Appendix 13 : Timber Demand

The oldest and greatest demand on the forest resource of the Avalon Peninsula is the supply of wood needed for fuel and building purposes. Domestic use of wood fulfils requirements for heating homes, building homes, stages and boat building, just to name a few. The commercial harvesting of wood has a long history on the Avalon as well. Wood from the Salmonier valley was exported overseas before World War II and the central Avalon was extensively harvested during the 1940's and 1950's. Current commercial operators harvest sawlogs, firewood and pulpwood which the latter of which is exchanged for sawlogs and birch fuelwood and all provide economic stimulus to the Avalon and to the island as a whole.

Historic quantification of wood demand for the Avalon as a whole is not easily determined. Suffice it to say that demand has decreased since the days when all homes, boats, and stages were built with local timber. As an example, in the 1930's and 40's fishermen on the Southern Shore would in some instances travel three hours by horse Ain the country to obtain their yearly supply of wood. The demand by commercial operators has as well decreased since the days when 250 men would spend the winter cutting timber through the Colinet River valley. The inception of the Avalon Forest Management District however allows for tracking and monitoring of wood cutting since the mid 1970's. The volume of wood harvested domestically on the Avalon Peninsula since 1977 is staggering (Figure 11(A)). In 1982 alone, over 200 000 m^3 of wood was harvested for fuelwood and sawlogs. Since this peak there has been a general downward trend. However this does not negate the fact that since 1981 the annual domestic harvest has been greater than 100 000 m^3 for a significant period which has put a serious strain on the resource and affected sustainable supplies of wood. Since its peak in 1982, the number of domestic permit holders (Figure 11(B)) has trended downwards due to out-migration and a decreased reliance on wood as a heating source. A reversal of these downward trends has occurred in the last three years due, in large part, to increases in other home heating costs.

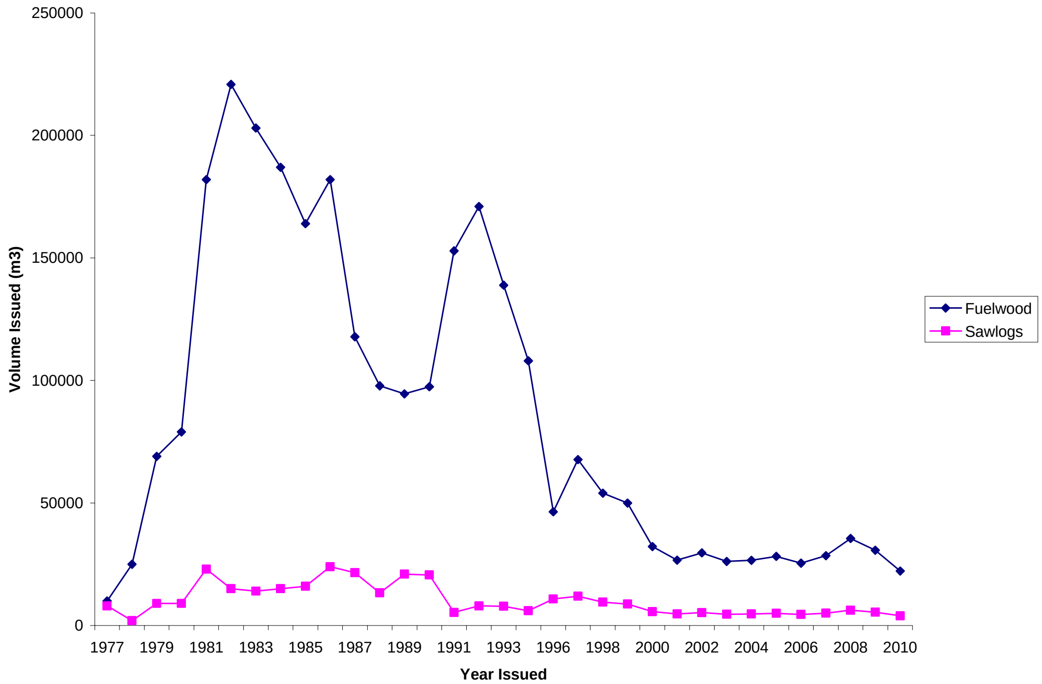

Figure 11(A) Volumes harvested by domestic cutters from 1977 to 2010 by product type

