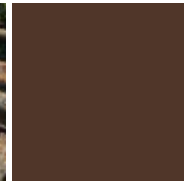




Woodlots BC

Forests in Good Hands

THE WOODLAND ALMANAC



www.woodlotsbc.ca

Summer 2026

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Woods and Waves in Parksville: 2026 Woodlots BC Conference



By Sarah Sutton

Can you hear it? The waves lapping against the shoreline while the wind whispers through the coastal forest as you walk along the pathways and beachfront of Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort? Join us for the sights and sounds of the 2026 Woodlots BC Conference and AGM on October 1-3, 2026. **Register online at www.woodlotsbc.ca/w26.**

This 2.5 day event explores the theme "Woods & Waves: Navigating the Narrative" through engaging field tours followed by a full day of speakers and sessions. Woodlotter advocates are the best advocates of woodlots and, collectively, we need to get better at using our voices.

How many people in BC even know what a woodlot is? This theme addresses the unique challenges woodlotter advocates face and how we navigate them together.

This is a fantastic opportunity to combine professional development with a relaxing resort experience. In your downtime, enjoy the 22-acre forested oceanfront resort featuring 3kms of sandy beach, the Grotto Spa, indoor pool and on-site restaurant.

AGM

All woodlot licensees are invited to attend the first evening for the annual general meeting free of charge. Attendance of the field tours and speakers requires a full registration. The AGM this year will

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Woodlots BC

Forests in Good Hands



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WOODLOTS BC

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FROM THE EDITOR

I recently saw a t-shirt with an image on the front of trees growing from a heartbeat pulse line. This depicted the sentiment that TREES = LIFE, meaning to show how trees help us live and help the planet breathe. Forests as a lifeline of our society.

This made me think about our upcoming conference and how it functions as a lifeline and connection point for woodlotters across the province. For generations, woodlot licensees and their families have been attending these meetings - reconnecting in person and building relationships. I recall my own Dad and brother sharing stories about woodlot conferences they attended over the years.

2026 in Parksville will be my 4th one and I look forward to it each year! I hope you consider joining us as well. Check out the conference insert in this issue and register by August 31 for Early Bird rates.

Sarah

Editor, The Woodland Almanac



include an overview of Woodlots BC's financial, organization updates and voting for new directors. Another important function of the AGM this year will be to vote on the proposed woodlot levy increase. See the Executive Director's report and the Conference insert for more information.

Field Tours

Take your pick of West or East for field tour options on Friday, October 2.

The West Option (limited seats):

Join us for a scenic ride across the central portion of Vancouver Island to Port Alberni. Along the way you will enjoy views of Mt. Arrowsmith (the tallest mountain on southern Vancouver Island, at an elevation of 1817 m), Cameron Lake, evidence of the Cameron Bluffs fire (2024) and the Westley Ridge Fire (2025), Cathedral Grove, and from the summit of Highway 4 (locally known as The Hump) down into the city of Port Alberni. Situated at the head of the Alberni Inlet, it is famous for its world-class river and ocean sport-fishing, pristine freshwater lakes like Sproat Lake, and its rich timber history.

Port Alberni lies within the traditional territory of the Hupačasath and Tseshaht First Nations. The Hupačasath First Nation manages two woodlot licences W1476 and W1902, as well as a First Nation Woodland Licence. Among other economic developments, they also own Kleekhoot Gold Bigleaf Maple Syrup. Producing bigleaf maple syrup is a difficult venture, which over the decades has been more of a family secret on Vancouver Island (including Harold Macy's W1677 in Courtenay and Backland's Managed Forest in Yellowpoint). Your tour will include a stop at the Kleekhoot

Gold production facility, the very first commercial-scale producers of Bigleaf Maple syrup.

Your tour will also include a walk through W0011 that flanks the Beaufort Mountains in the Beaver Creek valley, one of the best growing sites in the South Island Forest District. Todd Thompson's father Art managed one of the first farm woodlots in the South Island which is still included in the woodlot licence. Todd will share some of that personal history with you. Your tour will also include a walk on a portion of the historic Log Train Trail that runs through the woodlot, while Todd discusses his communications with the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, neighbours and recreational groups, and the Hupačasath First Nation.

The East Option:

The tours on the east side of the island will center around Nanoose Bay, Errington, Lantzville and North Nanaimo. These communities lie within the Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose), Qualicum and Snuneymuxw (Nanaimo) First Nations territories respectively. During your tour you will learn more about Mosaic Forest Management, a diversified, 100% Canadian-owned company, that manages approximately 550,000 hectares of privately managed forest land on Vancouver Island, most of which lies in the South Island Forest District. They have some unique perspectives around communicating with the public and other resource users. Because they also are one of the purchasers of woodlot licensee timber, they will be hosting a discussion on coastal log sorting and log buying at their Dry Land Sort in Nanoose Bay. You will also be walking through one of their commercially thinned stands and learn how they planned and

completed the thinning operation and where the small harvested trees were sent. Shawn Flynn, retired woodlot licensee, will then be hosting lunch at his Christmas Tree Farm in Nanoose.

