

# Western Spirit



Produced by Western Forest Products Limited

Volume 2 Issue 1 Summer 2000

## WFP Sponsors More Students to NVIT and Enters into New Co-Sponsorship Scheme



NVIT First Nations Forest Technology Training Program 1999 students, Merritt, BC  
photo: Craig Noordmans

**W**estern Forest Products is very pleased to announce their sponsorship of three new students to the 10-month Technical Resource education program at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) in Merritt, which will begin in September 2000.

The Forest Technician Training Program began in 1997 as a cooperative effort among the BC Ministry of Forests, NVIT, Forest Renewal BC

and the Council of Forest Industries (COFI), who are continuing to work together to increase forestry knowledge and expertise among First Nations communities. The program involves BC forest companies and their neighbouring aboriginal communities jointly sponsoring a First Nations student for one year of Forest Technician training at NVIT. Six months of classroom training is supplemented by a one-on-one mentoring system with their sponsor company and an additional six

months of summer work placement. Courses such as natural resource management, silviculture, technical communications, resource measurements and soils and hydrology are thus combined with opportunities to directly apply knowledge in the workplace.

The Program is maintaining a 90% retention rate, which Craig Noordmans, Program Coordinator,

*continued as NVIT, page 3*

### Western Spirit

**Western Forest Products Limited**

*Western Spirit* is an official newsletter of Western Forest Products Ltd. Content may be reproduced; however, we request that WFP and the author be credited.

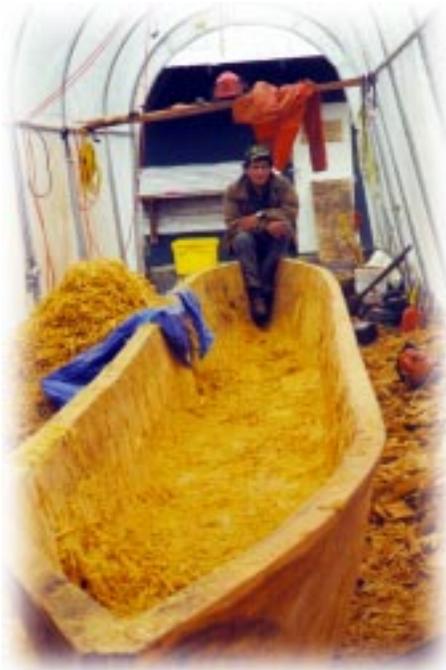
Western Forest Products Limited  
#2300—1111 West Georgia Street  
Vancouver, BC V6E 4M3  
Tel: (604) 665-6200  
Fax: (604) 665-6268  
Website: [www.westernforest.com](http://www.westernforest.com)

Editor: Dan Jepsen  
Editorial Board: Larry Andrews, Bobby Germyn, Ross Neasloss, George Watts  
Editorial & Design: Dianna Bodnar  
Desktop Publishing: CPH Desktop

Printed on recycled stock.  
Please recycle this product.



# Building Espranza's Youth Canoe—the Story in Pictures



Charlie making paddles the "traditional" way

Photo: Larry Andrews

Charlie Mickey, carver, surveys the first stage of work. Made from a log from Bligh Island, the finished product is destined to be a youth canoe, for quest rows and other special functions.

Photo: Larry Andrews



Canoe under tarp to be steamed wider (expanded 9 inches)

Photo: Larry Andrews



Charlie and councillor Tom Smith look at the finished product.

Photo: Larry Andrews



Youth in full sail up Espranza Inlet Photo: Larry Andrews



Youth crew paddling in Espranza Inlet

Photo: Larry Andrews

*NVIT, continued from page 1*

attributes to the one-on-one relationships provided by sponsoring forest companies and districts.

"The success of this program is in large part due to the personal attention that each student receives from their mentor," said Noordmans. "Mentors ensure that the students fit in the structure of the company for a meaningful training experience."

Each forest company that agrees to participate initiates the process of recruiting students. After contacting the over 30 First Nations Bands whose traditional territories they operate within, WFP has confirmed 3 candidates: Ross Neasloss from the

Kitasoo First Nation (who is currently the Kitasoo Forestry Coordinator), Paul Neuman Jr. from the Heiltsuk First Nation, and Georgina Thomas from the Campbell River band.

Dan Jepsen, WFP's Manager of Aboriginal Affairs, is enthusiastic about the new candidates, "We are really pleased with the excellent candidates who have applied for this important career opportunity and wish them every success."

Seats in the program are in such high demand that all 20 positions for the September 2000 course quickly filled, and there are 17 companies on the waiting list to sponsor First Nations students. WFP felt that exploring the opportunities to co-

sponsor a student with another company would alleviate some of the pressure, so they approached Stan Price at Weyerhaeuser to discuss co-sponsoring the Heiltsuk student with WFP. Stan and senior managers within Weyerhaeuser supported the idea of co-sponsorship, so Paul Neuman Jr. will have two company sponsors. Says Jepsen, "We feel that this spirit of cooperation will be positive for Paul, the Heiltsuk, and our two companies. It will also really broaden his work experience options."

Alan Hanuse from the Oweekeno First Nation was WFP's 1999 sponsored student, and is entering the second year of the program in September.

He and his fellow first-year students are recovering from their course work and exams. "We had students from as far away as Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands. While being away from home proved a challenge for some students, they have all risen to the challenge nicely, and we are really proud of them," stated Noordmans. Rhonda Ned, a student from the Upper Nicola Band in Merritt, said that the program "gave me the opportunity to get the education and experience to succeed in the career I really want."

