

PEI Woodlot Owners

Spring seminar Schedule

- Forest Enhancement seminar Apr. 17th Morel High School
- Forest Enhancement Seminar Apr. 24 Northam Community center

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Welcome to the second issue of the PEI Woodlot Owners Association newsletter, a service to our membership, providing them with information to help make informed choices about their woodlots but also to connect woodlot owners around the Island and help share ideas among themselves.

This issue will cover the Annual General Meeting as well as the presentation by the board to the Legislative committee, we hope you enjoy this edition and are always happy to hear your comments.

Woodlot Owners Developing a Collective Voice

As most of you know, the AGM for the PEI Woodlot Owners Association was held on April the 6th, we had many individuals come out to show their support for the continued growth of the organization. We kindly thank them for their interest and hope to see these woodlot owners throughout the coming year at the many events we will be planning.

That being said, there is need in this province for a strong and united representation that can only occur with a growing and diverse membership that represents all the woodlot owners of PEI. That will become a reality by realizing that we all have the same goals: a healthy and vibrant forest that supports a strong value added grass roots management system, one that serves the needs of all Islanders without sacrificing our most valuable asset, our environment.

Listening to the Environment officials speaking on the subject of buffer zone regulations it dawned on me that we truly are all looking for the same answers but are just coming at it from different angles, the Government is there to keep the public in line with the regulations and the public is doing their best to understand and conform to them. Where the problem lies I believe is in the difficulties of communication and trust. This is not a new thing and has been played out in many different ways over time. I see groups such as the PEIWOA as instrumental in bridging that divide by bringing these parties together to achieve the goals of preservation and responsible management through cooperation and understanding.

Remember many government officials are woodlot owners with the same passion for the forest as you or I.

Besides the government bodies there are a host of other non-profit organizations who are major contributors to the health of our forestlands and watersheds, we value our alliances with these groups and hope to open strong and positive dialogues regarding the many issues that exist in these areas.

These problems are by nature slow to solve, but they can be overcome with positive attitudes, perseverance and creativity. I ask all of you to join together and help to create a new and exciting chapter in the forests of the Island, this can only happen with your support and energy, but I believe that it is the best answer for the generations to follow.

Sincerely, Your Chair



2013 Annual General Meeting

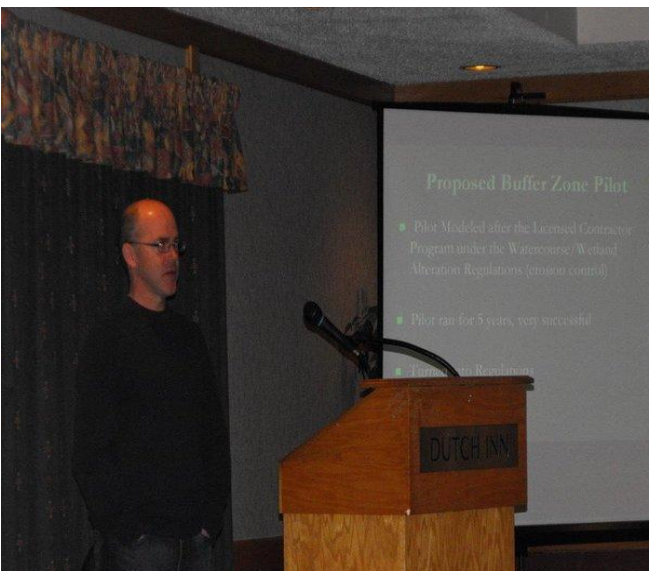
The second AGM of the PEI Woodlot Owners Association took place on April 6th at the Dutch Inn, with a good turnout of both members and other interested parties. Following a short meet and greet and membership sign up board member John Rowe welcomed all present and proceeded to introduce the speakers from the Department of The Environment, Labour and Justice, Greg Wilson and Dale Thompson, they both gave a detailed and informative presentation walking those present through all of the existing regulations regarding buffer zones, a following question period opened discussions on many issues regarding these topics.

Following Greg and Dale's presentation, Board member Ira Smith took the podium to discuss the boards' presentation to the Department of Agriculture and Forestry Legislative Committee on March 6. The body of that presentation can be seen below. Following a question period, John Roe adjourned the first part of the meeting for a refreshment break.

Following the break, PEIWOA Chair Bruce Craig, convened the Annual General Meeting where members heard reports from the Board and manager regarding the business that the Association had conducted over the past year.



Dale Thompson on Buffer zone regulations



Greg Wilson on Proposed Pilot project

The presentation by Greg Wilson touched on a proposed pilot project, which gave the audience the understanding that the Department of Agriculture and Forestry is working together with the Department of the Environment Labour and Justice to develop a program whereby some contractors and landowners would be certified to work in riparian zones without the need to apply for a permit.

Although this program is still in the developmental stages, and the PEIWOA applauds the actions of these departments in making it easier for landowners to manage their riparian zones

Presentation To The Legislative Committee

On March 5, 2013 representatives from the PEI Woodlot Owners Association made a presentation to the Legislative Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Forestry related to buffer zones and a number of restrictions the government has imposed on woodlot owners.

We are concerned that recent press coverage does not accurately reflect our views on buffer zones and our recommended changes.

To start, we want to make it clear that we support the need for buffer zones and the need for restrictions on the activities that are permitted in these zones.

However, recent regulatory activity has been directed at simply stopping all activity near a water course. In our view the regulatory regime should be a much more a balance. It should

- Respect the ownership interest that our members have in these properties.
- Encourage proper woodlot management and
- Protect the environment

Our presentation to the committee included two important concepts.

