



British Columbia's Woodlot Licence Program



Weldon Talbot overlooking the Pemberton Valley from his Woodlot Licence.

By LISA MARAK

BC's woodlot licence program makes up a small part of the forest industry but makes a substantial contribution to the forest stewardship mix.

Most people don't know what a woodlot licence is, let alone that there are 860 of them covering almost 603,000 hectares around the province with an annual allowable cut (AAC) of ~1.51 million cubic metres. Many are located near urban communities, rural subdivisions, sensitive ecosystems and traffic corridors.

The origin of BC's woodlot licence program dates back to 1948 when the Forest Act was

amended to allow farmers to acquire farm woodlots - small areas of crown forest. In 1979, the woodlot licence replaced the farm woodlot and the program was expanded.

The term 'woodlot' is typically used to describe a privately owned parcel of forest land. In BC, there are 860 woodlot licence holders and an estimated 20,000 woodlot owners.

A woodlot licence is a partnership between the licence holder and the Province of BC. In exchange for being granted exclusive rights to harvest timber on crown land, a woodlot licensee accepts responsibility for sustainably managing

the forests, soils, habitats, water, recreation and other values in the woodlot area.

A woodlot licence has a 20-year term but is 'replaceable' – meaning that it can continue in perpetuity providing the holder fulfills their obligations and responsibilities.

The maximum amount of crown land in a woodlot licence is 1200 hectares in the interior and 800 hectares on the coast. In addition, private land may be included. Woodlot licences, which are often thought of as BC's Family Forests, are held by individuals, families, partnerships, First Nations and small companies. They are often passed down from generation to generation within a family and are a great source of personal pride and satisfaction. While



Doug Horth's Woodlot Licence near Squamish has numerous bike trails throughout it.

most woodlot licensees are independent log sellers, many are involved in other businesses such as ranching, logging, forestry consulting, milling, manufacturing and recreation. Woodlot licences are small businesses and an important source of timber and wood for local mills; often supplying smaller manufacturers who need wood in lesser quantities than major producers like to supply. By hiring locally and buying goods and services from local suppliers, woodlot licences contribute significantly to nearby communities. The woodlot program also proudly supports youth by awarding scholarships each year to two students pursuing a post secondary education, with preference given to a natural resource-related program.

490 of BC's 860 woodlot licences include private forest land owned by the holder; an average of 142 hectares per WL.

Compared to other forest tenures, woodlot licences offer a personal or a neighbourly style of management which is the main reason why so many are located next to communities and residential areas. Their placement on the landscape makes them highly visible and accessible to the public. Licensees strive to uphold the social licence by balancing sustainable forest management with environmental, societal and economic values. Timber is harvested

consistent with principles of good stewardship and sustainability, and with due regard to conserving and protecting important social values such as water flow and quality, scenery, wildlife habitat and recreation. Woodlot activities are subject to a high level of public scrutiny - if the public doesn't notice the footprint, then the job must have been well done!

Many woodlot licensees volunteer to guide school field trips, and their woodlots serve as demonstration forests and classrooms for high school and college forestry programs. Woodlot license holders keep trails open and work with hiking, biking and cross country ski clubs to provide quality recreational experiences.

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. Given its past successes and considering the ever-increasing demands from our forests, woodlot licences are well positioned as a forest tenure for the future.

The Federation of BC Woodlot Associations

(FBCWA) is an umbrella organization for 23 woodlot associations throughout BC which represent the interests of the 860 woodlot licensees. Its mission is for all woodlot licensees and woodlot owners to practice exemplary forest and natural resource management in a socially, economically and environmentally responsible manner.

Welcome to New MLAs & FLNR Minister

FBCWA and BC's woodlot licensees welcome new MLAs and the new Minister of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development Doug Donaldson, MLA from the Stikine.

We look forward to meeting you and hope you visit our booth at the upcoming UBCM Trade Show.

FBCWA and WPDC AGM 2017 October 1-3, 2017

Grand Hotel and Conference Centre
Sun Peaks Resort

Register Now! For more info and to register, visit [woodlot.bc.ca](http://www.woodlot.bc.ca)



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