

# PROTECTING CANADA'S FORESTS

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for Q&A with  
**Paul Zizka**



## Equitable Tree Access — Planting a Better Future One Tree at a Time

Danielle St-Aubin



**Danielle St-Aubin**  
CEO,  
Tree Canada

Canada — the globe's second-biggest country — has a seemingly endless variety of wild landscapes, and our vast forests and nature are what attract many to visit. Despite having one of the highest numbers of trees per capita worldwide with an estimated 8,953 trees per person, not all Canadians have equal access to those trees and their benefits. With over 80 percent of the population now living in urban areas, municipalities have begun focusing their efforts on increasing the equitable access of urban trees and green spaces for all residents.

### The importance of equitable tree access

Studies done in Toronto, Montreal, and many cities in the U.S. have shown that a map of tree cover is often also a map of race and income, with those living in lower-income or more racialized neighbourhoods tending to have fewer trees and lower access to them. Alternatively, those neighbourhoods with a higher median income contain more trees with easier access to them.

The events of the pandemic have shone a light on many societal inequalities and the

uneven distribution of trees and environmental services across municipalities is yet another. Understanding that access to green spaces, urban trees, parks, and trails is a social determinant of public health will allow health care professionals, urban foresters, and municipal city planners to extend the benefits trees provide by supporting socially-just tree policy, planning, and management.

### Creating equitable tree access

In 2020, American Forests launched a Tree Equity Score to highlight the resource allocations required for equitable canopy distribution in cities. Further, in 2021, the Trust for Public Land added an equity factor to its annual ParkScore index.

As municipalities across Canada work to create equitable tree access, a common target to achieve is a 30 percent tree canopy coverage. Looking at this percentage closer, it's important to meet this target at the more granular neighbourhood level, not just municipality-wide, identifying first-hand those neighbourhoods with a lower canopy cover.

Possible solutions to the sometimes limited planting space in these neighbourhoods can

include breaking up existing concrete areas to expand soil areas for planting, choosing tree species that may flourish in smaller areas, or possibly creating incentive programs for private property owners if public space is limited. In addition, it's equally vital to protect and maintain any existing canopy or trees that currently exist — especially since good things like trees take a long time to develop and thrive.

At Tree Canada, we're hopeful for a greener and equitable future and are always encouraged by the municipalities we work with that are taking the necessary steps to increase their canopy cover equitably among all the neighbourhoods in their communities.

We understand that just as ecosystem health is commonly determined by a measure of biodiversity, so too should the health of our communities be determined by the shared prosperity, happiness, and safety of all its residents.

So, on this 10th anniversary of National Tree Day, consider your own communities and how your trees, parks, and green spaces are distributed. Trees, as we've come to discover especially this past year, bring us many benefits and they should benefit everyone.



To learn more about National Tree Day and the important role trees play in our communities, visit [treecanada.ca/nationaltreeday](http://treecanada.ca/nationaltreeday).

This article was sponsored by **Tree Canada**.

Project Manager: **Raman Wallia** Business Development Manager: **Melanie Kosev** Country Manager: **Nina Theodoris** Content and Production Manager: **Raymond Fan** Designer: **Lauren Livingston** Web Editor: **Karthik Talwar**  
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## Celebrating National Forest Week 2021

Committed to protecting Canada's forests through  
FPAC's "30 by 30" Climate Change Challenge

Learn more:  
[www.fpac.ca/sustainable-forestry/30by30](http://www.fpac.ca/sustainable-forestry/30by30)



# Vote with Your Wallet to Support Sustainable Forestry Practices

[shopfsc.ca](https://shopfsc.ca) helps consumers stand for forests.

**N**early 400 million hectares of forest stretch across Canada, which is home to 10 percent of the world's woodland. Still, our national canopy is threatened and consistently at risk: since the turn of the century, this country's tree cover has plummeted 11 percent — or by 44 million hectares, according to Global Forest Watch.

The news cycle demonstrates in real time our close relationship with forests. There is annual, serious wildfire activity in BC searing the landscape of many communities, and the summer of 2021 was no exception. In northwestern Ontario, smoke from forest fires hung as far south as Toronto, dropping air quality and visibility all along the way.

Walls of flame get the attention, but in truth stakeholders that range from activists to corporations have been sounding the alarm bell on deforestation in the name of urban growth, industry, and agriculture for decades. When we hear about this, it's usually in the spectre of something newsworthy, like RCMP officers recently shutting down old growth protests in the forests of Fairy Creek on Vancouver Island — a scene set to become the biggest act of civil disobedience in Canada's history.