Firstly, that a distinction should be made between buffer zones next to farm land where there is a risk of chemicals and sediment being washed into the water and forested areas where this risk is much lower. For the Forest buffer zone we recommended that:

- It not be as wide a buffer zone as one next farm land
- Owners allowed to do pre commercial thinning
- Owners allowed harvesting 30% of the mature trees during any 5 year period.
- Restrict use of heavy equipment within 20 feet of the water.
- Owners allowed to repair or remove bridges across small brooks or streams
- All of the above without having to obtain government approval or pay fees to the government.

The second concept was that the buffer zones need to be managed. In this regard we recommend that the government allow some low risk/beneficial activities to take place without having to seek regulatory approval.

- Cut trees that are dying but not yet completely dead.
- Cut deciduous trees where the roots have been exposed to salt water.
- Cut trees that have been damaged – tops broken off.
- Cut diseased trees (For example, trees with black knot)

In addition we had three technical areas where we requested changes.

1. Wooded Swamp – Pursuant to the Watercourse and Wetlands Regulations a woodlot owner is allowed to cut trees in a wooded swamp. However, the definition of wooded swamp basically negates this provision in that no commercial size trees would grow in a wooded swamp as defined in the regulations. In our view, if the ground is dry enough to grow commercial size trees it should be considered a wooded swamp and the owner should be allowed to harvest the trees.
2. Landlocked Pond – We see no need for buffer zones around holes that a landowner may dig on their land or where the government or their contractors remove soil to build roads or other purposes.
3. Drainage Ditch – We see no benefit to having environmental officials visit a property to advise on the need for buffer zones around drainage ditches.

Finally, we recommended that the woodlot owner be allowed to use their Forest

Ira Smith with Presentation



Did you know?

There are over 16,000 private woodlot owners on PEI.

In 1900 PEI had only 30% forest cover compared with 44% in 2000.

PEI has the highest per capita private land ownership of any province.

The Provincial tree of Prince Edward Island is the red oak

Board Members Biographies

The Board of Directors, responsible for the day to day business of this association is a group of dedicated volunteers, who share our memberships concerns and passions regarding their woodlots. These individuals are:

Bruce Craig- Chair: Bruce is President of Craig Construction and Cabinet Making Ltd. He co-owns 155 acres of woodland in the Northam area with his two brothers.

Lawrence Millar- Vice Chair, Heatherdale, Co-owns (with his wife) approximately 20 hectares of which 2/3rds is wood land with plantation and natural mixed stands. His email is:

Dave Carragher -Treasurer: Lives in Charlottetown but manages a woodlot in Kelly's Cross.

Ira Smith - Board member: Ira is a retired public servant, and owns several woodlots in the Freeland/Lot 11 area of PEI. He can be contacted at ira.smith@bellaliant.net

John Rowe- Board member: John J. Rowe is a retired educator who grew up on the family farm on PEI. He owns several woodlots in Queens and Kings Counties and has been involved with their management plans for over thirty years.

Cyrus Bernard- Board member: Cyrus is a horse logger, he lives in Tignish.

Jon Hutchinson- Board member: Lives in Bonshaw

Leonard Kelly- Board member: Lives in Bangor.

John Keuper- Board member: Lives in Wood Islands.

Greg Ridgway - General Manager lives in Breadalbane.



What we've been up to

Since our last newsletter winter has slowly been turning to spring and we are in the midst of presenting our seminars on the Forest Enhancement Program with the help of our friends at the Department of Agriculture and Forestry We are encouraged by the attendance at our first seminar that took place at the High school in Morel on Feb 25th. Our Annual General Meeting was held on the 6th of April as you have already seen and we are encouraged by the new members and board members who are putting their support behind this organization. The work by the board on its numerous presentations to the departments of Agriculture and Forestry as well as the

Department of the environment, Labour and Justice, culminated in the Presentation to the legislative committee on March 6. Following these presentations a clarification of our stand on buffer zone legislation was sent to political department heads as well as our membership, we are sorry for the misunderstanding to all and wish to restate our belief in the current systems that protect our most valuable resources



Where we are going

Over the spring we will continue to offer our membership the deliverables of education, connection and representation that we carry in our mission statement. But above and beyond this we are planning on making a strong drive for membership.

The board understands that the only way to be become a truly viable organization with both influence and credibility is to raise our membership in both size and diversity, if you are a member or on our mailing list you will receive a letter addressing this issue. Membership is only \$25, and it will make you a member of the only group that

represents the private woodlot owners of PEI. We ask you think about what you want in an organization and not only what it can do for you but what you can do for it.

The Board of Directors is always looking for energetic and engaged individuals to join them, and at this time we are in need of directors who have woodlots or reside in Queens County.



Links to Other Island Associations

PEI Woodlot Owners Association

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peiwatershedalliance.org/

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/environment/buffer-zones>

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/forestry/FEP>

We are a new organization and are interested in forming networks with organizations interested in preserving and enhancing the integrity of our Island forests, if you are a member of an organization that you feel would benefit from a network with us let us know.

MISSION STATEMENT



The PEI Woodlot Owners Association (PEIWOA) is an inclusive organization that will provide the private woodlot owners of Prince Edward Island with sound advice and practical information to let them make the best choices for their woodlot. We will accomplish this objective by working closely with the membership to identify and pursue the issues of concern relating to the forests of PEI, encompassing the economic, environmental and legal aspects of ownership as well as representing members on the Provincial and National stage.

By forging connections between woodlot owners and all other members of PEI's forest communities the PEIWOA will create new and exciting partnerships, and help to develop the frame work for the future of PEI's forest lands.