Your bus will then be travelling a short distance to W1475 in Lantzville. The Gregson woodlot licence managed by brothers John and Dave, has had a tumultuous history since its inception. As you walk through portions of the woodlot, you will learn about the history and how they have managed to improve communications with the local Lantzville Council and community, neighbours, and recreational users.

If you are on the other bus, after lunch you will be travelling a slightly longer distance to W0012 in North Nanaimo. The Heikkila woodlot licence includes the farm woodlot originally granted to Rick's father Eric. This woodlot lies adjacent to Benson Creek Regional Park and VIU's W0020 along the lower slopes of Mt. Benson. The world famous Fine China trail, with support from Rick, lies within the woodlot and is the first provincially approved trail built by the Nanaimo Mountain Bike Club (NMBC). You will hear from Rick how he communicates with the NMBC and manages the numerous bike trails that criss-cross his woodlot licence. Recreation use by hikers, walkers, bikers, and motocross is a dominant part of management on W0012.

Early Bird

Don't miss out! **Register by August 31, 2026 for Early Bird rates.** You could earn a chance to win back your registration fee. **Register online at www.woodlotsbc.ca/w26** or use the insert included to register by mail. ♦

Navigating the Narrative

By Gord Chipman

Strategic Focus: Controlling the Controllable

As we move from the challenges identified in my spring 2026 report toward our upcoming fall conference, "Woods and Waves: Navigating the Narrative," Woodlots BC is doubling down on a philosophy of internal agency. While we cannot dictate provincial policy shifts or global market swings, we can—and will—control our organizational response. Our four core Task Forces (Signs, No Net Loss, Private Land/Agriculture, and the Levy) have spent the spring translating strategic goals into operational realities. The results of our April/May member survey were definitive: your priorities are centered squarely on government advocacy and resolving the unacceptable permitting delays that stall your operations. This feedback has directly informed the three paths our Board is presenting regarding the Levy. We are at a crossroads that requires a decisive choice to maintain our influence in Victoria:

- **Option 1: Status Quo.** Maintaining the current levy without adjustment, which necessitates a reduction in support and advocacy capacity as costs rise.
- **Option 2: Inflationary Indexing.** Adjusting the levy to sustain current service levels against rising operational expenses.
- **Option 3: Strategic Advocacy Expansion.** Implementing an alternative funding model



specifically designed to scale up our advocacy efforts and member support services to meet the current regulatory crisis. This fall's plebiscite vote is your opportunity to define our mandate. While we refine this high-level

strategy, we continue to deliver immediate, tangible value through our robust funding programs.

Program Delivery and Member Value

Program funding remains the lifeblood of woodlot viability, providing the capital necessary for long-term stewardship. Our 2026 funding landscape represents a significant expansion in both scale and sophistication:

- **Forest Investment Program (FIP):** Building on the \$400,000 in projects completed in 2025, our 2026 plan is aggressive, targeting 35 projects with total funding up to \$490,000.
- **Silviculture Innovation Program (SIP):** We have secured a critical partnership with the Lil'wat First Nation for cultural burns on their woodlot, with 60% of the funds currently forthcoming. Additionally, we are launching climate monitoring projects across three regions to analyze the resilience of partial cutting.
- **Forest Enhancement Society (FESBC):** We are implementing \$1,000,000 in Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) work. To ensure regional breadth, this implementation is spread across

six different woodlots, ensuring our wildfire mitigation strategy has a provincial footprint. **Opportunity Alert:** We hope to secure new funding for hauling differentials to support the utilization of low-value fiber. If the economics of fiber recovery are preventing you from moving wood, contact your Regional Representative immediately to access this support. This financial value is only possible because of the human capital driving our association.

Organizational Evolution and Recognition

Woodlots BC is a "foundational" community, and as we evolve, we must recognize the individuals who have built our reputation. I am honored to announce that **Mark Clark** and **Tom Bradley** (in spirit) have been awarded the Foundation Woodlotter award. We will hold a formal recognition ceremony at the fall conference to celebrate their lifelong contributions to the sector. We are also navigating significant personnel transitions. **Cathy McClary**, a cornerstone of our operations, will retire following the fall conference. We have successfully onboarded **Alex Pite** as our new Administration Coordinator to manage this transition. These internal changes come at a time when the external landscape remains fraught with volatility.

