
NEWS RELEASE

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

Freer family woodlot receives minister's award

GRAND FORKS – The Freer family is being recognized by the Province through the Minister's Award for Innovation and Excellence in Woodlot Management for the South.

"Congratulations to Ross and Janice Freer and their family on receiving this award for innovation and excellence in woodlot management in the south area of the Province," said Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. "Their commitment to forest health, reforestation, public education and promotion of manufactured British Columbia wood products supports the woodlot licence program's core principles of sustainability, good stewardship, social licence and public trust."

Operating their woodlot through Son Ranch Timber Company, the Freer family actively manages their woodlot for forest health, using selection logging and prompt reforestation. They run a custom mill, kiln, planer, moulder and a timber framing company that is represented by their son, Shilo, who became a timber framer out of high school.

The Freers are passionate about educating the public, offering cottage experiences where guests can learn about life within a working forest. This includes learning how each tree is selected, graded, milled, dried, shaped, moulded and joined into added value products, such as wainscoting, siding, trim and traditional timber framing. In support of local tourism, they also provide free tours of their chainsaw museum and public education on the woodlot program.

"The Freer's passion for their woodlot, the woodlot program and contributions to local forestry are evident by just one look at the chainsaw collection and museum that Ross has put together," said Jeff Beale, president of the Federation of British Columbia Woodlot Associations. "Their operation is an excellent example of stewardship through selection logging, maximization of harvested fibre through added value wood products and contribution to the local economy through tourism. Congratulations to the Freers on this award."

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

- Son Ranch Timber Co. (Ross Gardner Freer and family) – south area
- Mountain View Silviculture Ltd. (Mark and Pauline Adamson and family) – provincial award and north area
- Kevco Timber Ltd. (Howie, Shari and Kevin Griessel) – coast area

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

The recipients were presented their awards on Oct. 5, 2019, while at the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations' 32nd and the Woodlot Product Development Council's 22nd annual general meetings in Smithers.

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.
- Licence holders are granted exclusive rights to manage Crown timber within the woodlot licence area but, in exchange, they must manage any private land contribution according to provincial forestry legislation such as the Forest Act, Forest and Range Practices Act and the Wildfire Act.
- While any amount of private land can be included in the woodlot licence area, the maximum amount of Crown land that can be included is 800 hectares on the Coast and 1,200 hectares in the Interior.
- British Columbia has 855 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 rural 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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