

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2012FOR0026-000271
March 10, 2012

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

Policy change opens up options for woodlot licensees

VICTORIA – A regulatory change allowing the removal of private land from a woodlot licence will give woodlot holders more flexibility in how they manage their assets, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Steve Thomson announced today.

In fall 2011, an amendment to section 47.1 of the Forest Act was introduced to allow private land to be removed from a woodlot. That change is now in effect.

All potential private land removals will be at the discretion of the minister of forests, lands and natural resource operations (or a delegate determined by the minister) following public consultation. The following requirements must also be met:

- The private land has been part of a woodlot licence for at least 10 years.
- The woodlot holder has provided notification and advertised their intent.
- The licence is in good standing with no overdue payments, no major contraventions of forestry legislation, or outstanding obligations.
- Access to Crown land via existing roads on the private land has been adequately addressed.
- Private land removed from an existing woodlot can't be used by the owners to apply on new woodlot licence opportunities.

The policy change was requested by the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations. The Union of British Columbia Municipalities was consulted, and helped develop the guidelines for a private land deletion.

Most, but not all, woodlot licences include private land. Some licensees have expressed a desire to diversify their operations and pursue other economic opportunities with their private land such as agriculture and ranching. Others have indicated they want to sell their private land for financial reasons such as retirement planning.

The amount of private land in an individual woodlot varies, ranging from zero hectares up to 1,400 hectares. The average area of private land per individual woodlot is 108 hectares.

Quotes:**Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Steve Thomson –**

“Woodlot holders are not major licensees. They are small-scale operators, who have asked for the flexibility to be able to manage some of their private land independently of the Crown land portions, which with this amendment the government is pleased to provide.”

Federation of BC Woodlot Associations general manager Brian McNaughton –

“As woodlot licensees get older, they require the flexibility to remove some or all of their private land from their woodlots in order to plan their estates and take care of their families. This legislative change gives them the opportunity to do so, but only with the minister’s approval. Each request will be evaluated and decided on its own merits. Any remaining private land, along with the Crown land portion of the woodlot licence area, will continue to be managed sustainably under the woodlot licence agreement. This change in legislation is good for the forests and good for the licensees who manage the forests.”

Quick Facts:

- Woodlot licences are small, area-based tenures that combine private land with Crown land. They are managed by individuals, families, small groups or First Nations.
- There are 866 woodlots across the province, covering about 592,000 hectares. Private land comprises about 16 per cent of the total area.
- Woodlots are replaceable tenures, usually awarded for an initial term of 20 years.
- Woodlots generate jobs in planning, harvesting, road construction and maintenance, reforestation, silviculture and small-scale timber processing.

Learn More:

Link to the policy around private land deletions:

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hth/timber-tenures/woodlots/forms.htm>

About woodlot licences:

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hth/timber-tenures/woodlots/index.htm>

About the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations:

<http://www.woodlot.bc.ca/>

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