

## AUTUMN/WINTER 2009 NEWSLETTER



### NOTICE OF **CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE**

The Board of Directors and staff of Athol Forestry would like to invite you to join us for our Christmas Open House

**December 17, 2009**  
 Time: 1:00 – 4:00 pm  
 Location: Athol Board Room

Please plan to drop by and visit with the board members and staff.

Refreshments will be served.  
 Door Prize: \$50 in-store credit

the contribution being made by the staff to ensure Athol is here for a long time to come. The future is looking brighter for the forest industry and we are all looking forward to 2010.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I wish to extend to you and your families our best wishes for a happy and safe Holiday season.

Gerald Read, Chairman



### **Manager's Report**

Change - some resist it, some embrace it, but without it, we would never grow or move forward - how boring that would be! One thing for sure in the forest industry, things change constantly. Signs are pointing to a turnaround in 2010, which will be welcomed by all.

Governments recognized the need for financial assistance in the Forestry Sector and Athol was fortunate to qualify for funding through a Federal/Provincial Stimulus program which saw \$150,000 provided for forest improvement treatments done in 2010. This funding would normally have been capped at approximately \$15,000, so it was a tremendous boost to Athol and its ability to have forest improvement treatments done on our members' woodlots.



### **Chairman's Message**

This time of year offers us all an opportunity to look back on the challenges of the past year and to reflect on how we are working to resolve them and move forward.

The forest industry has been hard hit by the recession and the Board members recognize

Another new initiative that has put approximately \$6,000 into our coffers was the Woodlot Certification program being promoted by the Federation of Nova Scotia Woodland Owners (FNSWO). I know some of you have had discussions with Craig Tupper who is spearheading that initiative and doing an excellent job. The Woodlot Certification program will provide an additional \$10,000 over the next few months.

Harvesting activities have slowed recently due to markets and wet weather (I think I've sung this song before) and we are patiently waiting for colder temperatures before we continue our harvesting operations. Today as I write this article, we are experiencing highs of 10 and 11 degrees ... I don't see frost or snow in the forecast any time soon. 2010 is promising to be a better year and everyone is looking forward to increased harvesting and forest improvement activities. Neal is looking after all of the field activities with respect to harvesting and forest improvement projects and doing a great job meeting our members' requirements.

As with any business in the forest industry, I also recognized that in addition to generating new revenue streams, cost cutting measures were required. An application was made to Human Resources & Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) for a Work Sharing program, whereby employees doing similar jobs, in this case Neal & Craig, would work a shorter work week with HRSDC providing EI benefits for the time not worked (up to two days per week, if necessary). Unfortunately, Lindsay and I were not eligible because our jobs were not interchangeable; however, in August Lindsay accepted a casual position with the Cumberland Health Authority and as a result her hours are drastically reduced. She continues to work a few hours each week assisting with order entry and pricing, etc for which I am much appreciative. In my own case, to contribute to Athol's overall cost saving measures, I have reduced my work hours and, of course pay, by 4 hours per week.

You may notice that calendars were not mailed to our membership this year. Another

cutback ... however, you can pick one up in the Athol Store when you join us for our Open House or just by dropping by any time over the next few weeks.

One of my business mentors use to say, "the key to a successful relationship is the three 'C's' - Communication, Commitment and Caring". It doesn't matter where we work; each of us individually has to bring those three qualities to the table to be successful, both personally and as an organization. I like to thank Neal, Craig and Lindsay for their contributions toward our cost saving initiatives, and for picking up the slack, so to speak, when short staffed.

In closing, I would sincerely like to wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2010.

Jane J Berry  
General Manager



### **Forest Improvement Report**

Another summer has come and gone and unlike the previous year it began raining in the spring and continued throughout. The rain may have dampened our hope for a dry summer but not our spirits; work continued as usual. Harvesting and silviculture has been the focus of my activity.

Harvesting began in the spring after the ground dried enough to bear machinery and throughout September until the monsoon season began and conditions deteriorated. The forest floor became saturated with water hindering movement of heavy equipment. The forest roads became unbearable; having wood trucks stuck in the mud became a common occurrence. The frequent showers prevented drying. We do; however, have wood at road side ready to be moved as soon as the ground freezes. We are also hoping to continue harvesting throughout the winter. The management plans are indicating several blocks that will require harvesting and landowners have agreed, allowing them to obtain financial gain from their wood products. The wood prices have not rebounded as much as expected, but the markets seem to be stable and wood is moving. Mills that

have been closed down are reopening and rumors of new mills exist.

Despite the weather conditions and the uncertainty in the wood markets we were successful in obtaining money for forest improvement work. The money came late in the year, but our contractors have worked overtime since September and it has been very successful. To date we have planted over 200,000 trees and have completed over 166 ha of pre-commercial thinning involving more than 35 landowners.

