

## Nova Scotia Forest Notes

Can we manage our Wabanaki forest for the benefit all species?

### Logging one-tree-at-a-time in Nova Scotia 18July2019

Posted on July 18, 2019 by admin

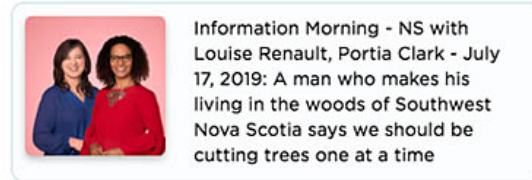
*“I’ve got grandchildren. I have come from five generations of guides, hunting and guiding in East Camp and we rely on the forest and we always will in one shape or form and if nothing else, then to create the oxygen we breathe and to sequester the carbon that we are polluting the earth with and if we knock it all down, cut it all down, it’s not going to be there”*

It’s not rocket science, says Ken Gray, interviewed in the field by Phlis McGregor for CBC’s Information Morning – Halifax, and aired today.

It’s “A call to ban clear cuts. Ken Gray is dedicated to selective harvesting [and] says clear cut forests are not growing back fast enough and we’re going to run out of wood in 25 years.”

Listen to the full interview on [CBC audio](#)

An “abbreviated transcript” of the words from this man of basic good sense who has “worked in forestry and selection harvesting in SW Nova for the last 35, 40 years” is provided below.



\*A note about the “abbreviated transcripts”. I post “abbreviated transcripts” of interviews on radio and TV as a matter of record, a prime objective of this blog being to keep track of Nova Scotia forestry in the news (see [About this site](#)). One can listen to the interviews, but in this rushed world it’s faster to read the transcript, albeit you miss some of the nuances. It is not [Hansard](#), and for the sake of getting through it in less than a day, the transcript is not always precise, but I attempt not to change the essence of what is said in any way, and in most cases one can check out the original audio files or videos. I also do it because it makes me listen carefully to what is being said, whether I like what’s being said or not.

### Abbreviated Transcript

#### INTRO

Yesterday on the show [we heard from Ricky Peterson](#)\* in Shelburne County. He is upset about the 100s of hectares of Crown land that have been clearcut between Keji and the town of Shelburne.

\*View his video, posted on Facebook, [here](#)

Ken Gray says there is a better way to cut down trees in NS forests and he met with CBC’s Phlis McGregor near

Tusket to explain his one-tree-at-a-time-method.

## THE INTERVIEW

**KEN GREY (KG)** We're in Yarmouth Co. on the Armstrong Road in Bell Neck and on some of the old Armstrong land on a small piece that wasn't clearcut 30 odd years ago. My name is Ken Gray. I live in Deerfield, I have lived there all of my life, and I've worked in forestry and selection harvesting in SW Nova for the last 35, 40 years.

**PHLIS MCGREGOR (PM):** *So this land we are looking at now, it's privately owned?*

**KG** Yes

**PM** *What have you been doing with it [the private land]?*

**KG** I have been selection harvesting the big over-mature red spruce and I've left most of the hardwoods standing, a lot the younger spruce, 30, 40 feet tall and then a lot of thickets underneath it, and all the pine I have left intact for seed trees, to make a shade canopy and within 15-20 years you will be able harvest more wood from this land.

**PM:** *And what do you do with the red spruce. Where does it go?*

**KG** It's mainly sawlogs

**PM:** *What do you want to promote here, what kind of trees do you want eventually?*

**KG** Shade tolerant species which are yellow birch, sugar maple, red spruce... all of our best wood is shade tolerant, as opposed to our pioneer trees which are generally what start on a clearcut or after a forest fire and you get fir and pin cherry, lower grade trees, white birch and then it takes time for those to grow up to make enough shade so the shade tolerant can come up under them.

So it's kind of a 2-stage many year process to grow back a clearcut as opposed to this when you can come back and cut it again and again, cutting partial amounts of the wood, doing it carefully not to damage what's left, you don't want to break the bark open on other trees, try to stay away from the roots when you are out driving by them, it's not really rocket science, it's just try to save the forest a little bit while making a living from it. Try to give people a choice as to whether they do a clearcut or maybe they can do something better with the land.

