



Model Woodlot Licensees Uphold the Social Licence



Woodlot planning work by Wolfram and Sibylle. The evenly spaced layout (with hipchain and GPS) was crucial to achieve a consistent thinning effect. The resulting thinning pattern is shown.

By LISA MARAK

In 2014 we told you about a unique woodlot couple on Vancouver Island, Wolfram Wollenheit and Sibylle Walkemeyer of Econ Consulting. They had received two significant honours: the regional Minister's Award of Excellence for their work on Woodlot License #1641 near Campbell River in the Coast region, as well as overall provincial honours for the outstanding example they set for woodlotters around the

province. They strive to uphold the "social license" for woodlot management, going above and beyond the legal requirements set by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. [See sidebar]

Woodlot licensees on the Island come under intense scrutiny due to the predominance of urban interface (working forests that are near or adjacent to population centres) and the public use that comes along with it. They strive to maintain a good rapport with the members of their community. It's their mandate to carefully

manage Crown resources and they consider themselves stewards of a shared resource.

As such, Wolfram and Sibylle have undertaken forest management practices that acknowledge the ecosystem while still upholding their responsibility to make their piece of Crown land accessible to the public. They've set up signs for roads and cut blocks, generated maps and created a parking lot so that they can gently guide weekend ATV riders, bikers and other outdoor enthusiasts in ways that will maintain the many values of their woodlot. This year the



Excavator falling and processing wood in one of the thinning corridors to create a herringbone pattern to reduce “wind throw”.

Back Country Horsemen of British Columbia will pass through their “backyard” with expert and novice riders alike on a multi-day trail ride.

Like many other woodlot licensees they’re constantly battling Mother Nature when it comes to protecting their crops. Borrowing from European forest management systems they’ve figured out a way to design patterns of small blocks taking into account the strong winds coming from the south-east. “Wind throw” can be a significant detriment to the value of a stand of trees. But if you harvest strategically against the main wind direction, the windfirm timber edges take the brunt of the wind and shelter the larger, more vulnerable timber. They’re enjoying success with this strategy.

Modernisation and mechanisation have changed the means by which all foresters manage their timber. Wolfram and Sibylle

have introduced mechanical “strip thinning” on areas with dense, immature stands, a process that creates the herringbone pattern seen on aerial photographs. And when harvesting a cut block the timber can now be processed within walking distance of a logging road. Wolfram and Sibylle leave the tops and broken ends at the roadside and after the completion of the waste survey invite the locals to gather it for firewood.

They recently negotiated the purchase of an adjacent woodlot licence – not a smooth process due to red tape – and will be expanding

What is Social Licence?

According to www.sociallicense.com it is defined as existing when a project has the ongoing approval within the local community and other stakeholders, ongoing approval or broad social acceptance and, most frequently, as ongoing acceptance.

At the level of an individual project the Social License is rooted in the beliefs, perceptions and opinions held by the local population and other stakeholders about the project.

their exemplary forestry practices, retaining the expertise and insight of the prior woodlot licensee and building on it. Their collaborative approach with the community and fellow woodlotters serve as excellent examples for the woodlot program province-wide.

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