

Agroforestry *Update*

December 2007

*British Columbia
Agroforestry
Industry
Development
Initiative*

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Silvopasture Demonstration Highlights Integrated Benefits

Range and forest management stakeholders in the Peace Forest District (PFD) are celebrating the early success of an agroforestry approach to solving multiple resource management conflicts. Overlapping forest and range tenures in the PFD can sometimes result in some form of unresolved impact and or conflict between livestock and timber interests. The PFD has over 138,000 animal unit months (AUM) of range located within the 900,000 ha that comprises its timber harvesting area. This represents almost a 50% tenure overlap within the District. Past efforts to resolve overlap issues tended to address the symptoms more than the underlying causes. In an effort to reduce the mounting frustrations and management pressures among all concerned, a new and effective working partnership was created through the formation of the Timber Range Impact Mitigation Committee (TRIMC). TRIMC has

created a forum to bring together regional stakeholders to work towards viable integrated management solutions. Members represent the BC Ministry of Forests and Range, the Peace River Cattlemen's Association, Louisiana-Pacific, Peace River OSB, the BC Ministry of Environment, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, the University of Northern BC and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. With support from the BC Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative, TRIMC has coordinated an innovative agroforestry demonstration over the past two years to test the use of silvopasture via forage alleys created in very dense, naturally regenerating aspen stands. These stands can cause problems for both timber and range interests because most of the forage within them is generally inaccessible among the dense young trees and livestock can concentrate in the few opening

resulting in unacceptable levels of damage to the regenerating trees. To improve access and animal distribution, a double pass with large mulching machines, normally employed by the oil and gas industry to clear seismic lines, were used to create 1.7-meter wide alleys, 30-meters apart at three sites containing regenerating aspen stands. At maturity, these aspen stand contain, on average, 600 to 800 stems/ha (PFD value indices). This equates to an inter-tree distance of 3.8 to 4.4-metres. Therefore, there should be no net loss of merchantable aspen volume from the sites given that the alleys are only 1.7-metres wide. In order to ensure optimal forage production the alleys were seeded with an approved Peace District seed mix containing: 25% creeping red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), 23% timothy (*Phleum pratense*), 15% birdsfoot...

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Silvopasture *concluded*

trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), 15% alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*), 12% red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) and 10% crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*). Livestock exclosures were situated on the sites such that they straddled the alleys and adjacent untreated aspen stands. Forage production and utilization both inside and outside of the exclosures was recorded in order to determine the effects of seeding and the level of livestock use. The monitoring concluded that usable forage production levels did not differ within the alleys and the adjacent

2-m forested belt over the first two grazing seasons following the creation of the alleys. Nor did seeding enhance the level of available forage when compared to unseeded areas. The primary early benefits of this system have been in improved livestock movement and distribution. The corridors provide livestock with unimpeded access where dense aspen otherwise restrict cattle. They also facilitate better distribution and travel through to adjacent grazing sites, greatly reducing animal concentrations and thus ensuring successful

regeneration of the aspen stands as required under the Forest and Range Practices Act. This is because the design has kept livestock use within the alleys and this has minimized unintended browsing and trampling damage to the trees. Based on the early success of this demonstration, TRIMC is planning on expanding the pilot project work with additional test sites in the PFD. With continued success, agroforestry applications may become a more widespread tool for resolving integration issues in the District.

“The primary early benefits of this system have been in improved livestock movement and distribution.”



Forage alleys in dense aspen stands have improved livestock movement and minimized tree damage in the Peace Forest District.

Native Shrub Opportunities Highlighted at Agroforestry Workshop and Tour

“Over 50 attendees from throughout BC and the Northwest USA gathered in Vernon in August to share information and learn about emerging opportunities for using agroforestry with native shrubs.”

Interest is growing in native shrubs due to their ability to supply novel foods, natural health products (NHPs) as well as providing conservation functions and cultural benefits. This interest was the focus of a recent Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative /Food Quality and Safety Initiative sponsored workshop and tour. Over 50 attendees from throughout BC and the Northwest USA gathered in Vernon in August to share information and learn about

emerging opportunities for using agroforestry with native shrubs.

The workshop included overview presentations on agroforestry (George Powell), berry production (Mark Sweeney) and good agricultural practices - food safety awareness (Raman Gill). Specific production and conservation opportunities were also featured, including excellent discussions on huckleberries (Dan Barney), wild black cherries (Al Oliver), hawthorn (Jeanette Lee), integrated

riparian management (Dave Trotter), First Nations' shrub management (Michael Keefer) and natural health products markets (Jim Strausz). Panel discussions were held on opportunities and challenges facing native shrub production and product and market development. The second day was devoted to a tour highlighting regional agroforestry examples including a visit to two of the West Kootenay Herb...