**PM** *How do actually go in to get the logs? Do you use a chain saw?*

**KG** A chain saw and a cable skidder. In doing so I can select one tree in the middle of a thicket with lots of young vibrant growth and pull that tree up through a path no wider than the tree itself, it's not damaging the other trees and will give our children and grandchildren something down the road.

**PM** *How does what you are doing.. compare to the way a lot of the Crown forest is being cut?*



Rickey Peterson is upset about the clearcutting between Keji and Shelburne. View [Video](#) (on Facebook), listen to CBC Info AM [audio](#)

KG Well, it's almost the opposite to what I do, they are taking it all at one... there is a lot of young vibrant growth that they are mowing down to get to the old trees, and they apparently don't want to run mills in the province in 25 years, that's for sure.

PM *What do you mean?*

KG I mean we are going to look at a brick wall of no wood if they keep this cutting up as they are now because down the road 25 to 30 years there will be no more Crown forest left and the private land that's left is going to be very scarce because the mills are gobbling it up now at an unprecedented rate which is wrong.

Our parents and grandparents didn't do that, and that's why we have our Crown forest today because they left it there for us to deal with and thought we would be good stewards of the land as they were but we are not being good stewards when we allow our government to take away that much of our Crown forest all at once.

With the amount of wood that has been clearcut over the last 2-30 years, is hasn't rebounded yet, it's pretty obvious. And then we are out there still doing it thinking we are going to get a return form the land we cut 30 years ago, we are not going to get it. That's the Acadian forest because they have removed and sprayed to kill the hardwood and grow one species of forest..it's totally wrong.

PM *What do you think about the emphasis we have on pulpwood in this province?*

KG That's backwards. Our sawmills should be our primary industry and the pulp mills should be secondary to the sawmills. Its obvious that the valuable commodity that comes out of our forests is the lumber, the building materials.

I just hope some sense comes into this picture soon and we stop the clearcutting and start training the young people to do some selection harvesting with chain saws, keep them healthy keep them taking care of our land.



Two approaches to forest management in Nova Scotia: LEFT: Woodlot under even aged management/short rotations. RIGHT: Woodlot managed by single-tree selection, high standing volume maintained. The latter but not the former would be eligible for carbon offset credits; when managed to conserve wildlife trees and snags and strongly limit degradation of the surrounding trees and the understory vegetation, single-tree selection also conserves old forest biodiversity.

**KG STARTS UP HIS CHAINSAW**

This is my new Stihl 462 computerized chainsaw, really good on fuel, low emissions. It's hard work and you are very tired at the end of the day but I'll tell you that when you get up in the morning and there is a little spring in

your step and you know you are going back into a forest, not working on a clearcut and tilling everything in front of you its got a give those guys a terrible feeling at the end of the day so I just hope more of them can do what I do someday.

You may have to involve larger amounts of woodland to get the same volume of wood to the mill and the wood will be a little more expensive for the mill BUT they can market that wood as sustainable and environmentally-friendly wood, not clearcut wood, you know.. and if we ever started shipping it by barge we would have the most environmentally-friendly shipping...seems to me there are a lot of people in this world that would gobbl that right up and pay extra for it. That's the world we are in today.

**PM *Why do you get so emotional about this topic of forestry?***

KG I've got grandchildren. I have come from five generations of guides, hunting and guiding in East Camp and we rely on the forest and we always will in one shape or form and if nothing else, then to create the oxygen we breathe and to sequester the carbon that we are polluting the earth with and if we knock it all down, cut it all down, it's not going to be there

We frown on deforestation in the Amazon, we frown on it around the world but we certainly don't frown on it in NS and I would like to know why.

Forests are integral in the life on this earth and we need them growing, we don't need them clearcut. It upsets me a lot to know what Mr, McNeil has allowed... He should know better.


*Thanks for sharing your experience and thoughts, Ken Gray*

**Related:**

**Thanks for sensitive management of an old forest in Nova Scotia**

Posted on NSFN October 8, 2018

Danny George speaking at the **Forest Funeral**:



**A good day in the woods**

Danny George, logger *I do selection harvests of quality hardwoods...I had less than 90 liters of fuel burnt in a chainsaw to harvest \$60,000 worth of wood...*

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