

Interview with Wade Prest (WP), woodlot owner in Mooseland on the Eastern Shore, past president of the Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners and Operators Association, with host Portia White.

CBC Information Morning, February 21, 2019, The future of Northern Pulp,

Interview starts at 1:09 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/northern-pulp-deadline-boat-harbour-information-morning-1.5027788>

WP- Hi Portia it's really good to be here.

*PW- It's good to meet you. Your family has a history with this mill, what's that.*

WP- Well that's right, the very first tractor-trailer load of saw mill chips which we're talking about this morning, the very first load that was ever delivered to the mill in Abercrombie Point in 1967 came from the Prest Brothers Lumbermill in Mooseland.

*PW- and many millions have followed,*

WP- and many, many more have followed. We've been, the Prest family, loyal suppliers to the mill for all years since, pulpwood and chips.

*PW- Given that connection obviously you know a lot about how it's operated and perhaps have some ideas of what the future will hold if Northern Pulp was to shut down. What are your thoughts about that?*

WP- Well there's no denying the intricacy of this industry and the inter-connectedness of it. It's obvious from the speakers that we had this morning that we are coming up to a time with there's got to be some hard decisions made. Now it's very fortunate that that time is still 11 months away, in January of 2020, so there's time for us already to start working on what will happen if NP mill closes in a year's time.

*PW- What do you see could happen depending on what decisions or actions are taken in the next 11 months?*

WP- We're also fortunate that there's a couple of other things happening just in the same time frame. The Lahey report was released a few months ago. The Lahey report which was, the recommendations were adopted by the province, is calling for substantive change to forest management and the forest industry in Nova Scotia and some of those changes that are being called for are not really compatible with the way we've been doing forestry in the past, for the past 50 years. So that has to be taken into consideration.

*PW- Do you think they're incompatible with pulp and the use of chips?*

WP- Our forest management practices which have fed the pulp mill in Abercrombie Point and the lumber industry as it exists today. So, there's incompatibility there that doesn't seem to be being acknowledged by the industry. We're going to move towards a more ecologically based forestry with longer rotations, bigger trees, less wood being cut with the wood having higher individual value to the trees. So that's not being talked about.

Now another issue that we have to deal with is, a few months ago, we were told that within probably 12 years we really have to deal with the issue of getting off of fossil fuels and one of our, the alternative for fossil fuels, is wood based energy and that's the thing we're talking about today is where is, where are the chips, the sawmill chips and the hog fuel that's presently being produced by the sawmills, where is that going to go should that pulp mill shut down?

*PW- Are you sensing opportunity there and how quickly could we make that shift Wade?*

WP- I think that it's incumbent on the Premier to lead this initiative to find the alternatives and it's all got to be multi-disciplinary and it's got to involve many departments of government. It can't be left to the industry, it can't be left to the Department of Lands and Forestry. It's part of the overall strategy of the province, how we're going to go on into the future dealing with our carbon emissions and developing a forest industry that's based on ecological forestry.

*PW- As we make that turn and that transition though, it will be tough, there will be job losses and how, how can that be softened in anyway or is that...*

WP- I'm not sure how many job losses it necessarily has to be if we are proactive and get to work on it now. The amount of saw mill chips that are produced in the province, there's another pulp mill in this province that has a hard time sourcing its fibre. And it would probably be quite anxious to have a lot of those sawmill chips that are already being produced. There's a possibility there.

*PW- Is this Port Hawkesbury?*

WP- Yes, Port Hawkesbury, Port Hawkesbury Paper.

*PW- But they can't take all them, we just heard from Eric about that...*

WP- Well how much it can take I'm not going to say. If you know theoretically it could take quite a bit of it. There's also a biomass burner in Port Hawkesbury, that they've been running on, a great deal of the wood that is firing it is cut purposely to feed it. Now the hog fuel and wood chips that are currently being produced by the sawmills and the rest could possibly be directed there. Now, Mr. Williams brought up good points about the relative value of pulp chips versus chips for other purposes. But those are market decisions, and when we as a province decide that we have to find a way to get away from using fossil fuels and there's a carbon tax coming on fossil fuels, those market forces are going to put new pressures on woody biomass or woody fuel.

*PW- In the 30 seconds we have left though, how do we make the transition for people who would lose their jobs at the mill?*

WP- There's not that necessarily, that many people who will lose their jobs outside of the pulp mill. The lumber industry should be able to continue to operate if we're proactive and we put in solutions. It's not necessarily going to be easy, but a rescue package by the province would work really well. There's a lot of people that are actually being left behind these days. From the woodlot owners point of view, contractors and truckers, it's not really that great. It's not really been such a good industry.

*PW- I know you have the ear of some people in the province listening to the show right now. I appreciate you coming on the show to share your perspective on what could happen some opportunity perhaps as we make this transition perhaps in the future at the end of January 31, 2020. Wade, good to meet you.*

WP- Thank you, I wish I had more time.