

Women teaching timber

Alison Duperron, a CNC biology instructor and spokesperson for Canadian Women in Timber is justifiably proud of her organization.

"In the past year," she says proudly, "Our 25 members have spoken to 3,500 local students about the forest industry in our province." The grades targeted by the organization are kindergarten to grade three and over the school year 120 classroom visits will take place.

The Prince George branch of Canadian Women in Timber began its educational activities in 1995 with a forest education plan put together by Theresa Anderson, a member of the organization and Maureen Monro, a career education teacher with School District 57.

The program is designed to develop an interest in and respect for the forest industry among Prince George children. Five different lesson plans are available

to the classroom teacher and are selected on the basis of their relevance to the particular class curriculum.

The five classroom options are; the life cycle of a tree, loggers and the forest workplace, products and by-products of a tree, forest management, and forest users.

Alison Duperron says, "The key to the success of the various classroom topics is making everything relevant. We use toy model trucks and skidders to demonstrate logging methods, and when we talk about forest products, we tell the children that the gum in chewing gum comes from a tree." She smiles and says, "When we finish that particular lesson we give the children a stick of gum."

There's a serious side to all of this though. Canadians are stewards of 10 per cent of the world's forests and Canadian Women in Timber have as their

purpose and philosophy the promotion of sound management and wise use of our forest resource. They know an informed public is essential.

Underlying all their endeavors is the strong belief that all forest users must realize the environmental, economic and spiritual benefits our forests provide. Which is why the group places such a strong emphasis on education, particularly in the primary grades.

Canadian Women in Timber are holding their annual general meeting Saturday, Sept. 26th at the U.N.B.C. Conference centre. Everyone is invited to attend and the luncheon speaker is Barbara Hislop, Group Vice-President the Canfor Corporation. Mrs. Hislop is also a director of the Bank of Canada, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Vancouver Board of Trade and Forintek Canada.

Forest policy changes needed now

The new chair of the Council of Forest Industries (COFI) says the B.C. forest industry is one in crisis. Ron MacDonald is calling on the industry and government to work together. Borrowing from a theme of retired Noranda President Adam Zimmerman, Mr. MacDonald says the Canadian government must negotiate free trade access for our forest products to the

U.S. market.

It's long been held by many Canadian wood producers that our superior Canadian manufactured product speaks for itself and shipments to the U.S. market should flow freely and on market demand.

Mr. MacDonald also attacked the NDP government, saying our B.C. forest industry has the highest fibre costs in North America and that the current administration is insensitive to the

market economy.

Current government tax expectations from the forest industry are estimated to be \$1.2 billion for the 1998/99 fiscal year, although recent projections show that target revenues will be down substantially this year.

The downfall in forest industry revenues coincides with a 17 per cent unemployment rate in the Central Interior.

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