

Newsletter

December 2nd 2020

All nature whispers the beautiful message of the season

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President's Report

by

Laval Bergeron

Hi folks,

Well now I can talk about it, snow, we have it, not too much, 6-8 inches, and so far fall has been moderate, not too cold. Perfect whether for putting your woodlot back in shape.

I've been keeping it a surprise from the Board and I'm sure you have read the food section before the president's report (haha), so you know what's going on. Thank you Julien

Schnegg for taking the time to do this and from what I understand, this will not be the last. Looks delicious! Thanks to Jurgen and Byron as well for their comments regarding the newsletter/logjam. On that note, anyone and everyone is invited to provide their comments and/or write articles. The Logjam had « My Woodlot » section on the last pages in the past and if anyone has not had the chance to be featured, there will always be room for that.

As you all know, because of Covid-19, our AGM was held by Conference Call. What you might not know is that we had a great turnout. Speaking on the phone with 15 people can be a challenge. There was a few glitches but overall it went very well. On November 30th we held elections for positions on the Board of Directors and positions stayed the same as you can see on the front page.. so you are stuck with me as president for another year.

Please welcome Linda Nagge to the Board of Directors replacing Herb Cerzke as the Membership Chairperson and Bob Cameron who by the way nominated himself, awesome, replacing Jurgen Moll. « I've not yet convinced him on taking the 'editors' job » :)) A big thank you to those leaving the Board and to those coming on.

As an association it is crucial to have members « paid up to date », it bonifies the members and the money is essential for the association's well being. I know it is difficult to keep track of this as I am guilty of this also. I find a good way to find out if you are « up to date » is, if you are not sure, then you probably are not. Please make Linda's job easy!

On this note I wish everyone a Safe and Happy Holidays!
Peace on Earth and good will to Trees!



Timber supply in Alberta's forests - these are risky times.

By Byron Grundberg

On November 19, 2020, the Canadian Institute of Forestry - Rocky Mountain Section presented a day long virtual conference that explored the topic of timber supply in Alberta. Approximately 80 participants heard presentations from a variety of expert speakers. We also had the opportunity to engage in breakout sessions with smaller groups of participants - to discuss our thoughts on the information presented and to provide feedback and suggestions back to the plenary group.

Relative to B.C., which is experiencing considerable challenges in meeting timber supply for its established forest industry, the situation in Alberta is not as dire. That said, many of the issues that plague the forest industry in B.C. are emerging in Alberta. We can no longer assume that timber supply in Alberta is as sustainable as it has been in the past; more on that later.

Why is timber supply in Alberta increasingly at risk? Loss in productive forest due to removal for other uses such as oil and gas exploration and production, set aside of large tracts of productive forest for conservation reasons such as caribou habitat, impacts from large wildfires and losses to major pest infestations have cumulative negative impact on security of supply of timber to Alberta's forest industry. The impacts of climate change exacerbate several of these factors and greatly complicate modelling of future forests - a difficult task at best made even more difficult by uncertainty of future growing conditions.

Other speakers highlighted opportunities for improving timber supply on a per unit basis relative to the productivity of natural forests. We can grow trees faster!

On similar sites to our forests in Alberta, regimes of managed forests in Europe have demonstrated three or even four-fold increases in natural productivity. Careful attention to early stocking control and management of competing vegetation and density management improve productivity and shorten rotations.

Genetic improvement of trees used in forest management can improve on these gains even more. By way of comparison, just think about how plant breeding has revolutionized our agriculture industry. The cultivars of wheat used in today's crops have resulted from many generations of plant breeding. Given longer rotations, traditional plant breeding in tree crops is a much slower undertaking. However, first-generation improved seed that is already in common use in Alberta today likely improve productivity by 10% relative to natural stands. New developments in seed selection based on genomic traits rather than phenotypic characteristics have the potential of shortening the cycle time for plant breeding for desirable traits.

