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**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FHABC**

**Date:** Saturday, September 11, 2004

**Place:** Heritage Square (Fraser Mills museum), 1120 Brunette Avenue, Coquitlam  
(north of Lougheed Highway at Mackin Park and east of King Edward Street,  
Trans-Canada Highway exit 40B)

**Program:** 11:00 AM      Business meeting  
                  12:00 Noon      Lunch on site, catered in (estimated cost \$10)  
                  1:30 PM      Talk by Tony Paré, who is writing a history of Fraser Mills,  
                                  then a tour of the museums  
                  Late afternoon      Departure for Vancouver Island members

**Please confirm your attendance soon:** mainlanders are to advise Stan Chester at (604) 921-9880 or e-mail [stanchester@shaw.ca](mailto:stanchester@shaw.ca) If you live on Vancouver Island please advise John Parminter at Office: (250) 356-6810, Home: (250) 384-5642 or e-mail: [jvparminter@telus.net](mailto:jvparminter@telus.net)

Car pools will be arranged to the extent possible.



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## **THE COWICHAN LAKE RESEARCH STATION TURNS 75** **by John Parminter and Don Carson**

The Cowichan Lake Research Station, the B.C. Forest Service's flagship coastal research facility, has seen much activity over the decades since it was established in 1929. The site was selected because the lookout on Bald Mountain provided for wildfire detection and the large forest of primarily 20-year-old Douglas-fir was a prime subject for research.

The station staff in 1929 consisted of the superintendent and just four researchers. Because a road to Mesachie Lake did not yet exist, they relied upon boat access to and from Lake Cowichan. In the first year of operation a site was cleared to accommodate four buildings and a firebreak was built on the eastern side of the property. Framed tents with wooden floors were used as living quarters.

The Depression quickly reduced research funding, and resulted in a serious loss of staff, but other initiatives kept the station alive through the 1930s. A provincial job relief program began in 1931 and crews billeted at the CLRS constructed roads and trails. The Young Men's Forestry Training Plan started up in June of 1935, due to the determination of Hugh Savage, the MLA from Duncan. About 60 men came to the station, where they added a cookhouse, bunkhouses, a residence, a telephone system and a water system to the camp.

The pay was \$1 per day, with a \$10 clothing allowance after two months of work. The food was good and there was organized recreation as well as field trips to sawmills and logging camps, lectures on forestry and courses in log scaling and first aid. Other job relief and training programs such as the provincial Forest Development Project and the federal National Forestry Program and Youth Forestry Training Program resulted in more men being stationed and trained at the CLRS until 1940.

Reforestation then took over as the mainstay of operations and the first crew arrived in 1941 to plant seedlings between Mesachie Lake and the village of Lake Cowichan. They were joined by Alternative Service Workers, or conscientious objectors, in 1942. Those crews were trained in fire suppression but planted seedlings when not on fire duty. They also felled snags, converted railway grades to roads and dismantled abandoned logging camps in the area.

The station was a very busy place during the war, housing as many as 115 men, including the cookhouse staff. But a serious labour shortage resulted after cancellation of the Alternative Service Worker program in 1944. Very little tree planting took place in 1945, and a backlog of seedlings accumulated.

The research program was reborn in 1947 when the pioneering forest thinning experiments, begun in 1929, resumed. Other research based at Cowichan Lake investigated tree seed production, direct seeding for reforestation and the effects of slashburning. The research station also enabled the reforestation of public and private lands and federal research in forest entomology, pathology and silviculture in the area.

The most important work begun during the 1950s was the Douglas-fir tree improvement program, which evaluated the characteristics of trees grown from seeds collected at different locations in the province and produced by crossing different natural populations. The program continues to this day and has contributed much to our knowledge of the natural variability in populations of trees and their adaptations to local environments.

In 1963 a nursery site was prepared and it was expanded later, in 1980. Much of the work in the 1960s and 1970s involved developing the nursery, establishing plantations and providing trees for seed orchards, where seed is produced for reforestation. Other work in the 1970s concentrated on evaluating the effects of different thinning and fertilization regimes on tree growth and yield.

The station's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1979 was commemorated by a gathering of foresters and many others who were closely associated with the development of the CLRS. The program ended with a dedication ceremony and the Hon. Tom Waterland, then Minister of Forests, unveiled a stone cairn containing a time capsule.

Cuts in funding in recent years brought about a reduction in staff and resources, however the station staff and visiting scientists continue to provide support and solutions in order to insure that our forests are a healthy, thriving and renewable resource. World-wide recognition of this research is evident by the number of international scientists, foresters and media personnel who have visited the station since its inception and continue to do so.

