

# The Federator

THE FEDERATION OF BC WOODLOT ASSOCIATIONS

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## THE FEDERATION CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

The seedling of BC's Crown Woodlot License Program took root in 1948 when the Forest Act was amended to allow farmers to obtain small areas of Crown forest to manage as farm woodlots. This new concept of forest tenure didn't enjoy much of a growth spurt though, until 1979; the small size and the onerous administrative requirements resulted in a very low level of interest. The Forest Act was amended in 1979 following the Pearce Commission,

### THE FBCWA IS A QUARTER CENTURY OLD. 1988 - 2012.

resulting in the creation of a new type of woodlot license (WL) that was larger in area and no longer had the requirement to be a farmer.



Peter Kokoska of WL 0001, Fraser Valley

This unique forest tenure of having individuals manage Crown forest land, often combined with their own private forest land, in Pearce's words "[was] not intended to serve the needs of typical industrial operations, licenses should be structured specifically for small scale enterprises. (1976)"

This Forest Act amendment resulted in considerable growth in WLs, with 450 new small forest tenures located in various forest regions around the province through



the mid to late 80s. These small forestry businesses had similar challenges and concerns and started organizing themselves by forest district into local associations. This gave them the opportunity to network and represent common issues within their local Forest District. Over time, the local associations came to realize they needed provincial representation with the Ministry of Forests, since BC's legislation and policies were designed for large tenures, and ill-suited to the small-tenure model. In 1988 with 10 local woodlot associations, the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations (FBCWA) was formed in Fort St. John to represent the interests of woodlot licensees and woodland owners.

What started out as a small, grassroots, volunteer based non-profit organization is now made up of 23 Woodlot Associations representing the interests of 866 woodlot

licensees with many accomplishments to its credit. The woodlot license program has been an integral part of BC's forest sector for over five decades, continuing to provide socio-economic benefits and environmentally sound management of BC's forest resources.

***The FBCWA's main purpose was to promote the economic and social benefits of small-scale forest management throughout British Columbia.***

**10 founding woodlot associations** – Fraser Valley, Boundary, Cariboo, North Island, Peace River, Prince George, Kamloops & District, Gulf Islands, Stuart/Nechako and South Island.

### FBCWA PRESIDENTS

Peter Sanders	1988 – 1991
Bill McIntosh	1991 – 1993
Ken Devick	1993 – 1995
Fred Marshall	1995 – 1998
Harold Reedy	1998 – 1999
Roger Patenaude	1999 – 2001
Chris Cunningham	2001 – 2003
Miles Fuller	2003 – 2005
Brent Petrick	2005 – 2007
Cliff Manning	2007 – 2009
Mark Clark	2009 – Present

### 23 WOODLOT ASSOCIATIONS



# THE FEDERATIONS BEGINNINGS



Historic McLean "Steam" Mill, 2007 AGM Port Alberni

The Federation held its inaugural meeting in 1988, but the pioneers who crafted this coalition had been laying the foundation for years beforehand. In essence, that first AGM in Fort St. John was as much an exercise in public image building as it was an administrative endeavor.

**The founders wanted to send a signal to policy-makers and their forestry community that an alliance existed, it was organized and focused, and was going to function with a unified voice to preserve and promote small-scale forestry.**

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Kootenay Agroforestry Society Woodlot Tour, 2009 AGM Kaslo

community that an alliance existed, it was organized and focused, and was going to function with a unified voice to preserve and promote small-scale forestry.

Let's rewind. In the early 80s, as associations were forming around the province, it became apparent that, in a climate where

such a great proportion of land belonged to the Crown, woodlot licensees were going to need a strong voice if they were going to be heard by federal and provincial policy-makers.

Individual associations could certainly bring pressure to bear on their local MLAs, however their voices were being drowned out by a burgeoning commercial logging industry with firm footing on the economic landscape. The bureaucracy immense, the red tape thick, independent operators managing small private and Crown forests were dwarfed. They needed a voice to represent their needs, one that could compete on a larger stage.

Fortunately, the public's appetite for the voracious cutting of BC's forest resources was waning. The era of maximizing harvest was coming to a close, and an era of pres-

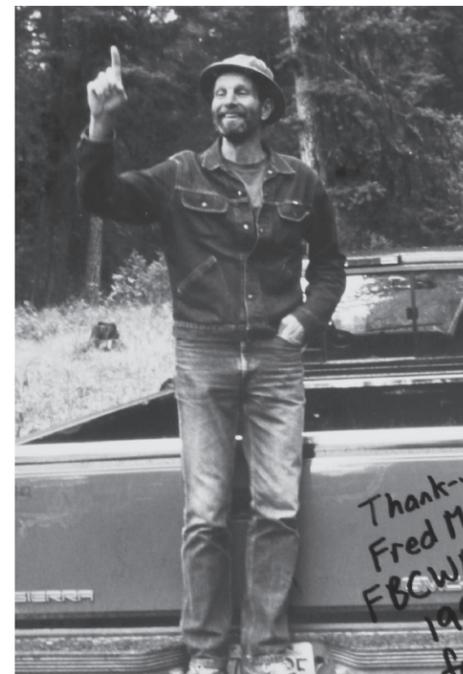
ervation and conservation was beginning.

