

# *Woodland PEI*

Newsletter of the PEI Woodlot Owners Association



*Focus on  
Biodiversity*

## ***Featured in this Issue:***

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## Message from the Editor . . .



Your Association can finally get down to business! While PEIWOA still relies upon loyal support through membership dues, the Board has obtained a federal grant to make a difference in how we can support more programs for members. On page 3, Barry Murray, former Board Director and now Project Officer, reports on this exciting project made possible through PEIWOA's new incorporated status.

Barry and all the volunteers involved are to be congratulated for successfully resolving much very tough organizational work on behalf of all woodlot owners through these difficult recent times.

PEIWOA's future looks very bright indeed, with such a diverse pool of talent on our 2023-24 Board under the visionary leadership of Thomas Baglole as President and our Rep to the nation-wide CFO (Canadian Forest Owners). At the AGM on May 6th, Jesse Argent and I stepped down as Directors after five years on the Board, while Jon Hutchinson and Trudy White were elected, each bringing tons of great experience and new energy to an already exceptional Board, as listed below.

Continuing with the theme of getting down to business, this issue is packed with practical advice for woodlot owners, many of whom are still grieving over Fiona. Smart woodlot owners who prioritize biodiversity can still optimize their woodlot's economic value as well.

Two regular contributors, Wanson Hemphill and Perry Jantzi, each provide advice on managing that balance. Wanson provides tips to evaluate biodiversity on p. 4 and Perry follows on p. 6 with important steps to take in managing a plantation.

On p. 9, Emily Foster, PEI's FireSmart Ambassador, describes how she helps woodlot owners identify fire risk as she navigates to find the resources you need to mitigate your particular fire risk. On p. 11 is a map from PEI Forests Fish & Wildlife. It outlines the private land regions and lists the forest technicians. Contact yours for timely info on Forestry incentives under the forest enhancement program (FEP). See videos from our May 6<sup>th</sup> Symposium at [peiwoa.ca](http://peiwoa.ca).

Finally, we now carry paid business card-size ads in this newsletter and on our website. Contributions to our next newsletter are welcome for the Fall issue to be published in October. See page 12 for info on advertisers, membership and how to contact us.

-- Kathy Stuart, Past President, PEIWOA

### PEIWOA BOARD of DIRECTORS 2023-24

Kings County:	<b>Kevin Carver, John Keuper</b> ( <i>Treasurer</i> ), <b>Trudy White</b>
Queens County:	<b>Thomas Baglole</b> ( <i>President / rep to CFO</i> ), <b>Wanson Hemphill, Jon Hutchinson, Doug Millington</b> ( <i>Secretary</i> ), <b>Judy Shaw</b> ( <i>rep to PEI Federation of Agriculture</i> )
Prince County:	<b>Marcel Arsenault, Bruce Craig, John Arthur Ramsay</b> ( <i>Vice-President</i> )
Ex-Officio:	<b>Barry Murray</b> ( <i>Project Officer</i> ), <b>Kathy Stuart</b> ( <i>Past President/Editor</i> )

## Biodiversity Woodlot Walk Series

. . . by Barry Murray, Program Officer



PEI WOA represents woodlot owners and their wide range of priorities, from commercial wood production to strong conservation, and the range in between.

We have recently acquired funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada through the PEI Forested Landscape Priority Place for Species at Risk fund. Our successful application involves 6 woodlot tours, roughly 2 in each county, and a central workshop to assist woodlot owners by demonstrating management techniques that will improve and maintain habitat for wildlife, and support biodiversity of all native species, including species at risk.

The decrease in biodiversity is perhaps the greatest challenge facing our planet. **Biodiversity** refers to the variety of living species on Earth and in a specific ecosystem. Animals, plants, bacteria and fungi live in a delicate balance, each species an integral part of the whole system. Our planet has a vast amount of species and biodiversity, but human activities have threatened many to the point of extinction, disrupting the delicate balance of ecosystems.

**Our island forests** are rich in biodiversity, and we as woodlot owners can manage our woodlots to maximize the health of our woodlot ecosystems, even in our working forests. Our FLPP project will allow woodlot owners to see different woodlots with different ecosystems and provide access to experts on managing forests for biodiversity. A central workshop will include a presentation followed by a woodlot tour with Mark Pulsifer, a noted biologist/forester from Nova Scotia who specializes in biodiversity forest management.