The External Landscape: Uncontrolled Situations and Advocacy

The provincial government's flip-flopping on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) has created a vacuum of



Scan to Update Your
Subscription Preferences



Please help us out! If you are transferring or selling your woodlot, make sure the new licensees get their own copy of the Almanac by asking them to send their contact information to Woodlots BC. Also, if you wish to remain on the Almanac's mailing list let us know. ♦

Timber Pricing Issues As We Know It

By Gord Chipman

Tabular rates have been in existence for Community Forests since 2005 and for Woodlots since 2008. Tabular rates were implemented for woodlots to acknowledge the issues around social license costs and challenging economies of scale to operate a woodlot. In 2019 the Deputy Minister of the time declared that tabular rates must be changed to harmonize rates between Community Forests and First Nation Woodland Tenures.

In 2021 the Ministry of Forests published the Modernizing Forest Policy in British Columbia Intentions Paper which identified many policy changes. Recommendations on page 20 are about revising area-based tenure-specific pricing policy:

Currently there is a disparity between stumpage rates applied to Woodlot Licences, Community Forest Agreements, and First



Nation Woodland Licences issued to Indigenous communities. We will harmonize the rate structures, consistent with our market-based pricing system, while being mindful that smaller tenure ownership is impacted by economies of scale.

Myself, Dean Daly and Kevin Webber have been in discussions with the

Ministry of Forests to discuss the initiative in the intentions paper. The purpose of these conversations is to explore pricing options, informed by the information we currently have available.

We are advocating for stabilizing the declining forest sector and we believe that there may be unintended consequences with pricing changes, which could cause further impacts. We believe that the woodlot program provides benefits to communities, like resilient forest conditions through Wildfire Risk Reduction, visual quality management, and provides fibre opportunities to local markets. We are sharing this perspective and information with the Ministry of Forests as we continue our discussions with the Province. We are proud that we have maintained Tabular rates since 2008. We are hopeful that we can say more at the Woodlots BC conference in Parksville this fall. ♦

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► From page 4

business certainty. Specifically, Bills 20 and 21 now threaten six woodlots in the Comox and Terrace areas, leaving licensees in a precarious limbo. We have established a new **Joint Working Group (JWG)** with a fresh Terms of Reference (TOR) focused exclusively on action. We have no intention of “talking about things we have no control over” and expect results. This includes tackling the “Tenure Transfer Crisis,” where delays have ballooned from 150 to over 700 days for some members; this is very frustrating following the death of a tenure holder. I have engaged the Tenures Branch directly to develop a resolution to these inexcusable timelines. I was informed that all tenure transfers go through the Minister of Forest Office now.

Industry Outlook: Pricing, Metrics,

and the Working Landscape

Stabilizing the managed land base is our top priority as sawlog prices soften into the \$80/m³ range and diesel costs surge past \$2 per liter. In this environment, the “Working Forest” concept—recently rebranded by Cabinet as the **“Working Landscape”**—is gaining traction. This three-zone model (Production, Mixed-use, and Conservation) must start with area-based tenures like woodlots that have already proven their value. Regarding timber pricing, the official return of **Tabular Rate reviews** is now a reality. While discussions are currently confidential, our position is firm: the province must choose a model that is “fair vs. easy.” In today’s economy, fair is more important than “easy” administrative models that sacrifice the economic

viability of woodlot owners. This, along with expropriation concerns on the Coast, remains a primary focus of our advocacy.

Final Announcements and Looking Ahead

In an era of restructuring, “showing up” is the only way to protect our interests. We have secured a new opportunity through the Canadian Forest Owners Association (CFO) to provide fire and insect insurance tailored for woodlots—a critical safety net as climate risks mount. Most importantly, clear your calendars for our **“Woods and Waves”** Conference this fall. Your vote on the levy, and involvement to vote in our next slate of Directors and your presence in these discussions will determine if we simply survive this narrative or if we lead it. ♦

When to Harvest on Your Woodlot Licence

By Ross Harris

Deciding when to harvest on your woodlot is a very important decision, considering most woodlot licensees only harvest once every five years to achieve better economies of scale and to hopefully time a decent log market.

Unlike ranching and farming where you often have to sell every year and take the prices available, a licensee can choose to wait if the economics don't work.

The Woodlots BC website has some excellent resources for members to reference like the **CP Reminders List** under [Woodlot Licensee Guides & Tools](#) on the Woodlots BC website.

This article is about the decision to harvest or not to harvest after you have a cutting permit in hand or have a high degree of confidence that the cutting permit will be issued shortly.

The following steps are part of the process that I follow, and I apologize to Coastal licensees as the Interior licensees usually sell directly to sawmills and processing plants while the circumstances are different on the Coast with wood often sold to log sort yards and log brokers. However, there are still some parallels.

