

SFMC FIELD TRIP

Members of the SFMC (Sustainable Forest Management Committee, formerly the FRAC), enjoyed a Tolko sponsored field trip to observe a free-to-grow regeneration site and a summer harvest operation. Five members accompanied by Paul Chapman, Divisional Forester, and Julianna Cook, supervisor Trainee, with the bonus of excellent weather of a hot, clear late summer day, traveled to the Hobbit Road area to view the harvest operation.



The Sustainable Forest Management Committee at Hobbit Road logging site.

Along the Sherridon Road the group stopped to view a free-to-grow regeneration site started four years ago. Jack pine growth was evident along with new sprouts including Black Spruce indicating regeneration is well established. Also of particular interest it was noted that part of the area was burned 1929, after which it came back very thick, but after about 35 years the growth was poor so it was harvested and prepared for free-to-grow with the result being a healthy forest now. This was explained as an example of how forest management is beneficial to use and maintenance of a healthy forest. Viewing the free-to-grow site was a highlight of the field trip.

After stopping for lunch at the Narrows on Kissinyew Lake the group continued to the Hobbit Road area worksite. An operating slasher was demonstrated and the comparison of roadside placement of wood for chipping use vs. sawmill use was noted. An advanced technology, a Hornet processor, was also working and it displayed its productivity advantage compared to delimiting and slashing with two machines. Two bunchers were operating also and the smaller machine stopped working so the group could talk with the operator and learn about some harvesting procedures. The use of GPS in machines to define the harvest area was another interesting improvement which is being tested on Tolko's Manitoba operations for the first time. The operator demonstrated the use of a touch screen computer mounted

in the cab that showed the machines location within the planned harvest area. It was interesting to learn how the operators manage the work to ensure representative sampling as they record the wildlife leave trees and meet the environmental protection requirements. At another area of the worksite a skidder was observed collecting wood and after a short chat with the operator he agreed to provide us with a group picture. Seeing the harvest operation and having the benefit of talking with the operators was especially interesting and informative for the members and it provided them a better understanding of forestry operations and forestry management.



Buncher operator demonstrates on board computer to SFM committee.

After visiting the harvest operation the group viewed an area of the harvest site protected for a Great Grey Owl nest. The site, discovered during the pre-harvest survey, was flagged as a no-harvest area and left undisturbed. The group was able to walk into the site to view the nest and it was gratifying to note the effort to protect species while enabling forest operations to continue.



Wildlife leave area within harvest block to protect Great Grey Owl nest (centre tree).

The field trip was a successful and educational experience for the members. Observing a harvest operation, the regeneration site, and having the benefit of the knowledge of some members' experience with the forest, and being able to speak with the machine operators was a much appreciated opportunity and experience.

Ron Black, Chairman, SFMC