

TRAILS & TALES

Newsletter of the Forest History Association of Alberta

FHAA holds fourth annual general meeting

The FHAA held its fourth annual general meeting on Tuesday March 18, 2008 at the Coast Edmonton Plaza with twenty-two members in attendance. Janet Millar and Trevor Wakelin from Millar Western Forest Products Ltd. were introduced as guests for the evening. President Arden Rytz opened the meeting by reading a short note from Bob Steele, Director of Forestry from 1962 to 1973, and Deputy Minister of the Departments of Lands and Forests, and Energy and Natural Resources from 1973 to 1979.

In his letter Mr. Steele reminisced about being one of the 'nine' that were hired by Eric Huestis; "The year 1949

was a major one for the AFS when Eric Huestis hired 9 of our 1949 UBC forestry graduating class consisting of Owen Bradwell, Trev Charles, Jim Clark, Vic Heath, John Hogan, Bill Bloomberg, Stan Hughes, Charlie Jackson and Bob Steele."

Steele continued by saying "the year 1949 was also the start of the forest inventory. Four of us were assigned to work with the Photographic Survey Corporation in Toronto who had the contract."

Elections were also held for three executive positions, with Bob Udell, Peter Murphy and Bruce Mayer being

re-elected by acclamation.

Door prizes consisted of history books and CDs and a fleece jacket donated by the College of Alberta Professional Forest Technologists.



Arden Rytz, President, FHAA



Bruce Cartwright, Mark Storie, Jim Maitland, Alaina Maitland, Andy Gesner



Peter Murphy, Tom Grabowski



Terry Zitnak, Gail Tucker, Chris Valaire, Tom Grabowski

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100 years of history - Millar Western Forest Products

Janet Millar, Director Communications and great granddaughter of founder James William (J.W.) Millar, and Trevor Wakelin, Director Fibre Resources joined the evening session to provide an historic look and overview of Millar Western's operations. Millar Western is a family-owned, Canadian group of companies that has been in business for more than a century. In 1906, founder J.W. Millar opened a blacksmith shop in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and was soon involved in logging in the area. By 1919, J.W. and partners had incorporated one of the first construction companies in Western Canada. In the 1920s, he expanded into logging and sawmilling in Whitecourt, Alberta, and in the 1930s, established a sodium sulphate mining and processing operation in Palo, Saskatchewan.

In the 1930s, J.W.'s sons Hugh, Allan and Keith joined the company and, in the decades that followed, oversaw the continued growth and diversification of the family enterprise, with a strong focus on the expansion of its various interests in the construction sector. Grandsons James, MacKenzie and Kenneth came on board in the 1960s and 1970s, preparing to lead the company's next phase of growth.

The 1980s was a period of rapid expansion for the business. In 1981, the lumber, construction and chemical companies were combined to form Millar Western Industries Ltd. Five years later, Millar Western Pulp Ltd. was established and, in 1988, it opened a bleached chemi-thermo-mechanical pulp (BCTMP) mill adjacent to the company's Whitecourt sawmill. The same year, a magnesium sulphate facility was added to the group's Whitecourt operations.

In 1992, Millar Western partnered with the Saskatchewan government to build the world's first successful zero-effluent market pulp mill. The facility was sold in 2007, after years of operation as one of the world's most technologically advanced, environmentally responsible



Janet Millar, Director Communications

Trevor Wakelin, Director Fibre Resources

BCTMP mills.

In 1993, the group expanded its lumber interests by purchasing and upgrading a sawmill in Boyle, Alberta. In 1998, this facility, together with the Whitecourt sawmill and BCTMP mill, were combined to form Millar Western Forest Products Ltd.