1. Assess your local log market

- For some licensees the local market is often only one or two buyers, other regions are more fortunate. Decide what log buyers to invite to see your proposed harvest areas. Contact information for log buyers can be found through your fellow licensees, your local woodlot association, Woodlots BC representatives or the local company offices.
- Where possible ask around to find out what some of the most recent prices have been paid by species and sorts.



Ross Harris starting harvest on W0238.

2. Get familiar with current harvesting costs

- If you have a logging contractor you work with, get a rough quote on their logging, hauling, road building costs and any other costs like road maintenance or road access charges.
- Costs have gone up substantially in the last five years. Make sure you are using current costs to calculate your potential margin.
- If you don't have a logging contractor or log yourself, ask the sawmills for approximate costs or ask your fellow licensees in the area.
- The mills often all pay the same tonne/hour for hauling and it changes month to month with fuel surcharges.

3. Understand log conversions and stumpage deductions

- In the Interior wood is taken over weigh scales and sample loads are taken over a scale year to convert the weight to cubic metres and calculate a ratio of species in the load and the log grades.
- Your wood will be put into a

population stratum with many other sellers and is used for calculating payment and by the Ministry of Forests (MOF) for stumpage calculations and volume attributed towards your annual allowable cut (AAC).

- Current stumpage rates are available on the Timber Pricing Branch website.
- The wood from your woodlot may be quite different from the population you have been grouped with. Some mills will pull load samples of your wood to adjust payment to your weigh scale conversion. This is a good option.
- Watch the volume billed to your AAC by the MOF as it may be different than you are being paid for.

4. Finding a home for low-grade and pulp material

- Pulp mills and pellet plants are now potential buyers for conifer and deciduous pulp, depending on your location.
- Utilizing conifer pulp down to a 5-centimetre top and deciduous

pulp to similar utilization can leave your cut block much cleaner and reduce debris pile burning.

- It is more efficient to remove pulp concurrently with harvest; MOF scaling department may require some additional permissions.
- Different delivery rates may need to be negotiated with your logging contractor as the purchase prices are very low for conifer and deciduous pulp.

5. Know your other Operating and Administrative costs

- There are ongoing costs such as annual rent, property taxes, maintaining an office, accounting and legal that happen every year. Consider all the expenses that have to be paid until you harvest again in five years.
- Silviculture costs occur on a time delayed basis but include seedlings, planting, brushing, and surveys as the most common costs.
- Woodlot administration includes updating Woodlot Licence Plans or Management Plans, inventory updates, archeological assessments and reports, wildlife and fisheries studies, First Nations liaison and consultation, mapping and RESULTS reporting as common administrative costs.
- Pay yourself. Recognize the time spent on the woodlot and that there needs to be a financial benefit to yourself after all the costs are paid.

In summary, find the best-selling price for your wood, determine your direct costs to deliver the wood, including stumpage, and then consider all the indirect costs you will incur over the next five years. There needs to be a clear margin to justify proceeding, otherwise wait. ♦

Clarification Notice

This notice is a follow up to the front page article “The Ins and Outs of Gates” published in the Spring 2026 Almanac. Woodlot Licence 0020 does not restrict public access through the installation or locking of gates without written permission granted by the Ministry of Forests. WL 0020 is held by Vancouver Island University (VIU) and managed by instructors in VIU’s Forest Resource Technology Diploma program. The woodlot serves as an outdoor classroom for forestry students, and recreational space for both residents and visitors to the Nanaimo region. ♦



Share Your Story



Wolfram

Meet A Woodlotter

Woodlots BC is looking for woodlot licensees from all areas of BC. Will you be our next 'Meet a Woodlotter?' Reach out or refer someone.

 **CONTACT US**

communications@woodlotsbc.ca 

Purpose of Woodlots BC: Connecting Woodlot Licensees and Giving Voice to their Tenure.

Values we believe in:

- ✓ Woodlot Licences and small-scale forestry
- ✓ The diversity of licensees, and the privilege to be a caretaker of the land
- ✓ Achieving social licence by developing and maintaining a good reputation with neighbours, communities, and business partners
- ✓ Excellence in forest management
- ✓ Resilient and healthy ecosystems
- ✓ Advancing innovation ♦



Woodlots BC
Forests in Good Hands

Meet A Woodlotter: North Island early woodlot thrives for 30+ years

By John McClary

Jim Burgess is a longtime dedicated woodlotter who lives just outside of Port Hardy, British Columbia close to his woodlot. Woodlot 0071 was the first one awarded in the North Island Resource District in 1992. The area was overlooked by other loggers due to the poor timber growth and numerous wetlands. His company, Spiketop Cedar Ltd., has a small sawmill where Jim mills Cedar, Hemlock and Pine from his woodlot. His Allowable Annual Cut is 1,700 cubic meters which is about a 2-hectare opening. There is no Private (Schedule A) Land in his woodlot although he owns a small piece of timbered land which he manages.

