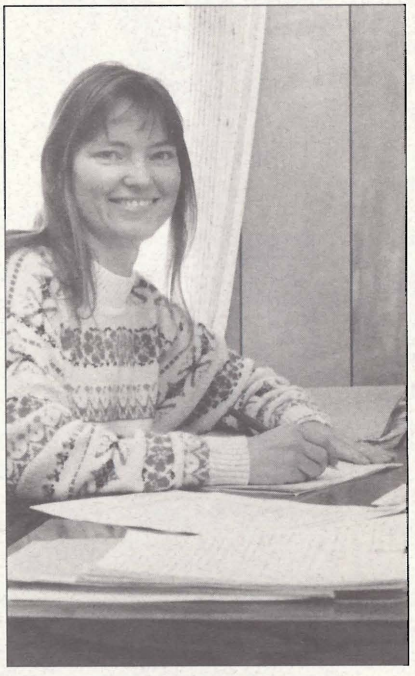
SMALL SCALE Woodlands
Spring 1993

What Can You Learn?

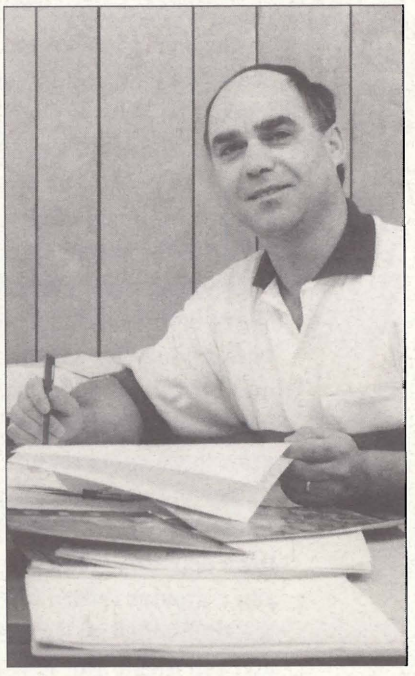
"Private landowners are becoming much more aware of the potential in forestry," says Nello Cataldo Senior Management Forester at Forestry Canada's Prince George District office, "not only on Crown lands but on their own lands as well."

A major reason for that heightened awareness: the Small-Scale Woodlands Program under the Canada/BC Partnership Agreement on Forest Resources Development: FRDA II. Through the program landowners can receive up to 90 percent of the funding needed to enhance forested properties 10 hectares in size or larger.

And along with the funding comes important technical advice on sound forest management practices. A case in point - a workshop held at Quesnel last fall in which 20 landowners learned some of the theory behind reforestation and juvenile spacing and then headed outside where they applied what they learned under actual woodland conditions. A "real eye opener" according to Forestry Development officer Cathy McClary:



Cathy McClary



Nello Cataldo

"They had to think if that's the tree that's going to be left is it a good

one, is there no disease on it? How close is it to the other trees or to local streams? They realized that there was more to spacing than just going out and cutting down trees.

The workshop was so successful, says Nello Cataldo more will be held this spring at Smithers, Hundred Mile House and Houston.

"Our goal is to foster an appreciation of the private portion of forestry lands in northern B.C. and to create good stewardship by landowners. This will benefit not only landowners but the B.C. public in general."