So, why aren't these solutions in wider use today? Almost all the speakers and participants agree that it comes back to public policy for forest land in Alberta.

Policy makers try to juggle many conflicting uses for our public forests and, let's face it, timber production isn't usually at the top of the list for most Albertans - particularly urban residents who do not rely on timber production for a means of livelihood. Given that modelling of future outcomes is a risky business - made even riskier by unknowns of climate change - it's not that surprising that policy makers take a very conservative approach. Although they want economic opportunities in rural Alberta, they are reluctant to prioritize these over increasing demands for non-extractive resource use such as conservation or tourism. Even when they do turn their minds to timber production, policy makers take a conservative approach. They take the wait and see attitude towards gains from intensive management or genetic improvement. The regulatory regime in Alberta is based on reforestation to an equivalent productivity of natural forests. Current public policy does not adequately incentivize investments in enhanced management. Why would the forest industry spend more money on enhanced management in exchange for fuzzy promises of possible future gain? Policy that linked timber supply to manufacturing facilities was successful in incenting hundreds of millions of dollars of investment in those facilities. Do the same policies discourage those companies from investing in the forests that industry depends on for future opportunities?

Part of the answer to the conundrum of policy may be to challenge some of our long-held assumptions about sustainable forest management. Sustainable development can be defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs". Traditionally, we've interpreted that through the lens of long-term stability of the resource mix that comes from forest land.

If we are uncertain of the impact of any development on one or more of the resources in the future, we tend to eschew current use or development in favour of future stability. Is that a false paradigm? After all, the forest is a complex ecosystem. It responds over time to a variety of external stimuli.

There may be too many unknowns to achieve stability. Maybe the best we can do is manage for dynamic resilience where resilience is defined as adaptive behaviour in the face of adverse conditions or change. This requires a different conversation couched in terms of a different time frame than we've used for sustainable development. What do the users of the forest want from the forest - now, 5-years from now, 20-years from now,...? Are they willing to adapt to a different stream of forest resources in the future than what they currently have? How can the investments we do now buffer against future risk?

As an owner of private forest land, I must admit that I was disappointed that management of private forest land was not discussed by any of the speakers. It did not seem to be on anyone's radar. This highlights the need for more robust discussion of policy options. Private landowners should be included in the conversation but we can't demand a voice at the table unless we have something to offer. What are we doing to elevate our profile with policy makers and with the forest industry? If we don't take timber production seriously but only view it as a by-product of woodlot management, do we even deserve a voice in the discussions?

In summary, this conference highlighted many concerns about timber supply in Alberta's forests. It also highlighted some potential solutions but also detailed obstacles to adoption of these solutions. It was a thought-provoking event which, at the end of the day, probably raised as many questions as it answered.

Thanks to the Canadian Institute of Forestry for hosting the conference, to the many accomplished speakers and participants who contributed their expertise and to West Fraser, Weyerhaeuser and the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta for funding assistance that helped make the conference possible.

The opinions expressed in this article are the authors and any errors in the facts summarized are mine alone.

Byron Grundberg

Opinion

The future of our forests.

Commentaries by
Jurgen Molls

In 1871 our first Prime Minister the Right Honourable Sir John A. Macdonald, wrote to the Premier of

Ontario "John Sandfield Macdonald" (*no relative*) in which he said "*The sight of immense masses of timber constantly passing my window every morning constantly suggests to my mind (that) we are destroying the timber of Canada and there is scarcely any possibility of replacing it*" What he saw floating down the Ottawa River were largely White Pine, This was the dominant species in north- eastern North America. These trees could live for up to 400+ years reach highest of 200feet with a stump diameter of 3 - 4 feet. Even at 100 feet the large trees still had a diameter of 2 feet. It was for this reason that the British Royal Navy would blaze selected trees with a royal stamp on it that reserved them for spares in their square rigger ships. In addition, white pine became the the most sought after wood for building every thing from houses, barns, fences and even furniture. The results were evident to Sir John which was that the growth of the forest could not maintain this accelerated harvest. Sir John could not do any thing to change harvesting practices because it was a provincial jurisdiction, but he did urge that both Ontario and Quebec study Norwegian and German harvesting practices, but not much came of this. His concerns were justified, for today there are less than 1% of the large pine left and are mostly in parks and protected areas. Many of the oldest trees are on private land. They have found that the trees when replanted do not do as well as expected and they believe that by harvesting the older dominant trees they have lost some genetic diversity.

