

## Portable sawmill solves supply issue on remote island

What do you do when you have a pile of logs? You get a portable sawmill and turn it into lumber! That's the idea Gord Reid had in 2016, when he decided to clear part of his section and build a holiday home for his family.

Gord is a car and truck enthusiast and runs a busy diesel engine repair business near Vancouver. When he was just 15 years old his neighbour gave him a diesel car that just wouldn't start. Gord was able to fix the issue in no time. From that day he got hooked on working with diesel engines, it even determined how his career would take shape. Today he owns a collection of trucks and cars, all diesel-powered.

In another clever move he decided to purchase a 2.5 acre piece of land cheaply.

"About thirty years ago I bought an oceanfront parcel on Nelson Island here in British Columbia. Back then I was 17 years old and the only student in highschool that owned property!"



**"The ease with which I could transport the JP just goes to show how mobile this mill is"**

Nelson Island is mostly forested, although there are some clear cut areas inland. Lakes and large mountainous hills define the geography. Lots of interesting bits of history can still be found. There were once a few homesteads and small logging operations, most of which are now summer cabins. As a consequence, the permanent population is quite small.

Part of the charm of Nelson Island is that once you set foot on it you're entirely off-grid, there's no municipal water supply, sewer, gas, electrical power grid, or similar utility services. You can completely turn off the outside world and relax.

To make space for the holiday home, Gord hired a contractor to cut down over 100 of mature Douglas Fir and Cedar trees, to clear a 1-acre (4,000m<sup>2</sup>) area.

# MILLER FEATURE

“When I saw that big pile of 20ft logs, I thought that it would be smarter to turn those into lumber myself, than to procure lumber elsewhere”. Even more so because shipping stuff to the small and remote island is quite an undertaking.



Gord's Junior Peterson (JP) was delivered to his office in Vancouver. He did much of the assembly work there in the workshop and gained an understanding of the basic operation. The transport of his lightweight Junior Peterson to the island, which Gord undertook entirely by himself, involved a tractor, a landing craft from the Vietnam War, and a truck. “The ease with which I could transport the JP just goes to show how mobile this mill is.”



## MILLER FEATURE

“The mechanised landing craft is an original military surplus item which was bought by my uncle. He fixed it and added a pilot house. It’s a very useful tool to have when you’re operating off-grid, albeit a bit slow and noisy. I timed for a high tide so that I could land the mill as high as possible on the beach.”

The first thing Gord did after he placed his JP on-site was to use it to cut posts and beams for a roof structure to go over the sawmill, so that he was able to work shielded from the elements. With only Vancouver Island between them and the Pacific Ocean, the climate is moderate yet wet for most of the year.

Gord soon gained confidence operating the Junior Peterson: “I was totally new to sawmilling back in 2016. I set up the mill, read the manual, watched the Peterson instructional videos, started milling and have never looked back. Milling was easier than I thought it would be. I could start milling right out of the box so to speak, everything worked as expected straightaway.”



He has now produced a nice, tall stack of 6×2's plus a stack of 2×4's and the pile of logs is nearly exhausted.

He had to expand his shed so that he could stack all the freshly cut lumber, and is currently cutting his way through all the required 2×10's for his new holiday home.

All Peterson mills are custom-built in our factory in New Zealand and are sold to customers all over the world. Providing excellent after-sales service to our worldwide customers is of utmost importance to Peterson. “I’m happy with the top-quality dimensional lumber which I’m producing by myself. I received top-notch support from the Peterson team and expect to be able to recoup a large part of my sawmill investment, once I sell the mill after this project is finished.”

# MILLER FEATURE

Gord is a regular contributor to our private Peterson Facebook group, where Peterson mill owners share stories and experiences, ask for advice and get instant support from other sawmillers.

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Gord hasn't started construction of their holiday home yet, as the lumber is still drying. He is hoping to lay the foundations in 2020. We look forward to seeing Gord's finished holiday home in the future!



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