At stake is the loss of diverse wildlife, Indigenous communities, and carbon storage that helps avert the climate crisis. Protecting our forests is a role that isn't exclusive to activist organizations, government agencies, or eco-conscious corporations. It's a role any consumer can accept, with their wallet and with their choices. In an economy-driven society, that role is second to none.

## FSC stands for forests

In Canada and around the world, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) protects animal habitat, Indigenous Peoples' rights, workers' rights, and areas of environmental or cultural importance.

To that end, it has set a strict national standard for responsible forest management that any forestry company must meet in order to be FSC-certified. In this process, companies must demonstrate they're preserving caribou habitat, working collaboratively with local Indigenous Peoples, acting in a socially-responsible manner, and prioritizing high conservation values — biological, ecological, social or cultural values of outstanding significance — among other requirements.

In this meticulous process, FSC tracks fibre

from certified forests along the entire supply chain all the way to the store — where consumers are then empowered to be part of the sustainability solution by selecting wood, paper and other forest products bearing the FSC label.

These labels provide consumers with an assurance that the products are made from responsible sources and have been verified to meet FSC's strict environmental and social standards.

In fact, FSC Canada's national forest management standard is this country's sole forest certification system to be supported by top environmental organizations including the World Wildlife Fund Canada, the David Suzuki Foundation, and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association.

The FSC label can be found on millions of products that range from toilet paper, books, and furniture to shoes and musical instruments. The consumer experience is often a rushed one, so to make sustainable purchasing even easier, Canadians can now find FSC certified products online at [shopfsc.ca](https://shopfsc.ca). It's home to a growing list of companies proudly showcasing their FSC-certified products, including Pottery Barn, Lululemon, Hunter Boots, Allbirds, and more.

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Find FSC-certified products online at [shopfsc.ca](https://shopfsc.ca) or learn more about FSC and its approach to sustainable forestry at [ca.fsc.org](https://ca.fsc.org).

This article was sponsored by the Forest Stewardship Council.



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## Protecting Canada's Forests Through Personal Action

The Canadian Wildlife Federation's programs engage young Canadians in conservation.

David DeRocco

**W**ith roots planted deeply in conservation education programming, the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF) has always been a national leader in youth engagement. The mission at the CWF continues to be connecting Canadians to nature throughout every stage and age of their lives, and education remains a primary pillar of that mission.

That commitment to education was reinforced in 2018 when the CWF launched the Canadian Conservation Corps (CCC), a three-stage conservation leadership program designed for youth aged 18 to 30 funded by the Government of Canada through the Canada Service Corps initiative. It was followed by the 2020 launch of the CWF WILD Outside (WO) program, an outdoor adventure and service learning initiative targeting youth

aged 15 to 18. Together, these two programs developed and delivered by the CWF represent a huge commitment by the organization to develop the next generation of conservation stewards in Canada.

"At the CWF, we take a comprehensive approach to youth engagement," says Mike Bingley, CWF's Director of Education. "We believe that all stages of development are important: from nature play with young children, and gardening stewardship programs for elementary schools to service learning and employment programs for teenagers and young adults, we're committed to helping young people make a difference."

Through a variety of initiatives delivered in collaboration with CWF partners in conservation and the development of self-directed projects, members of both the CCC

and WO programs have been actively involved in conservation activities across Canada. Many of these have been focused on forestry initiatives, including trail building, tree wrapping, reforestation and afforestation initiatives, woodland cleanups, and tree identification seminars. For example, Jessie Lozanski, a CCC participant from Ottawa, spent her placement working on invasive species management projects including Scots pine removal and gypsy moth surveying, along with inventorying forests and leading trail cleanups. Lozanski says that her time gave her a new appreciation for CWF conservation efforts.



**If your plan is for one year, plant rice. If your plan is for 10 years, plant trees. If your plan is for 100 years, educate children.**

— Confucius

"I learned that forestry is the act of a mutually-beneficial relationship between people and the woods," she says. "We gain so many services from forests, lumber being the most obvious, but they also clean our watersheds, filter our air, and house a wide array of biodiversity. Forestry, as careful management, helps the woods thrive and is incredibly important for the future of our forests and humanity as well."

The impact of the CCC and WO programs is being felt in Canada from coast to coast. So far, the 337 participants who have joined the CCC have completed more than 225,000 service hours, while over 839 WO participants have completed another 16,293 hours in their home communities. The projects developed and delivered by these young conservation stewards have focused on a variety of different conservation initiatives, from installing pollinator gardens, turtle nest protectors, and bat houses aiding species recovery to organizing shoreline cleanups, developing classroom curriculum, and spearheading programs designed to reduce plastic pollution in the ocean.

