

Jack H Woods:

The Face of Tree Improvement in BC 1999 to 2016

Jack Woods is a well-known leader and scientist among forest genetics communities both locally and abroad. He is recognized by many as the face of BC's forest genetics program, having served as Program Manager, Forest Genetics Council of BC (FGC), and CEO, SelectSeed Co. Ltd. from 1999 to 2016.

Jack was born and raised in the BC Kootenays where he developed his passions for the outdoors and sports. He was a member Canada's National Ski Team in the mid-70's, along with (but not one of) the "Crazy Canucks". Skiing took him south of the border where he earned a B.Sc. in forestry and M.Sc. in forest genetics at the University of Montana.

In 1982, he returned to BC for a gene archive job at the Ministry of Forests' Cowichan Lake Research Station. Living with his family in Duncan, Jack volunteered with a community school and team sports. In 1993, he took over the Coastal Douglas-fir (Fdc) breeding program from Chris Heaman and developed the advanced-generation breeding strategy, as well as research such as realized-gain trials to validate timber volume projections for reforestation with genetically-selected seed.

In 1997, Dale Draper recruited Jack to assist him with a review of the provincial forest genetics program. This review led to the establishment of the Ministry's Tree Improvement Branch, the FGC, and SelectSeed Co. Ltd, which is wholly owned by FGC. Jack was instrumental in developing the legal framework for the latter and securing a long-term funding agreement with Forest Renewal BC to expand provincial seed orchard capacity.

In 1999, he resigned from the Ministry to assume the dual-role position of FGC Program Manager and CEO SelectSeed. In these roles Jack developed and implemented strategies and business plans in collaboration with various public, private and academic agencies. He helped establish rigorous planning processes, science-based standards, criteria to guide investments, and durable performance measures and reports, such as this one.

Jack also oversaw the establishment of 15 seed orchards with five private partners in BC's interior. These orchards represent approximately 30% of BC's seed orchard capacity and contribute to FGC's select-seed use objectives. SelectSeed's orchards now generate sufficient revenue to support annual operating expenses, provide management services to FGC, and contribute to the Ministry's tree breeding program. Jack views the establishment of this financially-stable business model as a career highlight.

On the side, Jack also served on Western Forest Genetics Association's executive, co-chaired an IUFRO working group, supported the Forest Science Board, and helped organize numerous conferences, workshops and tours.

In November 2016, Jack "retired" and passed his FGC/SelectSeed reigns over to Brian Barber, but continues to provide support and advice to ensure a successful transition – another demonstration of Jack's interest and dedication to the program.

Jack is proud to have worked with many intelligent and dedicated people around the world. He also feels fortunate to have had opportunity to do field research and explore BC's diverse ecosystems. He will continue to pursue travel and adventure in retirement with his partner, Dr. Sally Aitken, and his three children and grandchild.



John (Jack) H. Woods, RPF



Three generations of Douglas-fir tree breeders. *Left to right:* Chris Heaman, Jack Woods and Michael Stoehr.

Photo: Keith Bird



Left to right: Hilary Graham, Jack Woods, Dee Shaddock and Brian Barber at SelectSeed's lodgepole Pine seed orchards at Sorrento Nursery Ltd.

Photo: Brian Barber

***We wish you all
the best Jack!***