

PEI Woodlot Owners

Welcome to the fifth 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 a variety of topics, with a focus on the value of your woodlot, and how to best capitalize on the visions that you have. We hope you enjoy this edition and are always happy to hear your comments.

Value in your woodlot

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Dear members

Many different values get attached to the things that we own, whether sentimental or monetary, everyone has a different idea of what is valuable. In my years in the woods I have experienced this with woodlot owners, while some are quick to look for a monetary return from their woods, others are content to leave it to the natural course of events. However there is a large group of individuals who own woodlots and for various reasons are not aware of the value that exists in their woodlot. Many times this can be attributed to lack of access to the woodlot, without a road or trail to give you reasonably easy avenue into the woodlot you are unlikely to venture into it and therefore have little idea of actually knowing what is in there. This problem can be easily remedied, because there are usually always old roads that have grown up over the years, and all they need is some brushing to be done and you are in your woodlot enjoying the natural surroundings and starting to look around at all the possibilities that exist. The following articles are designed to further inform you about getting into your woodlot and seeing the value that exists there in both economic and natural terms.

Sincerely, Your Chair



ROADS AND TRAILS



In order for any management to be carried out in a woodlot there must be some way to have access to the woodlot. A good main road and possibly some smaller side trails can make management of the property much easier. A system of roads and trails can provide not only access for management but also access for enjoyment.

Most woodlots in PEI are long and narrow with a single main road running through the middle of the property, which is usually all that is needed. There are many things that can affect the location of the road. These may include the topography, streams, wetlands, sensitive areas with unique features and countless other factors. Having a permanent access road that will allow for the movement of harvested wood will be extremely beneficial in the ongoing, long term management of a property. If a woodlot is managed well it will inevitably produce some usable wood product, and even if the primary objective is for wildlife or aesthetics there will, from time to time, be a necessity to harvest some trees. Improvements can always be made and these improvements will create timber products, they may be something as basic as fire wood but it has to come out of the forest somehow in order to get used and a good road just makes the process so much easier.

Roads and trails can do so much more than provide avenue for extracting wood, they can be used for recreation as well as access to enjoy the beauty of the forest. If you enjoy walking, what better place could there be then to go for a walk than in your own forest. Walking on your road you will see the many things you have done, and you can think about the many things you would like to do.

A main road is only part of the picture, depending on your interests and on your time and ability to work in your woodlot you may want some smaller trails that can be used for walking and with just a little more thought they can be used for making access to more of the woodlot where a main road is not needed. If you have access to smaller equipment for harvesting then these trails could be made just big enough to allow for this equipment. If you happen to be a hunter then these small trails can give you good access to find the wildlife you are looking for, and remember you can always hunt with a camera too!

The exact lay out of the road or the trail is important. Think of all the things it will be used for. Once it is built it will be there for a long time, perhaps centuries! A long perfectly straight road is the most economically efficient but probably the least aesthetically appealing. A few small and very slight turns can make a big difference in the visual look of a road and makes it much more enjoyable to walk. Take some time to think about the location and follow all the necessary restrictions for being near wetlands, crossing streams or excessive slopes.

If a road is not heavily used it will very quickly become grown over with grass and other annual and perennial vegetation. This is good as it will help to stabilize the soil and even create habitat of its own. The lush vegetation will become food for some plant eating mammals which in turn become food for animals and birds higher up the food chain. There is nothing quite like the sight of an owl gliding silently down the middle of your woodlot road looking for an evening meal.

Roads and trails can add so much to the use and enjoyment of a woodlot. But like most management decisions in the forest, it takes time and careful thought to get things just right. Take your time, get some advice but get out there and create the access you need to do the best job you can to manage your woodlot.



NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS

When we think of our forests we think mostly about trees. That is because by definition a forest is dominated by trees. Our traditional major use of the forest has been for the harvesting of trees for lumber and wood fiber. Let's look at other possible economic uses out there for products that do not use the trunk of the tree in the traditional sense.