Jim worked for the Forest Service early in his career and then for major forest companies before going out on his own. He remembers reading the 1976 Pearce report on Timber Rights and Forest Policy in BC and being inspired by the section on proposed Woodlots. That led to his becoming a woodlotter some 20 years later. He has been involved in showcasing his sustainable practices to local government officials. The Ministry of Forests office has been very supportive of Jim's efforts and the newest Minister of Forests visited the woodlot last winter.

Jim emphasizes innovative management practices, focusing on sustainability and the health of the forest ecosystem. He has worked on water management in his woodlot by improving drainage which has led



Jim and his grandson on the woodlot. Family involvement in the woodlot and sawmill operations is part of the succession plan.

to better tree growth. Soils are good and deep, but the trees need help to access nutrients.

“Every day spent in the woodlot is fulfilling.”

Jim has challenges managing the woodlot with the lower-grade timber and poor drainage. He has focused on revitalizing distressed trees and improving site conditions to enhance growth. The woodlot contains wetlands and wildlife habitats, contributing to biodiversity. Jim's mill operations foster connections with the local community, providing a source of lumber and engaging with local residents. Firewood cutters and recreationalists use the woodlot

although vehicular access is gated to reduce vandalism and garbage.

Jim has experience working with First Nations and the importance of being respectful and resourceful. He has received feedback from local First Nations for his good management of the woodlot.

W0071 has a few Species at Risk such as native Crab Apples and Marbled Murrelets. Fish-bearing streams flow throughout the woodlot with a good run of Coho Salmon annually.

One unique memorable experience was discovering petrified logs deep in the ground while building roads. He values family involvement in the woodlot and sawmill operations.

Jim aims to complete the development of a road system throughout the woodlot to facilitate better management. He plans to transfer knowledge and responsibilities to his family, ensuring the continuation of their sustainable practices.

His advice for new woodlotters includes the importance of patience, hard work, and perseverance in woodlot management. He recommended building relationships with local communities and consulting with experienced forestry and logging professionals including other woodlotters. Jim expressed that every day spent in the woodlot is fulfilling, and he feels fortunate to have a job he enjoys. ♦

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Note: If you are interested in or know of a Woodlotter interested in being interviewed for a future Meet a Woodlotter article contact Sarah Sutton at communications@woodlotsbc.ca

Meet A Woodlotter: Four decades of public education

By John McClary

The Willow River Demonstration Forest Society is the holder of Woodlot Licence W0272 that was awarded in 1986 and is located in the Prince George Resource District approximately 30 km East of Prince George.

Mike Trepanier of Industrial Forestry Service Ltd. has been the woodlot manager since 2004 and is also a member of the Society. The woodlot has a strong focus on sustainable forestry and public education. In the mid-1970s members of the Canadian Institute of Forestry's Cariboo Section wanted to make local forestry practices more visible to the public to address emerging environmental concerns. The Society was formed in 1985 and an area of land was selected for a demonstration forest and volunteers started planning interpretive trail building and developing interpretive signage.

The woodlot has been a platform for innovative forestry practices and demonstrations of sustainable forest management. Mike's role involves planning, managing forest health, harvesting operations, reforestation and maintaining the demonstration aspects of the woodlot. He finds the role rewarding, often witnessing the long-term results of forestry practices he has managed.

The Society operates the woodlot as an outdoor classroom to showcase ecological principles with a focus on creating learning opportunities for university and college forestry students and sharing novel forestry practices with national and international professionals through annual tours and workshops.

Successes include salvage of



Mike Trepanier giving a tour on W0272.

Mountain Pine Beetle-damaged stands while incorporating novel practices during harvesting to provide demonstration and educational opportunities.

The annual "Walk in the Woods" event during National Forestry Week has engaged approximately 500 elementary students each year for the past 40 years, totaling around 20,000 children, plus teachers and public members who tour the woodlot interpretive trails with volunteer forest professionals.

There are no significant challenges on the woodlot and operations have been reasonably smooth in recent years due to stable management, 1-Cutting Permit, and Tabular stumpage rates.

They maintain positive relationships with local sawmills and harvesting contractors to support their demonstration forestry activities and operate on a nonprofit basis, reinvesting revenues into the woodlot and educational activities. They maintain financial stability by managing cutting schedules and timber sales strategically, selling during high market periods to ensure operations are net positive.