The conference facilities, the bunkhouses, the famous cookhouse (designated a Forest Service heritage building in 1983) are once again open for business. The superb location makes the research station a prime choice for field trips and meetings. People belonging to many different public and private organizations have toured the grounds and often stayed at the station to enjoy its varied forests and visit elsewhere in the region.

The Cowichan Lake Research Station has come a long way from its origins as a tent camp in 1929. It provides many specialized services to support long-term forest research and enjoys a co-operative relationship with the neighbouring communities. Results from the station's experiments have been applied extensively in nursery, reforestation, silviculture and tree improvement operations in coastal B.C. – thanks to the foresight of a handful of people in the B.C. Forest Service in the 1920s and the dedication of many others since then.

With acknowledgments to Ralph Schmidt for much of the source material, see his history:

Schmidt, R.L. 1992. The history of Cowichan Lake Research Station. Research Branch, Ministry of Forests and the FHABC. Miscellaneous Report, Research Branch, Ministry of Forests, Victoria, B.C. v + 20 p.  
Online at <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/docs/bro/bro10.htm>



## **QUEEST MTN. LOOKOUT REVISITED** **by Al Schutz**

The article entitled "Queest Mtn. Lookout Dismantled" (FHABC newsletter # 71, September 2003) brought back a few old memories. During the summers of 1949 and 1950, the late Rory Flanagan and I made up the B. C. Forest Service's lookout photography crew. In 1949 we were both at the end of our third year of forestry at UBC. Rory had worked on the crew as an assistant in 1948 and so in 1949 and 1950 he was the Crew Chief and I was the assistant.

The work consisted of taking a series of eight panoramic photographs from BC Forest Service fire lookouts throughout the province. Bearings were established with the use of a surveyor's transit and level. Photos were taken on infrared film to maximize haze penetration. The resulting 8 by 12" prints had both horizontal and vertical grids superimposed and were bound into book form.

They were used by the Lookoutman and Ranger Station staff for fire location. The Lookoutman (or woman) would identify the location of a fire on the appropriate photograph and communicate the horizontal azimuth and vertical angle to the ranger staff. They had an identical set of photographs and could then get an accurate location of the fire. The fire finder also provided this information but the lookout photos provided a visual reference for each party.

In 1950 there were 100 lookouts in the province, and Rory and I took photographs from 50 of them. Most of the photos were taken from established, occupied lookouts. Queest was one of the very few that was not an established lookout. My memory suggests that it was planned for construction in 1951.

Rory and I arrived at the Sicamous Ranger Station in early July 1950. I don't remember the Ranger's name, but he told us where to find the trail that led to Queest Mtn. Early the next morning we drove to the trailhead, which was on the bank of the Eagle River near Malakwa. The distance from there to the summit of Queest was, as the crow flies, about five miles, and we were told that the trail, with its meandering and switchbacks, was about 11 miles. The trail started at about 1500 feet in elevation, and Queest Mtn. is 6850 feet. So we knew that we were in for a long day.

We started up the trail at about 7:00 AM, each carrying roughly 35 pounds of equipment and a rather large lunch. By 11:00 we were in alpine country with flowers of dryas and glacier lilies covering the slopes. A half-hour later we were walking in soft snow up to a foot deep. We arrived at one of two snow-covered peaks at about noon.

We had not been told that there were two peaks a short distance apart joined by a slightly lower saddle. Our dilemma was to decide which of the two was most likely to be the lookout site. The point we were on had good views to the north, east and south, whereas we judged that the peak to the south of us had good views to the south, west and north. We chose the one we were standing on.

We set up our equipment, and with the transit determined the precise known bearing of a distant geodetic monument. By lifting the transit off the mount and replacing it with the camera, we could then take our eight photographs at 45 degree horizontal intervals. This operation took about an hour.

After a short rest we ate our lunch, then packed up our equipment and made our way back down the mountain. We arrived at our car late in the day, with some sore muscles and aching knees.

When we checked in at the Ranger Station the next day we learned that we had taken our photos from the wrong peak. Not being anxious to take another trip up Queest Mtn. again so soon, we decided to drive to the Kootenays and work there for the next few weeks. We would return to Queest later in the summer. When Rory and I returned to Sicamous about mid-August, we were more than a little pleased to learn that a logging road had been constructed up Queest about halfway to the proposed lookout site. That made our second trip to the top much easier and relatively uneventful.