This summer term, a mentor from each sponsoring forest company is working one-on-one with each student to help them apply the knowledge learned in the classroom. On-the-job training began in May and will run through August 2000.

On completion of their 12 months of classroom studies and work experience, the students will be awarded a certificate in forest technology and half of the credits required for a Forestry Technician diploma.

# Planning for your Community Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

by Louanne Wong, Olympic Resource Management

**T**he impending settlement of the land question for many First Nations in British Columbia has focused the need to organize, control, and retain information at the community level.

Modern technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are excellent integrating tools that can be used to support conservation of First Nations heritage, manage the community's resources, and plan the community's future.

Stephanie Henry of Oweekeno Nation's GIS department is one of those working to help manage her community's lands. Acting as a liaison between her community, the government, industry, and various consultants, Henry is working towards finding viable solutions best suited to the Oweekeno's unique needs in forest management. Henry is excited about the possibilities that GIS brings to her community: "It helps us communicate our relationship with the land, as well as help us plan for our future," she says.

## What is a GIS?

A GIS is an information management system that can collect, store, and retrieve information about the earth based on physical location. It can also assist in analyzing and planning our natural and social environment. Using the GIS as a warehouse of information, relationships between objects or events in time can be explored, making sense of the environment that surrounds us.

A GIS can also help us find out about what the environment may be like given certain conditions, an analysis technique known as "modeling." Using these methods, a GIS can provide the "big picture" to support decision-making for the intelligent use of natural resources and to manage the human-made environment.

## What does a GIS look like?

Most often, a GIS presents information in the form of maps and symbols. A map is useful to help readers visualize:

- where things are located
- what kinds of things are near certain places
- how these objects can be best reached by means of transportation.

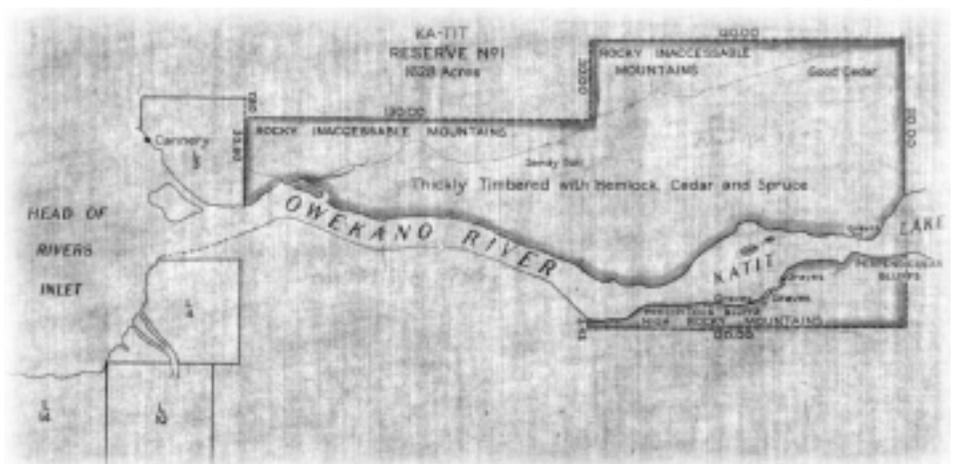
The way a GIS presents, displays, and analyzes data is flexible. It can reflect a user's unique interests and can be adapted to transfer information to readers.

## What can a GIS do?

Just as a filing cabinet stores files, a GIS stores "layers" of information that can be combined and cross-referenced to find answers to "what?", "where?" and "what if?" questions. But unlike a filing cabinet, the GIS can do thousands of these comparisons and cross-references in a minute.

A GIS can view the world in different time frames: we can look at our past, present and future through windows which we can define and change. Communities can archive their traditions and collective histories by adopting and adapting this technology as a tool. A GIS can view the landscape over time and simulate outcomes for environmental and land use concerns, reflecting the specific criteria a community develops. By combining information about culture, resources and other concerns over time, a GIS will help to forecast potential outcomes, support sustainable planning at the community and management level, and identify potential conflicts.

*continued as GIS on page 12*



Oweekeno Nation's Katit IR#1, drawn by E.M. Skinner in 1889-1890

# Living Heritage—Elder Violet Neasloss, Master Weaver

by Dan Jepsen, WFP Manager Aboriginal Affairs and Environment

I'm the proud owner of over 20 hand-made red cedar baskets made by one of the last traditional Kitasoo basket weavers: Violet Neasloss, a Kitasoo Elder from Klemtu, BC. Klemtu is about 125 kilometres due west from Bella Coola, on the outer coast of BC. On my travels as WFP's Manager of Aboriginal Affairs over the past few years, I have had the pleasure of many visits with Violet, and of hearing her stories about the past.

Violet bubbles with enthusiasm when she talks of her lifelong passion of traditional basket-weaving. She was born in Klemtu in 1914. At the turn of the century, the village had about 150 people; the population is now about 500. Violet clearly recalls that when she was a child, there were no lights or running water, so she and her family washed clothes by hand. Her grandparents told her of the early Hudson's Bay steamships that visited the village and brought in vital supplies from the city.