"Programs like the CCC and WO keep us at the vanguard of conservation education in Canada," says Bingley, who notes that the CWF has reached over half a million people through its education programming over the past five years. "It's vital to inspire young Canadians to care about nature, about wildlife, and, most importantly, about conservation. Education is the key to making that happen."



**Mike Bingley**  
Director of Education,  
Canadian Wildlife Federation



**Jessie Lozanski**  
Participant,  
Canadian Conservation Corps



For more information, visit [canadianconservationcorps.ca](https://www.canadianconservationcorps.ca) or [wildoutside.ca](https://www.wildoutside.ca).

This article was sponsored by the **Canadian Wildlife Federation**.



## Why Do Forests Matter?

**F**orests are renewable, reliable, regenerative, and restorative. They also store carbon, help protect wildlife, and sustain communities by enabling diverse career opportunities and supporting mental and physical well-being.

But not everyone understands the environmental, social, and economic value that forests provide.

Project Learning Tree Canada (PLT Canada)'s Forest Literacy Framework is a free, bilingual resource that helps increase people's understanding of forests — and the importance of sustainable forest management — and empowers them to take actions that benefit forests and people.

The publication is organized into four themes: "What is a forest?", "Why do forests matter?", "How do we sustain our forests?", and "What is our responsibility to forests?" Readers of all ages can also explore concepts by grade level or by "hot topics" (like climate change, public health, and green jobs).



Explore PLT Canada's Forest Literacy Framework at [pltcanada.org/forest-literacy](https://www.pltcanada.org/forest-literacy). PLT Canada is an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

This article was sponsored by **Project Learning Tree Canada**.



## Capturing the Beauty of the Canadian Outdoors with Paul Zizka

Canadian photographer **Paul Zizka** goes beyond the camera lens in an interview with Medioplanet on his love for the outdoors and the importance of leaving nature how it was found.



### What makes Canada's national parks special to you?

First and foremost, I think that in a country that's so rich in natural heritage, it's crucial for us Canadians to have an agency like Parks Canada that aims to protect and conserve those special places and ecosystems. I feel extremely privileged to be able to live in the heart of the national park system here in Banff, and to lean on my connection with nature so heavily, on a daily basis. So does my family. Nature has added much value to our lives. I also see millions of visitors coming to experience that special connection with the land, the scenery, and the fauna and so I've come to realize how important the wilderness is not just on its own, but as a place of significance to the human race. Preserving the ecological integrity of our national parks is absolutely crucial to the health of countless species, including our own.

### What do you find most inspirational when you're photographing?

The beauty of the parks alone is enough to get me to pull out the camera and create, both for myself and also to share my experience with the world. I also never cease to marvel at how dynamic those places are. As an artist, the local mountains, lakes, and forests constantly provide a fresh canvas as the locations keep renewing themselves through the ever-changing weather and light. I also find tremendous inspiration in thinking about all those who have come before me and have seen their lives bettered by a place.

### What are some of the issues Canada's national parks are facing today? And how can we work to mitigate them?

Living in Banff, in the heart of the Canadian Rockies, the issue that's always most front of mind for me is the sheer number of visitors. These are special places where lasting memories are made, where we feel alive and at our best, and so it's no surprise that they attract people from all over the globe. Unfortunately, heavy visitation has a negative impact on local wildlife, fragile environments, and delicate ecosystems. If we are to welcome so many visitors, we must make sure that the infrastructure can handle it, that the transportation mechanisms can keep up, that habitats are not encroached upon, and, most of all, I believe we must truly emphasize the importance of responsible, sustainable travel for all visitors so that these places can remain havens for humans yet still retain their ecological integrity.



Read the full article online at [innovatingcanada.ca](https://www.innovatingcanada.ca).







**Christine Gelowitz**  
RPF, CEO,  
Association  
of BC Forest  
Professionals

## Forestry Isn't Just About Trees, It's About People

Christine Gelowitz  
RPF, CEO, Association of BC Forest Professionals

In a year when COVID-19 again dominated much of the news, events in BC inextricably pulled public attention to the province's forests. Wildfires scorched much of BC's Interior, leaving people fearing the loss of life, home, and livelihood. The province moved toward shared decision-making with Indigenous peoples, a much-needed but complex change to forest management. Pending forest policy changes also left people wondering about the security of jobs in many rural communities. And old growth protests, originating on Vancouver Island, exposed passionate division between urban and rural residents, young and old, Indigenous Peoples, and even among the registered forest professionals charged with caring for forests throughout BC.

Sometimes forestry isn't about trees, it's about people. Nearly every British Columbian holds values about the forest — be they spiritual, environmental, or economic. When forest activities run counter to people's values, emotions run high, fingers are pointed, and blame is dispensed.