As woodlot managers we try to develop a series of well considered operations designed to improve the woodlot's productivity and thus maximize the benefits. In order to achieve our goals we must know the woodlot, make choices and plan our operations. The interaction with the landowner and his or her approval will allow us to achieve our goals and best manage the woodlot.

NOTE: The Spruce Bark Beetle is causing havoc throughout Cumberland County. White Spruce trees are rapidly being destroyed. Check your spruce regularly and contact us if you see changes.

### **Chemical Weeding**

Due to financial restraints in the forest industry the use of chemical weeding or herbicide has slowed dramatically and our plantations are beginning to suffer. At the present time Athol has over 600,000 planted trees eligible for weeding and most of which have grown in with heavy herbaceous materials and unwanted trees and shrubs. Planted seedlings are vulnerable and have to compete for light, water and nutrients. They may also be threatened by disease or attacked by insects or rodents; they will perish if not given the chance to survive. All of these factors cannot be controlled; however, we can control unwanted vegetation and allow the tree to benefit from light, water and nutrients. Herbiciding or chemical weeding is the most cost effective mechanism used in forestry to control these factors. Herbiciding will not ensure full survival, but will benefit a majority of the trees.

Forested areas that are planted or have grown back naturally that are properly spaced and freed from competing weed vegetation can produce up to four times the amount of wood in a shorter period of time. Seedling survival increases and wildlife habitat is improved. Herbiciding does not destroy all of the unwanted vegetation; it eliminates some weeds and slows the growth of others to permit the selected young trees to grow ahead of the weed growth.

Thank you for your cooperation throughout the year and I look forward to serving you in the future.

Neal Hewitt, CFT



### **Forest Technician Report**

This year has gone by so fast and so much has happened in the time since the last newsletter. Updating of management plans and writing new ones for new members has progressed steadily leaving only a small number to complete before we start to update newer plans with forest improvement work that has been completed in the past few years. To add some depth to the planning process, we have been allotted an additional ten plans for forest certification through the Federation of Nova Scotia Woodland Owners, bringing the total number of plans to 16. Six have been completed so far and have gone through the initial audit, prior to the entry audit. This has brought about several changes to the program, streamlining the paperwork and adding a bit of detail to these plans.

One other way we have been bringing in a little revenue is through boundary line maintenance. So far this has been offered to

landowners with outstanding dividends, requiring the work. Most woodlots would benefit from having at least the blazes painted and updated if it hasn't been done in the past 5 to 10 years. This could help prevent problems in the future such as wood theft or the expense of a full survey if the lines became too obscured. In September, we had a German exchange student join us from the Forestry school at Gottingen. Volker Jakob assisted Neal and I doing woodlot cruising, silviculture and harvest monitoring, but primarily helped me maintaining boundary lines. During his time here we completed upwards of 18 kilometers of boundary lines on five woodlots. Volker is also an avid outdoorsman, and outside of his work with Athol, he participated in deep sea fishing, skeet shooting, and successfully hunted black bear and small game in his time off on one of our member's woodlot. I involved him in the woodlot owner of the year field day outside of Truro and took him on a tour of the Ligni Bel Ltd. Sawmill in Scotsburn and the Irving Sproule mill, which is one of our stud-wood buyers in Valley, NS. He returned to Germany on November 2<sup>nd</sup> with many fond memories and a better understanding of private forest management in eastern Canada. If any of you would like to talk to me about your woodlot, management plan, boundary line maintenance or woodlot certification, I can be reached at the office, or email me at [Craig.Tupper@atholforestry.com](mailto:Craig.Tupper@atholforestry.com)

Happy Holidays,

Craig Tupper, BScF  
Forest Technician



### Athol Store

It is often difficult to find the perfect gift for that special someone! But, here at Athol Forestry we carry a wide array of often hard to find gifts. Just in and New from Helly Hansen Workwear is the CSA Z96 –2002 Compliant Gear; the Potsdam 3-in-1 jacket with striping (including a vest), a reversible jacket also with striping and from the Corporate line is the all

New Compass Jacket and Pant. These items would make great gifts for a family member or even your Company's employees! Along with having some great new items to show our customer we have been hit with the news that as of December 31, 2009 we will no longer be carrying the Husqvarna line. I have done my best to source other items that we would normally carry from the Husqvarna line; however, we have decided to only carry chainsaw boots from Viking. We currently have the full line and invite you to come in and take a look. We are also able to order items from Husqvarna until the end of December so if there is anything you would like order just let us know.

We have recently received our Winter Helly Hansen Leisure Wear and it is going quickly. We have several new Winter jackets, shirts, t-shirts and fleeces to choose from. Do not forget as a valued Athol member you receive 20% off your purchases.

I would also like to remind you that we do sell gift certificates for those hard to buy for people; they can make the perfect gift.

I look forward to serving you over this Holiday Season and into the New Year!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Lindsay Goldrich Sharpe  
Retail Marketer



*From All Of Us At  
Athol Forestry*