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FHABC 2005 AGM REPORT

The FHABC's 2005 AGM was held on September 17th at the Tigh-Na-Mara Resort Spa & Conference Centre in Parksville. The main items of business concerned the newsletter, a web page, our healthy finances, charitable tax status, funding for upcoming publications, and how to raise our profile and promote all aspects of forest history. President Stan Chester reported on the oral history project, the display and book prizes at the ABCFP AGM, and the developments at Green Timbers in Surrey.

Mike Apsey updated us on the Forest History Society's progress in forming a Canadian Chapter and Edo Nyland described the 75th anniversary celebrations of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and the formation of the Forest History Association of Alberta.

Following lunch we relocated to Cathedral Grove in MacMillan Provincial Park, on the highway to Port Alberni. Retired B.C. Provincial Parks forester Kerry Joy was our guide and kindly provided an interesting and informative presentation on the human and natural histories of the park. A written version follows.

The current FHABC Executive is as listed in the December 2004 newsletter, number 75.



Recycled paper

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CATHEDRAL GROVE, MACMILLAN PROVINCIAL PARK by Kerry Joy

Let's start with Cathedral Grove's origins as a public protected area. In 1886 a wagon road between Nanaimo and Alberni, some 85 km, was completed. It was located on the north side of Cameron Lake. In 1911 the road was relocated to the south side of the lake and a railway was built on the north side. These corridors enabled transportation of people and goods and exploration of the vast forests of the interior of the island.

H.R. MacMillan, B.C.'s first Chief Forester, was highly aware of the value of our old-growth forests. As an entrepreneurial opportunist, he staked his claim on the coastal old growth by leasing Timber Berths and obtaining logging rights to large numbers of entire river valleys by leasing blocks of timber at the river valley mouths, thus reserving entire valleys of old-growth forests. One such example was the Cameron River valley, whose river exited into Cameron Lake just 300 m north of Cathedral Grove.

When the road was improved in the early 1900s and the Alberni Valley timber industry burgeoned, the population swelled to meet the logging and milling demands. Many of these people traveled for business and pleasure across the Mt. Arrowsmith road hump to Nanaimo. On the way to or from that city it became common, and finally traditional, to stop off at Cathedral Grove for a picnic and visit to the old-growth forest. Cathedral Grove was said to be named by Governor-General Viscount Willingdon during a 1928 visit.

For the next 15 years the public, represented by the Vancouver Island Tourist Association and the local chambers of commerce, petitioned H.R. MacMillan to donate Cathedral Grove as a public park. H.R. steadfastly refused, citing the high values of the old-growth timber as necessary to his company's well-being and future growth. Finally, in 1944, at an historic meeting of the Vancouver Island Tourist Association in Port Alberni, H.R. was pressured by all present to give the grove to the public. After much haranguing, verbal battling, and shouting, H.R. stormed out of the hall, shouting "All right! You can have the God-damned grove," slamming the door as he left. This public victory resulted in provincial park protective status for 136 ha of old-growth forest, including Cathedral Grove, in 1947.

In 1944, my family moved to Port Alberni. Like many other residents we used to picnic in the grove and walk along the Cameron River through the huge trees. This experience as a small boy may have played a role in my decision to become a forester and conservationist, and finally the Parks Forester in charge of Cathedral Grove and all forest and vegetation matters in B.C. provincial parks.

Old-growth tree species found in MacMillan Park include coastal Douglas-fir, western red cedar, western hemlock, and grand fir. Bigleaf maple has a much shorter life span but can live up to about 200 years. These forests are transitional between the drier Coastal Douglas-fir Biogeoclimatic Zone (CDF) which characterizes the east coast of Vancouver Island and the wetter Coastal Western Hemlock Biogeoclimatic Zone (CWH), found along the west coast.

Old-growth trees can live for 600 – 800 years, with extreme ages of 1500+ years reached on drier upland sites. Trees in Cathedral Grove are not the largest or tallest, but heights are up to 50 – 60 m and diameters exceed 2.5 – 3 m, the largest is 4.4 m. One old veteran Douglas-fir was estimated to contain enough lumber to build five three-bedroom homes. In the BC Parks and Protected Areas Branch this analogy is not emphasized because it is felt that visitors should focus on the extraordinary living characteristics of the trees and supporting forest.

