



Forests in Good Hands

THE WOODLAND ALMANAC

Special Old Growth Edition



www.woodlot.bc.ca

Winter 2021

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Old Growth Deferral & Recruitment: A New Future for Woodlot Licences

Stakeholders in the Woodlot Licence Program are still working hard to interpret and assess the ramifications of the Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations recent Old Growth Deferral and Recruitment strategy. It was set out in their document, *A New Future For Old Forests*.



Woodlot cut block in the Shuswap Okanagan logged January 2021. Area around cut block is now considered 'Old Trees' under the new OG deferral.

Industry experts predict that as many as 12,000 jobs could be lost as a result of this initiative, and stakeholders in the forestry sector are struggling with the lack of consultation, information available and direction provided to tenure holders when this initiative was released.

For many woodlot licensees, the consequences of this sudden policy shift will be terminal to their woodlot operations. As small-scale, area-based tenures, licensees can't simply pull up stakes and move to a part of the Crown forest that isn't under deferral or recruitment. Their life's work, and in many cases a multi-generational family life's work and investment on their woodlots will become economically unviable. The province stands to lose some of the best Crown forest stewards...and small towns will be losing the social licence and economic benefits of small-scale forestry in their community.

The ripples will be felt.

The Federation of BC Woodlot Associations (FBCWA) acknowledges that old growth is important, but so too are objectives set for the Woodlot Program and the commitments the provincial government made to Woodlot licensees.

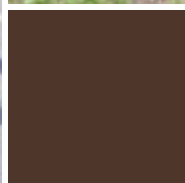
The Technical Advisory Panel recommended 11.1 % (54,130 hectares) of the Crown land in 764 of BC's 847 Woodlot Licences for deferral as old growth or recruitment forests.

That amount of old growth and old forests on Woodlots today is a testament to the high standard of sustainable forest management that has been afforded Woodlots over the past many decades. Old forests are part of the age class distribution that makes Woodlots

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Forests in Good Hands



www.woodlot.bc.ca

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www.youtube.com/channel/UCiEqfHa03fJ1k_D2pB1oY9g - BC Woodlots

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sustainable in the long term.

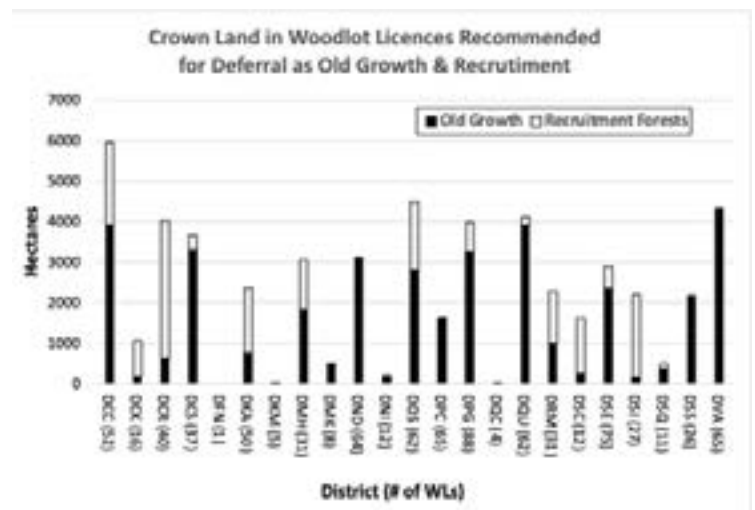
Many Woodlot licensees are reporting that forests identified for old growth deferral are not old growth. They are younger forests, previously harvested, areas denuded by wildfire, and/or actively being managed for insects and/or diseases.

Establishing old growth deferral areas (OGDA) on Woodlot Licences can have the following impacts:

- Old Growth deferrals on Woodlots could be contrary and counter-productive to the very purposes that the provincial government set over 70 years ago; and that have stood the test of time. Deferrals could threaten Woodlots' sustainability by necessitating the harvesting of younger forests thereby disrupting the age class distribution, adversely affecting the even flow of timber over time.
- Woodlots are small. Deferring old growth, even a small area, can have a disproportionate and profound downward effect on the allowable annual cut (AAC) which will adversely impact woodlot licensees and their families, threaten the sustainability of some Woodlots, and cause the demise of others.
- When considered in the provincial context, the recommended Old Growth deferral areas on Woodlots would be a minor contribution to the overall protection of Old Growth. Of the 11.1 million hectares of remaining old growth in BC[1], only 36,631 hectares of Crown (Schedule B) land or 0.33% is within Woodlots.
- Much of the legitimate old growth on Woodlots is already protected under the Forest and Range Practices act (FRPA) because it is in riparian reserve zones, wildlife tree retention areas, steep slopes, or where harvesting is heavily constrained such as scenic areas, ungulate winter ranges, areas of cultural and/or social significance.
- Further protection via deferrals is not necessary. Old trees and forests that could be old growth in the future are constantly being recruited for ecological, social, and operational reasons or to maintain an appropriate age class distribution so a Woodlot can be managed sustainably in perpetuity.
- Field verifying and validating Old Growth deferral areas and recruitment forests on 764 Woodlots will be time consuming, and a significant workload and cost to the ministry, Woodlot licensees and First Nations.

- Old Growth deferrals and recruitment forests will significantly increase administration as many of the 764 Woodlots will need new Management Plans (i.e., updated AAC determinations) and/or Woodlot Licence Plan amendments.
- Old Growth deferrals have the potential to create wildfire and forest management issues. Unmanaged old forests are highly susceptible to forest pests such as bark beetles which can threaten the sustainability of the forests.

It will take time to arrive at the real impacts on Woodlots as government works through the consultation process with First Nations, provides answers to the many questions and establishes policy/processes on how this strategy will be implemented. ♦



[1] Page 4, Old Growth Technical Advisory report, October 2021. Source: Maps provided by the Province of BC to reflect the data and definitions provided in the Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel report dated November 2, 2021.

Note: The OG maps show 844 Woodlots. The Woodlot report from the Forest Tenure Administration System dated Nov. 18, 2021 lists 847 Woodlots in BC.

The discrepancy has been noted and is being worked on.



Legal Implications of Old Growth Deferrals

by Brian McNaughton,
FBCWA General Manager

The origins of BC's Woodlot Licence Program date back to 1948. Over the years, the province's purposes for creating the program have remained pretty much the same – to increase the productivity of small parcels of forested land, better forest management, and encourage greater investments in silviculture.

The province always approved the Crown land included in a woodlot and, in doing so, deemed it suitable for forest management. A person then entered into a woodlot agreement with the government knowing that they would have exclusive right to harvest the timber in the woodlot in exchange for managing the land and forests.

Since the beginning of the program, the legal and licence framework has always required woodlots to be managed sustainably. Woodlot holders were required to establish an appropriate age class distribution that would provide a continuous flow of timber. Old forests have always been an integral part of a desirable age class distribution.

Fast forward to today...almost 75 years since the program began. 730 of BC's 847 woodlot licences have been in place for over two decades – 450 for 40 years or more! Apart from a program years ago to increase the minimum size of woodlots and some occasional boundary adjustments, most woodlots have resided and thrived on the same parcel of land they were awarded decades ago.

This attests to their sustainability, as well as social acceptance. Woodlots would not continue to exist in urban interfaces or near communities if social licence wasn't being achieved.

There is a well-established legal framework under which woodlots operate. So, an important question is: how does the current Old Growth initiative affect a woodlot licensee's legal, licence, and social licence obligations?

For example, the Forest Act requires each woodlot to have an approved Management Plan that contains objectives, including measures to be taken and specifications to be followed by the woodlot licensee regarding,

- utilization of the timber resources in the woodlot licence area
- protection and conservation of the non-timber values and resources in the woodlot licence area
- forest fire prevention and suppression
- forest health

The Forest & Range Practices Act establishes planning and practice requirements and requires a woodlot holder to act in accordance with their approved Woodlot Licence



Brian McNaughton,
General Manager

Plan (WP). Old growth was not a consideration in the preparation or approval of a WP.

It is worth noting, though, that it is not uncommon for woodlots to have retained old growth, recruitment forests and older forests in wildlife tree retention areas, riparian reserve zones, on steep slopes, in ungulate winter ranges, visually sensitive areas and other reasons.

Social licence – which may not be a legal requirement per se but is extremely important and adjudicated in the court of public opinion – may include licensee commitments to actively combat beetle infestations, reduce fuel loads, maintain roads and trails for public use, and remove snags that pose a safety hazard.

