

**In our news today:**

- **New PRT Nursery Announced for Brighton, MI**
- **Investing in the Future**
- **Did You Know: Forestry History - Skid Roads**
- **Reflecting on the 2017 and 2018 BC Wildfire Seasons – Worst Ever or New Normal?**

NEW PRT NURSERY ANNOUNCED FOR BRIGHTON, MI

PRT is pleased to announce that it will construct a containerized forest seedling nursery in Brighton, MI to serve forestry customers and forest landowners in the Great Lakes States (GLS) Region of the United States. Construction is expected to be completed in time to start sowing orders in early 2019, for shipping to customers for the 2020 plant season. The nursery will be called PRT Brighton.

The nursery will be established at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (MI DNR) State Forest Tree Improvement Center near Brighton, MI. PRT has signed a long term lease with the MI DNR which includes land on which to construct a new PRT nursery. PRT will construct greenhouse and open compound container growing facilities on the site, which it intends to expand over time to meet increasing customer needs, including those of the MI DNR. This nursery will offer primarily Red Pine and Jack Pine as well as other species to accommodate reforestation in the Great Lakes.

PRT President and CEO Rob Miller commented: "With the establishment of this nursery, PRT will take another step in better serving our customers in the GLS Region. This region is poised to grow with continued forestry activity and with the establishment of the Arauco particle board mill in Grayling, MI https://www.arauco.cl/na/este_es_arauco/grayling-project/. From our Brighton location we can offer customers from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan premium container grown seedlings from an efficient, local source." We will endeavor to keep our customers and PRT rePoRter readers informed as to our progress with this project.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Growing trees is all about investing in the future. Growing seedlings to replace harvested timber, trees lost to insect or fire are the primary objects that drive our business. Our impact on the future goes beyond just replacing trees. PRT believes very strongly in supporting and fostering the respect of this important natural resource, in our future generations. We take great pride in the initiatives our nurseries undertake in their local communities that teach and encourage future generations to continue to respect and value our forested lands.

As one example, our Cottage Grove Nursery undertook a unique initiative from the nursery's inception in the 1970s. The nursery is located on a parcel of land that had been a popular public picnicking area with river access. When the nursery first opened, a 4 acre parcel was set aside for continued public use. When the public area became the target of vandalism and became a burden to maintain, the area was closed to the public. A local Eagle Scout troop approached the nursery and expressed the desire to make improvements to the site in exchange for exclusive access to the park. Over the past 30 years, various Eagle Scout troops in the area have used the 'Eagle's Nest' to perform duties that earn merit badges. Not only do they earn merit badges, they continue to treat the area with great respect and appreciate the value of this special area.



Annually, our sites donate seedlings to local schools and organizations such as Scouts Canada. PRT supports the Scoutrees Program which encourages Scouts Canada members to take action to demonstrate their concern for the environment. Since the program began in 1972, members have planted over 80 million trees in conservation areas, provincial parks, on crown-lands and at Scout Camps across the country.



This year, PRT Dryden made a seedling donation that will make an impact beyond the typical reforestation initiative. Darla McCart, one of the team members at PRT Dryden, took a trip to visit her son Dylan who is the Conservation Coordinator at the Cochrane Ontario Polar Bear Habitat. Darla delivered a box of 500 seedlings to the Cochrane Polar Bear Habitat Education Project where they were used in their conservation efforts, helping them to raise awareness about the struggles polar bears face as the Arctic warms. The program teaches youth and the public about the value of planting trees to reduce the impact climate change. Some of the trees were planted at their 15 acre facility that acts as a rescue facility for cubs and bears from the wild and secondary facilities.



The future of our forest goes far beyond growing and planting trees. By investing time and resources in educating the next generation about our forests, we hope to inspire their love and appreciation for our forests and natural lands. A very wise investment in the future, indeed.

DID YOU KNOW: FORESTRY HISTORY - SKID ROADS

In residential North Vancouver, BC, there is a small area dedicated to a mostly forgotten method of transportation. Early logging in North America, especially on the West Coast, posed the challenge of how to get harvested timber from logging sites to sawmills for processing. "Skid roads" were the solution. In 1873, the first commercial skid road was built in North Vancouver to transport tree trunks from the original North Shore logging sites to the Moodyville Mill sawmill located on the Burrard Inlet near the present day site of the Seabus terminal, and the Hastings Mill sawmill located in Vancouver, BC. At the time District of North Vancouver was incorporated in 1891 several skid roads were in use although no civic roads had been built yet.

Skid roads used heavy logs 8 feet long (2.4 meters) positioned perpendicularly to the direction of the road. Down the center of the road, a "U" shaped notch was fashioned with axes to approximate the contour of a 12 foot (3.6 meters) diameter log. The roads were typically greased with salmon oil to allow for smooth sliding. The 160 foot (49 meter) logs were cut into three parts, spiked and chained together, and pulled by teams of eight pairs of oxen. During the heyday of logging in North Vancouver, which lasted until the First World War, there were 4 major skid roads with many other branch skid roads connecting to them. These roads delivered logs to sawmills at the foot of the Burrard Inlet or were formed into log booms and transported via water to other mills across the inlet in Vancouver. When logging ceased, the skid roads were abandoned and much of the area turned to residential housing by the 1940's and 1950's.

