



Woodlot Licences Asset to Selkirk College Instructor



Stu Deverney, Selkirk College Instructor on WL #400

By SARA GRADY

Woodlot licensees across the province are an important piece of the natural resources puzzle. They're tasked with managing BC's smallest Crown forest tenure managed for timber, along with other forest values - the woodlot licence - on behalf of the public, balancing social, environmental and economic imperatives.

This "social licence", the inherent understanding that comes with the privilege of managing crown forests, means the public's

rights and interests must always be considered; for example, access to the land or the forestry practices utilized.

Woodlotter Stu Deverney, RPF, exemplifies this mandate, and takes it a step farther.

A lifetime forestry professional, Stu's career path was interrupted twice: first in the 70s during a reorganization of the BC Forest Service, where he had served as an Assistant Ranger but lost his seniority while on leave attaining his Bachelor of Science in Forestry, and again in the 80s during one of the many softwood lumber disputes. Many mills were modernizing. His employer

simply closed up shop.

His small hometown of Castlegar didn't have many other opportunities for someone with Stu's background, given the economic pressures. So he applied for a job in the equipment room at Selkirk College. His interviewer, knowing Stu's credentials, instantly veered him in the direction of teaching. Stu recalls John Adams insisting "we can teach you how to teach." He understood that the wealth of Stu's knowledge would be a huge benefit to the Natural Resources program. After a one-week crash course, Stu was thrust into a classroom for his one-hour lecture. And



Selkirk students with Stu and Tucker (dog) out in the field.

so began his successful teaching career.

One of his greatest assets was access to working forests: Woodlot Licence (WL) #400 (held by Selkirk College) and WL #403, which Stu manages in partnership with Greg and Bob Sahlstrom. The Sahlstrom family were homesteaders who arrived in Castlegar in the 1920s and carved out part of their livelihoods on what was then Farm Woodlot License #23.

Under the auspices of the Forestry Technology Program students are taken onto the woodlots for hands-on lab experiences. They undertake silviculture surveys, measuring regeneration delay and free growing status. They assess risks to forest health, including fungi such as Armillaria and pests like the Douglas-fir and Mountain Pine Beetle. Students have the opportunity to tour salvage logging operations within the frame of climate change, and also

study the technical classification of riparian zones, learning how to identify the various kinds of streams on the woodlot.

Former summer student and now an Instructor in the department, Carol Andrews, marvels at Stu's knowledge of WL #403: ask him to find a Schedule 4 Creek for the students to experience, he can lead them straight to it. She also says his students learn much more from him than just forestry.

While retired from Selkirk College, Stu remains busy with the management of WL #403 and continues to host labs

on his woodlot. He considers it part of his social responsibility - a way to contribute to the community. Sharing his knowledge and passion are a great asset to future generations of forest professionals and BC's forests.

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