

## Third Time's a Charm

### Vanderhoof Forest District wins 2008 Resource Stewardship Monitoring Award

After being nominated in 2006 and 2007 for the *Chief Forester and ADM of Operations Award for Excellence in Resource Stewardship Monitoring*, Vanderhoof Forest District came out a winner this year when the district received the honour for their work completed during the 2008 field season.

For each of the past three years, a voting panel has convened that selects the forest district that achieves the most significant contribution and highest level of excellence for resource stewardship monitoring under the provincial Forest and Range Evaluation Program (FREP). The panel is comprised of FREP team members including the FREP Program Manager, FREP Quality and Data Management Specialist, and Resource Value Team Leads in addition to three Regional representatives and the Director of Forest Practices Branch. Ten nominations were received this year and all proved to achieve excellence in resource stewardship monitoring.

While the award is a team award given to the district as a whole, the 2008 Stewardship team of Kathleen Hebb, John DeGagne, Derek Lefler and Christine Friedrichsmeier received special recognition for their contributions to the program.

Vanderhoof Forest District is in good company on the unique carved yellow cedar award created by Ahousaht Nation carver George Williams, joining the names of 2006 and 2007 winners Nadina and Haida Gwaii Forest Districts.

Some of the results Vanderhoof achieved in 2008 include:

- consistently collecting data that is among the highest quality in the province;
- enhancing communications about FREP and the monitoring results with other district staff and licensees by providing opportunities for attending training and field trips, developing report summaries, and hosting presentations ; and,
- working with BC Timber Sales, Canfor and a local consultant on an innovative project to relate riparian monitoring data to local watershed characteristics.

A well attended all-staff luncheon was hosted at the Vanderhoof Forest District office, followed by presentations by Chief Forester Jim Snetsinger and Acting Executive Director of Operations, Jim Maxwell (via videoconference). District Manager Bill Thibeault proudly accepted the award on behalf of the district and the Stewardship team.

After lunch, district management, Stewardship and Tenures staff took the Chief Forester out to tour a typical large beetle-salvage block. Discussions were lively and interesting, ranging from the management of riparian and stand-level biodiversity in a large-scale salvage landscape, to using FREP data and results

in the continuous improvement in forest and range management, to the role and responsibilities of forest professionals in the achieving the objectives of FREP.

Being in the heart of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic and in a landscape where large cutblocks are the norm, work days are typically long when carrying out resource stewardship monitoring work. The Vanderhoof FREP team earned their paycheques on one particular cutblock, establishing 35 standing tree plots and coarse woody debris transects over the course of 10 hours and 274 hectares. Another cutblock over 400 hectares in size was selected for fish/riparian monitoring, as well as water quality evaluations at several road crossings.

It may appear that there is little glory for district FREP staff carrying out this work, but there is also no more important work than monitoring the effectiveness of forest management practices during salvage operations the scale of which have never been seen. The responsibility of evaluating and reporting out on how well current forest and range practices are meeting government objectives, encouraging continuous improvement where issues exist, and potentially influencing future policy and regulation is not taken lightly.

For more information on about the Forest and Range Evaluation Program, please go to:  
<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/frep/index.htm>