We are still in the planning stages of our woodlot tours, but some dates and locations are starting to come together. Our **main workshop on *Managing Woodlots for Biodiversity*** will be held on September 16 at the Bonshaw Community Centre, followed by a woodlot walk at Jon Hutchinson and Lyette Sansoucy's woodlot.

The **first *Prince County* woodlot walk** will be at John Lane's woodlot located at 9428 Rte. 14 near Bloomfield on Saturday, August 19, from 10:00 to noon. There will be free tree seedlings passed out to participants. The space is limited to 20 participants. Email [peiwoodlotowners@gmail.com](mailto:peiwoodlotowners@gmail.com) to register. John Lane is a long time coordinator with the Cascumpec Bay watershed group. His woodlot has a wide range of tree stands and biodiversity, including some uncommon native species. This event will be hosted by Dr. Jon Schurman.

The **first *Kings County* woodlot walk** will be held at Perry Jantzi's woodlot (3680 Rte. 2 near Farmington) on September 30. The host will be PEIWOA president, Thomas Baglole, a forester with a great vision of the future of forest management on PEI. Along with pointing out the biodiversity in Perry's woodlot, he will explain how the carbon economy can be a strong tool in protecting biodiversity in PEI's woodlots. Perry Jantzi brings a lifetime of forest management experience to his woodlot, and is managing his forest to maximize hardwoods and selectively cut for long term forest health.

Our first ***Queens County* woodlot walk** is scheduled for mid-October at the woodlot of Wanson Hemphill in Covehead. The host will be PEI Forest Fish & Wildlife biologist, Garry Gregory, who, along with Wanson, will point out and discuss managing

## *Biodiversity Woodlot Walk Series . . . (cont'd)*

woodlots for greater biodiversity, along with discussing PEI government programs available to woodlot owners to assist them in biodiversity management.

In the spring of 2024, there will be **another series of woodlot walks**, one in each county.

In the meantime, please keep an eye on our website ([peiwoa.ca](http://peiwoa.ca)), Facebook page (*PEI Woodlot Owners Association*) and email notices (*members only*) for more up-to-date information on this informative series, created especially for woodlot owners.

---Barry Murray

## *Biodiversity in PEI Forests . . . by Wanson Hemphill*

**Biodiversity** in forests may be defined as ***the variety and interactions of all life forms within a given habitat***. This includes all plant and animal life as well as all micro-organisms in the soils and waterways.

The biodiversity in forests helps to provide us with clean air, water, food, fuel and building materials. It also contributes to our quality of life with quiet and beautiful scenery. With our changing climate, protecting and enhancing biodiversity becomes even more critical.

Each part of the forest contains different amounts and varieties of biodiversity as well as greater and lesser biodiversity. For example, a clearcut has less biodiversity than a mature mixed wood forest, with most of PEI woodlots somewhere between these extremes.

Evaluating the amount of biodiversity in your forest can help appreciate and increase biodiversity in different parts of your forest. By looking for the existence and condition of the following biodiversity indicators, making small changes could greatly improve biodiversity levels. Look for:

- Forest access and walking trails.
- Amount and size of openings and edges.
- Amount of natural regeneration of trees and plants.
- Streams, springs, vernal pools (small pools of standing water).
- Stream conditions --erosion, blockages, logs across creating pools.
- Beaver dams, muskrat, mink, river otter signs.
- Riparian (buffer zone) plants and trees and widths.
- Number of dead standing trees with cavities or nests
- Number of large trees rotting on the ground.



## Biodiversity in PEI Forests ... (cont'd)

- Size and variety of tree heights in different areas.
- Amounts of different species of trees, shrubs and plants.
- Previously cleared, or uneven, unfarmed areas.
- Signs of bird, animal and amphibian wildlife.
- Amounts of natural food and shelter for birds and wildlife.

Increasing the number and diversity of plants and enhancements is based on the principle that better habitat will attract more birds and animals and will allow the many natural systems to work together.

It is estimated that one hectare of healthy forest provides \$26,000 in ecological benefits to humans, compared with \$200 to \$300 in lumber value in the same area.

Increasing biodiversity in your forest can include some of the following enhancements:

- Large woody debris - Leaving large logs (>20 cm diameter and 2 metres long) on the forest floor to rot greatly improves biodiversity and habitat over many years. Fiona has left many large trees that will eventually reach the soil but cutting the limbs and trunk will speed the process and reduce fire potential.
- Brush piles -- For small animal homes and protection.
- Snag trees -- Dead standing trees for nests and food.
- Planting missing species – Follow plant requirements for shade and moisture, to be used as future seed trees. Rabbit protection may be required for up to 5 years.
- Digger logs and brush mats in streams – Local watershed groups are skilled at these installations.
- Nest boxes - With correct openings and locations.
- Fruit and berry trees and shrubs including - Wild apple, Mountain Ash, Serviceberry, Wild Rose, Elderberry, Bayberry.



