



Beyond the Beetle and a look to the Future



John Pousette and Dave Peterson speaking on future timber supply post mountain pine beetle.

By LISA MARAK

BC's woodlot owners gathered for their Annual General Meeting in Prince George this year, a fitting location given that it is the heart of the interior forest industry and has one of the largest concentrations of woodlot licences. And it isn't surprising that the theme was "Beyond the Beetle" with a look to the future for these forest managers now that the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) epidemic has run its course.

Top of mind was future timber supply as woodlot licensees looked to the folks of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNR) in attendance to get a sense of post beetle harvest levels. FLNR Tenures

Forester from the Prince George Region, John Pousette's presentation looked at all areas of the interior impacted by the MPB and predicted that wood fibre supply to mills will decrease with a deficit of 11 million cubic metres of timber in the interior by 2020 - 2022.

Dave Peterson, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Tenures, FLNR and former Chief Forester of BC was on hand for questions saying "they have known this for five to ten years but the focus has been on harvesting and taking as much pine beetle wood as possible."

The good news story is that an inventory has been conducted on what remains of the forest and there is a "healthy" mid term timber supply. However a new threat has been identified - the

Spruce Beetle, with an infestation which has grown more rapidly than expected. "The Spruce Bark Beetle, biologically, doesn't operate the same as Pine Beetle. The beetles don't react the same way. So it should not spread the same way the Pine Beetle did. But it's not something that we're taking lightly, by any means" says Peterson. "The Spruce Beetle is going into some of the trees that were the mid-term timber supply and so it's just that much more important to be focused on it."

As a woodlot licence is a fixed area of land managed on a sustainable basis, a decrease in regional annual allowable harvest levels will not impact how much a licensee is able to harvest from their own woodlot licence. But the market into which they sell their logs will be impacted. Log buyers from local mills spoke on markets; current and future log demands and their need to continue purchasing wood for mills even in the face of an uncertain timber supply. They can no longer rely on dead pine beetle wood due to the poor quality, so are travelling greater distances to find wood. Log prices are strong right now but the expiry of the SLA has everyone concerned. Bioenergy makes up a small part of the interior market by using waste material, but is a limited market for woodlots as the material must be close by and available in large volumes.

For many, silviculture (the growing and cultivation of trees) was of interest as licensees

are required to re-establish the forest after harvesting. Not only are licensees from MPB country managing large plantations but they may also be faced with heavy brush competition from aspen. Hugo McLeod, Spectrum Resources explored brush control options to achieve “free growing” on woodlot plantations such as non-herbicide brushing techniques, herbicide treatments including aerial with helicopter and a combination of both.

The field tour on Day 2 took woodlotter into the forest to 3 local woodlots impacted by the pine beetle where key points from the presentations the day prior were highlighted as well as management of a woodlot with a low annual allowable cut and various beetle salvage logging practices.

The independent watchdog for BC’s sound forest and range practices, the Forest Practices

Board, provided an informative presentation on their audit process and what they look for under the Forest, Range and Practices Act (FRPA) regime, implemented over 10 years ago, touching on trends and findings in woodlot management.

The slate of speakers was rounded out by Murray Henry, Deputy Director of Wildfire Services who spoke on the importance of wildfire prevention and mitigation, wildfires on woodlots, many of which are located at the urban/wildland interface, prioritizing wildfires and allocating resources.

The stewardship video which throws a spotlight on woodlots exemplifying the mandate of the program featured the Willow River Demonstration Forest and Woodlot Licence #272 in the Prince George area managed by the Canadian Institute of Forestry. It is a leader in forest education offering public tours to adults

and has been host to “A Walk in the Woods” to school children for decades.

Each year the Institute enlists volunteers from all parts of the forest industry, from silviculturalists to tree planters to loggers. While they get an education on the ways a forest is managed and subtle lessons about the pressures on BC’s forests such as the urban /wildland interface, climate change, wildfire and pests like the Mountain Pine Beetle – the most important lesson these hikers, young and old, take away is a deep appreciation for the sheer pleasure of walking in the woods.

BC’s woodlotter strive to keep our Crown forests thriving and healthy even in the face of the Mountain Pine Beetle and other challenges. It’s part of the social contract they signed when they agreed to manage one of the 860-plus parcels of timber that make up the woodlot community.

Minister’s Woodlot Awards for Innovation and Excellence

(Source: Province of BC Media Release <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016FLNR0234-001872>)

The Province is recognizing three woodlot operators for innovation and excellence in woodlot management.

Big Bull Enterprises, owned by Brian Harding and Darcy Nygaard, the Hupačasath First Nation and Bob and Dan Davidson have each been presented with the Minister’s Award for Innovation and Excellence in Woodlot Management for the north, coast and south areas, respectively. Big Bull Enterprises has also been presented with the provincial

Minister’s Award for Innovation and Excellence in Woodlot Management.

In addition to the recognition, the three award recipients take home \$2,500 for each award presented to them.

Mike Morris, MLA for Prince George-Mackenzie, presented the recipients with their awards yesterday on behalf of Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Steve Thomson while at the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations’ 29th, and the Woodlot Product Development Council’s 19th annual general meetings in Prince George.

Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations –

“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.”

To view the presentations and stewardship video from the 2016 Woodlot AGM, visit woodlot.bc.ca



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