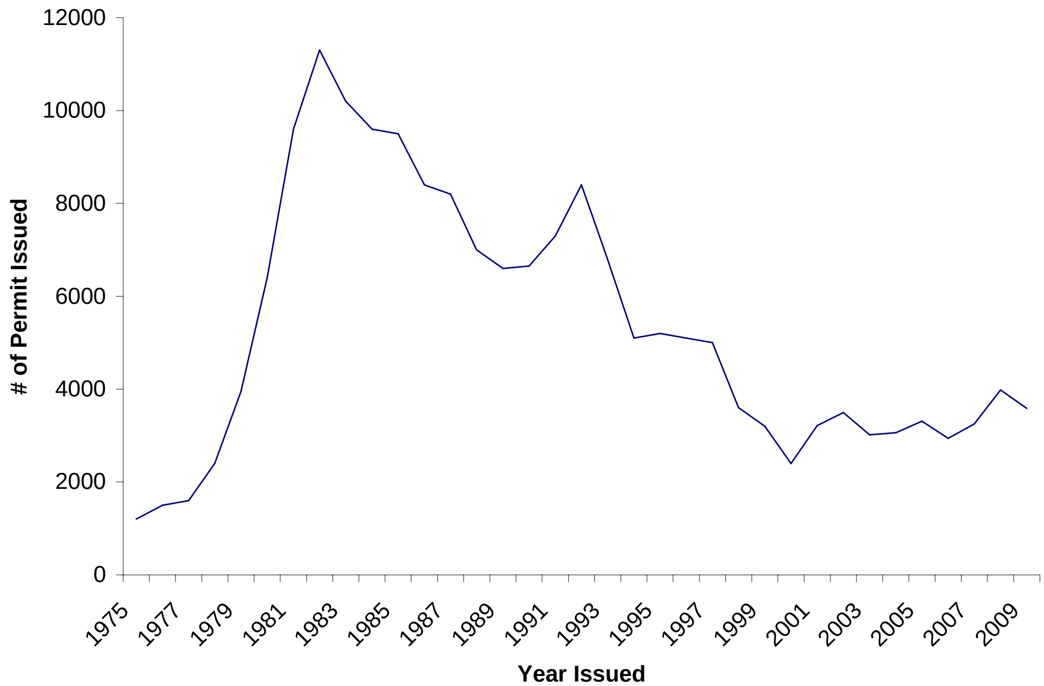

Figure 11(B) Number of domestic cutting permits issued from 1975 to 2010 in District 1. In addition to a variety of management practices over the last two decades, the volumes issued on individual permits have been reduced to bring the harvest to the sustainable level throughout the District. Domestic cutting (Figure 12) currently accounts for 81% of the total harvest of the District.

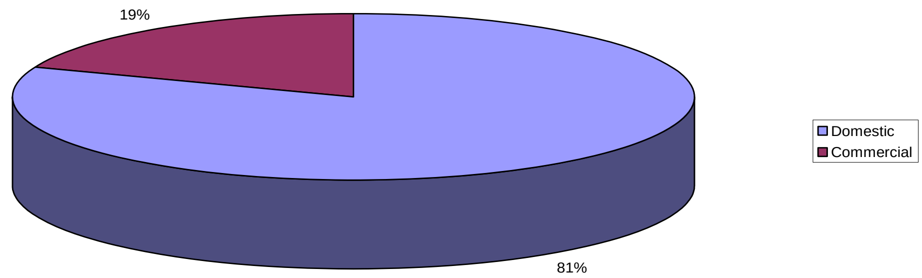

Figure 12 . Proportion of District harvest shown as domestic and commercial based on the last five years of harvest.