Increasing biodiversity in each part of your forest can increase forest health, improve habitat and provide benefits for all living creatures.

–Wanson Hemphill

*Editor's Note:* Wanson Hemphill, with many years of forestry management experience, is a retired forester and Watershed Coordinator. He represented PEIWOA on the Fiona Emergency Task Force and is a current PEIWOA Board Member for Queens County.

## Making Your Plantation Worthwhile by Perry Jantzi

Wow! Fiona sure did a number on some of our forests, especially so on our plantations. Ever since the seminar on *Building Resilient Forests*, my thoughts have often gone to plantations. As we heard, there are differing opinions. Are they a waste of time and money? Well, here's my opinion, for what it's worth.



Planting a single species plantation without managing it, thinning, etc., is in most cases a waste of your money, and mine if you're getting government funding.

However, a well-managed, diverse plantation can both give you a quick return on your investment while laying the foundation of a high value woodlot. I will try to give some pros and cons of different trees I would plant.

**White Spruce:** Seedlings are readily available and cheap. They grow well in most soils and can obtain large sizes in a properly thinned plantation. Shallow rooted and prone to windthrow.

**Balsam Fir:** Of all the species you can plant, fir will probably reach harvest size first. Is also readily available and reasonable to buy. Is susceptible to spruce budworm and very short lived.

I would probably plant about 20-25% of my plantation in spruce and fir. Why? Because of the quick return and their ability to smother grass to create bare ground for hardwood seedlings to regenerate. They are also the first trees I would thin cut. As the first thinning is mostly pulpwood and is basically no value, why plant more valuable trees for that purpose?

**White Pine:** Probably my favourite conifer, very long lived, will grow tall and large, towering over the forest. Valuable lumber and provides great nesting and roosting trees for our beautiful bald eagles. Unfortunately, it is prone to pine weevil when grown in plantations, turning a potentially valuable tree into a tangled, many branched mess. Blister rust can also have a high mortality. That's the reason I would only have 15-20% in my stand. However, I believe white pine shows great potential when interplanted into a thinned plantation or hardwood stand. The pine weevil seems to mostly miss them if there is a canopy of trees overhead, and once they are near grown, the weevil seems to leave them alone. They do need adequate sunlight to grow well.

**Red Pine:** I am not aware of a market for all the stands we have on the Island. Why plant more?

*Editor's Note:* As a former employee of Lands and Forest Consulting in Ontario, Perry Jantzi has walked hundreds of woodlots besides his own in Farmington, PEI. His earlier contributions on practical woodlot management can be found in the Fall 2020, Spring 2021 and Spring/Summer 2022 issues of *Woodland PEI*.

Now for ***the last 10%***, what would I plant?

Red oak, yellow birch, red spruce, sugar maple, and maybe experiment with a few American chestnut, black walnut, black cherry, etc. These are all long lived valuable species, so why not plant more?

Hardwoods can be out-competed by grass and the mortality can be high due to mice. Enough seedlings will be hard to source and expensive. Plantation-grown hardwood is often poor form and branchy. Generally, they will do better interplanted in a thinned plantation or hardwoods where there is no grass, and they have shelter from the wind. They will grow taller and straighter with larger trees around them if they get enough sun. Height promotes height. Including hardwoods in a plantation is not so much for their value as a wood product, rather for their value as a seed source.

When planting plantations, we used to strive to plant our rows 8 feet apart, with the trees 6 feet apart in the rows. I am not fond of spray or chemicals, but if you can control the grass the first two years, I feel the benefits might outweigh the negatives. After 2 years your trees should be competitive enough to survive.

When the trees become crowded, they are ready for the first thinning. This can vary from plantation to plantation, approximately 20 to 30 years. I like to remove up to 30% of the stand by taking every fifth row and thinning the remaining rows. This leaves 4 rows and the harvester can easily reach in 2 rows on either side of the trail. If you did your homework when planting, this row that gets removed contains nothing but spruce or fir. This will become your road for future harvests and the last full row you need to remove.

