



Achieving Peak Performance



2017 Minister's Award for Innovation and Excellence in Woodlot Management presentation - Left to right: Keith Granbois for R & K Woodlot Ltd. (coast recipient); Leanna and Craig Mann, WL 1595 (interior and overall provincial recipients); Dave Peterson, FLNRORD ADM, presenter on behalf of Minister Donaldson; Alison Patch for Omineca Ski Club (north recipient); and Mark Clark, FBCWA President.

By SARA GRADY

The Federation of BC Woodlot Associations and the Woodlot Product Development Council held their joint Annual General Meetings this fall at Sun Peaks Resort, a beautiful all-season destination just outside Kamloops.

The agenda was focussed on achieving “Peak Performance” as stewards of BC’s smallest forest tenure - the woodlot licence, a small part of the province’s Crown forests – approximately 2.2% of the provincial annual timber harvest – and the discussions were framed around the concept of “Social Licence”.

An unprecedented wildfire season has changed the landscape for over 30 woodlot licensees, so their task is that much more onerous, but they’re up for the challenge.

The conference was opened by Olympian and Senator Nancy Greene-Raine, Director of Skiing at Sun Peaks. She talked about the development of the resort and the community consultation that was, at times, challenging but necessary to ensure that all the stakeholders had input and were invested in the process.

Panel discussions were held with thought-leaders from, among others, the Forest Practices Board, the Union of BC Municipalities, the BC Cattlemen’s Association, the Ministry of Forests,

Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and representatives from Woodlot Associations throughout the province.

The first panel, which laid the groundwork for subsequent conversation, sought to define the term “social licence”. While each panelist had a slightly different perspective, the overriding themes were communication, trust and understanding.

Quadra Island woodlotter Coleen MacLean-Marlow’s input was an example of the necessity to keep in constant contact with the community. Caring for Crown land on an island known for its pristine shores and vibrant rainforests requires delicate handling to ensure that ecotourism



Sun Peaks ski hill, an example of a forest managed for recreation. Photo credit: Gemma Harris.

and thoughtful harvesting of timber can be complimentary rather than contradictory. As Coleen so aptly stated, having conversations with all the stakeholders, even when they're uncomfortable, is a key to maintaining trust in the social licence.

This sentiment was echoed by UBCM's Brian Frenkel, who spoke about the abundance of forestry-dependent communities in the province. He addressed the pressures placed on communities that rely on a lumber mill as their primary source of employment, and the need to engage the community when decisions have to be made about the future of timber harvesting, processing and marketing.

Kevin Boon spoke on behalf of the BC Cattlemen's Association and echoed the sentiments of his colleagues. As Kevin pointed out, many Crown tenure users overlap – ecotourism, grazing, fishing, logging – and the various stakeholders can always benefit from communication amongst themselves and with the community.

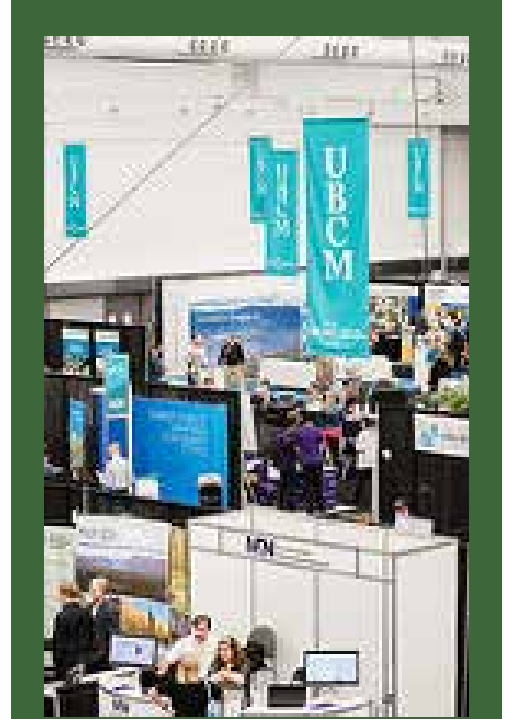
Ainslie Jackman, Board Chair of the Valemount Community Forest, shared the inspiring story of how her community is rebuilding their forest economy after the vacuum was created when their local mill closed. Their ambitious project

saw the acquisition of the abandoned mill and the revitalization, and utilization, of the facility.

Lisa Marak, woodlotter and secretary for the FBCWA, spoke on the woodlot program saying that woodlot licences are an excellent tenure for achieving social licence as they are small, area-based long term tenures, located close to communities requiring the licensee to take a hands-on approach to forest management. Woodlot licensees often live near the land they are licensed to manage and develop strong bonds with their neighbours and community.

The change in provincial government has signalled some subtle changes in resource management, including the addition of Rural Development to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. As Dave Peterson, Assistant Deputy Minister, explained, the small resource-based communities are vital to the health of the province's economy and the woodlot program is an important part of that equation.

Woodlotters will continue to care for BC's Crown forests and uphold their commitments that are the roots of social licence at a time when balancing the social, environmental and economic imperatives has become that much more of a challenge.



2017 UBCM Convention

FBCWA attended the 2017 UBCM Convention in Vancouver recently. We spoke with local and provincial government representatives providing maps showing Woodlot Licences & Community Forest Agreements in the interface and information on the important role of woodlots and community forests in fuel reduction and wildland urban interface treatments.



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