I once brought a visiting British forester to Cathedral Grove. After walking the trails and describing some of the forest's features to him we stopped near one of the larger Douglas-firs. I noticed that tears were flowing down the man's face. I thought he was in some physical pain, so I asked what I could do to help. His somewhat choked reply was that I had provided him with the most extraordinary experience of his long forestry career. He was overwhelmed by the amazing size and beauty of the grove. Some 300,000 people now visit the park each year. Many foreign visitors are bussed from Victoria and other centres to view the large trees.

Logging of the remainder of the upstream valley has resulted in significant damage to the Cameron River's course and the adjacent forest. In 1990, extreme runoff from a tropical storm caused extensive flooding and high winds resulted in 6 ha of blowdown and streambank erosion. In 1996 high winds estimated at 110 km/h resulted in windfall and broken tree tops, causing extensive damage to the grove and surrounding forest.

Park visitation has compacted the soil over sensitive root systems with vegetation removal and damage. In the 1990s BC Parks initiated a trail rehabilitation program with replacement of coarse woody debris along the trails to prevent further damage by controlling public access.

Parking has traditionally been along both sides of the highway just west of the Cameron River bridge. This was judged to be too dangerous for tour buses and cars together with loaded logging trucks. An alternate parking area was planned in 1998 – 1999 in an area of red alder and second-growth Douglas-fir adjacent to the Cameron River (upstream from the grove and occupying a former logging staging area). As a result of public controversy this site move has been delayed and the parking hazard continues today.

MacMillan Park's Cathedral Grove still represents the only highway-accessible area of protected old-growth Douglas-fir forest in British Columbia. Even though it is damaged and disturbed we in B.C. are happy that it still remains to provide an awe-inspiring example of Canada's temperate forests.



RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Carder, A.C. 2005. Giant trees of western America and the world. Harbour Publishing, Madeira Park, B.C. 152 p. ISBN 1-5501-7363-4 \$26.95

As a child growing up in the Fraser Valley, Al Carder was awed by the ancient Douglas-fir forests and spent hours staring up at trees that commonly stood over 300 feet high. Sixty years later, after retiring from his career as a plant biologist, he set out to find the trees that had transfixed him in his youth. Discovering many of them felled by storms or loggers, he determined to document those that were left before they could vanish from our memories as well as from our landscapes. The catalogue Dr. Carder compiled is a definitive record of the West's record-sized trees of all species, including such legends as B.C.'s 400-plus foot Lynn Valley fir and California's massive redwood, the Eureka Tree. Next, Dr. Carder set out to answer the question, how do the giant trees of the West stack up against the great trees of the world?

The result, *Giant Trees of Western America and the World*, reveals outstanding examples from each of the most noteworthy tree species Dr. Carder found – including some that are thousands of years old and over 300 feet high. Featuring more than 40 scale drawings, this collection of giant trees outlines the intriguing characteristics of each species, such as the resiliency of the English oak, which can endure lightning strikes and widespread rot for hundreds of years and still thrive; and the “grotesque” appearance of the African “upside-down tree,” the baobab, whose width can exceed its height. Dr. Carder also describes the histories of famous trees, including the stump of a B.C. western redcedar so wide that eight men and women danced a quadrille on it in 1887, and the Sicilian Tree of 100 Horses, well-known for sheltering Joan, Queen of Aragon and 100 of her horsemen in a storm. Carder's enthusiasm and expertise informs and entertains even as he urges us to appreciate and protect what is left of these fascinating “monsters of the past.”

Taken from the Harbour Publishing web site:

<http://www.harbourpublishing.com/title/GiantTreesofWesternAmericaandtheWorld>

Hunter, K. 2005. Franklin River history, 1934 ~ 2004. Hayes Forest Services Ltd., Duncan, B.C. 21 p.