First thinning will be mainly pulpwood because you want to target the small, low vigour trees. Now you might want to consider interplanting some shade tolerant species such as red spruce, hemlock and sugar maple. Do not plant them on your out row as this is the trail for future harvests.



Second thinning should start when your stand has achieved 75-90% crown closure. By now your plantation will be nearing full height. The fir should produce nice studwood and the spruce will have some also. This thinning should be all about spacing.

Well-spaced trees develop deep, balanced tops and large root systems. This in turn means faster growth and better wind resilience. Once again remove up to 30% of the stems, targeting almost all of the balsam fir as they will be unlikely to survive till next harvest. Also remove the crooked, forked or low viability spruce you did not get in the first thinning.

Your plantation should be at the age where the trees start dropping seed. Opening up the stand for more sunlight will really encourage the young seedlings to grow. It is also a good opportunity to interplant more species that are less shade-tolerant such as ash, red oak and white pine.

## *Making Your Plantation Worthwhile . . . (cont'd)*

By the time third thinning comes along, you should have good crop of saplings and young trees growing, well on the way to being a diverse mixture of conifers and hardwoods, a true Wabanaki-Acadian Forest. At this time, you would remove most of the white spruce as their life span is almost over. They should be huge logs by now that will find a ready sale in some of the local mills. If there's a good crop of pine seedlings, you could also remove some of the older ugly trees you first planted and salvage some logs. Ideally your woodlot will have evolved to mainly hardwood with a softwood component scattered throughout. The squirrels, birds and wind can now do your planting.

Future harvests should be based on the basal area and applying the "worst, first" principle. Using this method, you will eventually have high quality valuable logs to harvest.

A well-managed, diverse forest is a resilient forest, no matter the species, although some species are more wind resistant. A managed forest already has saplings growing to replace the tree that you harvest, or gets blown down. This sapling will thrive in the small micro climate created by the hole in the canopy left by the mature tree.

Woodlots are an underutilized, renewable resource. I believe they can be both, very beautiful, and very profitable, while maintaining a favourable environment for many birds, animals, shrubs, ferns and flowers.

Do not feel guilty if you make money off of your managed woodlot. Making a profit will go a long way in convincing your neighbours there is a better answer to woodlot management than clearcutting. But, making a profit isn't everything-- sometimes walking through a beautiful, vibrant woodlot bursting with birdsong, ferns and flowers is all the pay you need.

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**P.S.:** I would not want to close without a word of warning. If you have a mature stand that's never been thinned, this method will hardly work. You would likely lose the majority of your trees to blowdown. Although I do not endorse clearcutting, this might be your best bet before starting over with a more diverse mixture.

--- Perry Jantzi

PEIWOA Inc., through its Board of Directors, represents the interests of all woodlot owners and seeks resources for each of you to manage your private woodlot sustainably. PEIWOA's goals are aligned with education, sustainability and promotion of locally produced, value-added forest products and services.

See p. 11 for a map of PEI's ten private land regions where qualified forest technicians have been assigned by PEI Forests, Fish & Wildlife to assist you in managing your woodlot. Identify the region where your woodlot is located to find who to contact. For more information about forest management on privately owned land, visit <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/environment-energy-and-climate-action/forest-enhancement-program-fep-forestry-services>.

To see more on the rules for fire mitigation and prevention, such as Fire Categories 1-4 and the definition of 'prescribed burning', download the **Burning Permits Handout** at the same address above.



## PEI's new FireSmart Ambassador: an interview with Emily Foster

by Kathy Stuart



At 20, Emily Foster has joined Forests, Fish & Wildlife as PEI's new FireSmart Ambassador. She enjoys reading, hiking, fishing, kayaking and is passionate about spending time outdoors. "It brings me peace and I often spend any time I can there." I recently caught up with this impressive young woman in her Upton Road office to find out more.

Originally from Darlings Island in New Brunswick, a little over 3 hours away, Emily moved here to attend the Wildlife Conservation Technology program at Holland College, graduating in May 2023. "Moving here was a big jump as my entire family lives in NB, but I feel at home here in PEI and have had a wonderful experience throughout the last 2 years."

### **Q. What led you to becoming a FireSmart Ambassador?**

**A.** Over my 2-year period at Holland College, I was introduced to many new concepts and different points of view that helped me decide which path to follow once graduating. I have always had a strong appreciation for being outdoors and working in the forest; following the path of forest fire prevention and mitigation was certainly a great decision for myself.

I spent the month of April 2023 with Forests, Fish & Wildlife completing my on-the-job training experience as a Wildlife Technician, and began my position as a FireSmart Ambassador in May. Both experiences have been fantastic and I continue to learn something new every day.

