

Woodland PEI

Newsletter of the PEI Woodlot Owners Association



Back to Basics

Featured in this Issue:

- **News and Views: Report of the Chair - p. 2**
- **Exploring Amish Sawmilling in Kings County - p. 4**
- **The Sustainable Forest Alliance - p. 7**

News and Views: Report of the Chair



I recently drove through Eastern Kings enjoying sunny views of the delightfully blue Gulf of St. Lawrence. It was heartening to spot a new hedgerow of spruces between two fields that were planted with cover crops for the winter. Besides this simple effort to protect topsoil, some farmers care to manage their woodlots sustainably over the long term: their trees buffer fields, supply firewood and sawlogs, enhance wildlife and conserve the water table, developing microclimates in the process. It is concerning when forests with such potential are thoughtlessly destroyed, whether for the increased economic value of cleared land or because trained silviculture workers are hard to find.

Back to Basics: Good stewardship takes knowledge, trust and an appreciation of what has gone before. With this in mind, we devote this issue to “Back to Basics”, featuring Doug Millington’s in-depth article on PEI’s Amish communities as he explored several of their sawmilling operations in Kings County.

Website Launch: Getting back to basics in modern times also means creating a user-friendly website like the one that Connie Zoeller launched for us in early January at www.peiwoa.ca. Here you will find much basic information about PEIWOA and easy ways to join and pay your membership online. Joining means supporting education, sustainability and promotion of locally produced, value-added forest products and services. Please click the **subscribe** button on our website and provide your **email** to be notified whenever we post a new newsletter.

Board Matters: Your Board has been quite busy since our last report to membership at the AGM on October 3, 2020. We met by Zoom in November and held face-to-face meetings during both December and January. John Rowe, our representative to the *Canadian Federation of Forest Owners* (CFFO), keeps us updated on initiatives being undertaken at the national level. He also attends the *PEI Federation of Agriculture* (PEIFA) as our representative.

Species at Risk: Activity on this project began in the fall of 2020 when PEIWOA was invited to participate as part of a major 5-year Canada-wide research initiative by the federal government on Species at Risk. *PEI’s Forested Landscape Priority Place for Species at Risk* (PEI PLPP) was identified as one of the major research projects in Canada. The large Committee is made up of local community and PEI educational organizations that are undertaking projects.

PEIWOA BOARD MEMBERS (2020-21)

Kings County:

John Keuper
James MacDonald
Patrick Martens
Kathy Stuart

Queens County:

Jesse Argent
Thomas Baglole
Jeanne Maki
Doug Millington

Prince County:

Bruce Craig
Matt McIver
John Arthur Ramsay
Elwin Sharpe

Ex Officio:

John Rowe
(Representative to CFFO
and PEIFA)

News and Views: Report of the Chair – (cont'd)

PEI PLPP (cont'd): James MacDonald and Jeanne Maki, our representatives to the PLPP Committee, attended meetings and hosted a seminar for members at the Farm Centre on December 2, 2020. Its purpose was to identify relevant issues from the perspective of woodlot owners that could be the subject of a funded research project of our own. In the fruitful discussion which followed, forested wetlands and marginal woodlands were flagged as being undervalued, subject to pressures from unwanted or invasive species, or at risk of disappearing entirely due to industrial agriculture and development. These places are found all over the Island: they protect the water table, sequester carbon and enhance wildlife. Further research is warranted for their conservation and management. To participate further in this initiative, please contact Jeanne Maki at peiwoodlotowners@gmail.com.

Meeting with Minister Jameson: In January, John Arthur Ramsay (Chair of our Policy Committee), John Rowe, Marcel Arsenault (forestry contractor) and I met with Hon. Natalie Jameson, Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change, and two senior staff. This is the provincial government department where the Forestry Division now resides. We created awareness of what PEIWOA has accomplished to date and had a positive exchange on a wide range of issues including current standards for the provincial *Forestry Enhancement Program* (FEP), tree planting issues, and recruitment/training for silviculture workers. We anticipate productive dialogue will continue with this government.

Atlantic Forestry Review (AFR): The January 2021 issue of the Atlantic Region's forestry magazine features a fine two-page article on Hazel Robinson, winner of the 2019 PEI Woodlot Owner of the Year Award. See *Saved from the plow: Managing Island woodlots amassed through farm consolidation* by Zack Metcalfe, Vol 27 #3. www.RuralLife.ca

Volunteers Needed - PEIWOA will have a kiosk with information and posters at the Winter Woodlot Tour on Saturday, February 6, 2021 at 215 Buffalo Road near Rustico, weather permitting. See www.peiwoa.ca (click on Events) or Facebook for more info. We encourage as many woodlot owners as possible to come to this event. We could certainly use the help of any volunteer member who would like to take a turn at promoting your Association that day.

AGM Planning: Subject to public health advisories due to Covid-19, your Board is currently making plans to hold the 2021 Symposium and Annual General Meeting in April at a date to be fixed.