In May of 2004 the Port Alice pulp mill was sold by Western Pulp, a subsidiary of Doman Industries, the then owner. It was shut down by the new owners, LaPointe Partners of Wisconsin, in October of that year. Neucel Specialty Cellulose Ltd. plans to reopen the mill in March of 2006 and invest more than \$100-million over the next five years. The Woodfibre pulp mill owned by Western Forest Products is to cease production on January 23 and close on March 9, 2006. The following history of Rayonier Canada Ltd., taken from a company document dated August 1976, provides insight into the histories of these mills.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF RAYONIER CANADA LIMITED

- 1903 Wood Pulp Lease issued to Oriental Power & Pulp Company Limited covering 24,173 acres in the Swanson Bay area.
- 1904 Wood Pulp Lease issued to Quatsino Power & Pulp Company covering 46,386 acres in the Quatsino area.
- 1905 Wood Pulp Lease issued to Oriental Power & Pulp Company covering 23,489 acres in the Swanson Bay area.
- 1906 Wood Pulp Lease issued to Quatsino Power & Pulp Company covering 8,950 acres in the Quatsino area.
- 1909 Pulp, lumber, and shingle production began at Swanson Bay under Canadian Pacific Sulphite Company. This mill and Port Mellon (owned by other interests) were the first pulp producers in B.C.
- 1912 Production of pulp by British Columbia Sulphite Fibre Company, Limited at Mill Creek, Howe Sound (subsequently called Woodfibre).
- 1917 Whalen Pulp & Paper Mills, Limited incorporated and purchased the assets of the British Columbia Sulphite Fibre Company, Limited and the stock of the Colonial Lumber & Paper Mills, Limited (Port Alice) and Empire Pulp & Paper Mills, Limited (Swanson Bay). These companies then held the pulp leases described previously.
- 1918 First pulp produced at Port Alice.
- 1923 Whalen Pulp & Paper Mills, Limited went into receivership. G. F. Gyles, Manager of Price, Waterhouse Company was appointed Receiver. Subsequently, E.M. Mills of Rayonier Incorporated was appointed Receiver and Gyles, Deputy Receiver.
- 1925 B.C. Pulp & Paper Co. Ltd. was formed, having acquired the assets of Whalen Pulp & Paper Mills, then in receivership. Pulp mills were at Port Alice and Woodfibre, logging operations on the Queen Charlotte Islands and Vancouver Island.
- 1937 Port Alice started manufacturing dissolving pulp.
- 1938 New bleach plant at Woodfibre changed product from unbleached pulp to bleached paper and dissolving pulps.
- 1939 Alaska Pine Co. Ltd. purchased an idle sawmill (International Wood Products) in New Westminster and production commenced.
- 1942 Jones Lake Logging Co. Ltd. incorporated.

- 1943 Universal Lumber & Box Co. Inc. acquired the B.C. Box Company at Marpole.
- 1945 "Head Office" was established in the Marine Building at 355 Burrard Street in Vancouver.
Alaska Pine Company Limited acquired control of Pioneer Timber Company Limited. Northern Timber Co. Ltd. was incorporated by the Koerner brothers. It acquired 20,000 acres of Crown-granted land at Port McNeill, leased the Evans Products Co. sawmill for custom cutting, and commenced production immediately.
Northern Timber Co. Ltd. purchased all the lands and assets of the N.S. McNeil Trading Company Limited (Nippon Soda Company - a Japanese firm).
- 1946 Woodfibre modernization program started (completed in 1948).
Alaska Pine, with Australian interests, incorporated Western Forest Industries Ltd. and purchased Lake Logging & Lumber at Lake Cowichan.
Alaska Pine Company Limited acquired control of Canadian Puget Sound Lumber and Timber Company Limited (River Jordan on Vancouver Island) through the purchase of shares.
- 1947 Empire Machinery Limited was purchased from Empire Manufacturing Company Limited.
- 1948 The sawmill, shingle mill, and power plant of Western Forest Industries were destroyed by fire.
- 1950 The contract covering Management Licence No. 6 was executed.
Abitibi Power & Paper and Koerner interests purchased B.C. Pulp. Combined properties of Alaska Pine and B.C. Pulp merged into Alaska Pine & Cellulose.
- 1951 The transaction merging British Columbia Pulp and Paper Company, Limited with Alaska Pine Company Limited with ownership split between the Koerner interests and Abitibi was closed.
Port Alice modernization plan (first step) completed was an \$8,000,000 expenditure which included a bleach plant, bleach screen room, water supply, and wood plant.
Northern Timber Company Ltd. purchased the Fanny Bay Shingle Mill and Homfray Creek Logging operation from Forest Industries Limited.
A Management License in the Queen Charlotte Islands was approved by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council. Allowable annual cut was 40,000,000 fbm.
Northern Timber Company Ltd. purchased the Tofino logging operation from McQuillan Logging Co. Ltd. Operated for two years and then closed.
- 1953 Alaska Pine Company Limited purchased the Moresby logging operation (formerly known as Morgan's Camp) on Cumshewa Inlet in the Queen Charlotte Islands from Crown Zellerbach Canada Limited.
Alaska Pine & Cellulose Service Inc. (New York) was formed.

