



Scotland adopts BC woodlot model

BC woodlot owners have set a global example of good forest management.

The proof is in the pudding — or, in this case, in the haggis.

The Scottish Woodlot Association (SWA) has been working with woodlot licence holders in BC and is now bringing the woodlot licence concept to Scotland.

Woodlot licences have been operating in BC for over 60 years, and have brought many benefits to rural communities here. While the model in BC is slightly different than in Scotland, with licensees managing Crown or publically owned forest land often in combination with private land, the principles and benefits of small scale forest management are still the same.

Woodlot licences in BC have won many awards for excellence in forest management, and have helped underpin often fragile rural economies.

The SWA is a new forestry co-operative that is setting up a network of rented woodlots across Scotland.

A woodlot is a small area of private forest land that is rented from a landowner through the SWA Woodlot Licence system. The woodlot is managed for timber, environmental benefits, training opportunities and to build links between the local community and the forest.

Woodlot licence holders are usually local people with an interest in small-scale forestry and a passion for high quality management.

Licences are only administered to eligible SWA members and the production of a sustainable management plan is required as part of the woodlot licence process.

Woodlots will help reconnect the land to



Mine Wood in Stirling, Scotland, home of the famous William Wallace Monument (pictured above) will now be the site of Scotland's first woodlot licence. The Scottish woodlot program will be based on the model pioneered by British Columbia. NICHOLAS LAUGHLIN PHOTO

the people and will create an opportunity to manage local forest as small scale forestry enterprises.

Scotland has the most concentrated forest ownership in Europe, dominated by large scale public and private holdings.

Woodlot licences are a way of promoting small scale forestry, managed by local people, that helps to maximise benefits for the rural economy.

The SWA has identified Mine Wood in Stirling, northeast of Glasgow, Scotland as a potential pilot site for the first woodlot licence in Scotland. This is a great opportunity to really establish the first woodlots in Scot-

land, and the aim is to gradually increase the number of woodlot licences available across Scotland on the back of this project.

The SWA will rent the site from the local council and sublet to a woodlot licence holder. The licence holder will be responsible for the management of the woodlot, including maintaining public access for woodland users.

The Scottish Woodlot Association is a co-operative of forestry people who have formed a non-profit distributing association to create woodlot licences and help support their management, we are passionate about forestry and rural communities.

Perfecting land management balancing act

You know you're on to something when you find yourself touring an auditor through your woodlot on a fact-finding mission.

This is precisely what happened on Sid and Barb Dawson's Woodlot 013 in the wake of receiving the Minister's Award of Excellence for Woodlot Management.

When word spread about the honour, a large commercial lumber operation sent its ISO auditor down the road to see what all the fuss was about. What he discovered, no doubt, was an ingenious mix of practices making the best of Mother Nature and man-made know-how.

With the fifth generation growing up in the wings, Sid and Barb are part of a long legacy of forest stewardship. The family manages one of the original woodlots – awarded to Sid's grandfather in 1948 – on Vancouver Island. The island woodlots are small, intense operations requiring creative thinking, elbow grease, and consideration for the inevitable interface with the public.

New plantings have to survive the gauntlet of deer, which have an appetite for the tender seedlings. While extremely labour-intensive, Sid and Barb cover each plug with a protective cone. Imagine 1,100 white peaks in a fledgling forest, each one placed by hand. As Sid says, "Everything is for later." The time they're investing in guarding these new plantings will be a benefit to their grandchildren's children.

Their lot, a small parcel of Crown forest intertwined with the local community, is a popular destination for hikers, with as many



The Dawson woodlot on Vancouver Island demonstrates the unique balance of industry, environment and recreation that woodlots have come to exemplify in BC land management.

as 40 sets of feet trekking the miles of trails through their forest on any given day.

With the guidance of the "Wolf Pack" (the professional foresters from Econ Consulting), the Dawsons have adopted practices that balance the aesthetic, environmental and economic imperatives for their property, harvesting the trees in a pattern that allows cones from remaining trees to seed the ground for future growth. Additional thinning of "shelter wood" gives saplings the space and sunlight they need to grow to full potential.

Their staged harvesting has preserved the natural appeal of a coastal forest, which some

local residents have been traversing for over 20 years.

How closely connected are the Dawsons to their neighbouring outdoor enthusiasts? When one woman's Rottweilers - who took regular walks through the woodlot with their owner - passed away they named two trails after them, honouring their memory.

They have played host to countless observers and students from countries as diverse as Finland, Australia and Guyana, but their roots are firmly planted in the island culture of preservation and stewardship of this precious resource.

AGM back to its roots

The Federation of BC Woodlot Associations celebrates 25 years at the upcoming Annual General Meeting Thursday, September 13

to Saturday, September 15 in Fort St. John, the site of the inaugural meeting of the association. It will include woodlot tours, a river

boat/highway trip of the Peace country, Hutterite Colony tour, trap shoot, bison barbecue, speakers and business sessions.



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