Editor's note: the entire collection of lookout photo negatives, beginning with those collected in 1936 by Gerry Andrews, was turned over to the provincial archives last year. They have catalogued all the images and are nearly finished scanning them into digital form. Based on the best set of photos per lookout per visit by the photography crews between 1936 and 1980, there are approximately 4200 images representing over 200 lookouts. Including duplicates and sets of poorer quality raises the number to over 7000 images.

Some lookouts were never photographed, some only once, but most were photographed several times over the decades. The collection represents a valuable resource for people studying landscape change. Old harvesting and regeneration are clearly visible in many photo sets, also the impacts of wildfire and urban expansion.



## NEW PUBLICATIONS

Andrews, Mary E. and Doreen J. Hunter. 2003. A man and his century: Gerald Smedley Andrews. Koinonia Books, 1119 Blanshard Street, Victoria, B.C.  
ISBN 0-9734349-0-2

Marshall, Denis. 2003. Sawdust Caesars and family ties in the southern interior forests. Salmon Arm Branch, Okanagan Historical Society, c/o 33 – 1120 12<sup>th</sup> Street NE, Salmon Arm, B.C. V1E 1B8 ISBN 0-921241-73-9. 223 p.  
\$23 + \$4 shipping in Canada.

Probë, Frieda L. 2003. The day the North Thompson Valley exploded: an account of the McClure Fire. Willow Creations, McClure, B.C. 116 p.

## **FROM HORSES TO HELICOPTERS** **by J. H. (Jack) Carradice**

My first association with the Forest Service was in 1951. I was the truck driver on the Campbell River fire suppression crew that summer and got my first look at what fire fighting was all about. We had quite a few small fires to deal with and we also became involved with a couple of larger ones. The biggest was the Upper Campbell Lake fire which grew to several thousand acres. The use of aircraft was limited to a bit of reconnaissance and if you couldn't drive to the fire you walked, sometimes many miles.

Over the next few years we heard about experiments with aircraft dropping water and the potential that helicopters might have, but it was mainly talk. When I was posted to Pemberton in 1957 as the Ranger, in charge of this newly-created Ranger District, I quickly realized I was facing a bit of a challenge. The district was in the transition zone between the coast and the interior and was quite dry. It was on the lightning path that ran up Harrison and Lillooet lakes, the road system was confined to the valley bottoms for the most part and the main part of the district was rugged – mountainous valleys with no access.

After looking at the fire occurrence maps for the previous several years I came to the conclusion that the district was going to need a system of trails for access and possibly some horses to pack supplies. A discussion with my neighbour to the north, Ranger Gordon Cameron of Lillooet, convinced me that trails and horses were the way to go, the use of horses to supply fire crews being quite common in the interior of the province at that time. Ranger Cameron had also indicated that he was well-stocked with pack saddles and other tack and in case of need he could ship all the equipment I required very quickly by train as there was no road out of Pemberton at that time. At this point I realized that all I needed were the trails and the ability to pack a pack horse. I was short on both counts.

The summer of 1957 was very wet and it gave me time to learn my new district and to do a bit of planning. My staff at that time was me and a part-time Assistant Ranger, George Stefanac, borrowed from Squamish. More often than I like to admit, luck plays an important role in how things develop. In December of 1957 I was assigned a full-time Assistant Ranger by the name of Tag Neighbor. Tag was an expert in horses, trail building and all things associated with the great outdoors, as well as being an excellent fire fighter. After reviewing the district's fire problems with Tag we started building trails, organized a few horses with the local farmers, and put together the necessary equipment to pack fire equipment and supplies into remote areas.

The summer of 1958 was a doozy. We had our first fire on March 15<sup>th</sup> and were never a day without at least one fire burning until fall. We used the horses on a couple of fires but fortunately most of them were accessible by road. We did, however, make good progress with our trail program. With all the fires we had in 1958 we never saw so much as one helicopter and only on two occasions did we get the use of a fixed-wing aircraft for reconnaissance.

During the late fall of 1958 we were advised that the Forest Inventory Division was going to re-inventory the Soo River valley, situated between Alta Lake and Pemberton, and that the supply aspect would all be handled by helicopter. We were very excited. This would be our first look at what these new-fangled machines could do. The appointed date arrived, in early May as I recall, and a problem arose. The helicopter contract had fallen through and the Crew Chief asked if we could help him organize a packhorse outfit to supply his crews for the summer. Tag Neighbor was very enthusiastic as this would give us a real opportunity to develop our horse-handling capabilities in Pemberton. To make a long story short, working with the Inventory Division people, we got started on the necessary trail network in the Soo River valley, organized the horses and equipment, hired and trained a young farm kid by the name of Doug Purden, who was good at working with horses, and got the show on the road. The inventory survey went on for several months, all supplied by our packhorse outfit.