If you have news and notes about your woodlot, or about managing woodland in general, you are invited to post stories, relevant articles and photos on our Facebook page or contact the editor at peiwoodlotowners@gmail.com. The next newsletter will be the Spring 2021 issue planned for April-June.

In the meantime, subscribe, stay safe, wear a comfortable mask and enjoy your woodlot!

--Kathy Stuart, Chair of the Board, PEIWOA



Doug Millington became a PEIWOA Board member in 2020. He volunteers as admin for our new www.peiwoa.ca website and drafts great sets of meeting minutes. He is a retired teacher (band) and broadcast journalist (Saskatchewan CBC) living in Charlottetown. Doug's woodlots are located in Queens County.

Exploring Amish Sawmilling in Kings County

A little over two years ago, David Miller and his brother-in-law Isaac Miller brought their families from Ontario and bought a hayfield on the Stanhope Road in Kings County, PEI. Today that hayfield has been transformed into a thriving forestry enterprise with a sizeable home, a large warehouse, a sawmill, outbuildings and a significant stockpile of harvested sawlogs and milled dimensional lumber.

You might expect such a transformation on land being developed by young, ambitious newcomers, but there are several details here that are distinctly different from the typical Island agricultural operation. There is no automobile in the driveway. There is no power line onto the property. The men are dressed in matching overalls and broad brimmed hats and sporting identically cut beards. A woman wears clothing that seems from another century.

This thriving business is one of several ventures launched in the past few years in eastern PEI by a wave of Amish farmers and sawmillers attracted to PEI's relatively cheap land prices.



The Amish trace their beginnings to the Anabaptist movement of the 16th century Protestant reformation. Anabaptists, literally 're-baptizers', believed that baptism could only be meaningful to an adult who had consciously chosen to follow the teachings of Christ. A schism in the Anabaptist movement resulted in the Amish separating from what would eventually become the Mennonite faith. Persecuted for their beliefs by both the Catholic Church and state authorities, Amish and Mennonites migrated from Europe to North America in the 18th and 19th centuries, continuing to share many beliefs and frequently migrating to the same areas.

In keeping with traditional beliefs, PEI Amish don't make use of electricity, instead using diesel engines to power pneumatically driven tools and implements. Cars are replaced with iconic horse-drawn buggies.

To avoid any expression of personal pride, the Amish ask not to have their picture taken and adhere to an ‘old world’ dress code: married men grow a beard with no moustache and wear straw hats and black cuffless trousers with suspenders. Women typically wear long, dark skirts and long-sleeved blouses fastened with hooks or pins (not buttons), their uncut hair gathered in a bun and covered with a small, white cap.

Amish began arriving on PEI only four years ago, an influx that was the result of a combination of sky-high land prices in Ontario and strong support from Island politicians and community leaders like Islander-by-choice Tony Wallbank.

Tony and his wife Linda bought a small farm on the Seven Mile Road after becoming hooked on Kings County during a vacation visit. Prior to the move, Tony’s hobby of horse farming had brought him in contact with Ontario Amish who were searching for affordable land and finding none in Ontario. After discovering Kings County, Tony started encouraging his Ontario Amish contacts to come for visits. He also worked with local authorities to clear some hurdles. Amish don’t use health cards and they want their children taught in one-room schoolhouses. Tony Wallbank met with politicians, health officials and educators. Rules were adapted. The Amish came, they saw, they bought.



There are now some 45 Amish families comprising roughly 100 adults and 300 children in three separate groups, mainly in Kings County. That’s a far cry from the estimated 3,600 Amish living in Ontario. But in terms of relative population density, PEI has five times as many Amish as Ontario, and they are concentrated in a much smaller land base. Their impact, according to Tony Wallbank, has already been considerable. In his neighbourhood alone there are three Amish dairy farms, a farrier and two woodworking shops, one making picnic tables and the other producing cupboards and cabinets.



The Amish are even attracting tourism business. In 2019 Moncton’s Burgess Bus Tours sent two sold-out trips to “Amish Country In Montague” featuring guided visits to “Farms, a Bake Shop and Amish Store with Quilts”. The tours were filled with patrons relishing the farm-baking and other goods, charmed by the typically large (10!) number of children at the farm and even posing in Amish buggies. Burgess Tours had to cancel their sold-out tours (with long waiting lists) in 2020, but they are already booked to be back next summer.

The Amish are also having a significant impact on the area’s forest industry. Amish craftsmen are justly famed for their meticulous approach to woodworking. They use only solid wood and allow no substitutes or shortcuts. On PEI, as in other Amish settlements, those craftsmen are supplied by Amish sawmills. In Kings county there is now a network of half a dozen Amish sawmills like the one on the Stanhope Road run by David and Isaac Miller supplying their brethren with raw materials, but also reaching out to supply the greater community.