Planning and caring for healthy, sustainable forests is the role of registered forest professionals. Like dentists, engineers, accountants, and doctors, forest professionals are regulated. BC's registered forest professionals have university degrees or college diplomas, completed a two-year articling process, pass a series of licensure examinations, and follow professional standards and codes.

Forest professionals, however, don't have a single, monolithic view on forest management or how we use forests. They have a broad range of opinions, based on science, training, and practical experience.

Given the complexity of old growth forests, it's natural that forest professionals have differing opinions. But the debate around old growth isn't truly about the science and the practice of professional forestry — it's about the choices the landowner has made about how, and for what purpose, forests are used.

With 94 percent of BC's forested land publicly-owned, the provincial government has a responsibility to understand what the public wants from its forests and to set priorities for the use and management of that forest land. Regardless of their personal views or those of their employer, forest professionals are required to follow the law, adhere to public forest policies, and keep public interest paramount when making recommendations or decisions around forest management.

Determining what BC forests will or won't be used for isn't a small or simple task. There are a multitude of voices clamouring to have their preferred solutions imposed by governments. How do governments balance different values and demands? Which should be prioritized?

A growing number of British Columbians want the use of forests to reflect their current and future interests, regardless of past uses. That's fair — priorities should be reset as societal values evolve. But forests are complex ecosystems. Decisions made today can

have unintended consequences in the future. And therein lies the challenge.

Governments are responsible for setting the rules and policies that reflect society's desires for BC's forests today. And the informed voices of registered forest professionals are integral in helping public and government decision-makers alike understand the ecological consequences of whatever policies are introduced to meet those desires.

### Forestry is not what you think it is.

Learn how forest professionals serve the public interest.



**Mark Pearson**  
Executive Director,  
Canadian Institute  
of Forestry

## Canada's Diverse Forests Are Connected to Our Everyday Lives

Mark Pearson

Under the theme "Our Forests — Continually Giving," National Forest Week (NFW), running from September 19 to 25, 2021, celebrates how Canada's diverse forests are connected to our everyday lives.

Led by the Canadian Institute of Forestry/ Institut forestier du Canada (CIF-IFC) this campaign highlights how forests offer a variety of products as well as social, cultural, and health benefits.

"Forests are more important now than ever, serving as a beacon of renewal, resilience, and hope for the future," says CIF-IFC Executive Director, Mark Pearson. "As we look ahead, through sustainable forest management, we can ensure our forests are renewed and remain resilient."

There are many ways to participate in NFW: following daily sub-themes on CIF-IFC's social media, organizing a tree plant, exploring a local forest, or learning more about forests and sustainable forest management.



To learn more about #NationalForestWeek or to download free NFW materials, visit: [cif-ifc.org/national-forest-week](http://cif-ifc.org/national-forest-week).

This article was sponsored by the **Canadian Institute of Forestry**.



## Mike Holmes Jr.'s Advice on Sustainable Construction and Renovations

Professional contractor and TV host Mike Holmes Jr. shares his insight and advice on the importance of sustainable construction and renovations.

### Why is sustainability important to you as a carpenter and renovator?

As a carpenter, a contractor, and someone who has a great appreciation for the environment, sustainability is extremely important to me. I see a lot of waste in my industry. From houses being poorly built to furniture being cheaply made and not built to last, I see a lot of "flavour of the year" attitude. Too many people get caught up in current trends that fade and then want to grab on to the next one, thinking of building material as disposable. We need to start thinking more in terms of longevity and sustainability. We have the knowledge and ability to build healthy homes that last longer, but a lot of people only focus on the finishes of their home. As someone who appreciates the outdoors and has seen a change in the state of the environment in my lifetime, it's integral that we start thinking more sustainably.

### What advice would you give to woodworkers who are looking to be more sustainable?

To any woodworker who wants to be more sustainable, I'd suggest trying to upcycle materials where you can. If you see a tree that has recently died, consider having it milled up and dried by a local sawmill. If you can keep your shopping for wood locally, support your local trades, and follow the natural life cycle of trees around you, you'll certainly be a part of a greater impact.

### What steps can people take to be more environmentally-conscious when renovating their homes?

The most environmentally-conscious thing you can do when renovating your home is to work from the outside in. If you build an energy-efficient home that won't mould and is structurally sound with proper mechanical, then you won't have to renovate it as much over the years. The idea is to build a home that you can be born in, grow old in, and pass on to the next generation. Another thing we need to do is steer away from design trends and put some thought into a design that you want to live in for a longer period of time. Paint is easy to change, but when you start getting into moving walls, mechanical, and cabinets, then you get into a lot more waste and money.