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Dr. Dan Barney (Univ. of Idaho) describes agroforestry methods for huckleberry production at a tour stop in the Monahsee Mountains.

Native Shrubs *Concluded*

Growers' Co-operative hawthorn demonstration sites in Edgewood and a huckleberry production site in the Monashee Mountains. The day concluded with a tour of a new 'value-added' enterprise: the Okanagan Spirits' craft distillery. Tour participants were treated to a sampling of their all-natural fruit brandies and 'eau-de-vies' including distilled products from saskatoons and wild black (aka choke) cherries.

Five general themes emerged over the course of the workshop and tour and they form the basis of industry development needs to advance agroforestry with native shrubs.

First, there is tremendous consumer interest in native shrub products (berries and NHPs) creating a very strong impetus for further industry development. The primary production challenges are the lack of readily available, proven planting stock and the need to manage labour costs. Labour input is the single largest factor in determining the profitability of berry production in BC.

Second, product (food and natural health) quality and safety is of the utmost

importance to access and maintain markets. Safety and quality controls begin at the very earliest stages of production and must be adhered along the entire value chain. Good agricultural and collecting practices (GACP) involves a systemized approach to assessing risks, adequate worker training and supervision and good record keeping at all stages of production.

Third, the First Nations of North America have used agroforestry principles to manage native shrubs for food, medicines and building materials (implements, baskets, etc.) for millennia. Native shrubs represent viable economic development opportunities for First Nations' communities and there is also much to learn from their traditional uses and management techniques. Sharing of traditional knowledge however, must be done with cultural sensitivity and with respect for the spirituality of certain uses and places.

A fourth theme that emerged recognized that partnerships are important to expanding native shrub enterprises. Research and development is costly, can

be technically complex and should involve producers, manufacturers (food and beverage, natural health product) and the academic community. Additionally, many existing market opportunities require a volume and quality of raw product that can be difficult for small or new producers to achieve. These market barriers can be overcome with producer co-operatives to pool investments in processing equipment (e.g. drying and packaging), to assist with marketing, production and new product development, as well as, lobbying and interacting with government.

Finally, agroforestry has an important place in native shrub production opportunities. As an option to improve overall production levels, agroforestry systems can take pressure off increasingly overused wild harvest sites. Agroforestry is also a viable means to integrate production and conservation practices in the same system, thus achieving a balance between economic, environmental and social concerns.

A copy of the native shrub workshop summary can be downloaded from the BC Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative website:

www.woodlot.bc.ca/agroforestry/pdf/2007-Native-Shrub-Workshop-Report.pdf

Announcements and Upcoming Events

A reminder that next **deadline** for letters of intent and applications to the British Columbia Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative is **Friday, February 15, 2008**

Agroforestry Initiative Funding Priorities for 2008

The Agroforestry Management Committee is pleased to announce that for the final year of its first five-year plan, it will focus on supporting extension and marketing activities. Priority will be given for funding new, innovative projects that address *Raising Agroforestry Awareness* through education, training and access to agroforestry information and those that *Improve Linkages* between agroforestry producers, processors, wholesalers and consumers of agroforestry products. Full application details and deadlines are available at:

www.woodlot.bc.ca/agroforestry/

Maple Sugaring Workshops

Learn how to tap and make syrup from Vancouver Island's native maple trees. Workshops include a classroom session and a hands-on demonstration sap collection. Participants will also visit to the Backlund's commercial evaporator in Ladysmith to smell and taste maple syrup being made.

Ladysmith workshop, Saturday, **February 9, 2008,** 10 am – 3 pm, sponsored by The Land Conservancy - Wildwood. For Ladysmith registration, contact Jay Rastogi at 250-816-1816 or jay@conservancy.bc.ca

Nanaimo workshop, Saturday, **January 26, 2008,** 10 am – 3 pm, at Malaspina University-College (Nanaimo Campus).

Cowichan workshop, Saturday, **February 2, 2008,** 10 am – 3 pm, at Malaspina University-College (Cowichan campus).

For more information on Nanaimo or Cowichan workshops, please email Gary Backlund at: blmaple@shaw.ca

Agroforestry Session at the 2008 Horticulture Growers' Short Course

At the Pacific Agriculture Show, **February 16, 2008** in Abbotsford, BC. The 2008 session will once again be chaired by Dave Trotter, Agroforestry Specialist with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. Presentations

at the session will include:

Agroforestry Initiative - Projects and Funding Opportunities. George Powell, BC Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative, Quesnel, BC.