During the summer of 1959 we had one or two fires that were somewhat difficult of access and on one of these we were offered the use of a helicopter. The deal was that we could have the helicopter to get the initial men and supplies in to the fire but that any additional supplies would have to be packed in. When the fire was out we would have to bring the equipment out – either with horses or on our backs. The Bell G2 helicopters of the day could not carry much, were quite slow, and not readily available and so we were still largely dependent on backpacking or on our horses.

By the next year helicopters were much more readily available and a new problem arose. We discovered that some of our best fire fighters were scared to death of helicopters and would walk into a distant fire rather than ride in a helicopter. One of these men was Robert Kay and on two or three occasions Robert volunteered to hike in with his power saw to make sure that the helicopter had a safe place to land when it arrived - usually quite a few hours later - rather than take his chances in the helicopter. We were now allowed to use the helicopter to remove the men and equipment when the fire was out, weather permitting.

An interesting aspect at this time was the competition that developed between the horsemen and the helicopters. On one occasion we had a smoke reported some distance northwest of Pemberton on the back side of Copper Dome mountain. The report came in quite late in the day and I was told that a helicopter could be available the following morning. My fire foreman, John Decker, indicated that he could put together a pack outfit and be on the fire before the helicopter could get to Pemberton.

My limited experience indicated that helicopters were subject to unaccountable delays so I advised Vancouver that we would make a start with a ground attack force using horses. With that announcement the race was on. The fire was located about 11 miles from the closest road and up about 4000 feet, but close to a good trail. My crew organized the horses overnight and set out up the trail at first light. They beat the helicopter by about three hours and had the fire pretty much contained by the time the helicopter arrived. Were they ever proud of themselves for beating the mechanical monster.

By 1961 trails and horses were pretty much a thing of the past. Helicopters were much more available, more reliable, and taking over. Waterbombers were starting to play a role in fire control and times had definitely changed. Looking back it is quite amazing how fast the transition from men on foot and horses changed to helicopters and water bombers. In 1958 no helicopters were to be seen. By 1961 the new technology had taken over. It was the end of an era and the start of a new one.

### **KEN DRUSHKA, 1940 - 2004**

Born in Delburne, Alberta, Ken Drushka passed away on May 6<sup>th</sup> in Vancouver. As B.C.'s most prolific forestry writer, he was the author or co-author of articles for many journals and newspapers. His booklist includes *Against Wind and Weather* (1981), *Stumped: the forest industry in transition* (1985), *Three Men and a Forester* (1990), *Working in the Woods* (1992), *Touch Wood: BC forests at the crossroads* (1993), *HR: a biography of H.R. MacMillan* (1995), *Tracks in the Forest* (1997), *Tie Hackers to Timber Harvesters* (1998), *In the Bight: BC forest industry today* (1999), *Whistle Punks & Widow Makers* (2000), *Lignum: a history* (2002) and *Canada's Forests - a history* (2003).

Prior to his research and writing in forestry, Ken was a logger, silviculture contractor and sawmill operator. After moving west from Toronto, he co-founded the Cosmic Logging Company, which recruited employees through an ad in the *Georgia Straight* and operated on Thurlow and Sonora islands.

On April 12, 2003, at the first FHABC Honours and Awards Night, Ken received an award in recognition of his outstanding contribution as an author and journalist. In February of this year he was made an honorary member of the Association of BC Forest Professionals "...for his outstanding commitment to the improvement and promotion of forest practices through books, articles and courageous advocacy. ...(and being) personally responsible for bringing many forestry issues to the awareness of the public." Ken was the 17<sup>th</sup> person to be named an honorary member of the ABCFP since the award was instituted in 1972.



This newsletter is the official organ of the Forest History Association of British Columbia. Please submit newsletter material and send changes of address to the Editor: John Parminter, # 3 – 130 Niagara Street, Victoria, BC V8V 1E9. Phone (250) 384-5642 home or (250) 356-6810 office. E-mail: [jvparminter@telus.net](mailto:jvparminter@telus.net)

Membership in the association is \$10 yearly, or \$45 for five years. Please send dues to the Treasurer: Edo Nyland, 8793 Forest Park Drive, Sidney, BC V8L 4E8. Phone (250) 656-9276. E-mail: [edonon@islandnet.com](mailto:edonon@islandnet.com)

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