



Prince George
Community Forest
newsletter November 2007

Welcome

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Prince George Community Forest (PGCF) semi-annual Newsletter! This newsletter is intended to provide an overview of the goings-on in the community forest. Further information can be found on the website at www.city.pg.bc.ca, click on the beetle icon.

What is a Community Forest?

In November 2006, the City of Prince George signed a Probationary Community Forest Agreement with the Province of BC. This agreement grants harvesting rights to the City for Provincial Crown lands within city limits. The annual allowable cut for this license is 12,000 cubic metres per year, or 60,000m³ over five years. The term for our current license is five years.

Why do we need a Community Forest?

After the wildfires of 2003 the Province asked all communities in BC to prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Prince George has been a leader in this area. The Prince George Community Forest (PGCF) Management Plan which is available online, will guide our planning and operations and is based on the Wildland/Urban Interface Wildfire Management Strategy (WMS). The WMS identifies areas of the city which are most at risk for wildfires.

Forest Operations and Locations

The main objectives of the PGCF are to salvage beetle-killed pine trees on Crown land and to reduce the interface forest fire hazard from Crown land in the city. Two blocks have been harvested to date in cooperation with the two major recreation groups on the landbase; the Cranbrook Hill Greenway Society, and the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club.

Community Advisory Committee

As the startup phase of the community forest comes to a close, we will be forming a community advisory committee to assist in the management and operations of the community forest. The advisory committee will include representatives from:

- The provincial government;
- First Nations communities;
- Recreational groups;
- Local educational institutions; and
- The general public.

The Prince George Community Forest Advisory Committee (PGCFAC) will ensure the public's interests are taken into consideration when drafting policies and procedures related to the Plan. The PGCFAC will not have decision-making authority over the day-to-day operations or staff of the community forest.

How Can I get Involved?

Interested members of the public are asked to submit a letter of interest with a brief resume to the City of Prince George by Nov. 30. Letters can be dropped off to City Hall, mailed to 1100 Patricia Boulevard, PG, BC V2L 3V9, or emailed to ServiceCentre@city.pg.bc.ca. Further information can be found on the website at www.city.pg.bc.ca.



Aerial view of Cranbrook Hill, PGCF area

Cranbrook Hill Greenway



Variable retention harvesting along the Cranbrook Hill Greenway trail

Operations to Date

The first block to be harvested under the community forest license was along the Cranbrook Hill Greenway trail between km 4 and 6 up to the western City boundary. Dead pine was removed with a special focus on retaining as much unaffected forested areas as possible. The remaining stand is more open with a high level of retention.

The post-harvest condition is a great example of the type of variable retention system the community forest would like to promote where possible, especially where there is a high proportion of beetle-killed pine.

Otway Nordic Ski Centre

Thanks to a partnership between the Ministry of Forests and Range Protection Branch, and the City of Prince George, the Otway Nordic Ski Centre has seen most of the dead pine trees removed from the area. Volunteers from the Ski Club were involved in the planning and implementation of the harvesting operations. The work on these highly used trails is being done by hand to minimize damage to the trails.

Next Up: Forests for the World

Planning is underway to address the large amount of dead pine and dense fire fuels at the Forests for the World site. Bruce Blackwell of B.A. Blackwell & Associates is working to provide a fire fuel management program for the area. Bruce is well-known for his expertise in fire fuel management and forest ecology.

The details of the program have yet to be finalized but will likely involve some mechanized tree removal along with hand work by the Ministry Fire Crews. It is anticipated that the work could begin this winter, with sections of the park closed to accommodate the crews and ensure the safety of everyone working and those enjoying the park.



Pine along the lit trails network at the Otway Ski Centre

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