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MEDIA RELEASE

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British Columbia's woodlot program to become an international model

British Columbia's Woodlot License Program has captured international attention. Foresters in Scotland have used the B.C. model to develop their own resource stewardship program in that country.

The recently formed Scottish Woodlot Association has been working closely with members of the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations (FBCWA) to draw the blueprints for an innovative woodlot program. It will bridge the gap between their large-scale public and private sector holdings and individuals wanting to participate in small-scale forestry activities.

Their goal is to encourage local residents to manage small parcels of forest land, not only for timber and value-added products, but for educational and environmental purposes, maximizing the benefits to the communities in which they operate, and supporting their fragile rural economies.

"We've had a very productive dialogue ongoing with representatives of this fledgling organization over the past few years," says FBCWA General Manager Brian McNaughton. "Their land-ownership structure is quite different from that of B.C.'s. However, they are certainly able to apply the principles, and enjoy the benefits, of small-scale, sustainable forest management."

In British Columbia, a woodlot license is an agreement between the license holder and the Province, which owns approximately 80 per cent of B.C.'s forests, to manage both Crown and adjacent private forest lands, with an average area of 600 ha under management.

In Scotland, where forests are predominantly held by private interests, licensees will "rent" land from owners. The woodlots will range in size from 10 to 50 ha. Their pilot site, The William Wallace Woodlot (adjacent to the world-famous Wallace Monument), is approximately 6 ha in size and will serve as a template for future licenses.

"The Scottish Woodlot Association has been thorough and diligent in its efforts to research, promote, and implement a co-operative woodlot program that emulates the goals and values of BC's Woodlot Program," said McNaughton. "We wish them great success as they engage local foresters and expand in the years to come."

The FBCWA was founded in 1988. The FBCWA represents 23 woodlot associations, whose membership includes woodlot licensees and small private woodland owners from throughout British Columbia, united in an effort to demonstrate exemplary forest and natural resource management. To find out more about woodlots in British Columbia go to www.woodlot.bc.ca.

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