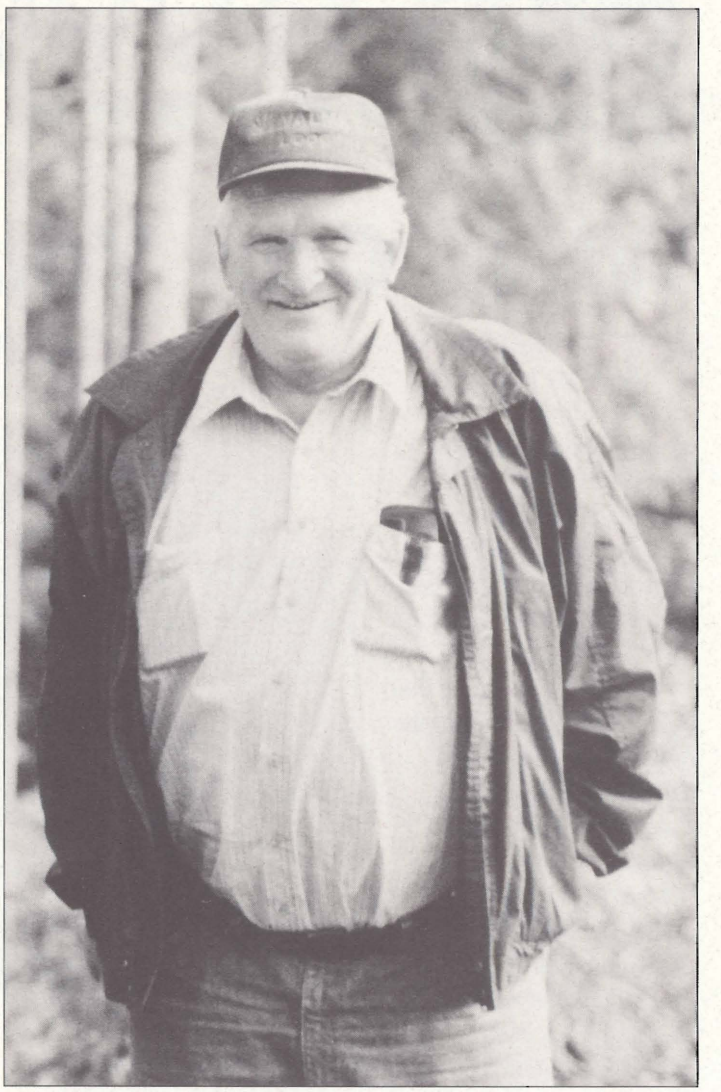
In my own words...

Eric "Archie" Strimbold, 62, ranches with his wife Viola, on 620 hectares in Burns Lake, B.C., 260 kilometres west of Prince George. This is the third in a series of first-person profiles of FRDA II participants.

"I've been a logger all my life but now I'm kind of a gopher for my sons. The boys own all the common shares of E.A. Strimbold now; they're it. We've been around since the early '60s' built roads and logged, stump to dump.

"We read about FRDA I in the paper and wrote. We ended up planting 150,000 seedlings—mostly pine. A lot of this was old logged-over land prior to us buying the place. Hopefully it'll never be for sale again; we're doing this for our own. We're both Scandinavian background, my wife and I, and I think we realize the value of trees. I think trees grow more value than money in the bank. Trees are a better investment than term deposits. They give you a greater return when the time comes to log them and sell them. But it's long term. My sons say, "We're sitting in the middle: the old man thinks it's a good idea; we do all the work; and our kids are going to be millionaires."

"Now we're doing survival surveys under FRDA II: how many of the little trees we planted lived. That's something we're very proud of: we have 90 per cent plus: way ahead of the industry average. My son Max was the planter foreman and we hired all local kids. Somebody local, they like to see these trees grow. If I'm here planting for dollars only, I couldn't care less if they live. I think that's very important.



Archie Strimbold

"My boys bought this new equipment and we've used it on the Crown portion of our woodlot...we only took out 500 metres this spring. It's called a feller/processor and a forwarder...made by Valment Equipment in Gladstone, Michigan. It's got a soft footprint, it's environmentally friendly, it processes the logs right at the stump. It falls the trees, limbs them, leaves all the limbs and branches—very necessary for nutrients in the soil, and it brings them out of the woods with very

little site degradation. We can selective log. We don't need any landings nor roads in the woods.

"The way most of industry does it, you'd use a grapple-skidder to drag the trees up to the roadside and process them at the roadside: all your limbs and tops are left at the roadside and then burnt. They cannot selective log nor commercially thin with conventional equipment.

"In two years time, if you walked into our woodlot where we've been using this equipment to thin, you would never be able to tell it had ever been there.