In briefing sessions to date, government representatives have said there are two options if an Indigenous Nation concurs with an old growth deferral recommendation:

- (1) the tenure holder can voluntarily defer logging or,
- (2) the province will proceed with a Forest Act, Part 13 Order that rescinds the harvesting authority and otherwise prohibits logging.

So, what happens if either one of those options is implemented? Is a woodlot holder absolved of the legal, licence and social licence obligations and commitments affected by the Old Growth deferral? Is it better if a licensee voluntarily defers logging or to have government establish an order?

These are important questions.

Presumably, if a licensee defers logging of their own volition, then they would be responsible for any non-compliance that were to result. However, if non-compliance were to occur because of government issuing an order, would that be an officially induced error and a licensee absolved of any responsibility?

To illustrate the potential seriousness, consider the situation where a licensee is planning to harvest timber this winter to reach their cut control limit. The area approved for harvest has now a recommended Old Growth deferral area.

What happens if the licensee voluntarily defers harvesting and doesn't reach 100% of their cut control limit? There is no undercut carry-forward, so does the licensee just forego that Allowable Annual Cut, or does the province intend to do something so a licensee isn't penalized for doing the right thing?

Alternatively, if government were to issue an order that precluded the licensee from harvesting that timber and meeting their cut control limit, would the province be culpable?

In my opinion, the ministry needs to address the implications of Old Growth deferrals to legal, licence and social licence obligations sooner rather than later so woodlot licensees can make informed decisions. ♦

Frequently Asked Questions

The following are questions frequently asked by woodlot licensees. The answers reflect the FBCWA's current understanding. Answers to many of these and other questions are being worked on and will be conveyed when received.

- Q. *Will the government be supplying better, more accurate, maps showing the recommended old growth deferral areas and recruitment forests?*
- A. The ministry advises they are working on maps with more accurate line work and that they will be released once the work is complete.

- Q. *The Technical Advisory Panel's report references a 'Methods Supplement report.' Will the government be making the detailed methodology the panel used for the analysis, including parameters and threshold values available?*
- A. The ministry advises that it is working with the panel to refine the report and make it available.

- Q. *If a First Nation concurs with a deferral recommendation, does that mean an area is or will be deferred?*
- A. Government has said there will be deferral in areas where there is agreement with Indigenous Nations and that deferrals may be implemented in two ways:

1. Licensees can volunteer to pause harvesting; or
2. Rescind approved permits and prevent new permits via a Minister's Order under Part 13 of the Forest Act.

- Q. *What do I do if I believe an area on my Woodlot recommended for deferral isn't actually old growth?*
- A. The ministry is working on developing validation and verification procedures and advises they should be available soon. Validation will determine if an area is old growth. Verification will determine if the area is truly at-risk and a priority for deferral.

- Q. *Who is responsible for doing the validation and verification? Who pays? Who is the decision-maker?*
- A. The validation and verification procedures should answer these and other similar questions.

- Q. *If I have an approved Cutting Permit (CP) and/or Road Permit (RP), can I proceed with operations?*
- A. Yes. An approved CP or RP is a legal document and operations can proceed.

- Q. *Is there any consideration being given to the impact of old growth deferrals on forest health, wildfire risk, and sustainable management.*
- A. The FBCWA has raised these and other related issues in a letter to the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operation & Rural Development and is awaiting a response. We are hoping to engage directly with the Minister and her staff to discuss these very important issues.

- Q. *Can I still apply for and get a CP and/or RP approved?*
- A. Yes, however – you may be asked to ensure the application does not involve a recommended Old Growth deferral area or identified recruitment forest. This can be somewhat contentious because if the deferral area or recruitment forest has not been designated under Part 13 of the Forest Act then there is no legal basis to deny a Woodlot licensee the right to harvest that timber. The ministry is asking Woodlot licensees to 'work with them' on this.

- Q. *Will there be any opportunity to manage and harvest some timber from recruitment forests and/or old growth areas?*
- A. The question has been asked but no answer yet. It's on the FBCWA's list of topics to discuss with the ministry.

- Q. *If there is an Old Growth deferral on a Woodlot, will a new Management Plan and amended Woodlot Licence Plan be required?*
- A. Conceivably yes but likely dependent on the size of the area, potential impact to the Woodlot AAC, and need to establish protect and/or establish practice requirements.

- Q. *Why are Woodlots included in the deferral plan when they are supposed to be managed for sustainable timber production?*
- A. It is the FBCWA's understanding that the Technical Advisory Panel's terms of reference did not include any consideration of tenure type or assessing socio-economic impacts. This is a discussion the FBCWA needs to have with the Minister and her staff. ♦

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Industry Webinar Questions and Answers – Nov. 6-9, 2021

Thank you for participating in the industry briefing sessions on the status on old growth and government's approach for implementing deferrals. Answers to the questions that were asked during the sessions have been prepared. The information is technical and intended for industry and forest professionals. **It can be found at woodlot.bc.ca website under Woodlot Management>Notices & Bulletins.** If you have further questions, please send them to oldgrowthbc@gov.bc.ca ♦



Explanation of the Old Growth Deferral Area Selection Process

by Tom Bradley

On November 2nd, 2021 the provincial government released maps of a proposed approach to achieve Recommendation #6 of the 2020 Gorley/Merkel Strategic Old Growth Review report:

“Until a new strategy is implemented, defer development in old forests where ecosystems are at very high and near-term risk of irreversible biodiversity loss.”

The maps were accompanied by a short report titled “Priority Deferrals – An Ecological Approach” (the report). Appendix 2 of the report provided some information on the processes used to identify the proposed deferral areas.

That appendix repeatedly mentions an Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel Methodological Supplement. **The Supplement has been requested but has not been supplied.**

A document titled “Brief Overview of the Spatial Data, Maps and Methods to Identify At-Risk Old Growth” (the overview) provides a few more process details. Additional information on analysis processes was provided during a series of web presentations. **Copies of the web presentation have been requested but have not been provided.**

DEFERRALS

This article summarizes what we know at this time on how proposed old forest deferral areas were identified.

The panel’s mapping work used a version of the 2021 provincial Vegetation Resources Inventory (VRI) Rank 1 data set that was modified by:

1. Excluding forests with a reported crown closure less than 10%.
2. Excluding private, municipal and First Nation reserve lands.
3. Classifying harvested areas per the July 2021 Consolidated Cut Blocks layer as early seral.
4. Classifying moderate and high severity burn areas from 2007 to 2020 burn severity data set as early seral.
5. Classifying areas where the VRI indicated more than 70% of the stand is dead as early seral.

Early seral stands are forest areas in initial stages of recovery from disturbance and are not considered to be old forests.



Tom Bradley

The panel used the September 2021 Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) subzone/variant mapping to:

1. Classify and set old growth deferral targets for the forest landscape in each BEC subzone and variant. The presentations and the overview indicate that BEC subzone/variant and landscape unit was a further level of stratification for analysis. **Further information on which landscape units and how/where this stratification was used has not been provided.**
2. Classify areas by natural disturbance type, or NDT. NDT is contained in the BEC data set. Age cutoffs for forests included in the proposed deferral vary by NDT. Age is very much a sliding scale in the analysis. NDT 1, 2 and 4 generally have older age cutoffs, NDT 3 has lower age cutoffs.

The NDTs in BC are:

- NDT1. Rare stand-initiating events
- NDT2. Infrequent stand-initiating events
- NDT3. Frequent stand-initiating events
- NDT4. Frequent stand-maintaining fires
- NDT5. Alpine tundra and subalpine parkland

Stand age was not the only factor used to identify deferral areas, and forests believed to be younger than old were included in the proposed deferral area in analysis units where there was insufficient old forest to meet retention targets.

The deferral areas proposed by the panel are outside of current protected areas. (Types of current protected areas are listed on Page 10 of the report.) The panel’s point is that old forests that are currently protected do not require deferral from harvesting.

Three sets of old forests for deferral were identified in the analysis, using similar but differing methods:

1. Ancient Forests,
2. Remnant Old Ecosystems (aka Rare), and
3. Big-Treed Old Growth

Ancient Forests

Forests with a reported age greater than 400 years (NDT 1, 2 and 4) or greater than 250 years (NDT 3) were classified as Ancient Forests.

Total area of Ancient Forest identified in the panel analysis was 0.6 million ha, of which 0.4 million ha is outside protected areas.

All of the Ancient Forest outside of protected areas is proposed for deferral.

cont'd on page 7 ...