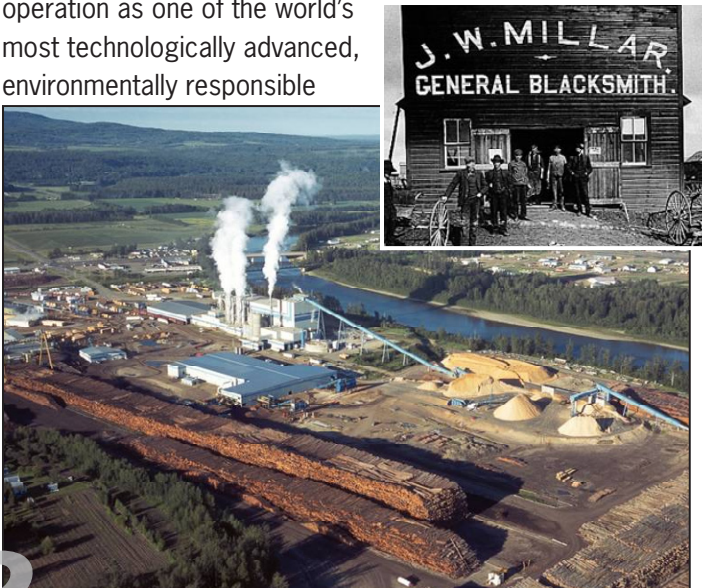
In 2001, Millar Western launched a new sawmill at the Whitecourt site on which it had operated a series of progressively updated sawmills since 1926. The high speed, high-efficiency facility has undergone significant additional investments since it opened, reflecting the company's commitment to keeping its operations current and competitive.

In 2007, the company purchased an Alberta lumber operation previously owned by the Mostowich family. Based in Fox Creek, the newest addition to Millar Western's lumber business is a two-line sawmill complex producing about 45 million board feet per year and bringing the company's total annual lumber production to 480 million board feet. This sawmill unfortunately was destroyed in a fire August 29, 2008.

In recent years, Millar Western has elected to focus on its core lumber and pulp businesses. In 2004, the group wound down its construction interests and, in 2007, sold its sodium sulphate plant in Palo.

Today, the group continues under the direction of Millar family members who, in the spirit of the company's founder, pursue intelligent growth and responsible development within Canada's progressive forest industry.

(Credit: Millar Western Forest Products Ltd. website)



Bob Newstead, Secretary of the FHAA

Bob joined the Forestry Branch of the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources in Prince Albert immediately following graduation. Having completed the two-year Forest Technology program at Lakehead College in 1965, he went on to acquire his BScF from the University of New Brunswick in 1968. After working for five summer seasons with the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, Bob and his wife Joy decided that the west offered “greener pastures” and they have not looked back since.

In 1971, Bob and Joy and their first son moved to Whitehorse, Yukon where Bob was employed as the Staff Forester and subsequently District Superintendent (North). Then, in the fall of 1972, with another son in tow, they moved to Edmonton to join the forest fire research team at the Northern Forestry Centre (NoFC) of the Canadian Forest Service. Working with a dedicated group of fire specialists, Bob’s research responsibilities, for the next decade or so, focused primarily on the roles and effectiveness of fire retardants, airtankers and heli-buckets in fire suppression.

At this point in his career, with a recently acquired MSc and a young daughter on board, Bob accepted a position as Manager of the Technology Transfer and Communications unit at the NoFC. In conjunction with his provincial government counterparts in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta under the aegis of two five-year rounds of federal-provincial forest renewal and development agreements, this period was a heyday of public awareness and extension services, knowledge and technology transfer activities and educational initiatives.

With the culmination of the federal-provincial forestry agreements, it was time to move on again. So, Bob joined Canada’s Model Forest Program as the Regional Coordinator for the prairie region where Model Forests were established in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. As a member of the Boards of Directors of each of these organizations Bob represented the interests of the Government of Canada as the primary funding agency. Upon reflection, this final decade (1992 -2002) was undoubtedly the most rewarding aspect of Bob’s varied career. Working in equal partnership with provincial forest management agencies, academic institutions, aboriginal groups, environmental organizations, forest industries, other municipal, provincial and federal agencies and a host of like-minded people from all walks of life provided endless



Bob Newstead with senior officials of the Forest Police Academy during a demonstration of forest fire fighting skills and equipment, Jagdaqi, northwestern Heilongjiang Province, China, June 1990

opportunities to learn and contribute to that elusive goal of “sustainable forest management”. Bob’s role in the Model Forest Program afforded many opportunities to associate with the other seven Canadian Model Forest organizations and beyond, as the international Model Forest Network evolved.

Bob retired from the Canadian Forest Service in April 2002, but wasn’t quite ready to hang up his hat just yet. He then took a contract position with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development as a Senior Policy Advisor (Science and Technology) until December 2003 before once again looking forward to those “greener pastures” full retirement had to offer.