"Twenty-seven per cent of the world's logging is done with this system we have. It's the only on in B.C. right now. Industry doesn't follow because of the cost. The price goes up from $12 loaded on to the truck to about $18. It's slower, and it's expensive equipment. These two pieces of equipment run between $600,000 and $700,000 dollars. And it isn't for every place, but there are niche markets for this in many, many places. It's good for mediocre, small timber. Like we logged some old vets last winter—older trees that are going to die, that are standing in amongst young growth. We went and picked up all the older ones and left the younger ones. Under conventional logging methods, the older ones would have just laid down and died.

"Hopefully these sons are going to have a business of this: they're very, very enthused about it. I think this kind of equipment is inevitable. But right now it's been in Alberta since May because nobody here wants it...they don't want to pay the extra price. My guess is the corporations are going to drag their feet until the public says, "Hey, do something!"

"My son Marvin's with the equipment. We imported two Scandinavian operators on a work permit and they're operator/ trainers. (It's very sophisticated equipment, all computer controlled.) These operators, they've all been to forestry school. To operate this machine in Sweden you must be licensed. They are taught how to select trees, what trees to leave for wildlife. Like on this one blowdown we logged, the ministry rep said, "Well, you gotta clean this up, why didn't you do that?" And they said, 'Oh, nonononono, that little pile of junk there, that's where a martin or a weasel can get under the snow...it needs to be done.' And on and on like this. That's part of their training. And they're passing that knowledge along. Even to our RPFs. Our own operators should be trained like that. There should be training and schooling for all forestry workers—even to tree planters."

"That, and we need to change the tenure system, I think. The forest lands need to be put in smaller people's hands. There's a pride of ownership...don't you look after your own yard better than a rental yard? All tenure is, is renting."

"And I think that's one of the biggest advantages of FRDA. In this area, we have lots and lots of private land that should be going back into trees instead of these mediocre farms. And FRDA's the right group to make that happen. I think everyone should have a woodlot somewhere's in B.C. on Crown land where you spend your holidays tending it. You go to Sweden, there's 50,000 woodlot owners. There's more timber growing in Sweden today than ever in history because of the care. A hundred and twenty years ago they had practically no wood."

"I can see we're running out of trees here.

When I was a young fellah there was trees everywhere. So,we'd better start looking after it, "cause I've got some grandkids that I'd love to see being loggers."

Woodlands, Wildlife and Water

Canoeing the canals around the man-made islands of the Ducks Unlimited project

When Bernd Wendler goes on holiday, he says all he has to do is take out his canoe and paddle through his marsh lands.

"I've got everything here you'd ever want to see," he enthuses, referring to the forest encircled wetlands right outside his front door near Vanderhoof in the B.C. Interior.

Bernd's marsh is a rich natural habitat about 2.5 kilometres long that attracts wildlife of all kinds, including moose, bear, deer, beaver, fox, wolf, coyote, mink, muskrat — just to name the more obvious ones. And then there are the birds, ducks especially, a hundred or more breeding pairs of mallards, teal, wigeons, scaup — more than a dozen species in all. They make good use of the more than 30 islands, five kilometres of canals, two dams and other assorted habitat improvements that the conservation group, Ducks Unlimited, has made to the marsh since Bernd turned it over to their care 10 years ago.

About 400 hectares of crown forest surrounding the marsh are manage by Bernd through a provincial woodlot license. He also has about 48 hectares of private forestland which he is logging and reforesting with help from FRDA II's Small-Scale Woodland's Program.

But Bernd doesn't worry about the administrative break down of his holdings as he paddles through the marsh — for him it's all one integrated ecosystem. And Bernd knows better than anyone that one bad logging slip-up could cost him his wetlands.

"I have this rule when I am logging in the watershed," says Bernd. "I only log in the winter, and I stay half a mile away from the water. The land is frozen, which means machinery won't destroy wildlife habitat. And can you imagine the disaster if you were logging by the water in the summer and one of your fuel lines burst, and all that oil drained into the water!"

