

Fall 2013

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Second-growth goshawk nest on private forest land near Comox Lake. Photo credit: Grant Eldridge

PFLA Public Policy Update

PFLA continues to work diligently to ensure the perspective of managed forest owners is represented at all levels of the policy process. We strive to maintain regular communications with elected officials, ministry staff and community members and remain actively engaged on a number of policy files important and relevant to forest owners across the province.

Here's an update on four key areas we're currently focused on.

1. Water Sustainability Act

Through an extensive consultation process, underway since 2009, the B.C. Ministry of Environment has developed a detailed proposal for the Water Sustainability Act. The provincial government is seeking feedback, one last time, before introducing a final version in the legislature in 2014.

It's important to note: the ministry's online consultation initiative has attracted considerable attention from a broad range of stakeholders, both regionally and internationally, as well as interested parties not directly effected by the legislation.

PFLA is preparing a detailed document for submission to ensure private forest interests are considered, but we encourage individual owners to participate as well. Given the reach of, and response to, the online process, it's critical to balance the submissions received

so far with factual input from people who live, manage and work in the areas directly effected by the legislation.

You can find more information at:
gov.bc.ca/watersustainabilityact

2. Species at Risk Act: Northern Goshawk

In our last update, we informed you about PFLA and CAFO's participation in a federal process, lead by Parks Canada, to develop a recovery plan for the Northern Goshawk under the Species at Risk Act.

To date, PFLA continues to work closely with federal and provincial staff members to ensure the best available science, and on-the-ground information about the habitat situation for Northern Goshawks in second-growth managed forests, is understood and incorporated into the policy process.

PFLA members recently participated in a workshop, held at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre in Nanaimo, October 23-24, 2013, designed to bring together scientists, experts and experienced practitioners to share knowledge about the Northern Goshawk species.

The roughly 30 participants of the 2-day workshop included a wide range of stakeholders with a deep level of expertise about Northern Goshawks: industry representatives,

ministry staff, professional biologists, as well as ENGOs and First Nations representatives.

The intention of the workshop was to exchange science, information and observations about the Northern Goshawk — how they live, how they breed, how they feed, how they respond to disturbances in the landscape and how they adapt to managed forests: ultimately, to reconcile perceptions about their needs and sensitivities with decades of observations and solid data about how the birds actually interact with their environment.

It's important to note: the workshop did not result in an immediate meeting of the minds. There are some significant gaps between long-held assumptions about the habitat conditions goshawks need to thrive (e.g. older-age and undisturbed forest types) and the younger, managed forest conditions the birds have consistently demonstrated (over several decades) they thrive in.

Moving forward, the experience and insights of managed forest practitioners will continue to offer a significant and valuable contribution to the process. To that end, PFLA members remain committed to protecting

endangered species and working with government to develop effective and responsible recovery plans.

3. CVRD Air Quality Program

The Cowichan Valley Regional District is taking the initiative to identify opportunities, and take positive steps at a regional level, to improve air quality and minimize health risks associated with pollution.

The CVRD hosted a well-attended workshop in Duncan on October 30, 2013 and PFLA was among the broad range of participants in attendance: health authority members, Ministry of Environment staff, local government officials, industry representatives, forest owners. We were pleased to see a strong emphasis on science, monitoring and analyzing data—from air quality information, to health impacts, to hospital admissions.

As far as we're aware, the CVRD is the first regional government, with private managed forests in its boundaries, to undertake such an intense and thorough look at air quality issues, risks and solutions. We're proud of the excellent track record PFLA members have as

responsible stewards; however, it's important to remain engaged and educate elected officials and community members about the procedures and regulations we follow to minimize the amount of smoke our operations generate.

4. Market Access

PFLA continues to focus considerable attention on the Market Access (or lack thereof) file. Over the past 2 years, we've seen significant increases in the demand and prices paid for lumber and veneer. During the same period, domestic log prices continue to flat line at a woefully low rate compared to international prices. This phenomenon further demonstrates the lack of a healthy functioning log market in British Columbia.

PFLA understands how critical diverse and competitive market access is to our members. We're working diligently to bring this politically contentious matter to government's attention, both federally and provincially, and continue to advocate for a resolution to the problem: specifically, our ongoing inability to obtain globally competitive prices for our fibre and return fair value to our forests.