Although these early days in Klemtu were very labour-intensive, the community had a strong spirit and determination to work hard together to provide the many necessities of life. Violet remembers in vivid detail the regular "work parties" each season to gather and process the

traditional foods required for survival in such an isolated community. Life was truly tied to the seasons, with villagers depending on the land, the water and each other. But the hard work required to live off the land



Violet Neasloss with a variety of her handmade baskets

has been the source of Violet's best-loved memories: "We gathered all the best food and processed it for the cold winter months. There was the herring roe, seaweed, cod and salmon seasons—we worked together to gather and prepare the foods. Our people worked together in harmony." Families often had specialties; Violet takes great pride in her skill at smoking fish.

School was taught by local white women, but schoolbooks were only provided for the children until grade 6. I asked Violet what they did for books after that, and she said, "You just used the same books over and

over again!" She had the opportunity to continue schooling at the Port Alberni residential school, but recalls it was just too far away from home and it would take her away from her home and family for too long. Other than those periods, Violet has spent her whole life in Klemtu; the longest she was away was one month for an eye operation. She started work in the Kitasoo Fish Cannery in 1933 and worked there until it closed in the 70s. She also married in 1933, over the years adopting 4 children. Violet now has 14 grandchildren. Her husband passed away in 1990.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Violet's life has been her rich knowledge and expertise in her language and culture. She speaks three languages: English, and the Kitasoo and Heiltsuk dialects. There are less than 20 people who can speak the Kitasoo language any

longer. It appears that it will disappear over the next few years—truly a terrible cultural loss.

Sadly, it also seems that the traditional Kitasoo art of basket-weaving may meet the same fate. Violet started weaving in 1932, teaching herself by watching the village elders. Her passion for weaving has stayed strong for almost 80 years.

Violet says the prime time for gathering the cedar bark is in the spring, when the sap is running. She misses collecting the bark herself, but finds

*continued as Living Heritage, page 13*

# “Tree of Life” Sparks New Vitality to Kwakiutl Community

by Mike DesRochers, RPF, Assistant Forester, Port McNeill Forest Operation

**W**hat started out as a retirement hobby has bloomed into a vibrant business for Gloria and Foster Roze. Looking for something to keep them busy, they purchased equipment from a failed cedar oil extraction business. But true to its name, their Tree of Life Essential Oil company has flourished far beyond its origins. Within two seasons of operating, they've recovered their start-up costs (approximately \$50,000), employed local people, and diversified from producing high-quality cedar oil into products including cedar mulch, soaps and candles. All bough collection and oil production takes place on Kwakiutl First Nation traditional territory on the Fort Rupert Reserve, within WFP's TFL 6 in the Port McNeill area of the North Vancouver Island Region.

One of the most satisfying outcomes is how many others Foster and Gloria have been able to involve in their venture. They have employed 10 people from the Kwakiutl First Nation over the past two seasons, including Napoleon Edwards, Wayne “Chamooga” Cook Jr. (student), Maggie Hunt (student), Abraham Sheena, Sidney Sheena, Josh Dawson, Donovan Hunt, and Ed White. They have also created a number of indirect jobs for local craftspeople.

Essential oils are concentrated aromatic oils found in plant leaves, flowers, seeds, bark, roots, and the rinds of some fruits. They are used as bonding agents and preservatives

in a wide variety of products, from soaps and candles to pharmaceuticals and insecticides.

To produce the cedar oil, Tree of Life staff carefully prune Western Red Cedar boughs from living trees along roadsides in 10–20 year-old stands. Trees selected are at least 4m tall, and are pruned so that no more than the lower 1/3 of their live foliage is removed. This ensures that the branches can be harvested again within four to five years. The boughs are then delivered via 1-ton stake truck to the manufacturing site, where they are chipped and loaded into a hopper. Because the essential oil starts to evaporate as soon as the branches are cut, staff tries to process them within 24–36 hours. Steam is forced through the chipped boughs, condensed, and collected in a skimming barrel. The finished process usually yields 150 litres of fluid, from which only a few litres of oil are produced. Used chips find their way to village gardens as bark mulch.

In the 1999 season, Tree of Life produced 6 barrels (1,200 litres) using 132 tons of cedar boughs. In two seasons of operation, they have sold 5 barrels of oil to brokers in New York, New Jersey, and Montreal at prices ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000 per barrel. Their website ([www.treeoflife.bc.ca](http://www.treeoflife.bc.ca)) has even attracted interested buyers from Japan. Sales of spin-off products include several truckloads of cedar mulch to the local school board, local businesses, the Town of Port Hardy, and private individuals. Candles and soaps made from cedar oil are also

sold in two local craft stores. In the face of such financial success, some might be tempted to forgo shutting down for the winter. But Foster and Gloria have their priorities clear,



Gloria and Foster Roze with “Tree of Life” (Western Red Cedar) carving on door by David Hunt Photo: Mike DesRochers

demonstrated by their philosophy of combining environmental responsibility and cultural values with modern business practices: “Tree of Life Essential Oil is not only about economic development; it is also about respect for ourselves and Mother Earth, job creation, pride and humility, and value-added processing. It means sharing, and most importantly, it means being environmentally responsible. With these values in mind, we are taking responsibility to control our destiny in a manner consistent with the teachings of the Ancestors.”

And as Foster says, “This is supposed to be my retirement hobby. Besides . . . it's raining!”

# Oktwanch Spawning Channel Open After Completion of 4-Year Project

**A** blessing ceremony performed last November by cultural leaders from the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation marked the successful completion of a 4-year project to complete a new spawning channel near Gold River. Located at the mouth of Oktwanch River where it empties into Muchalaht Lake, this innovative groundwater-fed channel is giving new life to those Muchalaht Lake salmon populations that use the Oktwanch River for spawning and rearing habitat.