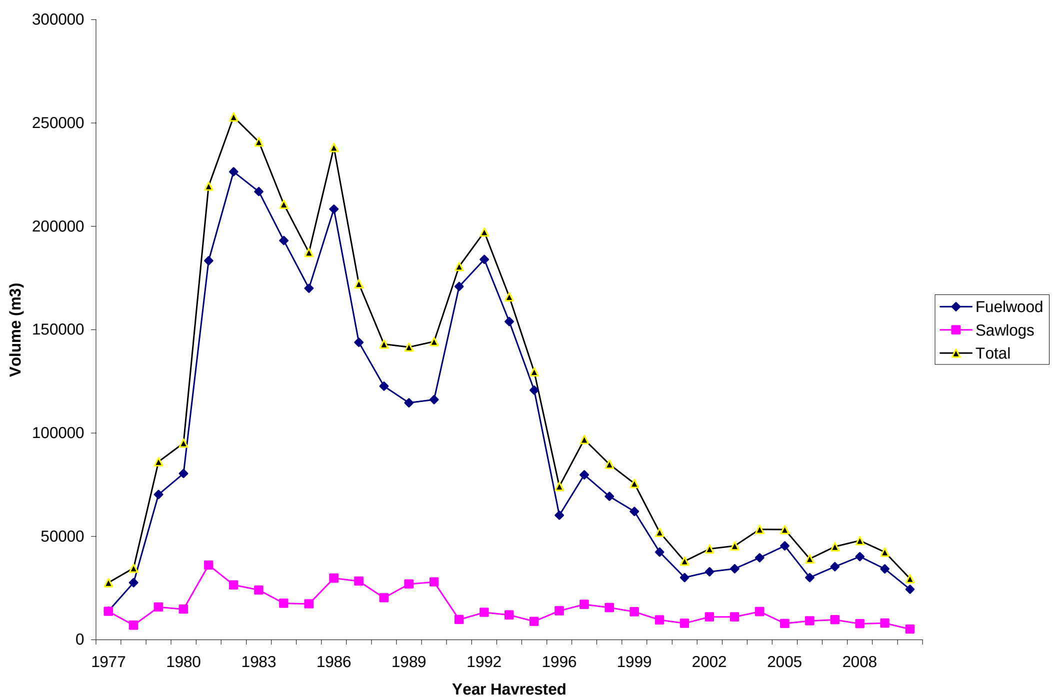

Figure 13. Total timber harvest in District 1 (Commercial and Domestic).

The commercial harvest of wood on the Avalon has followed a fluctuating path since 1976 (Figure 14 (A)). The numbers of commercial cutting permits and sawmill licences, continue to follow a downward trend (Figure 14(B)). In accordance with regulations, commercial cutting permits are required where any timber is cut that is not for a persons own use (which means commercial cutting permits are required for such things as transmission line maintenance or geological exploration). Hence, of the approximate commercial cutting permits issued, about 70 would be engaged in the harvest of timber as the primary commercial activity, with permit volumes ranging from 10 to 2,500m3 annually. About half are below the 100 m3 level per year. Timber harvest generally concentrates on the production of fuelwood, sawlogs and lower quantities of pulpwood. Commercial operations have generally maintained a production level corresponding to historical levels on the Avalon. Whereas commercial harvesting accounted for approximately half the total volume of timber harvested prior to the 1970's, it currently accounts for 19 % of the harvest on Crown Land in the District (Figure 12).

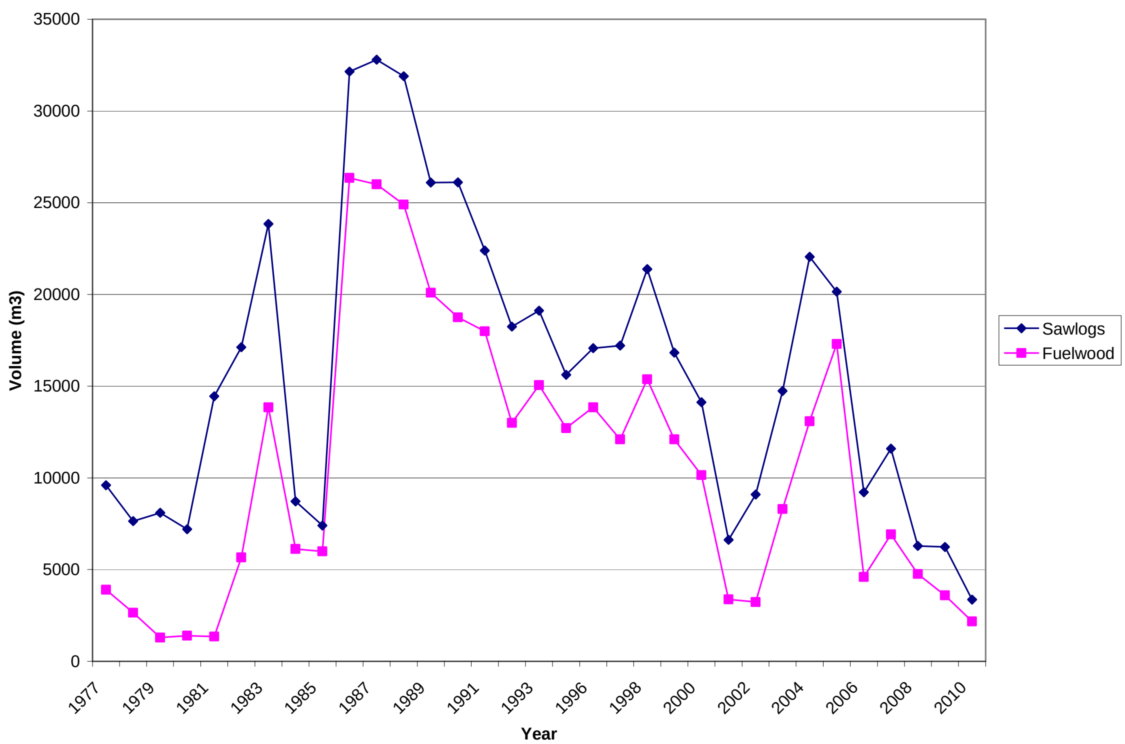

Figure 14 (A). Volumes harvested by commercial cutters annually from 1977 to 2010 by product

