



Treeplanters to Celebrate 6th Billionth Tree Across B.C.

Planting Crews Organize Province-Wide Simultaneous Plant

This spring on Thursday June 5 treeplanters, nursery workers and forestry contractors will celebrate planting the province's six billionth tree by planting thousands of seedlings simultaneously across B.C. The coordinated plant involving an estimated 6000 workers will represent a milestone in one of the province's lesser-known mega projects; four decades of reforestation covering six million hectares of logged and denuded land.

Undertaken in earnest since the 70s by a hard-working collection of seasonal workers and independent contractors planting trees has not only been the foundation of the province's forest management program, it has become a rite of passage for many young workers and a vocation for seasoned veterans. Celebrations and media tours are planned for rural communities across B.C. with an emphasis on the people who work in the woods planting, tending and restoring forests.

This year's planting season began, like most, in January on the West Coast continuing campaign-like behind the snowmelt up the mountainsides and into the Interior. The Interior season, just now getting underway, will soon have planters working in every corner of B.C. The Western Silvicultural Contractors' Association, which is organizing the celebrations, doesn't see any problems ensuring the simultaneous plant. Managing people, logistics, and time lines in outlying B.C. is pretty much what tree planting boils down to and something the sector excels at.

"We may not move the earth with this plant," said Crawford Young President of the WSCA. "But we hope we can draw some attention to our forest stewardship work and our workers and how they contribute to communities today and in the future."

The WSCA plans to bring attention to their usually remote activities by sponsoring media and community leader field tours featuring the tree-planting cast of characters in their natural habitat of clearcuts and wildfire-burned landscape. Seedling nurseries will also be holding celebrations



including greenhouse tours where millions of seedlings are being grown for next year.

"There is something generous about planting trees," says planter Jordan Tesluk. "You do this hard work knowing you will be compost yourself before these trees are fully grown. It's a nice legacy to leave behind."

The WSCA hopes that by drawing attention to the six billionth tree milestone they can also raise awareness of the industry's readiness to undertake a vastly expanded reforestation and restoration program. The silviculture sector can also provide skilled stand tenders, surveyors, fire fighting and prescribed burn crews many of them underemployed at the moment. It also comprises a major forest seedling nursery sector capable today of producing double the number of trees being grown annually for the province's current planting program.

Silviculture crews will plant their simultaneous trees at 11:00 am 5 June 2008.

"We chose that time on purpose," said contractor Tim Tchida citing the precipitous 25 percent collapse in planting anticipated for 2009. "We do believe we are at the eleventh hour for treeplanting in B.C. We need to get the program back on track and deal with the mountain pine beetle damage."

In spite of the 12 million hectares of beetle-attacked forest across the province tree planting activities are expected to drop to their lowest level in 20 years in 2009. The WSCA is lobbying governments at all levels to act boldly now to mitigate the environmental consequences of the beetle plague through prompt reforestation and eco-system restoration.

For more information or help in contacting tree planters in your area contact:

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Treeplanting and Silviculture Facts

There are an estimated 6000 seasonal tree planters in B.C.

Another 1200 workers brush, space and tend stands.

During 2003 fire fighting contractors provided 1700 fire fighters.

During the May-June peak of the spring planting season trees are planted at a rate of 120 per second across the province.

Last year the sector planted approximately 265 million trees. This year they will plant an estimated 250 million seedlings. At one meter apart that amounts to six laps around the equator. Six billion trees is 150 laps.

Ergonomically speaking, collectively bending over to plant six billion trees is the equivalent spinal strain of picking up the Great Pyramid and putting it down eight times.

The most seedlings planted in B.C. in one year (1989) is 298 million.

The silviculture sector annually generates an estimated \$700-million in economic activity spent in communities across the province.

Studies of treeplanting work suggest planters exert themselves at levels comparable to elite athletes in training.

Depending on the size and age of the seedlings grown B.C. nurseries could grow an estimated 550-million each year.