



Woodlots provide leadership in new landscape of environmental goods and services

By SARA GRADY

Travel a few kilometres out of any urban centre in British Columbia and you'll likely be on a ribbon of road that slices through undisturbed wilderness. Over 60% of the province is covered in trees, a whopping 57 million hectares (the size of France). Human settlement accounts for a meagre 3% of our province's landbase.

It's something locals can easily take for granted, this abundance of green space. But our sweeping grasslands and dense forests hold tremendous value in the global marketplace. In modern parlance, they deliver value in a new currency traded in the economy of Environmental Goods and Services (EG&S, see sidebar).

At the international level, organizations such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization and the OECD grapple with tariff and trade policies, seeking ways to balance the needs of the global ecosystem with the needs of the global economy. BC's abundant environmental assets are most certainly part of the dialogue. And given that 80% of these assets in BC reside on Crown land, it's vital that the stewards of these precious resources provide the best care possible.

It's reassuring to know that BC's woodlotterers are part of the management team overseeing the health and well-being of our forests. Members of the woodlot program are tasked with so much more than simply providing a sustainable source of timber.

They manage their Crown licenses for wildlife and riparian protection. They share their forests with outdoor enthusiasts on foot,



Doug Horth's woodlot licence exemplifies the multi-user nature of woodlots, with numerous bike trails throughout it. PHOTO WIM TEWINKEL.

wheels and horseback. They have standards for Visual Quality Objectives that dictate how their logging operations will affect viewscapes for the residents who share their land.

The vast majority of the 870-plus woodlot tenures across the province are strategically located in areas that embody the concept of "interface." They wrap around subdivisions and tourist destinations, straddle well-travelled transportation corridors, all the while playing host to a depth of resources vital to our ecosystem.

"Woodlot operators are often motivated by knowing their operations are being done under the watchful eyes of family, friends and neighbouring communities, so they strive to leave a light human footprint on the land," says FBCWA President Brian McNaughton. "For over 60 years, BC's Woodlot Licence Program has been meeting the public's expectations regarding the management of the province's

forest resources, often in some of the most challenging areas to manage."

Woodlots in BC are a reliable source of Environmental Goods and Services for our province, and the global ecosystem.

Programs also exist in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Prince Edward Island to foster responsible management of environmental resources and provide economic value for farmers and ranchers.

For example, ALUS – Alternative Land Use Services – is "a community-developed, farmer-delivered program that provides support to farmers and ranchers to enhance and maintain nature's benefits. ALUS has a simple goal: create a healthy working landscape that sustains agriculture, wildlife and natural spaces for all Canadians."

ALUS pays farmers to retain and reconstruct (Turn to Page 2)

natural areas such as wetlands, grasslands, riparian areas and trees, resulting in the rehabilitation of natural features that filter water, cycle nutrients, capture carbon and restore biodiversity.

While there isn't a formal system for acknowledging the production of environmental goods and services within the BC woodlot framework, licensees continue to manage our public forests for much more than profit.

Over the coming months we'll be exploring the wide range of EG&S that are generated by these small-scale foresters, highlighting the tremendous benefits we're all enjoying because of their diligence and dedication.



Weldon Talbot's woodlot licence overlooks the lush landscape of the Pemberton Valley. PHOTO WIM TEWINKEL.



In addition to landscape management, woodlots also provide plenty of recreational opportunities. PHOTO WIM TEWINKEL.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOODS & SERVICES

You're probably familiar with one of the most talked-about versions of this currency: carbon offsets, and they're one part of the mix. There are varying definitions of Environmental (or Ecological) Goods and Services, but the overarching themes include naturally occurring and engineered environments that provide "goods" such as fresh water, clean air, and cultural resources (medicinal plants and berries), and "services" that

- help maintain biodiversity,
- purify air and water,
- generate and renew soil and vegetation,
- aid pollination of crops and natural vegetation,
- recharge groundwater through wetland protection,
- facilitate seed dispersal,
- reduce noise,
- create recreational opportunities,
- and provide aesthetically pleasing viewsapes.

In essence, these are all things that make the planet a more sustainable and pleasant place to live.



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