When they arrived in Kings County, the Millers started business with a small saw belonging to David's father-in-law. Their first winter was slow, but things started picking up in the summer of 2019 after a \$30,000 investment in an Amish-manufactured bandsaw from Ripley, Ontario that is currently ripping through two thousand board feet on a good day. They plan to mill all winter long, meeting the building needs of local customers, needs which show no sign of slowing down. The last couple of days before our visit, the Millers were filling a large order for a local building project. Next in line is a customer needing poplar lumber for horse stalls. Another customer in the area reports plans to purchase Miller's 6x6 beams for much less than half the price charged at Charlottetown lumber yards. The Millers hope to soon acquire a second saw for the firewood market.



A short drive away, near Bridgetown, another Amish sawmill operation belonging to Levi Kuepfer is filling orders for local buyers, one of whom has just loaded 16-foot 2x4's on a flatbed trailer. Levi's customer is more than happy with his price of \$7.40 per board. A year ago he might have paid the same at the local lumber mart, but today that price tag has shot up to just under \$17. The lumber for his boathouse project would have cost over twice as much if not for the nearby Amish sawmill.

The arrival of hundreds of Amish in Prince Edward Island has not been without its problems. There have been several car-buggy collisions, one resulting in injury to an Amish child near Ebenezer. In another collision a horse had to be put down. Some concerns have been raised about increases in land price. Occasionally there has been grumbling about horse manure on roadways.

But the Amish community appears to have settled in quite nicely, baking, quilting, hosting busloads of tourists, woodworking and providing a supply of low-cost dimensional lumber through their network of Amish sawmills.

--Doug Millington



Traffic warning sign on Hwy 4 near Pooles Corner

The Sustainable Forest Alliance



SFA

Editor's Note:

Members of the PEI Woodlot Owners Association learned about the Sustainable Forest Alliance when two of its organizers, Pat Binns and Dan Dupont, made a presentation to our Annual General Meeting on October 2, 2020.

Since then, the fledgling Co-operative has further defined its mission statement and specific objectives to meet this mission.

The SFA Provisional Board of Directors includes:
*President, Dan Dupont
Secretary, Rob MacLean
Treasurer, John Keuper
Members-at-Large, Russ Compton and Jesse Argent.*

A permanent Board will be elected once incorporation as a not-for-profit cooperative is finalized.

Membership will become available in 2021.

Mission Statement:

To support Prince Edward Island communities through sustainable and ecologically based forest management.

Specific objectives to meet this mission are the following:

- 1.1 The forest will be managed using ecologically based forest management to maintain, enhance or restore healthy Acadian forest conditions.
- 1.2 The forest will be managed in full consideration of the larger landscape including protected areas and high conservation values.
- 1.3 Island forest resource is managed in such a way as to be environmentally and economically sustainable without dependency on government subsidies in the long term.
- 1.4 The Alliance will strive to support economic stability in Island communities.
- 1.5 The Alliance will aim for a high level of business innovation through new forest product development, start-up ventures, and community investment.
- 1.6 All investments and activities should strive to leverage and build local capacity.
- 1.7 The land base will be managed to maximize multiple economic, social and environmental values.
- 1.8 The organizational structure and planning processes are designed to cultivate a broad level of community collaboration.
- 1.9 Governance structures will have a high level of accountability and transparency to the community and membership. Board of director positions will be democratically elected from the membership.
- 1.10 The forest will be managed using ecologically based forest management to maintain, enhance, or restore healthy Acadian forest conditions.
- 1.11 The forest will be managed in full consideration of the larger landscape, including protected areas and high conservation values.



The PEI Woodlot Owners Association represents the interests of private woodlot owners (of which there are thousands) across PEI. Its elected Board of Directors seeks resources for you to manage your private woodlot sustainably.

Our Association goals are aligned with woodlot owner education, sustainability, innovation and support for PEI’s forest industry.

Your continued support is valued and will enable PEIWOA to grow and move forward.

Please encourage other woodlot owners to join so we can help even more people add value to woodlands and sustainably create superior quality forest products.

Contact information for PEI Woodlot Owners Association:
Mailing Address: 81 Prince Street, Charlottetown, PEI C1A 4R3
Website: www.peiwoa.ca
Facebook: PEI Woodlot Owners Association

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

2021 Membership Rates (Active and Associate):

- 1 Yr (April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022).....\$25
- 2 Yr (April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2023).....\$40
- 2 Years at 50% discount for PEIFA and NFU members (April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2023).....\$20

To become a member, pay online via www.peiwoa.ca
 or by Interac e-transfer to peiwoodlotowners@gmail.com
 or by cheque to address above.

When sending payment, it is very important to tell us:

- 1) your name, 2) mailing address, 3) email address, 4) phone number, 5) County of your woodlot, and 6) if you are eligible for farm discount** so that you do not miss out on any of our communications. Thank you.