



Forestry Minister, Iain Rankin, surrounded by members of the Spence family prepares to plant a ceremonial tree on the Spence family woodlot following presentation of awards and plaques to the family during 2019 Private Woodlot Owner of the Year open house in Ellershouse on September 28th. (Rees Photo)



Surrounded by members of the Spence family, Donald Cameron, left, and Forestry Minister Iain Rankin display the plaque which will hang in the department's office in Windsor for the next year. (Rees Photo)

## 2019 Private Woodlot Owner Honoured

By Maurice Rees

September 28, 2019 will be a day the Spence family of Ellershouse will never forget. The family's Acadian forest stewardship plan has been under the management / supervision of Jim Bremner for more than 30 years.

Their stewardship resulted in the family being chosen as the 2019 provincial woodlot owner of the year. Some of the 800 hectare woodland has been in the Spence family for seven generations. The woodland provides a good example of how ecological and recreational values can be protected while practicing sustainable forest management on a portion of the property.

The Spence family admiration and concern for forestry began after the second world war, when Norman Spence's father had a sawmill and logging crew which worked for the Jodrey family with Minas Basin sawing timber and delivering wood to the Halifax shipyard for export.

In the early 1980's Norman,

who passed away in 2004, was a former sawmill and local politician (MLA), arranged to have the property put under forest management with local silviculture contractor and consultant Jim Bremner. Since that time, Bremner has worked with three generations of Spence family members in overseeing the impressive sustainable forest stewardship practices.

Norman was recognized as a winner of the regional Woodland owner of the year award in the late 1990's. He established a trust agreement on behalf of the family whereby Bremner acts as the manager of the woodland as directed by the organization's board of directors which consists of Spence family members.

In May, 2019 the Spence Managed Forest won the Provincial Woodland Owner of the Year Award. Bremner has worked closely with Norman and his son Bruce over the years regarding the management activities. Bruce was involved with some of the harvesting and silviculture

treatments for several years while Bruce was involved with forest contracting. After Bruce's death in 2016, Bremner has been working closely with Jason Casey of Elmsdale Lumber in continuing the uneven-aged management regime begun decades earlier.

Bruce's brother George, his son Chad, and Bruce's sons Ian and Andy have become more involved with overseeing the forest management activities in recent years, and brother Larry, and sister Susie are also very interested. Bremner has also brought various consultants and experts onsite to help in the decision-making over the years.

The overall objective the family trust has for the woodland property is to continually improve the quality of the woodland, protect the ecological integrity, provide a sustainable source of economic return, provide a source of recreation for the family and visitors as well as a source of enjoyment and pride, and to keep the property in the family in perpetuity.

Visitors to the September 28 field day and open house had the opportunity to visit more than 20 different exhibits and displays on a wide variety of subjects including: wildlife management, protected areas, silviculture treatments such as thinning and shelterwood harvesting, conservation law enforcement, hunting and trapping, financial and information programs for woodland owners, ecological based forestry, endangered species, small-scale and mechanical harvesting, ATV's, wildfire prevention and suppression, and many others.

The highlight, for many people, is the Dawson Brook Falls around which the Spences have created trails and an access road for visitors to enjoy this special area that they are protecting forever. There are walking trails on both sides of the falls. Off-highway vehicle users been enjoying the Spence's network of woods roads through the property.

Those familiar with the Lahey Report recommenda-



Members of the Spence family receive a recognition plaque from Forestry Minister, Iain Rankin. The minister also presented individual plaques to several family members. (Rees Photo)

tions will recognize the Spence family have been following the three basic principles of Lahey's Triad model - which is an approach that gives priority to ecological protection, enhancement and biodiversity in determining how forest practices should balance environmental, social, and economic objectives and values.

The 800 hectare property includes a large amount of older tree stands consisting of white pine, hemlock, red spruce, maple and oak. There

are also healthy young stands of trees, some planted and some thinned at a young age to enable unencumbered growth.

Community support for the field day included a barbecue lunch prepared by the Brooklyn Fire Hall Auxiliary. Iain Rankin, Minister of Lands and Forestry attended the event making presentations to Spence family members and planting a ceremonial red maple tree.



**Elmsdale Lumber Co. Ltd.**

*"Elmsdale Lumber congratulates the Spence family for their commitment to forest management."*

"On behalf of Elmsdale Lumber Company I would like to express our congratulations to the Spence family for this great achievement in forest management. It is an absolute privilege to have the opportunity to work with such a dedicated family along with woodlot manager Jim Bremner. If anyone would like the chance to view some great examples of woodlot management, I encourage you to contact me via e-mail: [jason@elmsdalelumber.ca](mailto:jason@elmsdalelumber.ca)."

*Jason Casey, QFT, Forest Resource Manager, Elmsdale Lumber*

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