It is heavily debated as to whether the term "skid row" originated in Vancouver or Seattle. The name "Skid Road" was in use in Seattle by 1850s when the city's historic Pioneer Square neighborhood began to expand from its commercial core. In the district, centered near the end of what is now Yesler Way, was the original "Skid Road" named after the freshly-cut logs that were skidded downhill toward Henry Yesler's mill. The road became Mill Street, and eventually Yesler Way, but the nickname "Skid Road" was permanently associated with the district at the street's end. The Skid Road became the demarcation line between the affluent members of Seattle, and the mill workers and more rowdy portion of the population. The common usage of the term "skid row" or "skid road", derived from the original skid roads, refers to an impoverished area, typically urban, in English-speaking North America whose inhabitants are people "on the skids". This specifically refers to the poor, homeless, or others considered disreputable, or forgotten by society.



REFLECTING ON THE 2017 AND 2018 BC WILDFIRE SEASONS – WORST EVER OR NEW NORMAL?

As many of us living in BC witnessed, the past two wildfire seasons in BC were something to behold. It was believed that 2017 would go on record as the worst wildfire season in the province's history. While the 2018 wildfire damage in BC is still being assessed, it looks like it will rival 2017 as the worst in recorded history.

A brief summary of 2017: the first BC wildfires were reported on July 6, with a provincial state of emergency declared on July 7 and by July 8, more than 182 fires were active in the province. The wildfire season continued through to September 15 when the state of emergency was finally lifted. By then, more than 1.2 million ha (3 million acres) had burned and over 300 buildings were destroyed. More than 39,000 people had been evacuated. Amazingly, no loss of life was recorded during this time, which is a testament to the orderly safety precautions taken by the province and municipal leaders, and the excellent work by firefighters, police and all other first responders.

That fire season was highlighted by three major fires, all over 200,000 ha each, the Hanceville Fire near 100 Mile House (approximately 227,000 ha or 560,000 acres), the Elephant Hill Fire near Ashcroft (approximately 200,000 ha or 500,000 acres) and the Plateau Complex Fire on the Chilcotin Plateau (approximately 545,000 ha or 1.3 million acres). The Plateau Fire is the largest single fire recorded in BC history and covered an area roughly the same size as Prince Edward Island. Throughout the fire season, some 4,000 firefighters from across Canada, the US, Australia, New Zealand and Mexico were deployed, along with 233 helicopters and airplanes. Over 15 reception centers province wide were set up to coordinate emergency services.

Cost of fighting wildfires in 2017: the total figure province wide was \$550 million compared to the typical annual cost of \$100-150 million.

Cause of the fires: a combination of dry lightning and human-caused fires were responsible for the 2017 BC wildfires. Human-caused fires were both accidental and intentional; all wildfires in BC were investigated to determine the origin and cause. Extended heat waves and minimal rainfall throughout the province leading up to wildfire season dried out vegetation and soil. As well, forests containing large numbers of dead pine trees due to the mountain pine beetle infestation provided optimal fuel for fires. These factors contributed to the fire hazard rating most areas of BC being set at extreme or high risk of fire. The wildfires grew quickly in size as a direct result of strong winds, with some regions experiencing winds of up to 70 km/h (45 mph).

Looking forward, the factors leading up to the 2017 fire situation has many experts fearing that the 2017 and 2018 BC wildfires represent the "new normal". Professors from University of BC (UBC) and the University of Northern BC drafted a letter to the province saying they believe 2017's extreme fire season "represents the new normal and is part of a global trend of increasing mega-fires." They came up with dozens of recommendations they believe should be implemented to address the wildfire challenge. "Moving forward, the types of warm, dry, windy conditions that we saw the past 2 summers are projected to become more and more common because of climate change. With our forests in their current state, we will become susceptible year after year to wildfires," said Dr. Lori Daniels, a professor of forest and conservation sciences at UBC and one of the authors of the letter. Among the recommendations was a call for the province to increase the number of prescribed burns and to make decreasing the fire hazard around rural communities a priority. Dr. Daniels said the 45 recommendations related to "both how we respond to fires in an emergency situation [and] how we can more proactively and more urgently be acting to protect the wildland urban interface."

The most recent estimate of the total 2018 BC wildfire damage is 1.3 million ha (3.2 million acres) burned. The BC government is just now beginning to assess the areas affected in the 2018 season on both licensee and Ministry of Forest lands, with a more comprehensive report expected in late 2018. Fire fighting costs should be on par with the \$550 million spent in 2017.

Many of us lived through these events firsthand or through friends and loved ones. Hopefully the recommendations will be heeded to reduce the risks going forward, as we complete the 2018 BC wildfire season. The past two fire seasons have heightened public awareness of fire risk mitigation and the growing need to restore forests impacted by insects, fire and drought. In BC, the provincial and federal governments are committed to significant new investments in tree planting which will keep our industry very busy for the next few years. Customers are advised to contact their forest seedling nursery early to make sure their seedling needs are met.

Herb Markgraf



Contact Us

For more information, please visit our website at www.prt.com.

To contact our editor, to comment on a story or to report any concerns, [please click here](#).