Remnant Old Ecosystems

Remnant Old Ecosystems are stands identified as old that are located in

- (a) a BEC variant or
- (b) a BEC variant within a Landscape Unit where old forests occupy less than 10% of the forested area that has a site index greater than 10.

Old forests are stands with a reported age greater than 250 years (NDT 1, 2 and 4) or greater than 140 years (NDT 3).

Remnant Old Ecosystems are old forests in analysis units with little old forest remaining. The panel observes that if an ecosystem has been heavily harvested and very little old growth remains, these remnant areas are, by definition, rare.

Total area of Remnant Old Ecosystems identified in the panel analysis was 0.8 million ha, of which 0.5 million ha is outside protected areas. All of the Remnant Old Ecosystems outside of protected areas are proposed for deferral.

Big Treed Old Growth

The analysis identified older forests with the largest trees using stand height and quadratic mean diameter from the VRI data, stratified by BEC subzone and variant. **No information has been provided on how the height and diameter data was combined and ranked.**

The target level of old forest retention was set at the greater of either 10% of the total forest area or 30% of the area of old forest naturally expected.

The parameter “naturally expected” is important. The report footnote on the matter says “Based on BECv12, NDT, and updated disturbance information for interior NDT1 and coastal ecosystems.” **Further information is promised but has not been made available to date.**

Targets for proposed retention were set by either BEC subzone and variant, or by “BEC x landscape unit”, **the definition of which has not been provided.**

For each analysis unit, VRI polygons of old forest with the largest reported trees were selected in sequence (largest, next largest, next largest, etc) from the ranked VRI data set to endeavor to meet the target.

“Big trees” from forests with a reported age greater than 250 years (NDT 1, 2 and 4) or greater than 140 years (NDT 3) were selected first. If the retention target was met from these age classes, selection stopped. If the retention target was not met, forests greater than 200 years in NDT 1, 2 and 4 or greater than 120 years in NDT 3 were added to the potential selection pool, and the selection continued.

Where insufficient older forests exist in an analysis unit to meet the retention target, the target was not met. In these cases, recruitment forests greater than 80 years old with the largest trees were identified, but since it is not old forest, it is not included in the proposed deferral area. The report implies that the identification of recruitment forest stopped when the 10% of the total forest area or 30% of the area of old forest naturally expected target was met.

The report also explains that a second selection pass was carried out based on,

High-risk ecosystems (using site productivity classes within BEC groups) where old growth covers less than 30% of the historic distribution. We overlaid scenarios that identified varying levels of Big-Treed forest (top 3%, 5%, 7%, 10% of the forested area and 30% of expected natural old) with ecosystems and determined the scenario needed to capture 90% of high-risk old forest ecosystems.



Ponderosa Pine Dry Belt Old Growth

The overview adds,

Targets for each ecosystem were varied based on finer-scaled ecological risk. Whereas Map 2 shows the biggest 10% or 30% of expected amount of old for all ecosystems, this map shows the biggest 3 or 5% forests in ecosystems at lower risk, and 7%, 10% or 30% of expected for in ecosystems at higher risk.

The presentation notes, “the final deferral area includes a reduced area where targets are lowered in ecosystems with lower near-term risk”.

I am not able to explain this second selection process further. I think the second selection process in fact identified the Big-Treed old growth areas that are included in the proposed deferral areas.

The Big-Tree selection process could and did identify Ancient Forests and Remnant Old Ecosystems as Big-

cont'd on page 8 ...

Tree areas. However, such overlap areas were left in the Ancient or Remnant categories, and not added to Big-Tree.

The complex Big-Tree selection process resulted in a somewhat complex outcome.

Class Total Area (Million ha) Unprotected Area (Million ha)

At Risk Big Treed Old Forests 6.2/4.1

Priority At Risk Big Treed Old Forests 2.6/1.7

The 1.7 million hectares of Unprotected Priority At Risk Big Treed Old Forests (per the panel's definition) are proposed for deferral.

RECRUITMENT

The status of the Recruitment areas is not clear.

The panel states,

“We recommend extending immediate deferrals to include recruitment areas in ecosystems that are at very high risk to facilitate future planning for ecosystem recovery. Where insufficient old forest was available to meet ecosystem targets, priority recruitment big-tree forest was identified.”

We are not aware of an explicit request from government to defer harvest in recruitment areas, but the Panel's recommendation is to do so.

In closing, the deferral area selection process that the panel used is complex, and the key risk related Big-Tree analysis that led to identification of 60% of the proposed deferral area is not well explained.

This leads to difficulty in understanding why certain areas were selected for proposed deferral, and what the forest characteristics reported in the VRI that led to that selection were.

For example, if a licensee determines that a NDT 3 forest area is in fact age 122, not the 145 reported in the VRI, is that forest area removed from deferral? Or was the age cutoff used in the analysis unit actually 120 years, for reasons explained above?

These points have been made with government, and we hope that more information on process and thresholds is soon provided.

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Words of praise for BC's Woodlot Licensees from the Ministry of Forests

Every year, the Ministry presents the Award of Excellence and Innovation in Forest Management, acknowledging the exceptional practices of BC's woodlot licensees.

Here are some of the accolades given to our licensees over the years...in the Ministry's words.

2020: Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister FLNRORD

“I am pleased to announce Bob and Greg Sahlstrom as the top overall provincial woodlot licence award recipients for 2020, which is well deserved after the Sahlstrom family's 70 years of managing their woodlot licence area. They are dedicated to maintaining a productive and diverse woodlot operation and generously share access to the property for their local community to enjoy.”

2020: Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister FLNRORD

“I am pleased to announce Ben Wilson is a woodlot award recipient for his commitment to his community and First Nations capacity building. Ben is a great example of what the woodlot program can be for small, innovative rural operators who use every ounce of fibre harvested to maximize the efficiency of the woodlot.”

Woodlot Licence Old Growth Stats

	Hectares	# of Woodlots
Forested land in BC	56,200,000	N/A
Old growth in BC	11,100,000	N/A
Timber Harvesting Land Base in BC	~22,000,000	N/A
Crown Land (Sch B) in Woodlots	~528,000	847
Recommended Old Growth Deferral & Recruitment Forest Areas on Woodlots	54,130	764
OLD GROWTH	36,631	656
Big Treed	34,680	629
Rare (Remnant Ecosystems)	1,484	99
Ancient	467	24
RECRUITMENT FORESTS	17,498	302

Observations

- The Technical Advisory Panel identified 4,100,000 hectares of unprotected big tree old growth in the province and recommended 1,700,000 hectares for deferral; of which only 34,680ha was on Woodlots. Is it possible that there are ~35,000 hectares of suitable big tree old growth on the remaining 2.4M hectares that could be deferred instead of impacting 629 Woodlots?
- Why is it that 80% of the recommended ‘rare’ deferral areas on Woodlots is located in the Peace Natural Resource District?
- 21 of the 24 Woodlots identified with ‘ancient’ old growth have less than 30 hectares. The other 3 have between 55 and 160 hectares each. Begs the question – Ecologically and administratively, what is the minimum size area that should be considered for deferral.
- 45% of the proposed recruitment forests are on 81 of the 122 coastal Woodlots. ♦

**2018 – Honourable Doug Donaldson,
Minister FLNRORD**

“I’m encouraged by the work that Charles Bloom Secondary school is doing to prepare the next generation of forestry workers. This type of innovation is also an educational opportunity for the surrounding community. It’s a pleasure to name the school as this year’s provincial and South area award recipient for innovation and excellence in woodlot management.”



CBSS W1908 in Lumby, not only a managed forest, but an outdoor classroom will be heavily impacted by the Old Growth Deferrals announced by government. CBSS Forestry/Trades Program Teacher, Martin Tooms and students

FLNRORD Old Growth Deferrals

by Emma Neill, FLNRORD Tenures Branch

Reprinted from 2021 Fall Almanac

On November 2nd, 2021 the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (the Ministry) released the results of the Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel (the Panel) to the public of British Columbia, and announced its intention to work in partnership with First Nations to defer harvest of ancient, rare and priority large stands of old growth within 2.6 million hectares of B.C.'s most at-risk old-growth forests.

The Panel's independent report and associated maps take an ecological based approach to delineate areas of ancient and rare old forested ecosystems, as well as areas that contain the biggest old growth trees. The Panel recommended prioritizing deferrals in 2.6 million hectares of these forests and government agreed with this recommendation. These areas may be deferred from harvesting pending mutual agreement between the Province and the First Nation rights and title holders. Where agreement to defer harvesting is reached, a deferral decision will be communicated to the licence holder.