W0272 functions uniquely as a

demonstration small-scale working forest for educational and research purposes. It lies entirely within the boundaries of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation Woodland Licence but is managed separately. The woodlot is composed of regenerating harvested areas, mature White Spruce stands and 60-year-old Douglas-fir, White Spruce, and Lodgepole Pine stands that originated from the 1961 Grove Burn wildfire. The Society maintains a good working relationship with the Prince George Resource District staff to ensure smooth operations and compliance.

Mike's memorable moments involve seeing forestry demonstration prescriptions come to fruition, tours with forestry professionals, and the natural ambience of the forest. He emphasized the rewarding nature of longevity in managing a woodlot by witnessing forest regeneration and growth over decades. The Society wants to continue responsible management with a focus on reforestation, harvesting demonstrations, and multiple resource values management. They want to build on existing relationships with educational institutions, professional organisations and First Nations.

Mike's advice to new woodlotters is to learn the geography and stand types of your woodlot well. Plan operations strategically for the long-term. Regularly monitor forest health and respond promptly to any issues. Work to build relationships with local sawmills, consultants, contractors, Forest District staff, First Nations and other resource users. Don't wait to plant trees after logging. Recognize nature's resilience but always give it the assistance needed to meet objectives. ♦

Note: If you are interested in or know of a Woodlotter interested in being interviewed for a future Meet a Woodlotter article contact Sarah Sutton at communications@woodlotsbc.ca

Agriculture Woodlots Task Force

The Task Force was formed in March 2026 to explore shifting woodlot related responsibilities and recognition toward the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF). The group's Terms of Reference initially referred to this ministry using the shorthand "MOAF," but MAF is the acronym actually used by the ministry and external bodies, and is used throughout this summary. Members of the Task Force were Hugh Flinton, Harry Hooke, Russ Clinton, Troy Petrick, George Delisle, Lee Pond, Gernot Zemanek and Jon Seinen.

The group's work is framed as a possible "fresh start" for managing regeneration stands and improving responsiveness, relative to challenges members have experienced with the Ministry of Forests.

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The practical problem motivating these discussions: private land held within woodlot licences, referred to as Schedule A land, has been in steady decline, from roughly 80,000 hectares in 2010 to an estimated 43,000 hectares today. The ideas summarized below are early stage attempts to identify incentives that would help reverse that trend.

It should be noted that of the 276 active Schedule A parcels there are 60 (22%) that are classified as Farm Status.

Strategic Direction

Discussion at the Task Force's meetings centred on the following direction:

- Position growing timber as a commercial agricultural activity, in order to access farm class property tax treatment and potentially insurance and fuel benefits currently available to farms.
- Adopt a "broad tent" approach

to membership: opening the door to small private landowners beyond current woodlot licensees, both to strengthen the case to government and to grow the membership base.

- Avoid being pushed toward the existing "managed forest land" classification, which the group views as suited to larger landholders and disadvantageous to smaller ones.
- Any proposal will need to satisfy the government's own financial test for agricultural classification (assessed using Mean Annual Increment and total value) before it would be considered.
- Specific government bodies identified for future engagement: the Ministry of Forests (MOF), the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF), the Ministry of Finance, and BC Assessment.

Open Questions / Unresolved Issues

It was clear that this task force is a work in progress and there are future questions that were left unresolved.

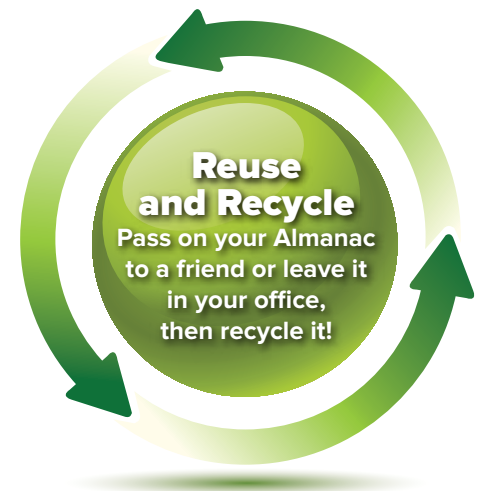
- **Size restrictions remain unresolved.** One comparison point raised: Ontario's managed forest land minimum is 2 hectares, versus 25 hectares in BC. Overlap with the Private Forest Land Assessment (PFLA) program is also unresolved.
- **Research and outreach in progress.** Inquiry to LandQuest/ LandCor regarding mapping of land suitable for forestry conversion, and outreach to Eastern Canada contacts (Andrew DeVry, Tony Rothen, Cliff Manning) on comparable provincial models and incentive structures.
- **No formal recommendation has**

been adopted. This document is a first pass collection of the ideas raised in discussion, intended to support further internal review rather than represent a finalized Task Force position. The current policy directions in the Province are not based on a clear direction and if this concept would be welcomed or not is questionable.

