



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, September 28, 2015

Woodlot Conference Throws Spotlight on Forestry Education

Over 100 Woodlot Licensees and guests from across the province will be gathering October 2-4 in West Kelowna for the Annual General Meeting of the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations, and this year's highlight is an in-depth look at educational opportunities in forestry.

With a pending crunch in the forestry labour force there are few topics more timely or relevant. According to the BC government's Forest Sector Strategy as many as 25,000 forestry job openings are projected in the next 8-10 years as boomers retire.

"We've assembled a great panel for our education forum," says Lisa Marak, FBCWA Communications Chair. "We have representatives at all stages of their career, including teachers, high school students and doctoral candidates, all of whom have boots-on-the-ground experience in forest management. It will be a very lively, very informative conversation."

The conference, entitled 'Wine, Woodlots & Wanderings', is co-hosted by the Boundary (BWA) and Shuswap Okanagan (SOWA) Woodlot Associations, and has attracted a larger-than-average number of registrants, according to Marak.

"There's no doubt the sunny Okanagan in the fall is a huge draw for our members," laughs Marak, "but we've got a full agenda planned for the entire weekend that will give our members a great snapshot of forestry in our region."

In addition to the education panel, members will be offered opportunities to tour:

- Gorman Brothers Lumber Ltd., a family-owned business with deep roots.
- Silver Lake Woodlot Licence & Forest Education Camp, with a focus on Silviculture.
- Westbank First Nations' Community Forest wildfire fuel mitigation project in the urban interface.

"We're thrilled to be hosting our colleagues from the Peace Region, Vancouver Island, Kootenays, and all points in between," says Marak. "It's going to be a productive weekend of sharing and learning from one another to improve small-scale forestry in our province's Crown forests."

The FBCWA was founded in 1988. The FBCWA represents 25 woodlot associations, whose membership includes woodlot licensees and small private woodland owners from throughout British Columbia, united in an effort to demonstrate exemplary forest and natural resource management. To find out more about woodlots in British Columbia go to www.woodlot.bc.ca.

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