Identified areas are subject to on the ground verification during the government-to-government process and through engagement with licensees. Once there is agreement with First Nations on the need for a deferral, licensees may wish to voluntarily defer harvest in some areas which have been identified for deferral while long term solutions are developed. The mechanism for this is for licensees to amend any Cutting Permits to exclude areas of critical old growth. This can be initiated through the standard CP Amendment process as outlined in the CP RT Admin Manual (gov.bc.ca). The licensee may also have the option to amend the Woodlot Licence Plan to include old growth as an area that will not be harvested, this does not require a CP Amendment.

Should a licensee not wish to amend permits or plans, government has other options, including initiating "Designated Areas" under the authority of Part 13 in the Forest Act. A Designated Area effectively stops any timber harvesting immediately and provides government opportunity to enable specific provisions relating to forest management – such as opportunity to salvage. A Designated Area does not trigger any compensation mechanisms, unless it is in place for a period that exceeds four years.



The deferrals are intended to be a temporary pause that give time and space to develop a new approach to old growth management in BC. The 14 recommendations in the Old Growth Strategic Review set the framework for how government will be engaging with First Nations communities, tenure holders and the public to develop this new approach. Any decisions related to longer-term protection will depend upon outcomes of this collaboration.

Licensees will have been invited to attend virtual technical sessions during the week of November 8th. Staff at Forest Tenures Branch are looking to support the Ministry's District and Regional staff through the implementation process and will be addressing this issue through our Joint Working Group with the Federation of British Columbia Woodlot Associations and representatives of the Woodlot Product Development Council.

Additional information on the Old Growth initiative can be found here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/old-growth-forests>.

BC's Recommended Old Growth Deferral Areas and Woodlots

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

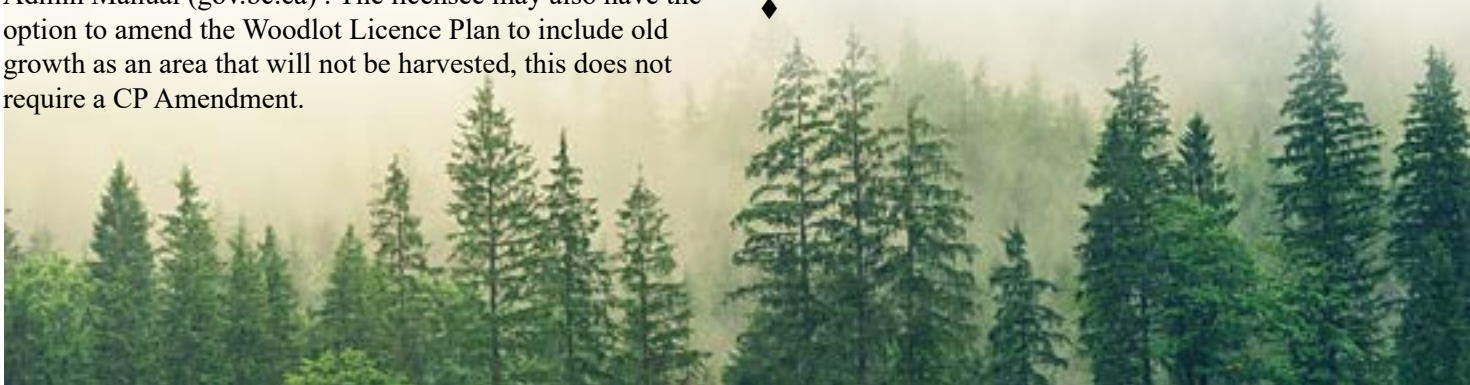
11.1 million hectares of remaining Old Growth in BC of which only 36,631 hectares on WLS has been recommended for deferral by the TAP.

This represents ONLY 0.33% of the old growth that currently exists in BC.

Priority Deferrals

An Ecological Approach

[VIEW DOC AT WWW.WOODLOT.BC.CA](http://WWW.WOODLOT.BC.CA)



Old Forest Management at Woodlot Licence 1611

by John Marlow and Coleen MacLean-Marlow, Rockview Resources Ltd., Quadra Island, BC



Forest Practices Board Workshop, September 2021 WL 1611

Management and retention of older age class forests is recognized as an extremely important aspect of forest management on Quadra Island and specifically within the Woodlot Licence Program.

Retention of existing older age forests and recruitment of a suitable percentage of old forest for future generations is practised at the Island wide landscape level, the woodlot level, and at the block/microsite level.

Island wide, there is approximately 15,000 hectares of public land on Quadra Island. ***Of that, approximately 5000 hectares, or 33% of the island, is under some sort of protection; primarily provincial and regional parks, as well as some 'forest service reserve'.***

This provides for long-term retention of old forests including existing old age classes and recruitment forest, which is generally comprised of 100-year-old second growth forest.

A secondary 'landscape level' objective, aimed at retention of old forests, comes from the informal "Quadra Plan" developed in the 90's by a now-defunct 'Quadra Island Forest Resource Committee (QIFRC)'.

The 'Quadra Plan' included a requirement to exclude old forests (minimum 250 years old) and/or individual trees from future harvest. *Although not a legally binding document, many Woodlot Licensees have committed to complying with the Quadra Plan in their Woodlot Licence Plan, thereby making the Old Growth retention commitment legal.*

As the majority of Quadra forests are a result of forest fires in the 1920s and 1930s there is little old forest remaining on the island and therefore the community strongly values the older trees and older forest types remaining.

At the Woodlot level, old forest retention is also managed both at the landscape and site level.

On our 400 hectare Woodlot Licence, there is approximately 60 hectares of productive forest in permanent long-term reserve area, and another 30 hectares of lands classified as non-productive sites which are generally rocky lodgepole pine sites.

The 60 hectares of productive forest land is primarily located in enhanced Riparian

Management Areas along fish-bearing streams and contains some of the best sites in the Woodlot Licence

This equates to 22.5% of the Woodlot Licence included in permanent reserve lands. Approximately 10 hectares of the reserve lands are genuine older forests with Douglas Fir tree diameters in excess of 2.0 metres.

At the site level, in most cases some level of retention is maintained for long-term biodiversity value.

This ranges from 2-3 large trees per hectare maintained for future individual older trees, to irregular shelterwood silviculture systems where upwards of 100 stems per hectare of mature trees are maintained.

These retention systems are most prevalent in high-use areas, along public roads and popular hiking routes, and are avoided in areas with forest health challenges (root disease) or areas highly susceptible to wind damage.

There does appear to be a looming conflict with these silviculture systems and the recent 'Big Tree Policy' where the intent of several rotations of forest management will be halted once the retained trees reach the big-tree diameter limit and a 1 ha reserve is required around each tree.

Over the years we have conducted many field tours with local industry, the local college and high school, as well as the local Woodlot Association. In September of this year, we also hosted members of the Forest Practices Board as part of their workshop on innovative forest management activities happening on the coast.

We welcome visitors from industry, education and government to survey our woodlot and learn about our practices. ♦

2019: Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister FLNRORD

"Congratulations to the Adamsons on receiving this award. Over the years, they have shown significant commitment to reforestation and forest health, leadership in protecting caribou habitat, dedication to the local community and have educated local youth on the importance of personal responsibility in taking care of our forests."

“ Approximately 40% of our Smithers Woodlot is affected by the Old Growth Panel recommendations. The entire Woodlot area was logged (~1948). I sampled two random “old growth” sites and the ages were 145 & 130 years. The largest trees (11” & 10” DBH) in each plot were sampled. In addition, this area shares a common border with Babine Mountains Provincial Park (already preserved).

This is not old growth and this is not science. It is clearly a preservation effort. In a nutshell, if we lose 40% of WL 1506A our Woodlot is no longer economically viable.

~ Skeena – Mark Adamson, WL 1506A

“ There wasn’t any practical, financial, or virtue-signalling reason for us leaving [old growth trees]. We just liked them and the profound experience, to us, of simply standing beside them. So we left them there, much to the chagrin of observers at the time.

[W]e have a situation where our land base will be reduced and our AAC affected because we liked the few old firs and left them standing.

They do not constitute an Old Growth ecosystem by any stretch of the imagination. But for us, they are a reminder to be good stewards and be humble and respectful in that endeavour.

~ Omineca - Murray McLean, WL 0639

“ Not having a formal academic background in forestry I remember 20 or 30 years ago trying to get my head wrapped around terms like “culmination age”, “over mature”, “faller select”, etc, as they were the buzz words used in that era’s good forest practices.

