
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations
and Rural Development

Thompson family receives minister's award

PORT ALBERNI – Todd Thompson and his mother, Joan Thompson, are being recognized by the Province through the Minister's Award for Innovation and Excellence in Woodlot Management for the Coast.

"The Thompsons have created value out of their sustainable, small-scale forestry operation — one that exceeds social and environmental requirements and focuses on the Port Alberni community," said Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. "I congratulate them on their environmentally conscious and community-minded approach."

Originally a Port Alberni-area homestead for the family in the mid-1800s, the multigenerational woodlot run by the Thompsons has been in operation since Todd's father, Art, started it as one of the original farm woodlots in 1951.

"The Thompsons have been an integral part of the Port Alberni community for generations," said Scott Fraser, MLA for Mid Island-Pacific Rim. "This award is just a small token of appreciation for their many community contributions economically, recreationally, historically and as outstanding local citizens."

Art passed away in November 2017, but his vision and dedication to the woodlot program continues through Todd and Joan. With their focus on exceeding social and environmental standards, only small openings are harvested to maintain visuals, biodiversity, recreational values and to protect fish habitat. Despite only harvesting small areas, the Thompsons harvested 100% of their allowable annual cut allocation in the last five years.

The Thompsons are quick to share their learnings about early planting and brush control to eliminate coppicing and reduce the need for brushing — so much so that they have hosted more than 50 Swedish forest owners over the last five years to share their knowledge.

"Hats off to the Thompsons on this award. Their professionalism, dedication, community spirit and willingness to educate others on forestry and sustainability is worthy of these accolades," said Jeff Beale, president of the Federation of British Columbia Woodlot Associations. "It's encouraging to have stewards of their calibre representing the woodlot industry in British Columbia."

The Thompsons are also good neighbours in the community, assisting the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District with the Log Train Trail, which is used by members of the public for recreation, and donating a 172-year-old, 30.5-metre (100-foot) Douglas fir tree to the McLean Mill National Historic Site to be used in the steam donkey logging demonstration.

The Province is recognizing three woodlot licensees for innovation and excellence in woodlot management. This year's recipients include:

- Todd Thompson and Joan Thompson – Coast area
- Charles Bloom Secondary school – provincial and South area
- Saulteau First Nations (John Stokmans) – North area

Award winners not only receive a signed, framed certificate of recognition from the minister, but the recipients also take home \$2,500 each for their area awards, with an additional \$2,500 going to the Charles Bloom Secondary school for also being named the top performer provincially.

The recipients were presented their awards yesterday while at the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations' 31st and the Woodlot Product Development Council's 21st annual general meetings in Williams Lake.

The awards are funded by the Province of British Columbia and administered by the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations. Since 2010, the annual awards recognize a woodlot licensee representing each of the Coast, South and North areas, along with an overall top performer. Award winners are nominated through official submissions received by the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations.

Quick Facts:

- Woodlot licences are small, area-based tenures managed by individuals, groups or First Nations.
- British Columbia has 857 active woodlots. Each woodlot generates jobs in planning, harvesting, road construction and maintenance, reforestation, silviculture and small-scale timber processing.
- Woodlots generate about \$200 million of economic activity for the province every year.

Learn More:

B.C. Woodlot Licence program: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content?id=53FB3BF3DEC3447C9BFE3A3068AE3A48>

Federation of B.C. Woodlot Associations: <http://www.woodlot.bc.ca>

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