



Managing 'Old Trees' on a Woodlot in the Wildland Urban Interface, Kelowna, an area of BC where wildfires are prevalent.

A small cut block was harvested in 2021 along with another nearby block which included 20 loads of pulp from 'fall out' from over mature trees. Following this, the trail was rehabilitated and 25 loads of fir beetle salvage wood were taken out to prevent the beetles spread into the surrounding trees. This area of the woodlot will not be able to be managed in the future as a result of the Old Growth deferral strategy.

# Old Growth Deferral & Recruitment – Do Woodlots Belong?

By SARA GRADY

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".

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 multi-generational families' life 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 economic benefits of small-scale forestry in their community.

Old growth is important but so too are these small, sustainably managed forests, many around communities that have been recognized by the Ministry for their excellence in forest management.

The ripples will be felt. **For a better understanding of the possible impacts on woodlots, the Federation has produced an Almanac edition on Old Growth. It can be found at [woodlot.bc.ca/woodland-almanac](http://woodlot.bc.ca/woodland-almanac).**

*We asked licensees to explain the impact in their own words. Here are some of their voices.*



**Skeena – Mark Adamson, WL 1506A**

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.

**Cariboo - Rod Blake, WL 0071**

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...?

**Kootenay-Boundary - Stu Deverney, WL 0403**

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.

**South Coast Region - Kevin Webber, FVWA President**

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 an issue. Everyone is in “wait and see” mode. Our members are quite pessimistic about the future of forest management.

**North Coast Region - John Marlow, 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 the block level.

**If you have questions about ‘old growth’ and woodlot licences, please contact us or engage your local MLA in a conversation about the importance of woodlot licences to local communities.**

*BC’s Woodlot Program Supports Education through Scholarships. Congratulations to this year’s recipients!*



Jared, son of Paul Frasca, W1563, Columbia Woodlot Association, is attending Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops. He has gained considerable summer experience working in firefighting, forest inventories, forest health assessments and silviculture field work. He is the recipient of the \$2000 scholarship from the FBCWA and is completing his Bachelor of Natural Resource Science this summer, then continuing his studies to become a Registered Professional Forester.



Olivia, daughter of Mike Gash, W1808, Cariboo Woodlot Association, has helped with silviculture surveys, beetle probing, GPSing and tree planting

on the family woodlot. She is the recipient of the \$1000 scholarship and is beginning her academic journey at McGill University in Montreal. Having achieved her dual Dogwood as a French Immersion student at Lake City Secondary School in Williams Lake, she’s working towards her Bachelor of Arts with the hopes of eventually working in education.



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