The reason that I have dwelt on the white pine tragedy is that it took over 200 years to accomplish this, using only hand tools, oxen and river drives. But today with the technology that is used we can product the same sad results in our own time. The reason for serious concern is that some if not all of the large forest companies have reduced their rotation age from 110 years to 85 years, in their FMA's for the coniferous species, putting our future forest in peril.

The allowable cut is then recalculated which will increase the allowable cut by some 20% thereby eliminating the forest inventory at a faster rate of the total wood supply; Further more when the rotation reaches the 85th year of harvesting in year 86 they will be harvesting where year one was logged 85 years ago. Now they will be harvesting 85 year old trees which will be a reduction of some 40% in volume as to what they harvested in the original stands. This is because 85 year old trees will have an average stump diameter of 8 inches, which will make this an uneconomic operation for the production of lumber. This is largely a pulp wood supply, but very expensive to handle, due to the number of pieces that will effect the cost of logging, hauling and manufacturing. These economics may indeed force some mills to discontinue operation. The truth of the matter is that the 85 year rotation age is really not sustainable forestry as we know it today.

This is a bad news for the future of the forests in the green zone, when layered on such as, ever larger forest fires, insect attacks, industrial and agriculture expansion, wildlife reserves, parks and global warming. But better news for the forests in the white zone, and woodlot owners. In that your private lands will be some that have retained their timber and let it mature to larger size. What you or your family will have is a premium product in time. So don't let a wood buyer tell you that the timber should be harvested before it becomes over matter, just remember that our conifers can and do live well beyond 150 years of age.

It is for this reason that we (WAA) have made an application to FRIAA for funding to enable us to employ some staff who would work with woodlot owners and potential woodlot owners, in establishing woodlots. Today FRIAA has not been able to fund us but we shall continue working with them on this. Private woodlots may well be important in the future wood supply of this Province, but only if we work with the owners.

As a foot note: One of the large progressive forest product companies some 40 years ago realized that there will be a shortfall in the timber supply in the future. Purchased some 50 quarter sections of marginal farmland (*in the white zone*) and now work them as a woodlots they have carried out considerable plantings with excellent results. This should be carried out throughout the white zone which contains, considerable marginal farmland but it will take some funding and effort.

Taste of the woods...

by Julien Schnegg

Hello folks,

Let me introduce myself. I am Julien Schnegg from Calgary. My wife and I own a woodlot management plan south of St. Paul, AB, and we are partners with Jim and Ann Szpajcher. Last October, we all received the woodlot newsletter. Like all of us, we miss the Log Jam. Laval put together this newsletter and so I decided to send him an e-mail to introduce myself. After some e-mails back and forth, he came up with an idea - he asked me to come with some recipes with products I find in my woodlot. I was very flattered and happy. I am a trained professional chef and I love to

cook using produce from my garden and to discover new things.

Let's get started with the first recipe. It will be a mushroom arancini. I like to do it with Porcini mushrooms, also known as King Bolete or Cep mushrooms, but you can do it with other edible mushrooms you find on your land, for example Chanterelle mushrooms or if you are lucky, with Morel mushrooms.