Next it was terms like “coarse woody debris”, “wildlife trees/snags”, “mycorrhizal fungi”, now the latest is “fuel loading”, “fuel mitigation”, “carbon sequestering”, but please someone tell me how Old Growth in the interior squares with all these terms...?

~ Cariboo - Rod Blake, WL 0071

“ Management and retention of older age class forests is recognized as an extremely important aspect of forest management on Quadra Island and specifically within the Woodlot Licence Program. Retention of existing older age forests and recruitment of a suitable percentage of old forest for future generations is practised at the Island wide landscape level, the woodlot level, and the block level.

~ North Coast Region - John Marlow, WL 1611

“ The Priority Deferrals were released with no information about how to manage immediate operations. Licensees who had approved Cutting Permits and set to get started were stressed and looking for answers. The maps showed recruitment areas which heavily overlap most of our Woodlots in the Fraser Valley.

The lack of quality data and methodology for stand verification is still an issue. Everyone is in “wait and see” mode. Our members are quite pessimistic about the future of forest management.

~ South Coast Region - Kevin Webber, FVWA President





“ This is a bigger story than just woodlots. The [Annual Allowable Cut] is too high, has been accelerated due to fires and beetles. The government of BC, past and present, has made no effort to assist or prepare the most affected communities.

The AAC was not sustainable and is based on 1970s forest economic policy and no longer reflects actual forest management sustainability or ecological integrity of our future forests.

Whether the old growth deferral is a good policy, I don't know. I do believe the AAC has to be adjusted downward, the old growth deferral is likely to do that.

~ Northeast – Chris Maundrell

“ Old Growth Deferrals will have a financial impact from loss of AAC, create a forest fire hazard from decadent and dying timber and be a breeding ground for bark beetle. This combined with the loss of the ability to manage will have significant impact if not be fatal for small area based tenures.

~ Thompson-Okanagan - Jim Stewart, WL 1615

“ The woodlot model of sustainability is harvesting the older forests as the younger stands grow to maturity. If the older forests are now 'off limits' the only alternative is to harvest young forests that haven't had time to grow to their maximum potential and reach maturity.

Such an approach is contrary to the sustainable management practices the Sahlstrom's have been employing for nearly 100 years and threatens the economic viability of Woodlot 0403.

~ Kootenay-Boundary - Stu Deverney, WL 0403

REGION	DISTRICT
Northeast	DFN (Fort Nelson)
	DPC (Peace)
Omineca	DMK (Mackenzie)
	DVA (Stuart Nechako)
	DPG (Prince George)
Skeena	DKM (Coast Mountains)
	DND (Nadina)
Cariboo	DSS (Skeena Stikine)
	DMH (100 Mile House)
	DCC (Cariboo-Chilcotin)
Kootenay-Boundary	DQU (Quesnel)
	DRM (Rocky Mountain)
Thompson-Okanagan	DSE (Selkirk)
	DCS (Cascades)
South Coast	DOS (Okanagan Shuswap)
	DEA (Thompson Rivers)
	DCK (Chilliwack)
West Coast	DSQ (Sea to Sky)
	DSC (Sunshine Coast)
	DCR (Campbell River)
	DQC (Halda Gwaii)
	DNI (North Island - Central Coast)
	DSI (South Island)

Old Growth Deferrals and W0403 Sahlstrom Enterprises

by Stu Deverney

Woodlot Licence 0403 is located approximately 8 kilometers west of Castlegar, mostly on the north side of Highway 3, in the Blueberry Creek drainage.

The woodlot has been under the management of Sahlstrom Enterprises – Bob and Greg Sahlstrom – since 1953, first as Farm Woodlot 0021 and later as Woodlot Licence 0403 as woodlot area top-ups were allowed in the 1990s.

The woodlot includes private (Schedule A) lands, as well as Crown land. The Schedule A lands were homesteaded by Bob and Greg's family in the 1920s. Part of the land was cleared and prepared for agriculture – hay fields – as per the requirements for homesteading. The remaining area was selectively logged for cedar transmission poles.

14 Selective logging created site conditions that would allow the residual cedar trees to thrive and grow into future cedar poles, as well as create conditions that favoured cedar to regenerate over other species such as spruce or hemlock.

In essence, the Sahlstroms were practicing classic “uneven age forest management” on this site – a management regime that was not only an ‘economic winner’ but also very compatible with the Sahlstrom’s ecological objectives. They wanted to protect other forest resource values, including water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity.

Fast forward to October 2021 when Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations, visited Woodlot Licence 0403 to present Bob and Greg with the 2020 **Minister’s Award for Excellence and Innovation in Woodlot Management**.

Part of her visit to the woodlot included a walk along a skid trail that has been used countless times over the past 90 years to view the ‘cedar pole farm’ that was first created in the 1920s.



Field tour on Sahlstrom WL 0403, Castlegar day of Minister Conroy's award presentation

To paraphrase Minister Conroy, she was impressed by what she saw and thought that the province needed more of this type of forest management. In actuality, Minister Conroy was walking through an ‘old growth forest’ that could, if it were not for being on private land, have been swept up in the province’s Old Growth Deferrals and Recruitment strategy.

If that were to have occurred, this award-winning forest would have been off limits to

any type of forest management.

The Old Growth Deferral strategy announced by the government in November 2021 has created a great deal of uncertainty and apprehension for the Sahlstroms, as well as many other Woodlot licensees throughout the province. Currently, an estimated 13% of the Crown land base – 73 hectares – in Woodlot 0403 has been recommended for deferral – Big Tree Old Forest. One month earlier, these same stands were the areas being planned for harvest in the next 20-30 years as part of the sustainable management strategy for the woodlot.

The woodlot model of sustainability is harvesting the older forests as the younger stands grow to maturity. If the older forests are now ‘off limits,’ the only alternative is to harvest young forests that haven’t had time to grow to their maximum potential and reach maturity. Such an approach is contrary to the sustainable management practices the Sahlstrom’s have been employing for nearly 100 years and threaten the economic viability of Woodlot 0403.

Simply stated, it’s just not good forest management. It’s more akin to ‘timber mining’ than long term forest management. Small trees produce small logs which bring in low dollar-value returns for the woodlot.

The ‘bread and butter’ for the Sahlstroms, as well as many

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2013: Honourable Steve Thompson, Minister FLNRO

“B.C.’s woodlot licence program is a unique way to give British Columbians the opportunity to manage small-scale forestry operations on Crown land. John and Dave Gregson are worthy recipients of this award, and exemplify the importance of incorporating public engagement and input in the successful management of their woodlot.”

other woodlot managers, is the ability to harvest trees which produce higher value products such as poles, pilings, veneer logs, building logs, and large dimension timbers for timber framers. These types of logs command higher prices than stud logs or pulpwood and result in higher average log prices per cubic meter for the woodlot licence holder – an important consideration when one is trying to stay in business and support a family through generations.

With ever-increasing licence and legal obligations, additional administration, higher logging and trucking costs, as well as escalating demands to manage the forest land base for a variety of ‘other resource values’ – none of which result in increased revenue for the woodlot licensee – the ability to derive more economic value from every cubic metre of harvested timber is crucial to the sustainability of a woodlot.

Large old trees represent a viable opportunity to realize increased economic value from harvesting timber. The large logs produced are also critical to several small niche markets, specialty mills, secondary manufacturers and forest products industries throughout our region and province.

No matter how well you ‘dress up’ small logs or certain species, they cannot replace nor satisfy the demands for the pole market or timber framers.

We’ve heard the message from government that British Columbia needs to encourage diversification within the forest industry and move away from dependence on ‘commodity markets’ for our forest

product manufacturing. By applying Old Growth deferral areas on woodlots, the province may be cutting off a source of supply for specialty logs to some of these niche industries.

Right now, the old growth strategy is in the early stages of development.

The Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations are throwing out their ideas for ‘managing old growth’ in the province by blanketing large swaths of forest land for ‘deferral’ until the final plan can be synthesized.

Some of the areas identified in the deferrals will not be included in the final plan but the process for deciding what stays in and what will remain ‘off limits’ to harvesting is not clear. What is also not clear is the process to adjudicate whether a forest is, in fact, old growth or not. Who does the work, who makes the decision, who pays for the work to be done?

Will designated old growth be subject to some level of constrained management to maintain and protect old growth attributes from pests and fires? Right now there are more questions than answers – again adding to the uncertainty and frustration for woodlot licensees.

