

Trees That Play

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Summary of presentation

Trees That Play

I was asked to address the following topics:

- Brief history of West Fraser.
- How smaller businesses can work with a major licensee to access wood.
- Factors that make such dealings difficult.
- Why some major licensees may be less cooperative than others.
- What small businesses can do to make the process more effective.
- What can the Ministry of Forests do to make the process more effective?

History of West Fraser Mills Ltd.

Started in Quesnel in 1954 with a planer mill.

Currently operate:

- sawmill/planer employing 200 people.
- medium density fibreboard mill (95 people).
- fingerjointing plant (12 people).
- CTMP pulp mill (50%) (200 people).

Other mills in B.C.:

- Sawmills in Williams Lake, Chetwynd, Fraser Lake, Smithers, Terrace, and Prince Rupert.
- Eurocan Pulp and Paper – Kitimat.

Operations in Alberta:

- BlueRidge Lumber, Alberta Plywood, Slave Lake Pulp and Paper.

West Fraser operates on two licences in Quesnel Forest District:

- Forest Licence (volume based).
- Tree Farm Licence 52 (area based).
- Species composition on the TFL is 49% spruce; 31% pine; 15% balsam, and 5% Douglas-fir; on the Forest Licence it is 85% pine 10 % spruce and 5% Douglas-fir

Some Operational Considerations That Influence Tone Wood Availability

- Sort by species in the bush.
- Logs are bucked in the bush to specific lengths to maximize lumber production. Deviation by even a few centimetres reduces lumber recovery and increases waste.
- Sawmill can handle log diameters to 70 cm.
- Each load is wrapped with cable for storage.
- Logs are not stored loose and are not easily sorted in the yard.
- Oversize spruce are picked out after the bundles are broken.
- About 2000 – 3000 m³ of oversize spruce are harvested each year.

How small businesses can work with a major licensee...

Yes, it is possible....

We need clear communication about the material desired in terms of

- species
- size and volume desired
- quality, which includes visual characteristics which indicate potential tone wood
- date desired, if that is a constraining factor for the purchaser

Some of the things that can be done to help improve your possibilities of getting the tone wood you need

- Cultivate a primary contact, if possible. The contact person can select and put aside desired material as it is encountered.
- Have arrangements in place for payment.
- Have arrangements in place for moving the material.
- Consider working through an agent.
- Consider forming a cooperative group, either formal or informal. This would introduce a degree of consistency and familiarity for a licensee.

Factors which make such dealings difficult...

- Physical factors found around a mill which affect safety
- Difficulty in physically locating and separating potential tone wood because of the way logs are stored and handled.
- Frequent requests for small volumes may interrupt regular work schedules of yard workers and equipment operators.
- Suitable logs may arrive when it is not convenient for the customer.
- Desire for parts of logs, rather than whole logs.
- Suitable logs may not be available when desired.

Why some licensees may be less cooperative...

- Too many requests from various interests.
- Previous poor experiences.
- Wood supply that is below mill needs.
- Attitudes of key individuals.

- Corporate culture.

What can small business do to make the process more effective?

- Prepare a list of specifications that would help identify potential tone wood.

This would allow a licensee to:

- Sort logs with specified qualities in the bush.
- Buck logs to an optimum length.
- Provide a more reliable supply.
- Plan for sufficient lead time to allow suitable logs to be obtained.

What can the Ministry of Forests do to make the process effective?

- Cutting rights are assigned to a company through various tenures and cutting permits.
- Timber cut under a permit has to be scaled and stumpage paid.
- A timber mark is assigned to each cutting area, and stumpage is paid at a predetermined rate for each cubic metre.
- Once logs are scaled, the licensee can do whatever it wants with the logs.
- From this perspective, there is little the Ministry can do to assist the process.

In Summary...

- We can work together.
- Licensees need to have a clear understanding of what you need.
- We can find an effective way to make tone wood available to you.