This position as the FireSmart Ambassador has offered many amazing opportunities and I am thankful for all that I have been able to do to date.

### **Q. Overall, what do you think about wildfires?**

**A.** Wildland fires are a natural part of the ecosystem and serve a great purpose. Without these sporadic fires, certain species cannot germinate and reproduce as they require fire for the process.

### **Q. What does FireSmart mean to you?**

**A.** Forest fires have become larger, more intense and more frequent, which raises concerns for homeowners living in forested areas, woodlot owners and property owners. As forest fires are naturally occurring and required for healthy forests, we cannot eliminate them, but we can make living and working in the forests safer by applying FireSmart mitigation strategies to lessen the potential impacts from a wildfire and to create resilient homes and woodlots.

### **Q. What helped you realize that FireSmart was such an important program?**

**A.** Recently, I was fortunate enough to travel to Cape Breton to shadow Nova Scotia's Wildfire Prevention Officer. This experience was extremely valuable, and being able to learn from an individual who had recently experienced the fires in NS first hand was an opportunity I took a lot from and found valuable in my training. I was able to learn that there were homes that were barely affected in the same areas where there were homes that were completely incinerated.

## Emily Foster, PEI's FireSmart Ambassador . . . (cont'd)

Once taking a step back to determine why this was the case, it was found that homeowners and property owners who were spared had applied FireSmart best practices. At the end of the day, these strategies and the mitigation efforts they made are what saved their homes.

### Q. What are some examples of strategies that FireSmart promotes?

A. Small actions such as cleaning gutters to be free of debris, keeping the lawn cut short, moving combustible materials away from buildings, and pruning trees 2 metres up from the ground are some of the quick and effective mitigation strategies that FireSmart offers.

### Q. Describe a typical day for you as FireSmart Ambassador.

A. My typical day-to-day will vary almost every day as there is a vast range of work I complete. I have been travelling across the Island this summer, promoting the messaging of FireSmart and helping homeowners understand why these strategies are as effective as they are.

Most recently, I attended the Morell River Run Festival, the Crapaud Exhibition and the Mermaid Tears Sea Glass Festival in Souris to promote this messaging. I attend community events to incorporate FireSmart in whatever way it suits, as well as hosting my own community presentations which strictly cover FireSmart and the strategies they provide for homeowners.

Every home is unique and I take this into account when I to advise individual homeowners how best they can apply FireSmart principles to their situation.

### Q. What are your hopes for the future of managing and mitigating wildfires on PEI?

A. Forest fires are becoming more frequent, intense and destructive as climate change increases and high winds help fires spread dramatically. Coniferous species will burn hotter, faster and more intensely than deciduous species, which is why we must take into consideration the types of vegetation we plant and where we choose to plant them.

My hope is that homeowners and woodlot owners feel some sense of relief once viewing these mitigation strategies that FireSmart offers. It is reassuring to know as homeowners and landowners that there are actions we can take to help protect our families, homes and properties from these natural disasters.

As we cannot eliminate fires in our ecosystem, we must learn how to adapt to them and become resilient. Mitigation is our best chance at protecting our homes and properties as it focuses on reducing the impacts that these potential fires may have on our Island.