Ideas, Opportunities & Resources – Speciality Crops and Agroforestry Lisa Zabek, BC Agriculture Council / Greencover TAC, Kamloops, BC

Huckleberries and Bilberries: Management Strategies for Agroforesters. Dan Barney, University of Idaho, Sandpoint, Idaho

Hybrid Poplar / Agroforestry Intercropping in the Peace River Region. Presenter TBA

Exploring the Opportunities for the Production of Truffles in British Columbia. Shannon Berch, BC Ministry of Forests and Range, Victoria, BC

For more information or to register please visit www.agricultureshow.net

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Announcements and Upcoming Events *continued*

Birch Tapping and Syrup Production Training

April 2008, Quesnel, BC

Farmers, rural land owners, woodlot managers, or anyone interested in a new small business opportunity or small-scale food production, are invited to participate in this unique training opportunity. A one-day workshop and on-farm production / processing training will provide participants with:

- An overview and on-farm demonstration of birch tapping and sap collection;
- An overview and on-farm demonstration of birch syrup processing from the raw sap;
- Information on relevant processing, food safety and labeling regulations; and,
- Information on markets and marketing.

Additional workshop details and the registration package will be available in January through the Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation website:

www.quesnelinfo.com

or the BC Agroforestry

Industry Development Initiative website:

www.woodlot.bc.ca/agroforestry/

For more information or to reserve a space in the workshop, please contact April Cheng at the Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation at (250) 992-3522, 1-866-QUESNEL (783-7635) or acheng@quesnelcorp.com

Due to the 'hands-on' nature of this training opportunity, registration will be capped.

Value Chain Management Workshops

January 9-10, 2008,
Nanaimo, BC
and

January 30-31 2008,
Abbotsford, BC

The purpose of these workshops is to assist producers in identifying opportunities to improve the competitiveness of their businesses. Explore all facets of value chain management using real-world examples of successful value chains from Canada and around the world. You'll learn in an interactive, hands-on format how producers are adopting the value chain

strategy.

For more information, please contact Bill Henderson of the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC at (250) 356-1675 or council@cfbmc.com

Registration is available online:

www.farmcentre.com/EventsAnnouncements/Events/ValueChainManagement/2007-2008/Register.aspx

6th Annual Natural Resource Forum

January 17 - 18, 2008,
Prince George Civic Centre, Prince George, BC

The BC Natural Resource Forum is designed to bring together government, community decision-makers and business people from the natural resources sector. It provides delegates an opportunity to examine key issues facing governments, communities and industries, to discuss challenges and identify opportunities for sustainable, responsible development of natural resources in BC. For more information please visit:

www.eventscreators.com/businessstechshow/nrc/nrcconference.html

New Website Supports Marketing

Visit the North Island Woodlot Association's products and services marketing website:

www.northislandwoodlot.com/services.html

The North Island Woodlot Association (NIWA) has recently expanded its website to include marketing services for agroforestry products and services. This venture is aimed at improving the connection between producers, and the buyers and consumers of goods from agroforestry systems. Previously, there were no dedicated web marketing resources of this type for Vancouver Island. The website marks a new approach for supporting NIWA's marketing efforts,

and it is hoped it will aid production diversification and will expand over time.

Any wood or non-timber forest product or service that a NIWA member wants to sell can be listed. Potential products that could be sold on the site include maple syrup/ maple wine, mushrooms, honey, burls, conks, conifer boughs (or other forest greenery), Christmas trees, wreaths, live forest plants, rare species of wood (cherry, birch, yew etc), lumber and raw logs.

Services that may be sold on the site include forest and agroforestry management services, logging and road building, milling, and silvicultural contracting. All transactions occur directly between the buyer and the seller. NIWA did not want to add an extra level of administration and costs to the process to broker deals.

NIWA is a non-profit group representing Crown and private woodlot holders on the north end of Vancouver Island.

Agroforestry Initiative Launches New Extension Note Series

The British Columbia Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative is pleased to announce the launch of a new extension note series. These notes highlight results and practical production information from its demonstration and education projects over the past 5 years. The first note summarizes information on tapping bigleaf maple for syrup and other value-added products. The Extension Note can be downloaded from:

www.woodlot.bc.ca/agroforestry/ext/Agroforestry-Extension-Note-01.pdf



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[www.woodlot.bc.ca/
agroforestry/](http://www.woodlot.bc.ca/agroforestry/)

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- 1) Name & location
- 2) E-mail address
- 3) Organization or interest in agroforestry (optional)

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If you have suggestions for future editions of the *Update* or know of an event that should be included, please let us know.

The **Federation of British Columbia Woodlot Associations** administers the BC Agroforestry Initiative.



Funding for the Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative is provided by the **Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia**. **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada** and the **British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands** provide funding and support for the Foundation.

Funding provided by:

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