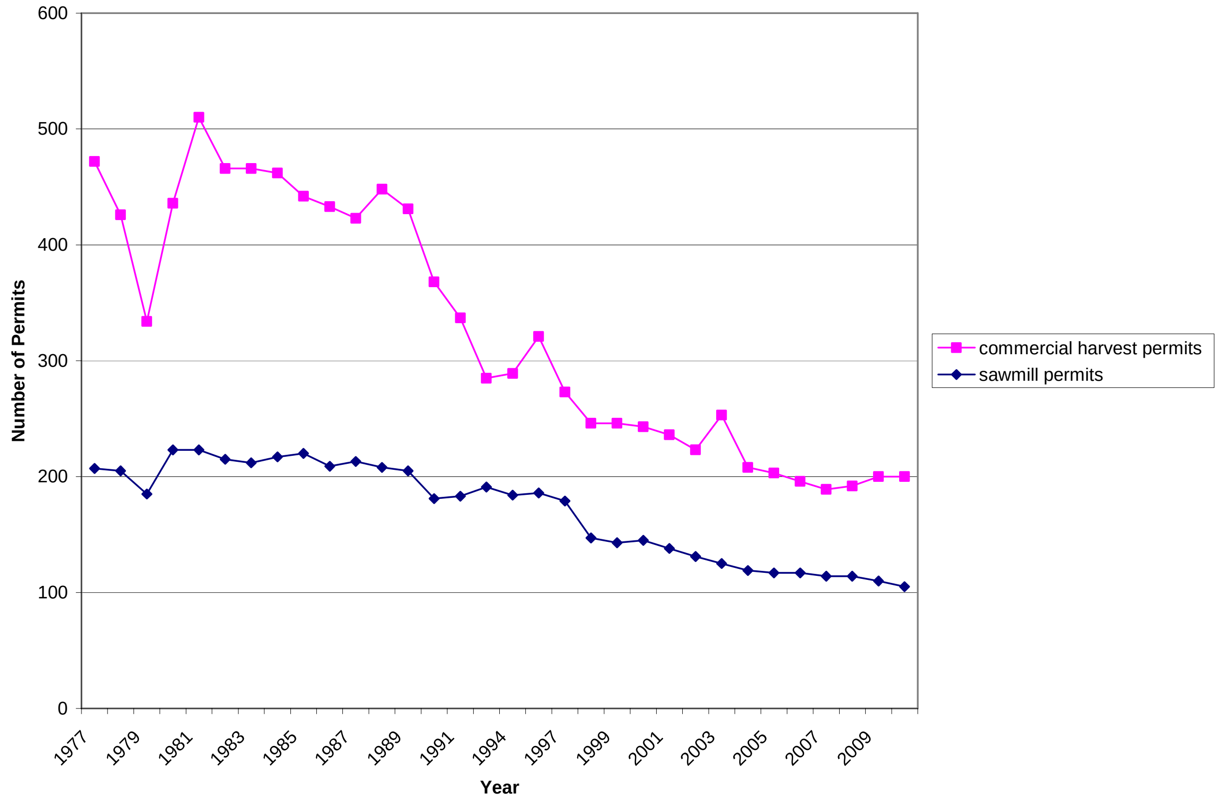

Figure 14.(B) The number of commercial cutting permits and sawmill licences issued from 1977 to 2010.

Note : (14A) does not include cut from private land.

The demand for local forest products ranges from rough sawn dimensional lumber, dressed finished lumber, fuelwood to wood for furniture and craft construction (Figure 13). In St. John's alone, over 10, 200 households purchased fuelwood in 1995 (Trelawney 1995). Currently white birch and black spruce from central Newfoundland are being sold on the Avalon which indicates that the market for fuelwood is substantial this wood would normally be consumed in central however the closure of the pulpwood industry is now resulting in the flooding of fuelwood markets of the Avalon and impacting local operators.