"This project will finally allow the Muchalaht Lake sockeye, coho, and chinook stock to rebuild," said Bill Dumont, Chief Forester for WFP. "While the salmon have years of recovery ahead of them, we are one very important step closer to returning stable spawning and rearing habitats to the watershed."

Then \$300,000 spawning channel was a WFP project, supported with Forest Renewal BC funding, started four years ago when the potential renewal of the Oktwanch River fish habitat was first examined. The project was initiated by Canfor, then reassigned to WFP.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Forest Renewal BC had recognized that the river's fish habitat would benefit from a restoration project. However, further study showed that due to increased peak flows, reduced woody debris, and accelerated sediment delivery, the river would be unable to support large-scale salmon spawning for some time.

Fisheries biologists from Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council determined that a solution to saving the runs rested in enlarging a small side channel to the west of the main river. This newly-enlarged channel, converted to a groundwater-fed system, provides stable spawning and rearing areas that are protected from the changing dynamics of the river.

Site work began during the spring of 1998, and was completed in August 1999. In total, 28 people worked on the project, including contractors, members of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the BC Ministry of Lands, Environment and Parks, and WFP staff.

The 1.4 km-long spawning channel incorporates the newest fish habitat management techniques and research and mimics a natural stream by providing calm rearing areas for fry, log and root tangles where fish can hide from predators, and graveled areas for spawning. Ferns, salmon berry, maple, and alder will provide coverage on the banks and assist with restricting access to the stream by large animals and people. A long, raised berm protects the channel from the nearby river.

Other fish habitat improvements proposed for the Oktwanch River include gravel bar stabilization, another spawning channel project on the opposite valley wall, force pools, and large woody debris cover in the main river. It is expected that the river's main fish spawning and rearing zones will gradually recover.

The Oktwanch channel will be used primarily by sockeye, coho and chinook salmon, and may also assist cutthroat trout and Dolly Varden char. *Oktwanch* comes from the Nuu-chah-nulth word *Okwasht*, which means "smoking salmon."

Forest Renewal BC chair Roger Stanyer points out that since 1994, Forest Renewal has invested almost \$350 million to restore watersheds across BC. "Assessments have been completed in 860 watersheds. Restoration efforts have been completed in 150 watersheds, and some restoration has been done in 320 watersheds. This significant restoration effort is generating employment in local communities, supporting water quality, and protecting fish species."



Totem pole carved from log donated by WFP by Johnathan Henderson and Sean Whonnock, the first to be raised in Victoria's Thunderbird Park for over 40 years.

Photo: Heather Brown

# Kitasoo Government House

by Dan Jepsen, WFP Manager Aboriginal Affairs and Environment

**O**n June 2, 2000, a wonderfully bright and sunny day to match the spirits of all present, the Kitasoo First Nation hosted a major celebration to mark the historic opening of the new Kitasoo Government House in Klemtu, BC. Klemtu is the main village for the Kitasoo people, located about 200 kilometers southeast of Prince Rupert.

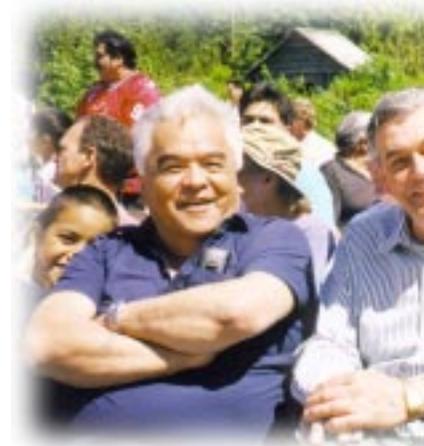
The old Kitasoo office was located in an old home behind the church in the village, and was too small and confined for the numerous band operations to work effectively and efficiently. Band Manager Percy Starr and the Kitasoo Councils over the past few years looked at various options to construct a new office building in the village. However, due to the high cost of new construction and the tight restraints on capital, they determined that the construction of a new office large enough to fill their needs was going to be virtually impossible. They decided to look at options that would reduce the costs, yet provide the village with a new office building.

As part of their review process, the councils considered the old Kitasoo School. It hadn't been used for years and was in a state of major disrepair. Ben Robinson, Kitasoo Councilor, remembers that "when we first looked at the building, it was hard to see the potential. However, after careful review with the community carpenter, we determined that there was potential, the foundation was solid, there was enough inside space with only minor construction, and the main structural integrity of the building was sound." The Kitasoo Council decided to contact a number of businesses that the band deals with to explore potential partnerships to undertake the major renovation required. WFP was one of these. "We are pleased that Western Forest Products had the foresight to see the opportunity to play a role in the re-construction of the building," said Starr.

The new office is over 5,000 square feet, and includes two boardrooms, a reception area, a 2-bedroom self-contained suite, and 6 offices.



Kitasoo Hereditary Chiefs



l to r: Band Administrator Percy Starr, WFP and Area Manager Corby Lamb



Kitasoo Dummers; Raven Drum left and Black Fish Drum on right



l to r: Master Carver Robert Starr, WFP and Kitasoo Hereditary Chief



Kitasoo Dummers warming up

# Opens to Sun and Celebrations



WFP Vice President Vic Woods,



Cutting the handmade cedar bark ribbon! Vic Woods, WFP Vice President and Kitasoo Elder and Master Weaver Violet Neasloss

Thinking of the future, the band made the additional effort to renovate the basement area, which includes an additional 1,000 square feet of finished space. Currently this space is being used for important treaty-mapping functions, and has also been used by the auditors, since it provides an excellent space to spread out the audit materials.

