with Stu Deverney.

We encourage you to engage in the conversation about the preservation of our forests – as a source of social, environmental, and economic benefits – with your local MLA and stakeholders in the industry.

BC's Recommended Old Growth Deferral Areas and Woodlots

689 of BC's 847 Woodlot Licences have some area recommended for old growth deferral by the Technical Advisory Panel.

11.1 million hectares of remaining Old Growth in BC of which only 37,518 hectares on WLs has been recommended for deferral by the TAP.

This represents ONLY 0.34% of the old growth that currently exists in BC.

PRIORITY DEFERRALS
AN ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Continued on page 2

Bob and Greg Sahlstrom, South Region AND Provincial Award Recipient

The Sahlstrom family has deep roots in the Castlegar area. Their father was a homesteader in the 1920s, and the family has upheld the traditions of stewardship and sustainability ever since.

Woodlot licence W0403 is in the Selkirk Natural Resource District; the current licence has been in the family since 1952.

This woodlot is in one of the most productive and diverse areas in the Southern Interior. The Sahlstroms' management strategy has always been to balance productivity, longevity and diversity on their land.

Over the years, thriving stands of cedar, birch and aspen have created healthy forests that produce timber for local mills and a place for locals to enjoy the great outdoors.

The Sahlstroms keep road construction narrow to minimize their footprint, while maintaining them in the event that firefighters would need to access their property, or adjacent land.

The Sahlstroms' longtime partner, Stu Deverny, has assisted in the planning and maintenance of the woodlot. He also facilitates field labs by the Selkirk College school of environment and geomatics (forestry). It's the ideal classroom because it is in a wildfire interface area and the woodlot has a diverse wildlife ecosystem.

The Sahlstroms give back to their community by employing local harvesting and reforestation contractors and making the woodlot available for mushroom and berry pickers, snowshoers and mountain bikers.

"We are proud of the Sahlstrom family's dedication to natural resource management and their long history as good woodlot citizens." Jeff Beale, President, FBCWA.

1. 12% - 73 hcs of W0403 has been recommended for Old Growth deferral

Ben Wilson, North Region Award Recipient



Ben Wilson with skidder-seeder direct seeding blocks

Benjamin Wilson holds woodlot licences W0117 and W0950 in the Burns Lake area. He caught the attention of the Ministry and his peers because of his approach to optimizing timber use and silviculture reforestation.

He has worked diligently to reforest one woodlot that was damaged due to wildfire, and restoring a second woodlot that needed extensive silviculture expertise, and a considerable investment in time and resources.

He's worked hard to clear debris from his harvesting sites to minimize further wildfire risks, and markets his timber to all the local mills, fueling the local economy.

He's committed to building and maintaining First Nations capacity and relationship building by directly employing several local workers, two of whom work full time. It's his goal to support their career development.

As a valued member of the community, he leaves firewood on the side of the logging roads for neighbours to gather to heat their homes. He also donates to local causes including the LINK (food bank/community support) and the Burns Lake Minor Hockey Association.

"Congratulations to Ben Wilson. It hasn't been an easy road for him rehabilitating one woodlot heavily impacted by wildfires and acquiring a second woodlot requiring extensive silviculture work, but they are proof of what can be accomplished with some ingenuity and determination." Jeff Beale, President, FBCWA.

British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), Coast Region Award Recipient

The BCIT Forest Society holds woodlot licence W0007 in Maple Ridge, which it operates as a non-profit society. The proceeds from all their commercial endeavours go towards bursaries and scholarships to educate forestry students, including the Katzie and Kwantlen First Nations.

Instructor and President of the BCIT Forest Society, Jonathan Smyth, has dedicated his time and energy to educating the next generation of forest professionals.

He has gained the respect of his fellow woodlot licensees and the praise of the Ministry by forging the way for future sustainable approaches to forestry that involve the entire community.

Smyth has created synergies with local mills, operators, adjacent tenure holders and non-forest interest groups to create a community-based integrated plan for Blue Mountain. He's nurtured opportunities for students and First Nations peoples to work on the woodlot in a wide range of capacities.

As a long-time Scout volunteer, Smyth gives kids hands-on experience in the woods, teaching them about natural history while hiking the area.

"Congratulations go to the BCIT Forest Society for this well-deserved award and kudos to Jonathan Smyth, the driving force behind the woodlot program." Jeff Beale, President, FBCWA.



**Jonathan Smyth, President BCIT Forest Society
and Instructor**



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