Out and About with the PFLA

Rod Bealing donned his favourite straw hat for the 145th annual Cowichan Exhibition and spent many sun-filled hours manning the PFLA info booth, doling out newsletters, pamphlets, info sheets and conversation loaded with information about private forestry in B.C.



CAFO News Bulletin

The Canadian Association of Forest Owners (CAFO) continues to make steady progress finding alliances with like-minded and influential organizations across the country in order to more effectively carry a united and consistent message to Ottawa from Canada's forest owners. CAFO is particularly encouraged to be talking with a range of allied organizations, including: maple syrup producers, provincial woodlot organizations, the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, to find common ground where landowners can stand together with a united voice on federal policy issues.

Executive Director, Tony Rotherham, has provided sterling service and outstanding results getting the organization up and running. As captain of the ship, Mr. Rotherham has set the organization on an even keel and charted a steady course for success. Earlier in the year, Mr. Rotherham let the board of directors know his retirement (the kind that doesn't involve traveling from one end of the country, attending meetings and conferences, poring over policy documents and crafting position papers) was on the horizon.

After a thorough search, CAFO is excited to announce Chris Lee will officially start as CAFO's new managing director November 1st, 2013. With a background in forestry, and over 30 years experience working with industry, government and professional associations across B.C., Saskatchewan and Ontario, Chris brings the just-right combination of knowledge, expertise and connections necessary to man the helm of the CAFO ship.

As a strong supporter of CAFO, PFLA is excited about the organization's growing momentum and we continue to work closely on shared interests while exploring ways to formalize what has evolved into a valuable partnership.



5 Steps to Ensure Responsible Prescribed Burning

Prescribed burning is an important forest management tool — an opportunity for forest owners and land managers to take advantage of the season's cooler temperatures and wetter conditions to manage wildfire fuels and minimize the risks of uncontrolled fire during hotter times of the year. Prescribed burning also:

- Improves forest health
- Increases reforestation success
- Creates and maintains important wildlife habitats

Unfortunately, where there's fire, there's smoke, potentially lots of smoke. As responsible stewards of B.C.'s managed forest lands, it's important to be educated and informed about the regulations and processes in place to minimize disturbances and ensure the health and safety of communities.

1. Be aware of the laws and regulations that apply to your area.

At the provincial level, you need to obtain a burn number before you can burn. The easiest way to get a burn number is to call the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations' open burning registration line at 1-888-797-1717.

If you've never registered before, you'll need to provide a legal description of your land and the number of piles you plan to burn. Once the ministry staff locates your land on the map, they'll provide you with a registration number. Generally, the registration period lasts two weeks. Next time you plan to burn, call the open burning registration number again, provide them with your burn number and they'll renew the same number for future burns.

You also need to follow the Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation. You can find detailed information about the regulation on the Ministry of Environment's website at: bcairquality.ca/reports/agttoobsc.html. If you're still unclear, you can also talk to the staff at the Protection Branch or ask PFLA for support.

2. Have good relationships with your local council and fire department.

If your managed forest land falls within a municipal boundary you need to be aware that municipalities may have additional expectations and you need to be informed about what those expectations are.

Local representatives are often uninformed about the distinction between municipal laws and provincial laws. To avoid complications, it's wise to have a conversation with your local council to make sure they're familiar with provincial regulations that apply to burning on private managed forest land.

It's also a good idea to contact your municipal fire department, before you start burning, and let them know what your plans are. Municipal fire departments receive the majority of complaints about smoke, but they're not always familiar with provincial regulations. This simple gesture will go a long way to help minimize confusion, improve relationships and ensure your burn plans go smoothly.

3. Communicate with your neighbours.

Communication is key to minimizing complaints, complications and stress. Educate your neighbours about what your plans are. Be specific. Let them know what timeframe you're planning to burn, in what areas, why you're burning and what they can expect.

4. Minimize the amount of smoke you generate.

Smoke can be a serious irritant — coughing, asthma, aggravation of lung and heart problems — that poses a significant risk to the health of some community members. Along with health concerns, smoke also poses safety risks by limiting visibility on roadways and air travel. Minimizing smoke is critical to maintaining the health and safety of neighbouring communities.