A question specific to Woodlot 0403 is that the woodlot is not ‘fully roaded.’ Will roads through deferral areas be permitted so there is access to non-old growth stands? If not, **the old growth strategy effectively makes more than half of the woodlot unavailable for timber harvest, which would render the woodlot uneconomical to operate.**



Stu Deverney with Minister Conroy in a Cedar block on the day of the Minister's award presentation

I am sure it is not the government’s intent to shut down a small, family owned business that employs local contractors and spends its money in the local economy for a small patch of big trees that, by their own estimates occupy millions of hectares in the province? Is the government not including those areas already protected in parks and other reserves?

Adding to the uncertainty is that First Nations have been asked if they want to be part of the process – as they should be. It’s been inferred that if they do, a deferral is

inevitable regardless of the socio-economic implications or impact on the Sahlstrom family.

Woodlot 0403 is included in at least ten different First Nations ‘traditional territory claims’ – mainly because of its proximity to the Columbia River, historically one of the greatest salmon producing ecosystems in the world. What are the odds that all ten Nations will come to the same conclusion as to whether any or all of the areas with old trees on Woodlot 0403 will be further deferred or deemed to not be included in the long-term Old Growth Strategy?

During one of the ‘on-line’ Old Growth Deferral sessions

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a question was asked about overlapping claims and how that might impact the process. The response was that the government would adjudicate “strength of claim” to guide their decision making. Our questions are:

Woodlot 0403 won an award for Excellence and Innovation in Forest Management in old forests – the Minister herself saw the results.

Why not allow us to continue to set the example of how things could be done and allow us to maintain the sustainability of a thriving small business in the forest economy? ♦

Please note:

The opinions expressed in the Almanac do not necessarily reflect those of the Federation, the Council, or their members.



Woodlot 639 - The Last 37,230 Days Or So

by Murray McLean

The most recent Old Growth initiative from the Government of BC has given me a chance to reflect on how we arrived here both as a society and ourselves as a family.

Our family has had an affinity for farming and forestry on one part of the globe or another for millennia. Forestry, logging, saw-milling and farming stretch back many generations. Most recently – the last 102 years or so – we have been in British Columbia and mostly the interior.

Leaving Scotland and Ireland behind in the early 1800s, my Great Great Great Grandfather went to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and worked in farming and forestry there as well. Leaving Lunenburg, Nova Scotia in the late 1800s, my Grandfather, and his parents travelled to Boston, New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, book-keeping and prize fighting along the way, until they ended up in Anaheim California where they – you guessed it – farmed.

The tragic death of my Grandfather’s first wife from cancer left him with three young sons and a desire to move on, leaving the three boys and grandparents behind to sell the Anaheim farm – titles now held by Disneyland.

My grandfather set off for British Columbia in hopes of a new farm and a new start. Arriving in Prince George in 1919 he found good soil covered by trees. Although their first love was farming you had to remove trees initially and that led to the first sawmills, river drives and horse logging operations.

He married again, to my grandmother who was the local school teacher, and the two of them raised three more children: my father, and my two aunts. My grandparents always had good relationships with the local First Nations, who had been moved out to Shelley 10 to 15 years earlier, as employer, teacher, friends and hunting companions.

I grew up with many great stories about rural Shelley life. Dad had a real connection with Mary Pius and we used to visit her to bring firewood and catch up on the local news. So the point of my abridged family history? We are connected to this particular patch of ground and we aren’t the pilgrims here.

We have a history and a small place in it. Many woodlot owners do. So, in the late 80s and early 90s, after decades of corporate and government concentration, the culture in the forest industry became increasingly impersonal and regimented.

Companies founded by determined individuals and families with their strong personalities and community ties were slowly sold or absorbed by larger corporations with their professional management class and boards of directors with goals, budgets and projections.



McLean River Drive

cont'd on page 17 ...

2018 – Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister FLNRORD

“Saulteau First Nations have clearly shown innovation and strong, sound forest management. Their consideration for wildlife and non-timber values, while maintaining high woodlot productivity, is a job well done.”

Similarly the government and its managers and agencies preferred larger scale broad brush approaches for practical political and management reasons. Especially on a province-wide scale. Slowly but surely, small local forest communities were diminished as the forest industry concentrated and rationalized workforces, plants and harvesting operations.

The Forest Practices Code was implemented and forestry became prescriptive for many practical and political reasons. It was an improvement in a broad brush stroke sense, and some large scale mistakes or abuses were avoided or mitigated.

It worked fairly well for the large corporations and government but wasn't always effective or efficient for small land based tenures like woodlots. If you remember the old PreHarvest Silviculture Prescriptions (PHSP) you may have had similar experiences we did initially. We would submit our prescription based on our local knowledge and experiences and have the Ministry review it, reject it, and send it back for revising. We generally had very good relations with Ministry personnel but they were locked in to the hide-bound code at the time.

So after submitting and resubmitting and resubmitting back and forth we would eventually end up signing off on exactly what the Ministry wanted at the time.

Clear cut, site prep and plant.

So, ever the common sense optimists with a slight rebel streak, we harvested and left the very few scattered fir vets and large deciduous. Of course the Ministry reacted the only way it could at the time and demanded that we follow the prescription to the "letter of the law", which resulted in us receiving a double registered letter threatening to cancel and rescind our woodlot license.

We relented and dutifully went out and cut down the scattered leave trees with the exception of some fir vets. Even the Ministry personnel had to admire their majesty. Of course we had to pick up the tab for the resulting cloning and vole outbreak without any leave trees for raptors. The result was expensive brushing and weeding and replanting due to the vole damage.

The exercise of on-paper forestry as opposed to on-the-ground-experience forestry.

But things did improve over the years, or so I thought. To be clear there is not a single acre of our woodlot, Crown or private, that hasn't been logged, burned or experienced railway construction over the last 120 years. There is, in reality, no old growth, just a few scattered old Fir trees. The only reason that there are any old Fir vets on the woodlot is because me, my father, grandfather and great grandfather had an affinity for them.

There wasn't any practical, financial, or virtue-signalling reason for us leaving them. We just liked them and the profound experience, to us, of simply standing beside them. So we left them there much to the chagrin of observers at the time.

So now, to the irony and double jeopardy of the latest "Old Growth Initiative".

The only reason there are any old firs on our woodlot at all is because we had an affinity for them and left them standing. The vast majority of the Vets out there are standing in thriving plantations of spruce and pine putting growth on at an astonishing rate, much better for the carbon footprint. While the old firs have their glory days of increment behind them. So now we have a situation where we face the Catch-22 of having our land base reduced and our Annual Allowable Cut affected because we liked the few old firs and left them standing much to the chagrin and guffaws of others for the last few decades or so.

We left them standing out of our family's respect, and affection for their ability to survive.

They do not constitute an Old Growth ecosystem by any stretch of the imagination. But for us, they are a reminder to be good stewards and be humble and respectful in that endeavour.

In closing I would simply say, "Just because you can, doesn't mean you should".

And, "While power is intoxicating to the fool, it is a burden to the wise."

This applies whether you are standing in the forest with a chainsaw or in the Premier's office with an Old Growth initiative. I'm hoping commonsense prevails sooner rather than later for small land-based tenure holders.

Dazed and confused,
Murray McLean RFT, Current steward for Woodlot 0639 ♦



Rough and Tumble Days



*"Example of an Old Douglas fir that I have an affinity for that was left from horse logging done by my grandfather in the 1930's. Certainly not what anyone would classify as an old growth eco-system but we just like them standing. Something inspiring about survivors. Trees or people."
~ Murray McLean*

Woodlot Viability After 40 Years of Stewardship

by Kevin Day, Woodlot Licence 0343, Kelowna, BC

My name is Kevin Day. My father, Ernie Day, and I have had the responsibility of managing the forest tenure known as Woodlot 0343 for the past 40 years.

My father has been recognized twice in that period for his excellence in the management and stewardship by receiving the Minister's Award for excellence in woodlot management.

When we were awarded the woodlot licence, it became apparent that in order to salvage the extensive spread of green, red and grey attack lodgepole pine bark beetle infestation with the limited Allowable Annual Cut (AAC), we would have to extensively develop our haul road system with small narrow roads and limit the size of our landings and selectively remove only the trees containing beetle or already killed by beetle.

Most of the logs were hauled to the local mills with self-loading trucks, further limiting our footprint. We managed this over two cut control periods of five years each by taking up to 80% beetle attacked trees of our AAC volumes.

Needless to say, the reward for this hard work was not as much financial as a sense of accomplishment in improving the forest health by removing the threat posed by a large population of bark beetle with minimal impact to the overall biodiversity of our woodlot.