Thanks to Haisla Master Carver Robert Stewart, Kitasoo Government House is as beautiful as it is useful. Stewart carved the two totems that grace its entrance, which feature the four main Kitasoo family clans: the Black Fish, Raven, Eagle, and Wolf Clans.



Robert Stewart and Archie Robinson



Kitasoo Youth Dancers

At the June opening, over 150 community members came out to enjoy the traditional dancing, which included the Kitasoo welcome song and the dance of the four clans. Vic Woods, WFP's Vice President, was very honoured to be asked by the Kitasoo Elders to cut the cedar bark opening ribbon along with Kitasoo Elder Violet Neasloss. During the opening speeches, Band Manager Starr reflected on the history that led to the construction of the fine new office. He said, "I wish to acknowledge the efforts here today that were made by our previous Elders and Chiefs who are no longer with us. Hereditary Chief Tommy Brown made major efforts starting 30–40 years ago to establish better relationships with the outside business world to enable breaking the bond with government. We have a beautiful relationship with WFP—and this relationship has provided the creation of this new office." Percy went on to say, "I wish to thank Victor and his staff for working with us towards a common future."



Opening Dance

The Kitasoo people presented Woods with a beautiful framed photo of the "stew", one of the only remaining First Nations longhouses on the coast that still has the roof beams in place. The building is thought to date at least back to the early 1800s. Woods in turn presented Chief Gary Hall with a carved mural by Robert Stewart depicting the four Kitasoo clans.

# Partnering with Native Communities an Important Part of WFP's Mandate

by John Copley, adapted from *Western Native News* Vol 13, No. 2, June 2000

**J**oint partnerships, shared ventures and successful capital investment strategies have been making a positive difference for Canada's leading non-Native business fraternities, and for the many Aboriginal communities that have decided to open negotiations and develop sustainable partnerships with them.

British Columbia-based Western Forest Products Limited (WFP) is an example of one of the many organizations whose successful partnering in Aboriginal communities has helped to increase and enhance economic opportunities, employment and education.

In business on the BC coast since 1858, WFP and its predecessor companies have evolved from a small lumber mill, initially located on the mouth of the Shawnigan River, to become one of the province's leading forest companies. Currently managing more than 850,000 hectares of coastal forest in British Columbia, including public and private lands, WFP's operations are located on Vancouver Island, the central coast and Queen Charlotte Islands, and cover more than 30 traditional territories.

The company has always had a keen interest and a strong commitment to working with First Nations communities, but, says WFP Aboriginal Affairs and Environment Manager Dan Jepsen, "over the past few years there's been a substantial increase

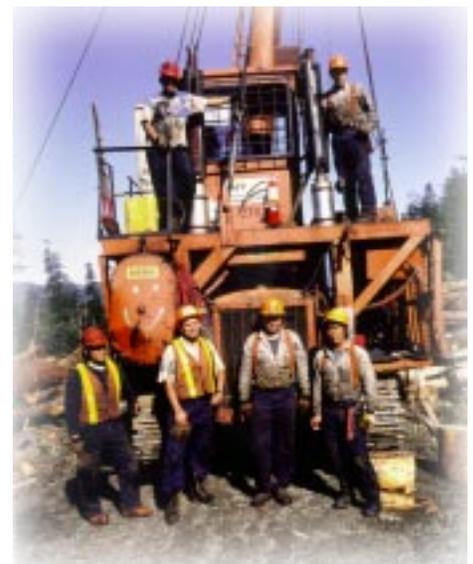
in the need to look at better ways of communicating and engaging with local (Native) communities." In a recent interview with *Western Native News*, Mr. Jepsen said the quarterly publication was developed as a "communication medium for First Nations communities whose traditional territories we operate within."

Building on the experience WFP has gained in working with First Nations in developing successful joint business ventures, the company is currently working with a number of First Nation community leaders and the Ministry of Forests on additional forestry-related business development and employment ventures. "These business development opportunities," explained Jepsen, "include a diverse range of partnership opportunities such as additional employment in surveying, assessing fish habitats, taking wildlife inventories, road construction and maintenance, harvesting, and the full range of silviculture activities."

Western Forest Product's tenures are within the traditional territories of over 30 First Nations communities throughout coastal BC. These areas overlap one another throughout the region, but WFP-initiated programs to involve the Native communities and their citizens have proven to be of benefit to everyone.

"The company and the communities have all benefited from First Nations participation," assured Jepsen. "We believe that meaningful involvement and inclusion of First Nations is integral to the economic stability

of the communities in which we operate." First Nations communities who have participated in archeological surveys, silviculture projects, forestry and numerous other ventures with WFP are too numerous to mention here, but do include the Quatsino, Ehattshaht, Haida, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo, Kwakiutl, Mowachaht, Oweekeno, Nuxalt, Squamish, Campbell River, and Tlatlasikwala Nations. One of the most successful economic development, employment and skills-learning ventures has been the WFP and Heiltsuk First Nation logging crew that began training back in 1995. "It is truly a success story," emphasized Jepsen. "That crew is producing over 30,000 cubic metres of wood per year. At a recent meeting between the Heiltsuk Forestry Committee, senior WFP staff and the logging crew, it was decided to look for additional opportunities to access wood for the crew this year."