In February of 1987 when Peter Sanders and Fred Marshall sat down with officials from the Ministry of Forests and other stakeholders to galvanize support for a federation that would advocate for these small-scale forest stewards, the reception was a warm one.

**They needed a voice to represent their needs, one that could compete on a larger scale.**

Stakeholders in forestry (and the general public) had cast their sights on the Scandinavian model: their independent forests were thriving, generating jobs, income, stability, and social benefits to agrarian communities. Could Canada surpass Sweden's reputation as a worldwide custodian of its forests? There was social and political will to try, and the principles of the woodlot example pointed to great promise in that endeavor.

Despite the wave of popular support for the notion of small-scale forestry, Federation executives faced some challenging obstacles in the early years. Changes in government



Fred Marshall, 1998 AGM Fort St. John

## ATTENDEES OF INAUGURAL MEETING

Boundary Woodlot Association  
 Cariboo Woodlot Licence Association  
 Gulf Islands Woodlot Association  
 Fraser Valley Woodland Owners Association  
 South Island Woodlot Association  
 Kamloops And District Woodlot Association  
 North Island Woodlot Association  
 Peace River Woodlot Association

Prince George Woodlot Association  
 Stuart Nechakow Woodlot Association

Fred Marshall  
 Tom Redl  
 Ken Renaud  
 Peter R.W. Sanders  
 David Smith  
 Ken Devick  
 Harold Macy  
 Bill Bickford, Sandy Long,  
 Cliff Kowalsky, Hans C. Sholz  
 Harvey M. Anderson  
 Bill MacIntosh



Woodlot Licensees standing at the Haskin Farm trail sign entering Alex Hartford's woodlot licence, Quadra Island

meant changes in priorities, and the pendulum would swing back and forth between social and economic objectives.

Were the woodlots designed to support a family or preserve a Crown resource? Were they a source of supplementary income and a lifestyle choice, or a viable career for a young forester?

It was in this ever-changing atmosphere that a core of volunteers would attend roundtable meetings, write position papers for government consideration, navigate through and try to influence massive policy changes such as the Forest Practices Code.

As one Past President observed, the Federation afforded him the opportunity to sit in a room with industry giants as an equal, and state his case for small-scale enterprise.

In those early days, getting a seat at the table was a start. Making yourself heard was a victory.



Pete Vahee at the barbecue, 2006 AGM Burns Lake

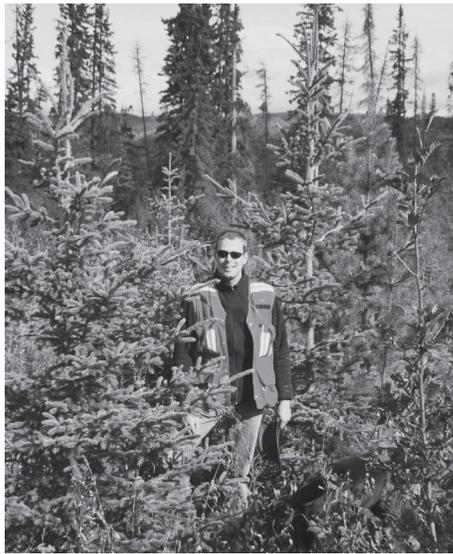


President Mark Clark (top lt.) and Recipients of FBCWA Life Memberships, Peter Kokoska (top rt), Wilf Chelle (bottom lt.) & Len Bawtree (bottom rt.), 2011 AGM Harrison Lake.

## INAUGURAL MEETING AGENDA SUNDAY NOVEMBER 27, 1988

- 08:30 Introduction**
  - Round Table Introduction of Delegates
  - Purpose of Meeting
  - Adoption or Revision of Agenda
- 10:00 Coffee Break**
- 10:15 The Federation**
  - Concept and Objectives
  - History of BC Federation
  - Role of Federations elsewhere
  - Purpose of Meeting In Fredericton
  - National Woodlot Action Committee
  - Goals for year 1
  - Current status
- 11:00 Federation Concept Discussion**
- 12:00 Lunch**
- 13:15 Organization and Structure (Part I)**
  - Membership
  - Constitution
  - Representation
  - Voting
  - Terms of Office
  - Alternates
  - Meetings
  - Routine Communications
- 15:00 Coffee Break**
- 15:15 Organization and Structure (Part II)**
  - Finances
  - Membership Fees
  - Fund Raising Options
  - Operating Expenses
- 16:00 Advisory Board Membership (Non-Voting)**
- 17:00 Review and Wrap Up**
- 19:00 Delegates Dinner**

**“Pleased with this initiative (the joining of woodlot associations to form the FBCWA) spreading around the province....coming together to develop an organization which can deal directly with government and let government know what kinds of things you want from government and what kinds of things we can expect from you.” Jack Weisgerber, MLA**



Alistair Schroff hybrid Sx plantation 2009 planted 2001

**“Woodlot licenses are a social contract. There are obligations that come with those rights.” Alistair Schroff**

**“For woodlotters, everything is for later.” Sid Dawson**



Len Bawtree and Tom Bradley, 2010 AGM Quesnel

## THE FEDERATION'S 25 MOST NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