The world of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP's) has not been fully explored in PEI yet. The forest has always been used for other values and products but not in a big way in PEI. In this article we will focus on some of the products that come from the forest and could add to the economic value of the woodlot. Other regions of the world, including North America, have found value in cultivating and or "wild crafting" products the forest has to offer. Sometimes the products become so valuable that the harvesting becomes destructive or creates conflicts. For now, let's focus on the possibilities in a broad sense and any issues of sustainability and conflicts can be dealt with on a case by case basis.

The number of possible products that can fit into NTFP's is staggering. Here is a list of possibilities:

Aromatics (essential oils)

- Medicinal (essential oils, fresh, dried)
- Floral/Decorative (fresh, dried)
 - o Greenery
 - o Colored stems (red osier, willow)
 - o Grasses
 - o Cones
- Food
 - o Wild berries and fruit
 - o Mushrooms
 - o Nuts & Seeds
 - o Syrup
- Landscaping
 - o Bark mulch
 - o Pine straw
 - o Forest plants
 - o Unique natural fencing
 - o Bentwood garden accessories and furniture
- Weaving (baskets)
 - o Bark
 - o Willow whips
- Speciality wood products
 - o Figured woods
 - o Unique shapes (for turnings and other art)
- Forest Art (limited only by imagination)

This is not everything but it does give you an idea of how broad the possibilities for Non Timber Forest Products can be. Someone somewhere is making money, and sometime a very good living, from each and every one of these products listed above. Christmas trees and wreaths are two well-known examples of NTFP's that have caught on well in North America. Salal for floral decorations and button mushrooms from the mountain sides of the West coast have made many people wealthy. Some wild products are cultivated or cultured to produce crops more economically. There is one very well-known Non Timber Forest Product that is cultivated in this region as a food crop. Can you guess what it is? Blueberries! That's right; blueberries are in fact a wild forest shrub. We have learned to culture them in their natural habitat to grow larger and sustainable crops that we now consider as an agricultural crop. There are many other areas in which forest and agriculture meet, and produce products under a system known as "agroforestry", but that is for another day.

So what other possibilities are out there, under our feet or above our heads? What can we gather and extract or cultivate and harvest? There are many possibilities for PEI. As a start-up business, none of these will be easy. Most people will tell you "That will never work." It will take an entrepreneurial spirit and a keen interest in some aspect of one or more NTFP's to succeed. But even before we can succeed we know what some of the possibilities are. That is what this article is all about. I am simply planting a seed that might someday grow into a business for someone out there. If you have a little interest in NTFP's, I recommend downloading and reading "**Income Opportunities in Special Forest Products**". You can find it online at:

<http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/documnts/usda/agib666/aib666in.pdf>. It's an older publication but it will be a good start. It is about 200 pages and you may not need all of the segments.

Start small. Find out if what you are doing is something you truly love to do. If it is and there is some market then chances are you will be successful. How successful will depend on how hard you want to work and how big your dream is.

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.

Ira Smith – Board member: Ira is a retired public servant, and owns several woodlots in the Freeland/Lot 11 area of PEI.

John Rowe- Secretary: 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.

Jon Hutchinson- Treasurer: Lives in Bonshaw

Leonard Kelly- Board member: Lives in Bangor.

John Keuper- Board member: Lives in Wood Islands.

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



Summer is coming

As summer approaches, many people's thoughts leave their woodlots as vacations and summer activities take the forefront. During the summer we will still be publishing our newsletters every six weeks as usual, but our information seminars and woodlot tours will not start until early fall.

However we will be busy developing a work plan for the upcoming year as we will require funding of some form to be able to continue to offer the services that you expect as a member, with that in mind, we ask all interested parties to give us their input on the direction of the association, what events would you like to see in future and what type of information is important to you the woodlot owner.



Links to Other Island Associations

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<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.