Going Forward

There were many perspectives shared and we will keep them internal for future reference.

If this topic is of interest to you, please contact gord@woodlotsbc.ca.



Please note:

The opinions expressed in the Almanac do not necessarily reflect those of Woodlots BC, the Board, or its members.



Task Force Updates

No Net Loss Committee Summary

By Melissa Steidle,
North Region Rep

The woodlot licence program in British Columbia (BC) is currently experiencing a decline in woodlot licences due to surrender, amalgamation and the reconciliation processes, while new woodlots are not being awarded. To address this issue, the No Net Loss Task Group was established to explore strategies to ensure the woodlot licence program in BC maintains the number of licences to be a viable tenure as well as continues to maintain a diverse voice. The primary objectives of the task group include identifying the causes of woodlot loss, proposing solutions to halt further losses, and generating ideas to introduce new woodlots into the program. The committee consists of Woodlots BC and volunteer licensees.

On that note, I'd like to acknowledge and thank the volunteers. This includes: Chantal Blum, Denise English, Ed Hughes, Fred Newhouse and Gernot Zemanek. They've been insightful and full of concepts and ideas addressing this topic.

Currently the Task Group is focused on stemming surrenders and discussing woodlot consolidations.

In the Forest Act, "surrender" can mean the exchange (surrender) of one type of tenure for another or the surrender of a licensee's tenure rights back to the Crown. As a group we only considered the surrender of a licensee's tenure rights where the tenure then goes back to the Crown without a replacement.

Licensees initiate surrender for a number of reasons: tired or overwhelmed by managing the licence, thought the crown would reissue the tenure, death without a will or the heirs aren't interested in

continuing the licence or a natural disaster. Surrenders can occur in two ways: the renewal document doesn't get signed or a surrender request is made. If the woodlot is in good standing, the Province **MUST** accept the surrender.

However, many woodlots are surrendered and never meet their Free Growing Obligations. This is a risk to the Crown and it seems that the MoF should be able to be a partner in slowing the surrenders.

Woodlots BC has already begun the Kindling program with 106 applicants interested in a woodlot of which 59 are interested in a woodlot that has little or no cut. These would be woodlots in distress.

The second topic identified as a risk to the program is consolidation. This is when two woodlots are merged into one licence number.

In the forest sector, the voice of woodlot licence holders is invaluable. Woodlots represent a distinctive tenure system that empowers individuals, families and other groups to manage a forest tenure ensuring rural citizens have a seat at the forestry decision-making table. With every lost voice, our unique collective influence diminishes.

There are pros and cons to consolidation of woodlots as some woodlots need to be consolidated for financial viability. However, amassing woodlots into large holdings can weaken small-scale forestry's role in local value chains, as fewer independent operators might reduce the economic and forest management diversity tied to woodlots. This amassing of woodlots is a point that tarnishes the image of woodlots as a tenure.

Consolidation of woodlots sits at the

intersection of the political viability of the program and individual economic sustainability. Consolidations can be justified in cases such as where a woodlot is clearly non-viable due to wildfire or forest health damage; however, broad consolidation risks concentrating tenure, reducing the number of licensees, and weakening the diversity of voices and forest management that make the woodlot program distinctive.

We have some other topics to discuss, revolving around extension services to provide information for licensees beginning the process of transfers or selling a woodlot.

Woodlots are valuable not only because they produce timber, but because they support small-scale forestry, local employment, public understanding of forestry, and offer a direct relationship between forest tenure holders and their communities. This is powerful, if there are enough voices behind the program and yet every year the number of woodlots shrinks, reducing our voice. ♦



Links of Interest

- Our website:
<http://woodlotsbc.ca>

- BC Government:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca>

Snags or a more encompassing term: Standing Habitat

By Melissa Steidle,
North Region Rep

We've always been aware of the importance of snags. Snags provide food, shelter and nesting sites. Do you know 35% of bird populations are dependent on snags? The forest also depends on the birds to spread seeds, eat insects, deposit waste and at the end die, providing nitrogen or food for others. Cute furry critters and creepy crawlers also use various forms of standing habitat, including one of my faves: bees.

Birds need somewhere to nest, perch, hide and sometimes even store food. Enter the need for standing habitat. Not just now, but standing habitat over the rotation. Although trees are renewable, we need to maintain trees with attributes that provide nesting and perching opportunities through every seral stage of a stand. **Before you cut, you should have a plan on what to leave that will provide that need now, and what will you leave that will DEVELOP into standing habitat over time.** That snag you leave today will probably not be standing at the end of rotation. Look in that crystal ball and choose some trees to maintain that will be snags in 40-60 years.