This is how you can use mushrooms from your woodlot in an easy recipe. If you have any questions you can contact me at: cuisto04@bluewin.ch.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Kind Regards,

Julien Schnegg



Mushroom Arancini:

Ingredients:

- 200 g of Arborio rice
- 1/2 white onion finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- 100 ml of dry white wine
- 1 L of chicken stock
- 100 grams of Porcini mushrooms cleaned and roughly chopped (clean your mushroom with a brush - do not put under water)
- 1 tablespoon of chopped parsley
- 35% cream
- 2 tablespoons of grated parmesan cheese
- 40 grams of butter
- Salt, Pepper
- Flour
- Eggs
- Bread crumbs

Directions:

1. In a pot put your olive oil and sauté the onion and garlic this until the onion is translucent.
2. Add the mushrooms. Cook and stir over medium heat for 2-3 minutes.
3. Add the rice and stir over low heat for 2 minutes. Be sure to stir and be careful as you do not want to burn the rice.
4. Deglaze the pot with the white wine and stir. Reduce to half of the liquid. Be sure to keep stirring.
5. Add some chicken stock (200 mL), cook slowly, stir and cover with lid. Cook over medium heat and stir frequently. Repeat this process: add water, stir, and put the lid on a couple of times until the rice is almost cooked (~ 75%).
6. Add a little bit of the cream, a bit of salt and pepper, stir and cook for 2-3 minutes.
7. Turn the stove to low heat and add the parmesan cheese and butter, stir until they are incorporated into the risotto. The risotto needs to be almost cooked (~ 90%) and creamy. Check the seasoning. Turn off the stove.
8. Put the risotto in the fridge.
9. Once the risotto is cold, use an ice cream scoop to form balls of the risotto on a baking tray with parchment paper and freeze it.
10. When the risotto balls are frozen, you need to bread them. Season the flour with salt and pepper in a bowl. In another bowl, beat some eggs. In the third bowl, put the bread crumbs.
11. Put the frozen risotto balls first in the flour, then the eggs, then finally the bread crumbs. This is a technique called "paner a l'anglaise". You can keep the battered risotto balls in the fridge or freezer for later.
12. Cook the battered risotto balls in a deep fryer at 160°C until golden brown. You can finish cooking it in the oven if it is still a bit frozen in the middle.
13. You can serve the arancini as a side dish or as an appetizer with a tomato sauce

Touch of art

By Nature...

Hello everyone,

I am Monique Bergeron and I put the Newsletter together. (No... I am not an editor. I can definitely not be an editor as I am very francophone and don't have the knowledge of editing.) But my family lives on a woodlot and I love to share with other woodlot owners.

Maybe because I am a grandma or maybe because I did work with children or simply because children are our future... What ever the reason, when my grandchildren discover nature it makes me rediscover it again. When they just enjoy the silence, the sound of birds, of water, of wind in the forest, it makes me appreciate it again. And... when they express it... it is such a gift.

If you ever have children around you that are inspired by nature and express it through art, I invite you to send pictures of these pieces of art to me to publish in the newsletter.

Sincerely,

Monique Bergeron



Pictures from Maëlle Bergeron. 9 years old.