Heiltsuk loggers, Yeo Island  
Photo: Patrick Armstrong

# ISO 14001 Certificates Awarded—Well Done All!



Peter Johnson, Lead Auditor of Quality Management Institute, and WFP VP Vic Woods present ISO 14001 certificate to Band Manager Helen Wallace, Quatsino Band

Photo: Sandy Lavigne

The combination of a positive working relationship and some quick thinking on the part of WFP forestry staff at the Zeballos Forst Operations was responsible for the creation of “a very interesting and successful project with the Ehattshaht Band to plant 25,000 trees and hand-fertilize a 33-hectare plantation,” explained Jepsen. “We heard about an opportunity to purchase fertilizer that had been salvaged after a truck flipped over. A small amount of dirt was mixed in with the fertilizer, making it unsuitable for resale. Operations Forester Doug Folkins recognized an opportunity to enhance growth in a critical area and provide an opportunity for the Ehattshaht community to gain employment in a very unique trial.”

Folkins said that “the Ehattshaht crew worked very hard on this often physical and challenging job. We expect very positive boosts in the growth of these trees.”

Numerous other First Nations planters have also been working hard with WFP and its contractors during this year’s spring planting season. Crews have planted more than 350,000 trees. “WFP First Nations silviculture crews commenced work in early February and are currently involved in numerous projects throughout WFP’s operations,” added Jepsen.

One example of WFP’s newer projects is the continuing work with the Kitsoo Nation near Princess Royal

Island. The Kitsoo, whose main community comprises the village of Klemtu, are currently consulting with WFP on current and planned development within their traditional territory. Joint forest resources initiatives and training and employment opportunities are among the topics being discussed. Training and employment initiatives include stream classification, assessment and cleaning, archaeological assessments, technical training in resource management, silviculture, reforestation, harvesting, and road construction.

Another example on the long list of successful WFP/First Nations partnerships involves the 1600-plus membership of the Heiltsuk Nation of Bella Bella. WFP is working with the Heiltsuk on a number of projects, including one which has already trained more than 20 band members in forest harvesting practices on Yeo Island. Other WFP/Heiltsuk projects include training in road construction, silviculture, stream classification, and harvesting. Silviculture employment has been established on both Campbell and Yeo Islands. Other initiatives include employment in archeological inventory, biodiversity, and wildlife studies.

“It’s an exciting time for WFP and the Aboriginal communities we serve,” closed Jepsen. “It is also a busy time; there are many positive initiatives currently being discussed and carried out with First Nations communities and there is bound to be many more on the horizon.”



# Baring the Facts about BC's Mysterious Kermodes

**G**host bear. Mythical spirit. *Ursus americanus kermodei*. The kermode bear is all these things and more. White in colour, similar to their counterparts in Arctic regions, BC's kermodes are found on the North Coast, concentrated in a few areas such as Princess Royal Island in the traditional territory of the Kitsoo and Hartley Bay Bands.

With land and resource planning underway in the area, more information about the mysterious "ghost bear" is crucial to its effective management. A study funded through a multi-year agreement between Forest Renewal BC and Western Forest Products is focusing on determining the exact range of the bear, and identifying the genetic mechanism accounting for their distinctive colour.

Biologist Helen Davis explains the process: "Our crews first had to locate the best sampling areas, string hair snares across bear trails

leading to salmon spawning streams, and then return every two to three days to collect hair samples." The "hair snares" are lengths of barbed wire baited with spawned-out salmon or salmon roe. Each clump of bear hair snagged on a barb is considered to be an individual sample.

With the help of Kitsoo workers, crews have collected more than 2,000 hair samples. These are placed in a paper envelope and given DNA identification numbers, then sent to the UBC Faculty of Forests genetics lab. The DNA analysis then done at the lab could identify factors like the interchange between breeding pairs, or the frequency of white kermode bear births.

"Western Forest Products is supporting this project because we make a lot of decisions around forest-planning on the North Coast," said WFP's Chief Forester Bill Dumont. "We have to learn a lot more about the bears' genetics to ensure our plans include the needs of the kermode."

According to Tony Hamilton, research biologist with the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks' wildlife branch in Victoria, little is known about the genetics of the white coat colourations. "While several explanations have been put forward, we still lack a definitive understanding of why some black bears are white, and why some areas seem to have a higher frequency of white individuals," said Hamilton.

At WFP's Roderick Island operation, a black mother was observed in 1998 with three cubs, one white and two

black. Pooley Island also has a white mother, with two black bear cubs.

Until biologists and foresters gain a better understanding of this mysterious mammal, appropriate conservation measures are largely speculative.



*GIS, continued from page 4*

## Who is using GIS?

Many First Nations have taken advantage of GIS as a technology to archive their past and to prepare for their future. GIS systems today are being used to assist in resolving land questions, and to manage a Nation's territory and forested lands. They provide a way to monitor information such as resource inventories and culturally-modified trees and also to quantify this data for value, quality, and area.

Historical information can be archived in a GIS, such as the sketch on page 4 of Oweekeno Nation's Katit IR#1 drawn and surveyed by E.M. Skinner in 1889-1890

## Find out more!

GIS is a wonderful educational tool that can be used at primary to advanced levels to learn more about the world around us. There is a wealth of information about the software, data, and the technology available free on the World Wide Web.

If you would like to find out more about the GIS for your community, contact Louanne Wong, Olympic Resource Management (Tel: 604-806-3700, Fax: 604-806-3701, Email: lwong@ormcanada.com). The Oweekeno Nation GIS department can be contacted through Stephanie Henry (Tel: 250-949-8625, Fax: 250-949-7105, Email: shenry@island.net).