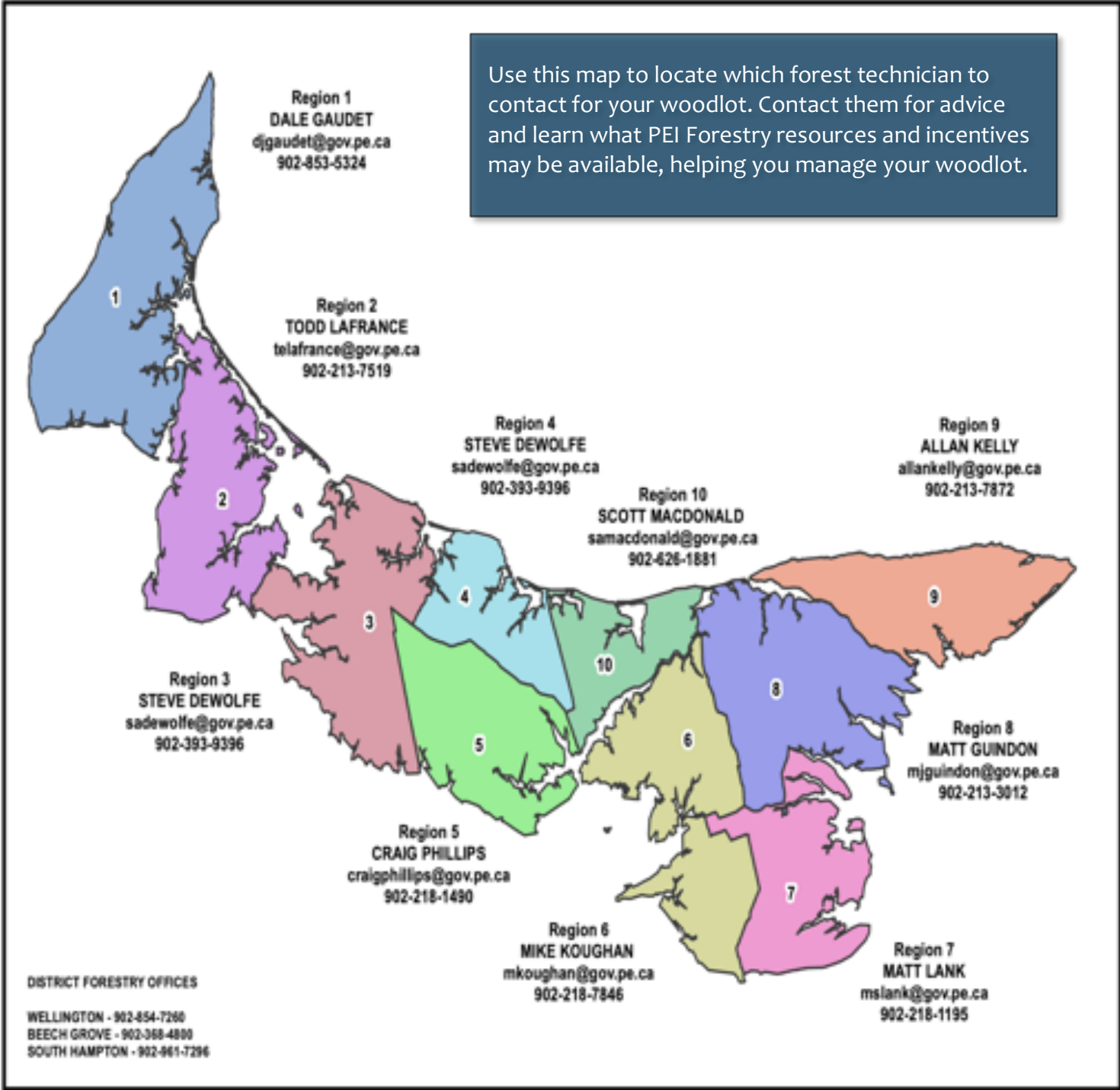
Everyone, please check out the website **[FireSmart.ca](http://FireSmart.ca)** for more information on how you can protect your family, home and property from the destructive impacts of forest fires. --EF

Thank you, Emily!  
Congratulations and best wishes with FireSmart!

---Kathy Stuart

# PEI's Forest Technician Regions – Private Land

Use this map to locate which forest technician to contact for your woodlot. Contact them for advice and learn what PEI Forestry resources and incentives may be available, helping you manage your woodlot.



# Membership in PEIWOA

To join as a new member of PEIWOA, or to simply renew if your current membership has expired, just do **two things**: (1) fill out our membership form online at [www.peiwoa.ca](http://www.peiwoa.ca), and  
 (2) **INTERAC etransfer from your bank to [etransfer@peiwoa.ca](mailto:etransfer@peiwoa.ca)** (NO HYPHEN!) where it will be auto-deposited securely into our account.

If you prefer to mail your cheque, include your **current civic address, e-mail address & phone number**.  
**Send to: PEI Woodlot Owners Association, 81 Prince Street, Charlottetown PE C1A 4R3**

### 2023-25 Membership Rates

One-year PEIWOA membership*, ending March 31, 2024 .....	\$ 25.00
Two-year membership, ending March 31, 2025 .....	40.00
50% discounted rate for members of PEIFA or NFU, ending March 31, 2025 .....	20.00

\*You may be asked for your number of acres (kept confidential) and the **County** where your woodlot is located to become an **Active** (voting) member. **Associate** (non-voting) members pay the same rates but are not required to own a woodlot.

PEIWOA very much appreciates the support of members and advertisers. *[peiwoodlotowners@gmail.com](mailto:peiwoodlotowners@gmail.com)*

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