
NEWS RELEASE

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

Benjamin Wilson woodlot receives minister's award for the North

Benjamin (Ben) Wilson is being recognized by the Province with the 2020 Minister's Award for Innovation and Excellence in Woodlot Management for British Columbia's North.

"I am pleased to announce Ben Wilson is a woodlot award recipient for his commitment to his community and First Nations capacity building," said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. "Ben is a great example of what the woodlot program can be for small, innovative rural operators who use every ounce of fibre harvested to maximize the efficiency of the woodlot."

Woodlot licensees are small-scale forest managers who strive to take a hands-on approach to natural resource management. Timber is harvested in a manner consistent with principles of stewardship and sustainability. Each year, the minister of forests, lands, natural resource operations and rural development recognizes three woodlot licensees that exemplify excellence in woodlot management.

Licensees are recognized for excellence in three categories:

- Basic and Incremental Forestry;
- Sales, Marketing and Utilization; and
- Good Woodlot Citizen.

Wilson holds woodlot licences W0117 and W0950 in British Columbia's northern Interior and was selected because he has an innovative approach to optimizing timber use and silviculture reforestation. He has successfully partnered with a local nursery to improve transport and planting efficiencies, as well as rehabilitate severely fire-damaged stands. Wilson markets his harvested timber to all the local mills, which enables him to maximize utilization for a broad spectrum of timber products, while minimizing site debris to reduce fire risks.

Wilson leaves logs at the side of the road for his community to heat their homes. Wilson is also committed to building and maintaining local First Nations capacity and relationship building by directly employing several local workers, two of whom work full time, and supporting their career development. He donates to local causes including the LINK (food bank/community support) and the Burns Lake Minor Hockey Association.

"Congratulations to Ben Wilson. It hasn't been an easy road for him rehabilitating one woodlot heavily impacted by wildfires and acquiring a second woodlot requiring extensive silviculture work, but they are proof of what can be accomplished with some ingenuity and determination," said Jeff Beale, president, Federation of British Columbia Woodlot Associations. "I would like to thank him for his diligent salvage program, cleaning up extensive areas of dead and downed pine in interface areas, particularly near the Village of Burns Lake."

The Province recognizes three woodlot licensees and an overall provincial top performer for innovation and excellence in woodlot management. This year's other two recipients are:

- Sahlstrom Enterprises – provincial and South area
- British Columbia Institute of Technology – Coast area, with recognition of Jonathan Smyth, manager.

Award winners receive a signed, framed certificate of recognition from the minister. The area winners each take home \$2,500, with an additional \$2,500 going to the top performer in the province.

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

Quick Facts:

- Woodlot licences are small, area-based tenures managed by individuals, partnerships or First Nations.
- Licence holders are granted exclusive rights to manage Crown timber within the woodlot licence area and must manage any private land contribution according to provincial forestry legislation, including 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 attributable to a woodlot licence is 800 hectares on the Coast and 1,200 hectares in the Interior.
- British Columbia has 847 issued woodlots. Each woodlot generates jobs in planning, harvesting, road construction and maintenance, reforestation, silviculture and small-scale timber processing.
- Woodlot licences contribute to approximately 2% of the provincial annual allowable timber harvest.

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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