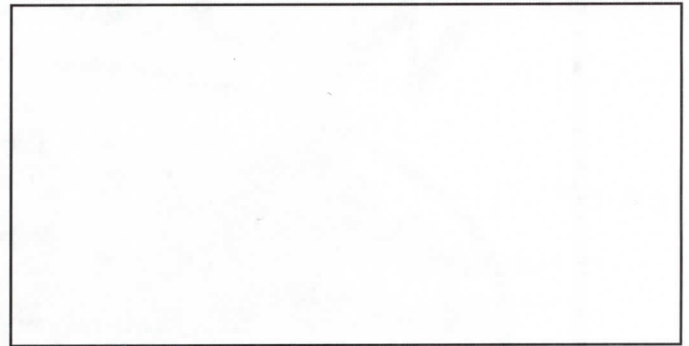
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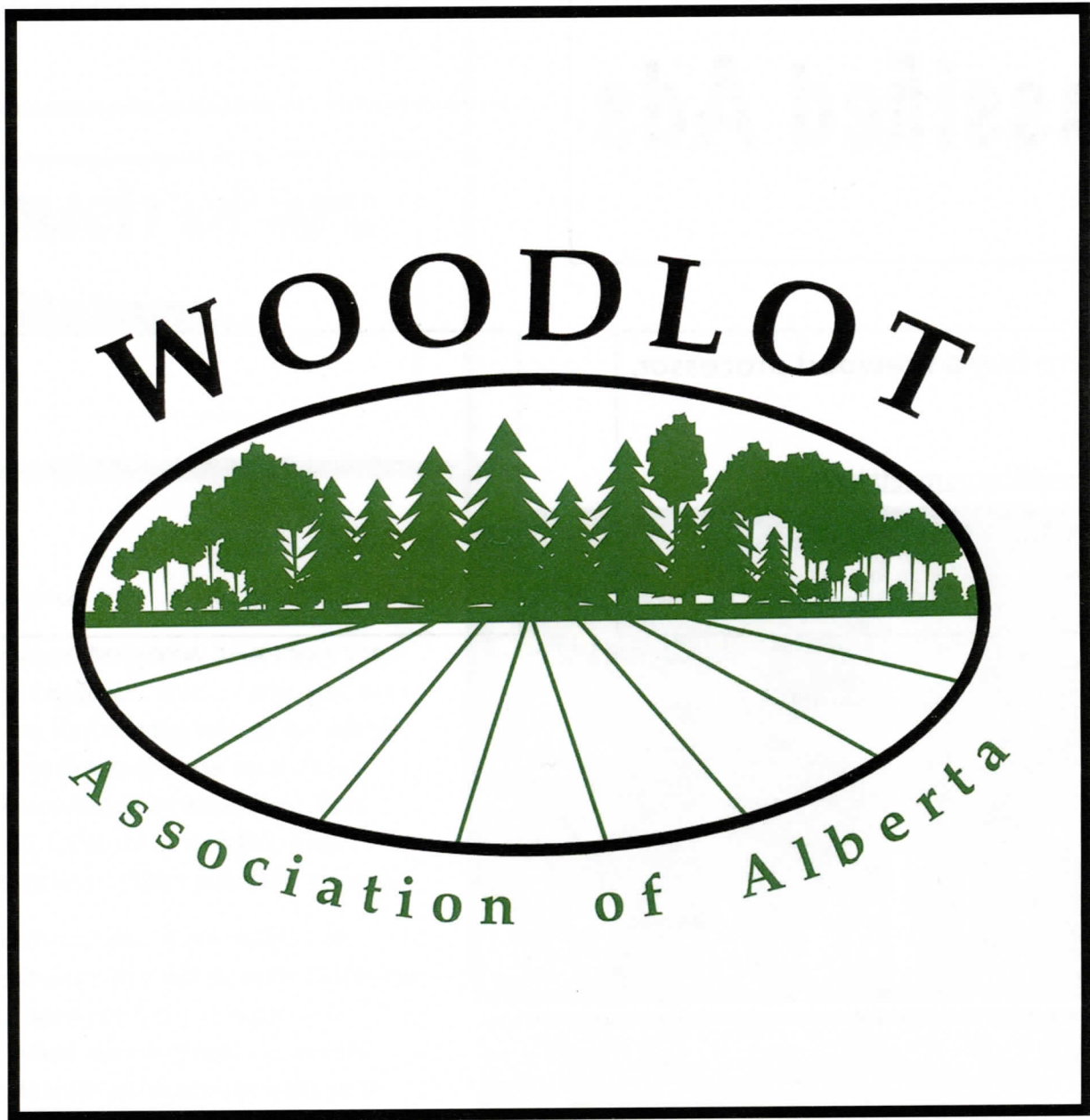
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Our mission statement

The Woodlot Association of Alberta's purpose is to promote leadership in sustainable forest management by encouraging the development of Private forest by increasing awareness of their inherent social, economic and environmental values.