



Left: Tugwell Creek Honey Farm and Meadery owner Bob Liptrop,
Right: Guests discussing forestry at Van Isle Tree Farms.

The Private Forest Landowners Association (PFLA) met for its 2011 annual general meeting, June 15th and 16th, at the Prestige Oceanfront Resort & Conference Centre in beautiful Sooke, B.C.

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A great turn out: owners of forestlands – large and small, coastal and interior; government representatives; industry experts; communication specialists; and international presenters converged for a lively and inspiring 2-day event packed with a forest field tour, banquet and awards ceremony, presentations, and of course, the AGM itself.

Here are some of the highlights.

Day 1: The Renowned PFLA Forest Tour

For those of you who couldn't make it for the PFLA forest tour on June 15th, 2011, here's a quick recap to whet your appetite for next year.

Imagine a forestry charter bus, an immensely diverse group of occupants, and a rural winding road on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

Highlights continued

First stop: Tugwell Creek Honey Farm & Meadery

Tugwell Creek owner, Bob Liptrot, is a self-proclaimed lover of cut blocks. It's true. Where others see cut trees, Bob sees a perfect habitat for bees. A beekeeper for close to 50 years, Bob shared loads of information about bees, honey, mead and what makes for good beekeeping. He's excited about the possibility of beekeepers and forest landowners working together for mutual benefit: the beekeepers get access to choice conditions for excellent beekeeping, and the landowners get another pair of attentive eyes on their property – a win-win.

Informative and inspiring, this leg of the tour also proved tantalizing – co-owner Dana Comte offered up samples of honey, mead and wine in the tasting room (it was 5:00 p.m. somewhere). Lucky for us, the store was open. With brown bags tucked under our arms, we headed back to the bus. A well-behaved lot, the wine and mead stayed corked, and the atmosphere tame.

Next stop: Van Isle Tree Farm.

At Van Isle Tree Farm, we were graciously received by the Robertson family – Ken, Dorothy, and their two sons, Warren and Blair – for the forest focus portion of the PFLA tour.

With over 110 hectares of forestland, there was a lot to see. We were collectively impressed by the creativity and diversity of species on the property: copper beech planted in 1996, giant sequoia planted in 1997, redwoods, oak, arbutus, and tales of eucalyptus (over 25 varieties) attempted, but in the end, lost to father winter.

Strolling through the forest, there was plenty of time to glean knowledge as the Robertsons shared stories of land management and reforestation. Spirited conversations emerged about wild life, paint ball, burning, harvesting, firewood, trespassing, and of course, the deer – what to do about the deer?

Wrapping up this leg of the tour, Ken Robertson was presented with an award for outstanding commitment to, and demonstration of, private forest stewardship in British Columbia. Along with a plaque, the PFLA was pleased to present Mr. Robertson with the only meaningful gift to give a guy who has over 100 hectares of land, an excavator and a passion for planting trees – 45 gallons of diesel and some hydraulic fluid.

Next stop: Happy Valley Lavender & Herb Farm.

Warmly welcomed by Lynda Dowling, we enjoyed lavender shortbread cookies and cold refreshments, in the garden, at Happy Valley Lavender & Herb Farm. Lynda's grandfather signed the deed for the land in 1910 and it's been in the family ever since. 100-year-old apple trees from the original homestead still stand. These days, lavender is their signature harvest – a labour of love, as much as anything else.

After enjoying the property, the final leg of the tour was wrapped up as the now weary participants headed back to the bus with tomato plants in hand – a generous parting gift from another gracious host. Back to the Prestige Conference Centre for a quick rest before the evening's banquet and awards ceremony where the PFLA was honoured to present Robbie Preston with an award for leadership, patience and persistence, integrity and calm.

Day 2: Highlights from the 2011 Private Forestry Forum

The PFLA's private forestry forum on June 16th, 2011 was a huge success. The organizers put together a series of timely and engaging presentations that sparked interesting debates and thoughtful questions. For those of you who missed it, here are some of the highlights:



Highlights continued

Tom Niemann, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, started the morning off with a Wood Market Update & Outlook presentation.

Highlight: Amazingly detailed, colourful and comprehensive graphs and charts depicting the forest sector's business cycle over the past 10 years

Key point: This is not a regular business cycle – both the product mix and the markets have changed. Tom advises policy makers, foresters, and landowners to think creatively about adjusting product mixes to match market demands.

Conclusion: The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer period highlighting the complexities facing the forestry industry today. The discussion wound its way to the issue of private land log export restrictions: a number of participants articulated their clear opposition to the restriction of private log exports.

Next up: **Matt Walsh, New Zealand Carbon Farming**, gave an informative and engaging presentation about international developments in forest carbon trading.

Highlight: An international demand for carbon credits (created by voters and consumers pressuring governments and corporations to off-set negative environmental impacts) means “sinking” a forest, and selling carbon credits rather than logs, may prove as, if not more, lucrative.