Although Bob reports that there were innumerable highlights throughout his rewarding career, it was inevitably the people and places encountered that made it all worthwhile. Stints with the

Canadian Institute of Forestry, the College of Alberta Professional Foresters, the Weldwood (Hinton Division) Public Advisory Group, the Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba Forestry Associations as well as on-the-job contacts all contributed to personal and professional fulfillment. Travels throughout Canada (to all three oceans), the United States, China, Scandinavia and Mexico reinforced the belief that we in the forestry community do not, cannot and must not learn and work in isolation of one another. Forest practices and progress are universal in scope and will call for our collective and world-wide vision and innovation if ever the sense of sustainable development is to be achieved.

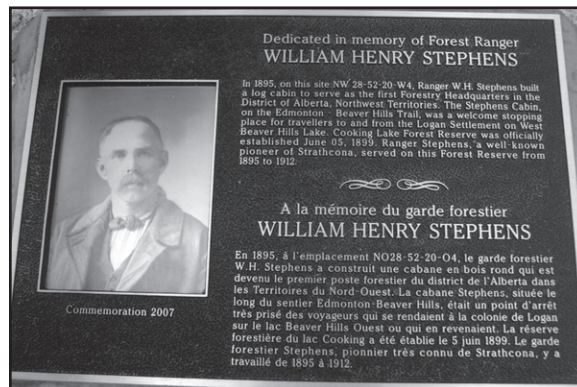
Bob and Joy continue to reside in Sherwood Park surrounded by family and friends. Three beautiful granddaughters and another grandchild on the way (end of November) have added a new and exciting dimension to their “life and times” some 40 years after “moving west”.



Bob Newstead

Dedication ceremony held in honour of Forest Ranger William Stephens

On June 1, 2008, a plaque was unveiled to honour Mr. William Henry Stephens and the first ranger station site in Alberta (1895). Family members representing five generations, along with a group of local dignitaries and numerous friends and people associated with this historic area participated and enjoyed the occasion. From this site, Ranger Stephens brought much needed protection to the area's forests and wildlife. In the past, widespread uncontrolled fires and trespass logging had removed much of the large white spruce and poplar forests east of Edmonton. Through Ranger Stephens efforts, the federal government made Cooking Lake one of Alberta's first Forest Reserves on June 5, 1899.



Plaque unveiled during the commemoration ceremony

In 1906, Ranger Stephens received help from five prominent local residents who each put-up a bond of \$1,000 and petitioned the government to establish a sixteen square mile reserve for 20 elk and 35 mule deer near today's Astotin Lake. This "Elk Park" was

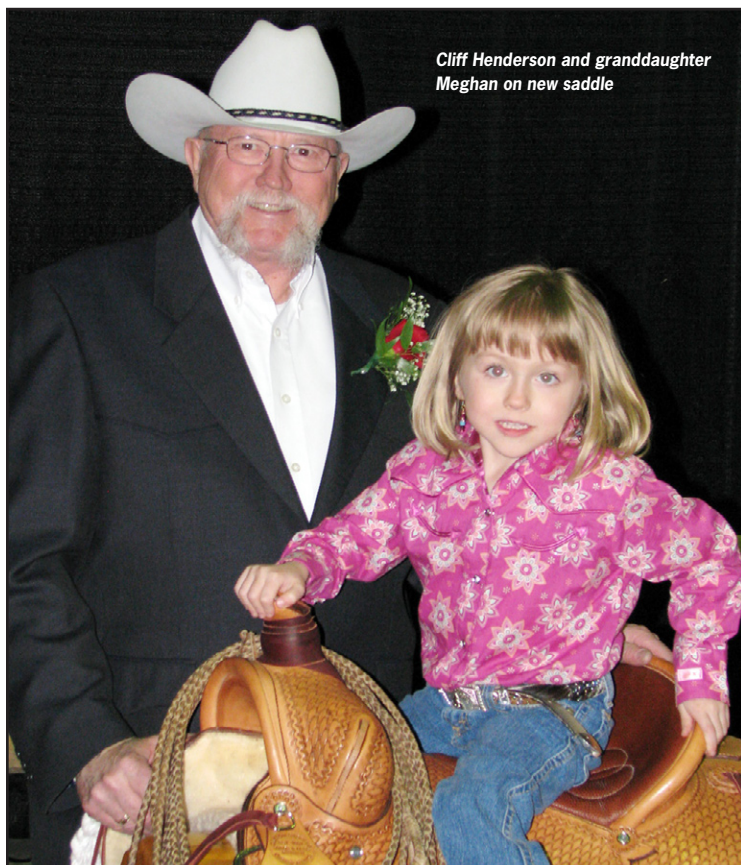
soon fenced and the protected wildlife thrived. In 1907, this park became the new home for the introduction of bison purchased by the Canadian government from a Montana rancher. Shortly after, the elk and bison required more space and in 1913, Elk Island National Park became part of the Dominion Parks system.