Bernd can more than imagine it, because a few winter's past a hydraulic line on a tree "snipper" broke open, and before he knew it about 40 gallons of bright red fluid had gushed out across the snow.

"It was like something got butchered," says Bernd, who sat by and watched the blood-like fluid seep into the snow and become absorbed. Then he scooped up the oily, snowy sludge. Not one drop made it into the watershed.

For Bernd, integrating forest management with managing his wetlands is a matter of common sense. "It only takes a little thought," he says, pointing out then when he did some logging around the water's edge recently, he left behind 20 good-sized Douglas-firs — so

the neighbourhood eagles could continue to make use of the trees as waterside perches.

"You just make up your mind to work with nature," says Bernd. "It's that simple."

Small-scale woodlands operators across the province often find themselves working around water. On the east side of Vancouver Island, for example, a salmon stream touching on Ernie and Nancy Rombough's property empties into a small estuary in Johnstone Strait. Over the years Nancy has kept track of the water fowl that use the estuary, and they include cormorants, Barrow's goldeneye and buffleheads. A heron rookery is somewhere nearby, and bald eagles watch for salmon from the tall trees along the coastline.

When Nancy and Ernie planned to do some logging on their land under the FRDA II woodland program, one of the first things they did was arrange (through FRDA) for an impact study on the estuary.

"The main thing they have going for them in the estuary, "says habitat biologist Barry Baldwin, who carried out the study, "is a good supply of eel grass. You don't find much eel grass along that part of the coast, and it provides excellent habitat for crabs, for bait fish such as herring, and for juvenile fish. That eel grass is a virtual nursery for young salmon."

The best advice Baldwin could give the Romboughs — in addition to not logging too near the stream or estuary — was to be sure not to disturb the eel grass. Any log boom would be disastrous, and boats in general should stay clear of the area, especially if they were dropping an anchor. But whether it is near Vanderhoof or on Vancouver Island, small-scale woodland operators will continue to figure out ways to integrate their forestry work with water resource management. British Columbia's rivers, streams, bogs, marshes, wetlands and estuaries contain a rich abundance of aquatic lifeforms that nourish a host of birds and animals feeding along the food chain. Protecting and enhancing these water resources should be every forest manager's priority. As Bernd Wendler repeats so often: "It only takes a little extra thought."

Management Tips: Wildlife, Water and Forestry

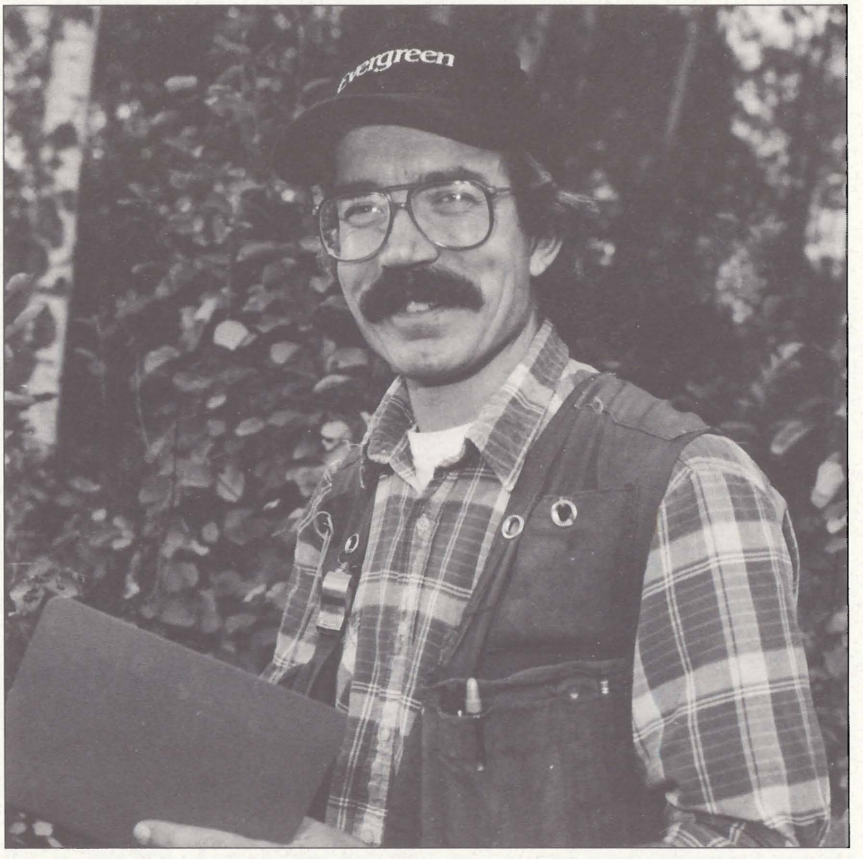
All wildlife require access to water. If there is any water on your woodlot at all, including a seasonal pond or seep, you can be sure that wildlife make use of it. Any logging carried out around water should be carefully thought out.