As always, the gnarlier the better. These are the trees with existing scars, forks or crooks. Something with big ugly branches also provides opportunity for perching, and when the branch breaks off there is an opportunity for a cavity

to form.

Choose to also maintain younger trees that have defects, they will grow into mid and late term standing habitat. You can even slap a wildlife tree sign on them today!

Here are some attributes to look for when identifying the best trees that are or will become standing habitat. If you can't find these attributes, leave anything close:

- Trees with forks or u-shaped divergence of tops. Trees do not need to be old, as they will develop into cavities.
- Trees with deformities, conks or scars.
- Trees with large branches which will eventually break off, developing into a cavity.
- Tree species with a shorter life expectancy such as aspen.
- Maintain windfirm dead trees and

also a couple that aren't windfirm.

Sometimes the stands don't have many snags, especially when thinning young stands or treating mature stands without a lot of disease. More commonly, they aren't in the right spot or you just want more than what is in the area naturally. Don't despair! There are lots of innovative ways to create standing habitat.

- Don't take out all the trees damaged by harvesting equipment, this will provide a spot for fungi to begin the rotting process. Yes, you read that right, machine damaged trees are okay, but only if it is a targeted damage.
- Plant a snag! Grab a cut tree from a debris pile and dig a hole for it to stand in. You could even flip it upside down so the root wad is at the top for perch.
- Stubbing a tree does work, even if it looks awkward. You could always stick a pallet on top for a nesting site. This strategy is used around Ootsa Lake and they have a vibrant osprey population using these features.
- No snags? Make boxes for nesting birds or the weasel family and hang them around the stand.

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AI-generated image of an innovative method.

- Trees too healthy to decay? Introduce fungi. This is being tested in southern B.C.

I am sure there are lots of other ideas, let me know yours!

In one woodlot licence plan the MoF Tenures Forester and I are working on a “if you build it, they will come” concept. I know that movie reference is a bit dated, and we aren’t talking about a corn field, but what if we built habitat that is missing from our woodlots. What if we have a woodlot that is in a landscape heavily impacted by a stand initiating event, be it beetle or fire. What if we have a large tract of forest that is young, maybe a bit short on species diversity.

There are still birds and animals that need somewhere to be. So, build it. Write it into your wildlife tree plan or scratch it on a napkin and make it your thing you contemplate when walking in the great outdoors. How, in the short and mid-term can I replicate that great snag? Look at that crevice with eyes staring back at me, how can I get that into my blocks?

We, as licensees, want forestry to look good. So too do the machine operators. Give them a reason to leave the existing snags and imagine new ones in the trees they leave behind. We can write all the plans we want, but it is the operator who shapes the block. Make it a discussion point at pre-works and tailgate meetings. Build it, and they will use it. ♦

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Woodlots BC Joins Canadian Forest Owners

There is strength in working together, and that’s why Woodlots BC has joined Canadian Forest Owners (CFO). As the national voice for approximately 480,000 private forest owners, CFO brings provincial organizations together to advocate for policies and programs that support sustainable forest management, healthy rural communities, and a strong forest economy. By joining CFO, Woodlots BC will help ensure the perspectives of British Columbia’s woodlot owners are reflected in federal discussions while benefiting from collaboration with like-minded organizations across Canada. Together, we’re building a stronger voice for private forests from coast to coast.



Exclusive Group Insurance Now Available to Woodlots BC Members

As a member of Woodlots BC, you have access to Canadian Forest Owners’ exclusive group insurance program, designed specifically for private forest owners. Through our partnership with BrokerLink, the program offers coverage options that have traditionally been difficult to obtain, including forest damage insurance and vacant land liability coverage. Members across Canada are already reporting significant savings while improving their coverage. If you haven’t explored your options yet, now is a great time to request a no-obligation quote and see how the program could help protect your woodlot and reduce your insurance costs. For details, visit <https://www.forestowners.ca/>. ♦

Contractor's Corner



Alexander Pite, Administration Coordinator

As the newest member of the Woodlots BC team, Alex has a background rooted in both the field and the digital world. He spent eight years working in silviculture, planting over 650,000 trees across British Columbia, and holds a diploma in environmental planning from Selkirk College. For the past two years he has worked online with a range of clients, taking on everything from administrative support to web design to emerging work with AI tools. That mix of hands-on forestry experience and digital know-how is what he now brings to his role supporting the day-to-day operations of Woodlots BC. A lover of nature and an advocate for responsible land and resource management, Alex is passionate about the work woodlot licensees do on the ground. A lover of the outdoors, Alex enjoys spending his free time enjoying nature through activities like surfing, snowboarding, and paddleboarding and has a deep love for music. He currently calls Chemainus home. ♦

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