- 1954 "Head Offices" moved from several locations in Vancouver and combined in the Alaska Pine Building at 1111 West Georgia Street, Vancouver.
A new logging operation at Mahatta River on Quatsino Sound went into production.
Frazer Bay (a former logging operation of B.C. Pulp and Paper) reopened.
Research Division, Alaska Pine & Cellulose Limited opened adjacent to the Marpole sawmill.
A Management License covering Swanson Bay, Port McNeill, Loughborough Inlet, and Jordan River was approved by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council. Allowable annual cut - 85,000,000 fbm.
Rayonier Inc., N.Y. acquired 80% of Alaska Pine & Cellulose.
- 1955 \$14,000,000 to be spent on Port Alice, increasing production from 220 tons per day to 350 tons per day – new boiler, turbine, two digesters, and a pulp drying machine.
Alaska Pine & Cellulose Service Inc. (New York) was changed to Alaska Pine Lumber Sales, Inc. (New York).
Empire Machinery Limited was sold.
- 1956 Homfray Creek operation closed down.
Alaska Pine Company Limited purchased the assets and timberlands of Northern Timber Co. Ltd. except for one foreshore lease covering the present log dump.
Silvichemical division opened adjacent to the Marpole sawmill.
- 1957 Rayonier purchased the balance of the common stock of Alaska Pine & Cellulose.
- 1958 Completion of a \$14,000,000 expansion and modernization program at Port Alice.
Woodfibre closed down due to poor market conditions and obsolescence.
- 1959 Company name changed to Rayonier Canada Limited.
- 1960 Took over Jeune Landing operation from W.F. Gibson & Sons Ltd.
- 1961 Woodfibre restarted operations as a kraft mill.
- 1965 Woodfibre expansion completed, with a rated capacity of 600 tons per day.
- 1966 New Westminster sawmill division destroyed by fire, except gang mill and office.
Gang mill was reactivated one month after the fire.
- 1967 Option to purchase Silvertree sawmill acquired, which option later exercised.
New planer mill started at New Westminster.
- 1968 Merger of Rayonier Inc. into ITT Rayonier Inc., a subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation.
- 1971 Conversion from calcium base to ammonia base at a cost of more than \$2 million completed at Port Alice.
\$2.5 million Chip-n-saw operation at Woodfibre started production.

- 1972 The ice arena at Port Alice was officially opened by the Hon. Dan Campbell, Minister of Municipal affairs. Minister also announced 20-mile road paving project between Jeune Landing and the Port Hardy - Port McNeill Highway, and a cash donation by the company of \$59,400 to expand the diagnostic centre, making it a 10-bed hospital, to replace the private hospital which opened in 1929.
Walter Koerner, 73, retired from his position as Board Chairman of Rayonier Canada, and as a member of the company's Board of Directors. His retirement ended an association with the organization that began in 1939.
\$2.5 million program to reduce Woodfibre smoke plume announced.
- 1974 Construction begins on \$40 million first stage of water pollution works at Port Alice. Chemical recovery system is scheduled to begin operation in 1976.
Small log mill (scrag mill) placed into service at New Westminster.
Small lumber mill and related timber quotas in Rocky Mountain House, Alberta purchased.
Woodfibre's \$2.9 million air pollution control system begins operation.
- 1975 Installation of \$400,000 mechanical barker, replacing a 25-year-old hydraulic unit at Marpole division was completed in May.
Seed orchard established on 67 acres at Victoria, B.C.
- 1976 Silvichemicals plant shut down because it was no longer economical.



FHABC CHANGE OF ADDRESS

As noted below, our long-time treasurer, Edo Nyland has a new address. Please use it when sending in your membership dues and charitable donations.



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: jvparminster@telus.net

Membership in the association is \$10 yearly, or \$45 for five years. Please send dues to the Treasurer: Edo Nyland, # 102 - 9993 Fourth Street, Sidney BC V8L 2Z6 Phone (250) 656-9276. E-mail: edonon@islandnet.com

The President: Stan Chester, can be reached at 5686 Keith Road, West Vancouver, BC V7W 2N5 Phone (604) 921-9880. E-mail: stanchester@shaw.ca