- Try to maintain creeks, ponds, lakes etc. in as natural condition as possible.
- Keep logging activities away from the water's edge, going back at least .05 kilometre.
- Maintain all waterside vegetation. Riparian (streamside) areas provide excellent habitat for a range of wildlife including raccoon, muskrat, mink, otter, and beaver. (Many a beaver habitat has been destroyed when willows growing near a stream were cleared away).
- Keep the water clean of chemicals, human and animal waste, and logging debris.
- Keep an eye open for water fowl that breed on your lake or stream. They will need protected nesting sites.
- Migrating birds, (song birds as well as water fowl), need places to rest and recuperate. Your wetlands and the surrounding forest may be just what they are looking for.
- You can create a pond for wildlife by continually pumping water from a well, or by digging or blasting out potholes.

A Dream Come True

"I've always dreamed of working on my own woodlot but now I have the opportunity to go around and look at everyone's woodlot and have some sort of input," says Dave Weaver, the Woodland Forester for the Prince Rupert region.

"My involvement in the Small-Scale Program has been extremely positive. I'm always talking to someone who doesn't know that much about forest management, and they're picking my brain all the time. It's very pleasing. In the forestry industry it's almost an ideal situation."



Dave Weaver

Dave Weaver got involved with the program shortly after moving to the Smithers area from Vancouver Island in the spring of '91. In his region, the area with most participation in the Small-Scale Forestry Program is the Burns Lake-Hazelton corridor, but his territory also extends along Highway 16 to Prince Rupert and covers the land as far north as Deese Lake, about 200 kilometres south of the Yukon border.

Dave lives with his wife Rose and their two young children, 3 and 6. He says, "We've only lived in this area for a couple of years, but I like the seasons and that's one of the reasons we moved up here. I love the Smithers area—it's a great place to live."

Dave's roots are in Ontario, about two hours north of Toronto. He graduated from the University of Toronto in '79 and started his career in forestry on Vancouver Island for the B.C. Ministry of Forests. He then worked for MacMillan Bloedel for 12 years before jumping into the forestry consulting business.

"The shift from Mac Blo to forestry consulting was

quite a major shift for me," explains Dave. "I made the decision for several reasons, but mainly it was time for a change in direction to where I could grow and learn more. The experience on the coast was great but moving to the interior would broaden my scope a little bit further. Up to that time I had not worked in the consulting business, and that seemed fairly attractive to me. It was at that point in my career where I asked myself, 'Do I spend the rest of my life at Mac Blo and go for the retirement plan or do I make a break and do something different?' Fortunately I was capable of making the move, and it's worked out really well."

As Dave sees it, one of the most attractive features of the Small-Scale Forestry Program is getting involved with people who are just starting to think about managing their woodlots. He adds, "It's great for me because I can talk to people who don't know that much about small-scale forestry and help them to understand things better and get them involved on their property actually doing something."