Our next harvest priority became the salvage and rehabilitation of large fir root rot areas on the western ridge of the woodlot and both quarter sections of schedule A lands. The next three cut control periods were dedicated to the salvage of the marketable timber in these areas.

In order to establish a new forest as quickly as possible and to ensure a healthy resulting stand, we stumped the areas to reduce the fungus carrying roots in the soil and to allow sunlight to kill the exposed roots. We then planted immune and resistant species of softwood in these areas.

Again, it should be apparent that forest health was the

main priority here for future generations.

During these five cut control periods, 25 years, we also salvaged any downed wood that was capable of becoming a sawlog. There is, actually, a small patch of true old growth Douglas Fir on our woodlot. This small patch was identified early in our tenure. We very carefully took the active pine bark beetle from the area and left untouched these trees.



Douglas Fir stand managed on the Day Woodlot, Kelowna

The only reason that they are still there is that they were protected from the original loggers logging for railway ties by an extreme adverse above the patch and by a swamp below it. It was not worth the oldtime harvester's attention. ***We have preserved this old growth wood for the value of its history.***

The wildlife populations, in my opinion, have increased on all points. The deer, moose, and bear are in abundance. There is a healthy herd of Elk that makes "Woodlot

Ridge" their home. The smaller mammals and bird species are everywhere you look and prove the biodiversity that we have maintained and, indeed, improved on.

All these years of care and attention to the biodiversity of our woodlot is being called into question by the sweeping and scientifically unsupported mandate called the Old Growth Deferral initiative.

The future viability of our continued stewardship of this woodlot is severely and unfairly challenged by this arbitrary and political initiative.

Considering the fact that it is extremely difficult to find a tree in excess of 115 years of age – except for the few and far between occurrence of a fire scarred Douglas Fir that survived the forest fire from many years ago – along with the abundant evidence that woodlot 343 has, in fact, resulted in a forest stand that is both healthier than before our stewardship, the production of fibre – read tree growth – has improved.

We hope that Woodlot Ridge could be removed from this initiative. ♦

An Argument for Woodlot Forest Management

by Don Whyte

Woodlot Ridge is located just east of the Kelowna city limits and is composed of four woodlots, all within close proximity to each other. There is a long history of log harvesting within the lands that make up these woodlots including both the Crown and private portions.

Since European descendants arrived in this area, harvesting has occurred here due to the good timber quality combined with the short distance to town. This is evidenced by numerous old stumps, old roads, trails and bush mill sites.

The establishment of the first two woodlots occurred in the mid-eighties and the next two were established ten years later. These lands have been managed as woodlot licences for the last 25 to over 35 years and the many natural resource values, including timber, are still well intact and plentiful.

Had these lands not fallen into the woodlot licence management regime, but instead been open to conventional, industrial logging, it is doubtful these values would exist as they do today.

The woodlot program, with its much smaller and slower harvest goals, has been very good for the long term existence of the many forest values, including old growth.

It can be fairly argued that the abundance of existing old growth is because of the woodlot program. This is why it seems counter-intuitive to remove lands from continued woodlot forest management.

Forest management, when done right, increases the resiliency and long term existence of old growth as well as the many other forest values. Without thoughtful management, such natural occurrences as wildfire, pest infestation and diseases can more readily cause severe large-scale damage to a forest.

Small scale harvesting, as occurs regularly within a woodlot, focuses on removing pest and disease issues before the problem gets “out of hand” and irreversible. Forest harvesting creates small roads, trails and openings in the canopy that form effective breaks within an otherwise continuous fuel load.

These fuel breaks have the effect of creating a means to slow and stop a wildfire that is generally impossible when burning within undisturbed forest cover. For these reasons, maintaining a land base within woodlot forest management can have the positive effect of preserving the old growth structure of a forest.

The Woodlot Ridge area is within the community interface of the largest city within the interior of BC. The potential for fire occurring here is very high due to the abundance of people and proximity to a large residential area. Further, should a large fire occur, the potential for major structural damage and real threat to homes and human life is very high.

Because of the location of Woodlot Ridge within an active interface area, there is good rationale for maintaining this land base within the management of a woodlot licence. ♦

2019: Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister FLNRORD

“Congratulations to Ross and Janice Freer and their family on receiving this award for innovation and excellence in woodlot management in the south area of the Province. Their commitment to forest health, reforestation, public education and promotion of manufactured British Columbia wood products supports the woodlot licence program’s core principles of sustainability, good stewardship, social licence and public trust.”

2015: Honourable Steve Thompson, Minister FLNRO

“Ron and Doug Fuller have led the way in building a viable, thriving business without compromising forest stewardship values. For 30 years, the Fuller family has been a positive force in Powell River – and in the woodlot community throughout the province. Congratulations to Ron and Doug and all award recipients. We appreciate your industry leadership and value your long-term commitment to the woodlot program.”

A State Of Confusion Over OG Deferral

by Skip and Susan Plensky, Woodlot 1878, Kyuquot, BC

We are in a state of confusion [over the government's Old Growth Deferral] because we were surprised that woodlots were included in the deferrals when woodlots are sustainably managed in perpetuity to be self-sustaining forest zones.

Woodlots epitomize the very values that the NDP government states as the reasons for their "modernization" of forestry.

Woodlots are self-sustaining, community-based and ecosystem-based forestry that also include small-scale manufacturing such as a sawmill. The neighbouring two woodlots beside us are managed by First Nations.

All the woodlots in Kyuquot are identified for deferral. We found out by receiving an "invitation" for regional FLNR technical debriefings. *There was nothing in the first briefing specific to woodlots. The second briefing was mostly about enforcement using the Forest Act and cabinet orders.*

We waited patiently after the first briefing and called the FLNR district office for help understanding, but unfortunately there has not been a District Woodlot Coordinator since the staff person who held this position for decades retired in 2019. The new staff person wasn't available.

FLNR staff were unable to provide detailed regional maps, nor any explanation of how our woodlot may be impacted. The process of deferral decisions will take a long time.

One staff person kindly said, "These are horrible circumstances for you, best of luck."

Why horrible? Because 6% of our woodlot has been identified for deferral. (6% = 23.1 ha of our 405.6 ha woodlot)

The poorly drafted provincial maps don't make any sense to us because their map highlights areas on our woodlot with good quality second growth trees; none are ancient. The provincial maps only cause more confusion. If, indeed, any "old growth" is deferred, it's problematic because we have very little high value wood on our woodlot which is overwhelmingly second growth hemlock.

We need every cubic meter of high value wood, especially cedar or fir, to make any profit on our woodlot. *The deferred areas also cause us concern over increased road costs as the deferrals may force us to build roads in steeper adverse terrain.*

With our west coast logistics for road-building, yarding, hauling and barging costs we need to earn more than \$130/m². * For perspective, the barging and sorting costs were \$30/m³ three years ago during our last cut. The road building costs were \$16/m³. All of these costs will be higher now due to inflation and fuel costs.

*[Editor's note: West Coast Woodlots have to band together to produce an operational volume to cover the barging and log delivery fees. Losing one or two woodlots to Old Growth Deferral and Recruitment shuts down all five of them.]

Without the highest value wood, we cannot achieve this minimum average price. *We're disappointed because without any consultation, the government's decisions may have rendered our woodlot unviable.*

And equally disappointing, nor does the government seem to care. It is our life's work.

We've managed our woodlot licence since 1999 and hoped that our children, who are third generation loggers, would one day take over the woodlot. *Logging is more than a job, it's a way of life.* Our disappointment is profound. ♦

2017: Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister
FLNRORD

"British Columbia's woodlots create employment and promote long-term stewardship of our forests. This year's award recipients have all demonstrated innovation and excellence in woodlot management. Their high standards encourage all of us to look for innovative and effective ways to manage our forests."

Opinion: WL's, OG & Global Warming

by Russ Clinton, Woodlot 0205, Prince George

Woodlots are area based tenures of no greater than 1200 hectares, the boundaries of which were carefully defined over the past 40 years for their suitability to sustain commercial timber production. Simultaneously larger areas were selected as protected forest to be preserved.

At this point there is no rationale to impede the productivity of woodlots to protect old growth when that has been provided for substantively on alternate lands.

In fact, with the world concerned about global warming, the realization that wood is our most environmentally friendly building material and the knowledge that managed forests are one of the most efficient ways to sequester carbon, there is every reason that our government should be protecting commercial forests. Especially those with hands-on management. ♦

Old Growth Recruitment - Coast

by Alex Hartford, Woodlot Licence 0025, Quadra Island

Alex Hartford is one of BC's original woodlot licenses, and one of three provincial licensees to win the inaugural Minister's Award for Innovation and Excellence in Woodlot Management in 2010. The Province has long admired the exceptional stewardship practiced by Woodlot Licensees, and this award was a way to formally honour their efforts.

