
NEWS RELEASE

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

Saulteau First Nations receive minister's award

MOBERLY LAKE – Saulteau First Nations are being recognized by the Province through the Minister's Award for Innovation and Excellence in Woodlot Management for the North.

"Saulteau First Nations have clearly shown innovation and strong, sound forest management," said Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. "Their consideration for wildlife and non-timber values, while maintaining high woodlot productivity, is a job well done."

Operated by John Stokmans, the stand density and productivity of the woodlot is above average and achieved without using herbicides. Saulteau First Nations have held the woodlot since 1990.

"Despite many silvicultural difficulties and other arduous challenges, Saulteau First Nations and John Stokmans have persevered and managed a woodlot that is a model for others to follow," said Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. "Their woodlot provides jobs for members of their nations, is operated with environmental impacts front of mind and is an added revenue stream for the Saulteau peoples."

Their innovation extends to buying a flock of sheep and mobile pens and employing two full-time shepherds to aid in the removal of unwanted foliage. They place high values on moose habitat management, wildlife tree retention and support of Treaty 8 rights to hunt and trap.

"Congratulations to Saulteau First Nations. It hasn't been an easy road for them, but they are proof of what can be accomplished with some ingenuity and determination," said Jeff Beale, president of the Federation of British Columbia Woodlot Associations. "I would like to thank their woodlot operator, John Stokmans, for his drive to acquire a small sawmill to enable a squared-log small home and cabin business to be operated by Saulteau First Nations members in their home community, and also for his insightful commentaries on woodlot licence and pest management plans for other woodlot operators in the area."

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

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

Saulteau First Nations: <http://www.saulteau.com>

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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