Here are a couple of strategies to help accomplish this:

1. **Educate yourself about venting indexes.** Wind speeds and temperature inversions affect how smoke moves (or doesn't move). Check the venting index before you burn and only burn on days when the index is "good" and forecast to be "good" the following day as well.
2. **Only burn material that is seasoned or dried out.** The wetter the wood you burn, the more smoke you create. One practice to help facilitate drying is to cover your brush piles with tarps or lumber wrap. Stacking your burn piles in beehive shaped structures also hastens the drying process.

5. Reminder: Burn piles are stacks of unmarketable materials.

Forest owners strive to get every merchantable piece of fibre out of the tree — we offer wood to firewood merchants, we provide salvage permits and we sell firewood directly. If you see woody material in a burn pile, it's because we were unsuccessful in finding a buyer.

Deer Hunting Season

Reminder: your opportunity to influence the number of deer enjoying your forest ends December 12th, 2013. If you're looking for expert assistance managing your deer problems before then, please contact us directly to be added to our list of private land hunting opportunities for responsible and experienced deer hunters.



Woodlots — The Island Way: A showcase of community-friendly forestry

The Federation of BC Woodlot Associations (FBCWA) held their annual conference and AGM in Campbell River and Quadra Island, September 19th-22nd, 2013.

PFLA shares a long and productive history with the FBCWA. We also share a lot of the same goals and beliefs about forest stewardship and land management. Many PFLA members are also FBCWA members, and from time to time the two organizations work together on common issues.

The FBCWA conference and field tour was an interesting, useful and educational opportunity for PFLA to engage and connect with licensees, landowners, ministry staff and other important stakeholders involved with PFLA over the years. As always, we were impressed and inspired to find a dynamic group of industrious people, deeply passionate about the work they do.

Conference Highlights

2013 Woodlot Stewardship Recognition video

Jerry Benner presented a 15-minute video describing the evolution of the woodlot program on Quadra Island and highlighting some of the challenges and successes licensees have faced and accomplished since the program's inception in the late 1980s.

Rick Monchak, RPF, TimberWest

Rick's presentation, "Woodlot Style" Forestry on a TFL, provided a detailed history and description of the company's approach to managing forest land on Quadra Island over the past 30 years.

Judi Cunningham, UBC Sauder School of Business

Judi Cunningham's presentation highlighted the importance of family-run businesses to the global economy and included all kinds of practical information and resources for business owners and family members to think about.

Bill Markvoort and Terry Basso, Probyn Group

Bill and Terry offered an enlightening presentation about coastal log markets. They used graphs, charts and years of local knowledge to make sense of current log market opportunities and also provided insights and advice to help land managers best plan for future cycles.



Mark Nighswander describes the diverse tree species he's planted.

Friday Night Banquet

Not to be out done by the charm of the west coast, the excellent spread at the April Point Lodge or the lively entertainment, Minister Thomson gave a heartfelt speech to the group acknowledging the dedication, commitment and contributions that woodlot licensees make to the overall fabric of forest stewardship in the province.

Field Tour Highlights

Saturday's field tour on Quadra Island was an excellent opportunity to hear firsthand how other forest managers tackle issues. Because many PFLA members face challenges operating close to the urban interface in coastal communities, it was particularly interesting to visit the Village Bay Road stop on the north end of the island.

Woodlot licensees, tourism operators and ministry staff discussed managing for visual quality objectives (VQOs) and offered examples of different strategies used:

- **Leave a standing buffer vs. clear to the road in staggered sections (red alder site)**
- **Commercial thin vs. patch cut (Douglas-fir site)**

The tour stop provided an opportunity for a productive discussion about the expectations of tourism operators and how woodlot licensees are managing those expectations.

A second highlight was Rick Monchak's facts and figures presentation comparing the visual and economic history of a 1975 cable commercial thinning. Using recent timber cruise data, Rick compared the block with an adjacent untreated control site and presented the long-term outcomes for those particular circumstances.

The presentation was a handy reminder that different treatments impact the long-term value of a stand. A lot of the things you do — the treatments you carry out, the investments you make — you do because they make good sense at the time, but then decades later you can realize it doesn't make sense anymore.

We were also lucky to tour Mark Nighswander's private property where he described, with enthusiasm, the diversity of trees he's planted in an endeavour to establish non-native species known for their high values, including a variety of eastern Canadian hardwoods.

Thanks to FBCWA organizers, volunteers, staff and community members in Campbell River and on Quadra Island for hosting the event and sharing such a positive and inspiring perspective of community-friendly forestry.