The original ranger cabin site is located within Elk Island National Park.

The commemoration was conducted as a partnership between the federal government and the Friends of Blackfoot Society; who are managers with the Alberta government of the Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Grazing, Wildlife Provincial Recreational Area.



Plaque unveiling (L to R) David Quest, MLA; Marilyn Peckett, Superintendent, Elk Island National Park; Mildred Stefiszyn, granddaughter of William Stephens; Cathy Schreiner, Director, Friends of Blackfoot Society; Jim Shewfelt, President, Friends of Blackfoot Society.



Cliff Henderson and granddaughter Meghan on new saddle

Chief Sorrel Horse retires!

On March 8, 2008 close to 400 family and friends came together to wish Cliff Henderson a happy retirement after more than 43 years in forestry with the provincial government.



Prior to retirement Cliff became an Honourary Chief of the Piikani Nation. Chief Reg Crowshoe and Cliff Henderson



Don Fregren, Ken South, Peter Murphy and John Benson at Cliff Henderson's retirement



Peter Murphy, Oliver Glanfield and Florence Glanfield

John Francis Hogan passed away May 31, 2008 at the age of 86. John was raised in the Nelson, B.C. area and graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1949. He was one of the "nine" immediately hired by Eric Huestis, including Bob Steele and Stan Hughes, to fill the forester ranks of the Alberta Forest Service. John was initially assigned to the forest inventory project with the Photographic Surveys Corporation leading forest survey cruise parties down the Wabasca River and in the Fort McMurray area. He also served as Head of the Forestry Training School in Kananaskis from 1953 to 1955, taking over from Victor Heath. He moved to Blairmore in 1956 as Forest Superintendent of the Crowsnest Forest, then returned to Edmonton as Head of the Construction and Maintenance Branch until his transfer to Highways in 1974. He returned to Nelson when he retired in 1978.

Obituaries

Garry Robert Leithead passed away July 12, 2008 at the age of 60 years following a lengthy but strong battle with cancer. Garry was well known to many through his work as a forester and 15 years as the Executive Director of the Alberta Forest Products Association. Although health reasons prompted his decision to leave in 2003, Garry remained active with special projects such as Alberta's softwood lumber trade negotiations. Garry was an Alberta-born and raised forester who trained at the University of Montana in Missoula. After a short time supervising reforestation crews for the Alberta government, he joined Revelstoke Companies as a district forester in Coleman, and later as chief forester based in Calgary. He took over from the helm of the AFPA from Arden Rytz in 1988.

FHAA PHOTO CORNER



Alberta and Parks Canada employees share time with Charlie Van Wagner, the "Father of Canadian Wildfire Science." L to R: Simon Hunt, Lisa Steele, Rob Osiowy, Cliff White, Scott Jevons, Charlie Van Wagner, Bob Mazurik, Dennis Quintilio, Rick Arthur and Ian Pengally

Dr. Charlie Van Wagner was a chemical engineer before taking a degree in forestry at the University of Toronto and joining the Canadian Forestry Service in 1960. He has worked until his retirement at the Petawawa National Forestry Institute on many aspects of forest fire, including fuel moisture, fire behaviour and danger rating, prescribed fire, and fire ecology, with many publications on these subjects to his credit.



Repeat photographs of the Red Deer Ranger Station taken as part of the Mountain Legacy Project. Top photo: 1917. Bottom photo: 90 years later, 2008



Alberta Forest Service Patrol Boat at Peace River, June 14, 1932; Photo courtesy Peace River Centennial Museum



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Please send story ideas to
Bruce Mayer at (780) 644-4656

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