Kermode bear

# The Devil's Club— Strong Medicine

by Kahlee Keane, Save Our Species

**D**evil's Club (*Oplopanax horridum*) is a plant unique to the west coast of North America, being found in the dense coastal forests from Northern California to Alaska. Often reaching ten feet in height, with its oversized leaves gathering the dappled sunlight, a mature colony of Devil's Club is almost tropical in appearance. The whole plant, including the maple-like leaves, is armed with a multitude of large yellow spines. Gracefully swaying in the forest breezes, it is indeed formidable as well as beautiful.

For the past several years, a research team at the University of British Columbia has been analyzing the chemical constituents of the root and stem bark of Devil's Club. They are attempting to determine the source of the medicinal qualities associated with its traditional use by native coastal groups. It is evident that the data supports its use as a treatment for various respiratory complaints as well as other conditions.

For centuries, northwest coast native groups have prepared a tea from the root and stem bark to treat a variety of lung problems, including tuberculosis. The tea was also used to treat adult-onset diabetes. Like other members of the ginseng family, the root of Devil's Club was made into a tonic to increase stamina and to help strengthen the body after a long illness. It was also used effectively on the skin to treat burns, sores and swollen glands.



Due to the anti-viral and anti-bacterial compounds found in the bark of its roots and stems, Devil's Club is becoming of interest to European, Asian and North American manufacturers of herbal formulas. As a result, commercial harvesters are increasing the pressure on the plant colonies of the coast; so much so, that it has all but been eradicated in parts of the north-western US.

Nancy Turner, an ethnobotanist at the University of Victoria, told me recently, "most people 'prune' the Devil's Club branches from the mother stalk, then leave the plant to recover and regenerate for a few years before harvesting again. This is done in a lot of traditional medicine harvesting."

It is my belief that it is up to those people who understand the ways of the plants to point out these precautionary measures to commercial harvesters and loggers. In this way, we will be assured of a sustainable harvest and future medicine from this sacred traditional plant.

*Living Heritage, continued from page 5*

that with her failing eyesight, it just isn't practical to go out into the woods anymore. Friends and family now collect bark for her. The best comes from young cedar trees with small diameter and relatively thin bark. The traditional Kitasoo gathering method requires that the bark only be removed from one side of the tree, to ensure the tree will not be permanently damaged. If you are skilled in bark collecting, you can get bark strips of over 30 feet long.

Depending on the size and design of the basket, weaving can take anywhere from one to three days. Violet showed me a unique basket she made in the 1940s that she still uses for clam and seaweed gathering. Although it was in need of some repair, it was amazing to see a basket almost 60 years old that was still being used in a traditional way.

**"The best bark comes from young cedar trees with small diameter and relatively thin bark"**

Violet's only disappointment is that since young children are not interested to learn traditional skills like basket weaving, the cultural art is destined to be lost: "The children of today are too preoccupied with television to take an interest in the traditional ways."

But positive as always, Violet smiles and says, "Life has been very good for me in Klemtu." As I left her cozy home, I saw her going back to her kitchen to finish baking bread.



# Restoring Old Growth Properties along the Keogh

by Mike DesRochers, RPF, Assistant Forester, Port McNeill Forest Operation

**D**uring the 1940s and 50s, commercial logging practices often included the removal of timber adjacent to streams. Portions of the Keogh River on North Vancouver Island were treated in this manner when they were logged 50 years ago. Many of the riparian areas along the Keogh are now restocked with relatively dense (3,000–4,000 sph), uniform conifer regen, or have reverted to early seral alder-dominated stands. This project was implemented to restore and accelerate old-growth properties along sections of the Keogh River. All riparian silviculture



Wally Bernard doing alder girdling in conifer release area  
Photo: Mike DesRochers

work took place along the Keogh in the vicinity of West 100, on Kwakiutl First Nation traditional territory within WFP's TFL 6 in the Port McNeill area of North Vancouver Island.

Treatments performed included large alder release, conifer release from alder competition, the thinning of dense conifer stands, the immediate and gradual introduction of large woody debris into the river system to complement existing instream structures, and the creation of wildlife habitat.

Work crews on this project were made up of people from the Kwakiutl, the Quatsino (J&T Silviculture Ltd.) and the Sechelt (SIBFOR Forestry Inc.) First Nations. These crews performed a wide range of riparian silviculture: alder girdling, conifer girdling, conifer spacing, tree topping and a variety of habitat "starts" for bats, birds, small mammals and amphibians.

This type of silviculture was a departure from normal enhanced forestry in that uniform spacing and densities were abandoned in favour of irregular treatments that would more resemble old-growth characteristics. The crews questioned the treatment techniques, but soon understood the purpose of this "bad" spacing and girdling, and how these treatments would have immediate impacts on the riparian ecosystem along the Keogh.

*continued as Restoring, page 16*



Arthur Timothy tree-planting on Roderick Island  
Photo: Jeff Brown

## Kitasoo Crew Braves the Elements for a Third Silviculture Season

by Jeff Brown and Han Van Vugt, WFP contract supervisors

**F**or the third consecutive season, the Kitasoo Silviculture Crew from Klemtu has been busy planting trees at WFP's Roderick Island Operations. Every spring brings excitement and anticipation for many in this remote community of BC's coastal north. Silviculture work brings the Kitasoo

*continued as Kitasoo Crew, page 16*



Second-lift pruning at Port McNeill operation  
Photo: Jim Johnson

# Pruning Project at Port McNeill

by Amy Beetham, Assistant Forester, WFP Port McNeill Forest Operation

**T**his March in the Port McNeill Forest Operation of TFL 6, we had J&T Silviculture Ltd. complete an 11.1-hectare second-lift pruning project. J&T primarily employs Kwakiutl First Nations band members from Fort Rupert and Quatsino First Nations band members from Coal Harbour.