One of the challenges for Dave is that as a government-subsidized program it takes a certain amount of time for processing. Explains Dave, "Landowners tend to want to do things now rather than wait for tomorrow. Also, they have to realize that they can't just jump in and do something, they have to plan it. Together, we have to make sure we're doing it properly. There's quite a bit of planning that goes on in this business—it's not haphazard. Unfortunately that scares some people off. It's not always exciting but they have to accept that some delays might come with involvement in the program."

Dave sees the forestry industry on the brink of a new threshold. "The land is becoming challenged on all kinds of fronts. Timber production is no longer the sole purpose of a chunk of land. The future is compromise and maybe community-oriented forestry. In this area they've been experimenting with the Community Resources Board which is trying to incorporate all these varying objectives and opinions before confrontation happens. It's possibly the way things can go, but it's a long haul.

"It's really interesting dealing with the Small-Scale people because they already seem to have a lot of that in balance since they're working in their own backyard. Many of them have a clear understanding of logging. The woodlot owners have pulled out the odd log here and there and are not total preservationists, but on the other hand they know that they can't go ahead willy-nilly and mess everything up. I don't know if it's a formula you can apply to the whole province and make money but it's definitely a balanced approach."

SMALL SCALE Woodlands

Articles from this issue may be reprinted without permission. Contact Dave Haley, Forestry Canada, 363-0707 for further information.

Editors: Dave Haley/ Lorraine Blashill
Layout: John Wiens
Contributors: Mark Atherton, David Kosub, Julie Ovenell-Carter, Cynthia Sprout,

Small-Scale Woodlands is published by Forestry Canada (506 W. Burnside Rd., Victoria, B.C. V8Z 1M5) through the Small-Scale Forestry Program of the Canada/B.C. Partnership Agreement on Forest Resource Development: FRDA II.

Canada - British Columbia Partnership Agreement on Forest Resource Development: FRDA II

Canada BC

Just How Committed Are You?

Before you can get government cash to improve your forest under the Small-Scale Forestry Program, you have to make a commitment to maintain the treated land under forest production for a minimum of 15 years. Landowners thinking about joining the program often ask, "Why do I have to make this commitment. What happens if I can't live up to it?"

"Answering the first question is easy," says Mark Atherton, manager of the program. "Forests take a long time to grow, anywhere from 60 to 120 years depending on the productivity of the ground. Fifteen years isn't a long time by comparison but it's enough to ensure the forests have a good chance of getting started without limiting future opportunities down the road."

"We really struggled with this issue," says Atherton. "When we first raised the question with some of the landowners they told us to require the commitment to be until the forests are mature. We didn't think this was practical and compromised at 15 years."

It is more like a moral commitment. "We don't want to be policing the forests," says Atherton. "Instead, we prefer landowners to be sure of their own commitment to practicing forestry before they accept government money."

Landowners often respond, "I understand the need to make a long term commitment but situations change. What if I later decide I want to sell the property or use it for another purpose?"

And another one that might come up is that the landowner dies and the property is transferred to an heir.

"First of all the landowner is only making a commitment for that portion of his forest actually improved with program funding," explains Atherton. "He is not making a commitment for the whole property. So if the program provided funding to plant seedlings or to thin out a young forest the commit-ment would only apply to the treated areas."

"Secondly, the commitment can be transferred to the next landowner if the property is sold.

"If the new landowner agrees to assume the balance of the commitment the original landowner can be released from his obligation."

"Unfortunately, our life spans are shorter than trees and situations where the property is transferred to an heir are bound to come up," speculates Atherton. "There shouldn't be a problem with maintaining the commitment, however, because most landowners fully involve their children in their forest management program and expect the kids to continue with it after they've passed on. Besides, given the long term nature of forest management it's more likely that the kids will reap the benefits than their parents."

"If the commitment can't be maintained the government is going to want their money back," says Atherton. "We want people to be absolutely sure they can make the commitment before they accept government funding.

"We've been very fortunate with the program so far" he says. "Because people consider the 15 year commitment long and hard before they make it very few have failed to follow through.