Since Quadra Island is almost exclusively second growth forest, the Old Growth Deferral program doesn't have the same impact on his woodlot that it does in other parts of the province. He only logs Old Growth for the purpose of maintaining safety for his crew and the people who enjoy the woods year round.

However, the Recruitment program – in which trees that are 80 years old or greater are held as potential Old Growth and can't be logged – proposed by the Ministry has created a challenge for Hartford. Under the current proposal, 40% of his woodlot is under Recruitment, devaluing his woodlot...and effectively preventing him from harvesting the timber he had been patiently preparing to log as part of a long-term management plan.

His only option now is to harvest a plantation that's only 35 years old, which mills don't find valuable. And, in doing so, will undermine his plans for maintaining a naturally regenerating forest that provides a biodiverse ecosystem and revenue from harvesting mature timber that's in demand at local mills.

For his colleagues on Quadra and in Campbell River who have significant stands of well-managed Old Growth and 2nd Growth forests, the measures proposed are crippling to their operations.

"They're punishing one of the best [forestry] programs in the province," says Hartford. As a recipient of the Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation in Woodlot Management, he has a unique and valid perspective. ♦

Managing for Old Growth - Interior

by Brent Petrick, Woodlot Licence 1458, Kootenay River Basin

Woodlot 1458 is located in the ICHdw ecosystem of the Kootenay River basin. The small area-based tenure provides domestic water for many local citizens and has been managed within the Kootenay Boundary Land Use Plan (KBLUP) and relevant Acts and Regulations. Although the KBLUP exempts woodlots from larger Old Growth Management Area (OGMA) style targets, the woodlot has been managed from the first Development Plan in 1997 with a focus on stand level biodiversity and old growth attribute management, utilizing permanent retention of a combination of contiguous patches, single tree, and riparian retention within harvest units.

- Within a recently identified old forest retention (approximately 30 hectares), a 14 hectare Old Growth reserve was delineated in 1997. This reserve provides connectivity to an 100 hectare Old Growth Management Area adjacent to the woodlot in the same ecosystem, watershed management and landscape level biodiversity.
- All riparian management areas have basal area retention of 60%- 100%, including larger diameter trees. The objective of these retention stems/groups is long term, eventually providing for old growth attributes, stand diversity, wildlife habitat, natural species, and stem distribution.
- At the site level, retention is maintained for long-term biodiversity value. Single tree retention ranging from 3 to 15 stems per hectare is retained where feasible, for long term old trees. Larger diameter trees are routinely retained for long term stand biodiversity, which will eventually become old "big trees". ♦

2020: Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister FLNRORD

"I am pleased to announce BCIT is a woodlot award recipient for its commitment to developing future forestry industry leaders. The dedication and enthusiasm for embracing new sustainable forestry practices demonstrated by lead instructor Jonathan Smyth will ensure our province's forests will benefit future generations."



BCIT WL has no priority deferral or old growth identified but quite a bit of recruitment area

Editorial: Managing forests to reduce wildfires

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In Southern Oregon, the Nature Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service and Klamath Tribes set up what became one of the nation's largest outdoor laboratories.

Instead of racks of test tubes, however, this laboratory was populated by thousands of acres of trees.

The experiment: To determine how best to manage forest land to reduce the damage a wildfire causes.

The Nature Conservancy, which owns a vast swath of forest land, thinned one portion, performed controlled burns on another portion and did both on still another. Other portions were left unmanaged to serve as controls that would allow scientists to compare the management practices.

The catalyst was the Bootleg Fire, at 400,000 acres one of the largest wildfires in the West this year.

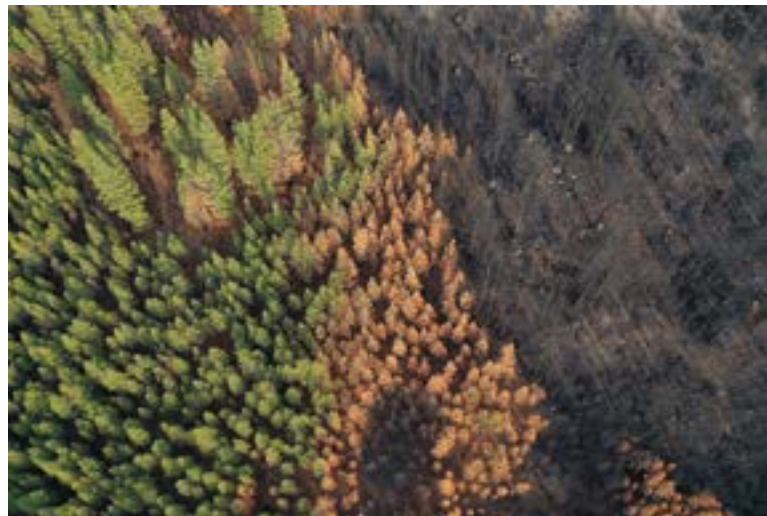
What the experiment showed was fascinating and provides a giant step in the direction of determining how best to manage forests.

It found that the portion of the forest left unmanaged was incinerated. Feeding on the excess fuels, the fire turned trees into charcoal, and the soil was transformed into a dead zone.

So much for the theory that forests should be left unmanaged.

The sections that were thinned or that had been managed using controlled burns fared much better. The damage was significantly less than that sustained by the unmanaged forest.

But the section on which both thinning and controlled burns



At left, an area where both thinning and controlled burning took place before the Bootleg Fire. At right, an area where no thinning or controlled burning took place. Photo Credit: Brady Holden/The Nature Conservancy

had been performed fared best of all.

The evidence clearly shows that thinning and controlled burns together significantly reduce wildfire damage. Most of the remaining trees are alive and will quickly rebound from the fire.

Beyond that, fighting a wildfire in a forest that has been managed is far easier than one where the forest is unmanaged. Towering flames that leaped from crown to crown and laid waste to the forest

were replaced by much smaller flames that could be extinguished.

In one instance a whirling fire tornado was knocked to the ground when it blew from an unmanaged forest section to a managed section.

There's still lots of work to do. Scientists need to put numbers to the observations and help others come up with follow-up experiments that replicate and expand upon this experiment.

Our hope is the impact of livestock grazing in forests will be included in future experiments. This will determine the value of grazing as a means of reducing the underbrush that feeds wildfires.

We also live in an era of a changing climate. We need to find ways to reduce the size and number of wildfires, which spew millions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

It is better to sequester that greenhouse gas in trees or lumber by managing the forests than to release it in catastrophic wildfires.

That's something on which reasonable people can agree. ♦

2016: Honourable Steve Thompson, Minister FLNRO

"This year's Minister's Award for Innovation and Excellence in Woodlot Management recipients are exemplary in their leadership, innovation, forest stewardship and local community involvement. Congratulations to Bob and Dan Davidson, the Hupačasath First Nation and Brian Harding and Darcy Nygaard for setting environmental and social models for all woodlot licensees to follow."

**2019: Honourable Doug Donaldson,
Minister FLNRORD**

“From implementing innovative approaches that protect neighbouring stands of harvest areas from windthrow, to leadership with area woodlots on timber pricing, marketing and forest health management, the Griessels have clearly shown their excellence in woodlot management. Howie’s focus on maximizing resources and minimizing waste from harvested areas also aligns with our Coast Forest Sector Revitalization Initiative. Congratulations on this very deserving award.”



Howie Griessel W0085 log deck

Links of Interest



- Podcast - Old Growth with John Innes, Andy MacKinnon and Garry Merkel
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1KR DxyxBZBR68jvrWtkhK7?si=eguTrC-vQIOPjXAsFRsuFA&nd=1>

- FLNRORD - Old Growth Forests
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/old-growth-forests>

- FLNRORD Industry Old Growth Webinar Q & A – Nov 6-9, 2021
<https://woodlot.bc.ca/notices-bulletins/>



Thank you
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Brian McNaughton	

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Dawson family receiving the Minister’s Award for Woodlot Management – Coast in 2012

**2012: Honourable Steve Thompson,
Minister FLNRORD**

“Sid and Barb’s commitment to ensure their woodlot provides social, environmental and economic benefits for the local community is outstanding. They should both be extremely proud of the example they continue to set for other woodlot licensees on the Coast.”



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