*continued as Pruning, page 16*

# Sentry Branches out into Silviculture

by Doug Folkins, RPF, Operations Forester, Zeballos Forest Operation

**S**entry Forestry have been working in the Zeballos Forest Operation for over five years, and have a good deal of experience with spacing, pruning, creek cleaning and pile burning. In efforts to find sustained employment opportunities, WFP and Sentry are working to find new activities to fill the slow periods of the year.

One of these is a manual fertilization silviculture project in TFL 19, in Ehattesaht Band territory. This project provided Sentry with new experience and employment while spacing areas are snowed-out. Objectives were to enhance crop tree

growth in order to achieve greenup at an earlier date, and to realize the benefits of increased growth and site productivity. (The harvest of two low-elevation conventional blocks are delayed until the treated stand is three metres high.)

Altogether, the crew treated about 35 hectares. Crew members Lloyd Billy, Marleen Billy, Steve Frenchie, Alfred Frenchie, Jeremy John, and Lyle Billy Jr., from the Ehattesaht Band, finished up in May. As Alfred Frenchie said, "It's a good job. It gets a bit boring, but it's a good job." Added Lloyd Billy, Sentry's owner, "Things are going well. It's the first time we've done fertilization, but the crew is learning quickly." WFP personnel other than myself was Dave Friars.



Marleen Billy, Ehattesaht manual fertilization project

Photo: Lloyd Billy

crew an opportunity to work outside the village, get into good physical shape, and accumulate some well-deserved cash. As last year, contract supervisor Han Van Vugt led the crew: Aubrey Brown, Greg Brown, Mitch Duncan, Jack Robinson, Darryl Robinson, Tammy Robinson and Arthur Timothy.

The crew began each day with a thirty-minute navigation of Finlayson Channel in their boat, the *Sx ay a lakv* (Griffin Pass). The weather threw many obstacles their way: high winds, high seas, snow, rain and hail. Yet together they planted more than 20 thousand trees, including Western Red Cedar, Cypress, Balsam and Sitka Spruce species. In addition, the crew completed minor maintenance to the tree cones covering the Western Red Cedar, which protect the seedlings from deer browsing.

The Kitasoo crew were scheduled to complete additional planting on Roderick Island with WFP, ensuring that future forest growth is maintained and can be enjoyed by generations yet to come.

# Western Spirit

Western Spirit is a publication produced by Western Forest Products for First Nations Communities, WFP staff, employees and contractors

Note: The views expressed in *Western Spirit* are not necessarily the views of Western Forest Products Limited, its staff, employees and contractors.

Personnel involved in the project were

- Kwakiutl First Nation (J&T Silviculture): Walter Johnson, Wally Bernard, Keith Hunt, James Nelson, Richard Williams, Mark Hunt
- Quatsino First Nation (J&T Silviculture): Mark Wallace
- Sechelt First Nation (SIBOR Forestry), Steve Macleod, Dennis Fenton, Bob Toth
- WFP: Eric Gagne, Mike DesRochers, Amy Beetham, and Dan Hayward (co-op student)
- Other: Vince Poulin (Poulin and Associates), Bart Simmons (Quillicum Forestry Services), Tim Brown (Frontier Tree Services).

The Douglas-fir dominated stand was originally pruned to 2.0 metres; second-lift pruning took the lift height to 5.5 metres. This project was challenging due to areas of steep and brushy ground in the block, but quality was high.

The project employed a crew of eight over a three-week period. At start-up, they were Jonathon Jacobson, David Louis, Jim Johnson, Shaun Johnson, Richard Williams, Mark Hunt, Keith Hunt and Dale Scow. As FRBC year-end loomed, some additional pruners came onto the project, including Wallace Bernard, Walter Johnson Jr., Leonard Nelson, Robert Paul, Glen Robertson, and Mark Wallas.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Dan,

Thank you for putting me on your mailing list for *Western Spirit*. I was very pleased to receive the two extra issues. I am very impressed to see that Bill Dumont and Western Forest Products Ltd. have established a good relationship with the First Nations people, as this paves the way to a healthy future. The decisions we make today determine the course of our future. *Western Spirit* has taken an important step in the right direction.

Sincerely,

Mike Leclerc, M.Sc.P., M. Sc. F.  
Silviculture Forester  
Small Business Forest Enterprise Program (SBFEP)  
Ministry of Forests,  
Queen Charlotte District

Dear Dan,

After reading the last couple of issues of the *Western Spirit* newsletter, I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed them. The format is great (very readable) and I was pleased to see the extent of WFP's involvement with First Nations. I knew things were happening, but was not aware of the range and scope of the projects.

The newsletter is very informative—please add me to your regular mailing list.

All the best to you and your colleagues!

Dr. Terance Lewis, Ph.D., P.Ag., P.Geo.

If you have any comments or questions on the information contained in this publication, please contact Dan Jepsen, Manager, Aboriginal Affairs and Environment, Western Forest Products Limited, 2300 – 1111 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, BC, V6E 4M3, Telephone (604) 665-6274 website [www.westernforest.com](http://www.westernforest.com) e-mail: [djepsen@westernforest.com](mailto:djepsen@westernforest.com)