Key point: International examples from New Zealand and California indicate the carbon credit industry is developing quickly. By 2012, we'll see open trading in carbon credits in order for companies to meet their Kyoto Protocols. Pacific Carbon Trust marked the first carbon sink deal in BC (June 2011).

Conclusion: Private forest landowners have options for managing the carbon components of their forests. Proceed cautiously: it's still early, other options might emerge, but the decisions you make today ought to take carbon into account.

Next on the agenda: **Mike Brooks** offered up a lighthearted, but thorough, scan of B.C.'s political landscape, including a detailed “who's who” of Christy Clark's cabinet.

Key point: Continued political uncertainty puts two of PFLA's key issues – maintaining policy distinction for private managed forestlands and positive change on log export policy – at risk.

Conclusion: There's hope. We're harvesting well under the average allowable cut, each year, in this province. This is a new concept for citizens. Undercutting public lands reframes the debate about log exports in a new light. It's important to find a way to communicate this new message to the public.

Last, but not least: **Laura Coward, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations**, spoke briefly about recent shifts in government ministries. She reaffirmed the government's commitment to work with the PFLA to ensure that government remains alert and respectful to the perspective of private managed forest owners.

Ron Davies, Private Managed Forest Land Council also provided a brief update of the council's activities over the past year.

These highlights don't do the presentations justice. If you'd like a more in-depth look at any of the topics, please contact Rod Bealing or Ina Shah at: info@pfla.bc.ca, or phone: (250) 381-7565 – they'll happily pass along a copy of the any available full-versions.



Policy Input:

The provincial government is in the process of regulating off-road vehicles (ORVs). Vera Vukelich gave a detailed presentation of the ORV Management Framework at the AGM's 2011 Private Forestry Forum.

Under the ORV Management Framework vehicle registration is mandatory for ORVs operated on crown land: this applies to current and new owners, and includes safety regulations. A compliance and enforcement strategy is in the works, and the implementation process is expected to take about 2 years – this gives ICBC the time necessary to upgrade their systems.

In her presentation, Vera Vukelich was sincerely sensitive to the unique position of private forest landowners. The province is prepared to include or exclude private managed forestlands, from the legislation, based on our input. One way or the other, the ORV legislation will affect private forest landowners.

The question before the PFLA is how to respond? This is an opportunity for managed forest owners to influence policy development. The best course of action is for the PFLA to respond to government by the end of September with a solid PFLA position – a clear statement on whether we welcome the regulation of ORVs on private managed forest lands, whether we have specific recommendations or concerns, or whether we oppose it.

Let's take full advantage of this opportunity for close cooperation with government and ensure that private managed forestland is well represented at all stages of this process. If sufficient appetite warrants, we can organize conference calls, or face-to-face meetings, to develop suggestions and comments to help government

pursue its goals with an appropriate respect for private property.

You can view Vera Vukelich's full presentation on the PFLA blog: <http://pfla.bc.ca/blog/2011/07/regulating-off-road-vehicles-orvs-in-bc/>

Communications Update:

The PFLA Communications Committee is delighted to announce another successful year of positively representing private forestlands in BC. We've done a tremendous job of getting our message in front of elected officials at municipal, provincial and federal levels of government.

With a solid footing on external communications, the PFLA Communications Committee is shifting gears to refocus our energy on member communications. Our plan is to engage both traditional and online communication methods to ensure members have access to regular updates, relevant news and timely information.

After a thorough review process, we've recruited two talented young professionals with new energy and fresh perspectives. Juhli Selby and Lisa Weeks are excited for the opportunity to work with the PFLA, and look forward to helping us continue to tell our unique story in compelling and engaging ways.

Juhli Selby of Juhli Selby Social Media gave a presentation at the AGM's 2011 Private Forestry Forum sketching a broad overview of social media. Juhli outlined different ways the PFLA can use tools like Facebook, YouTube and blogging to better communicate amongst ourselves, with the public, with other like-minded organizations, and with different levels of government.

Participants were kind enough to engage with our new efforts

and a lively discussion emerged addressing both concerns and enthusiasm for the possibilities social media has to offer. Our sincere thanks for your participation: we're excited about our expanding online presence and look forward to your continued feedback.

Other things to look forward to include:

- A regular PFLA Member Update newsletter via email.
- Weekly blog posts providing information, stories and insights relevant to the PFLA community.
- A member only Facebook page for communicating amongst ourselves on timely topics.
- A YouTube channel with video footage of interesting aspects of private forestland management from our own perspectives.

We're just tightening the bolts and greasing the wheels now, but we should be off and running in no time. Here are the links to our Facebook page, YouTube channel, and the PFLA blog. Check us out and let us know what you think:

YouTube:

www.youtube.com/user/PFLABC

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/PFLABC

Blog:

www.pfla.bc.ca/blog