### Why do you believe it's so important to support sustainable Canadian wood and forestry?

We need to think sustainably in everything we do. As our population continues to grow, we require more resources from the earth. When we start to take more than the earth can reproduce, then we have a real problem. Personally, I think we're already past that point, which is why I think it's even more essential that we think sustainably in everything we do.



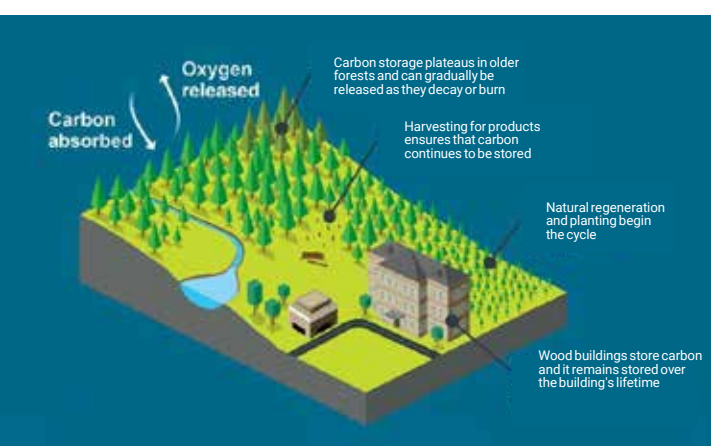


# Protecting Canada's Forests and Reducing Our Carbon Footprint

Tolko Industries Ltd

The effects of climate change can be seen across the country in droughts, insect outbreaks, floods, increased wildfire intensity, and melting glacial ice. In an effort to slow the warming of the earth's surface, Canada has committed to reduce the country's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 30 percent by 2030. Closely related to climate change is the earth's natural carbon cycle.

The carbon cycle refers to the continuous transfer of carbon from land and water to the atmosphere and living things. Forests are a vital part of this cycle, both storing and releasing carbon in a dynamic process of growth, decay, and renewal.



*Illustration of the carbon cycle showing how growing forests absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen.*

"There exists a perspective that is held by many that forest fires are solely the result of climate change, and not the result of forest preservation and fire suppression," says Bob Fleet, Vice President of Environment and Forestry at Tolko Industries Ltd. "Although the release of carbon is inevitable during a forest fire, it's important to remember that this process is part of a natural cycle that's necessary to help rejuvenate our forests over time."

Canada's forests are a vital global ecosystem, absorbing tremendous amounts of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), and an important renewable resource that contributes to our economy. Carbon is stored in wood fibre products, with storage prolonged through the recovery and recycling of forest products. As Canada faces the challenge of reducing GHGs, maintaining healthy, vibrant forests and furthering the use of wood-derived products will be important in the transition to a greener, low-carbon economy.

## Tolko's role in mitigating climate change

Sustainable forest management practices, leading-edge manufacturing facilities, and the ongoing development of innovative wood products lay the foundation of Tolko's commitment to mitigating climate change. Tolko helped shape the collective forest industry's commitment in fighting climate change through the development of the Forest Product Association of Canada's "30 by 30" Climate Change Challenge in 2016. The challenge for the forest industry is to remove 30 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year

by 2030, representing 13 percent of Canada's overall target.

## Supporting sustainable forest management

Proactive forest management is an important tool to mitigate and combat climate change. Tolko is committed to sustainable forest management that follows strict regulatory systems, environmental standards, and continuous monitoring.

"Sustainable forestry practices maintain the long-term health of forest ecosystems for present and future generations," says Fleet. "Tolko's practices, such as the use of new technology in forest inventories, continuous research, prompt reforestation, support of Indigenous partnerships, and harvest planning imitating natural forest ecosystems, all support sustainable management."

Tolko forests are certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standard, an independent third-party certification that demonstrates the rigorous level of planning that's involved to harvest and ensure successful reforestation of the forests it manages. SFI-certified forests and products are powerful tools to achieve shared goals such as fighting climate change, reducing waste, conservation, fostering biodiversity, educating future generations, and sustainable economic development. SFI standards are recognized and accepted by governments and customers around the world. The SFI Forest Management Standard requires a number of practices with direct climate benefits, such as ensuring forests remain as forests, requiring harvested areas be promptly regenerated, and requiring practices that reduce the likelihood of wildfire or damaging invasive species.

At Tolko, research on the state of the forest and its evolution help shape the company's understanding and informs its management strategies. In Saskatchewan, for example, ecosystem-based forest management is implemented by mimicking natural forest patterns in harvest plans. Careful planning and harvest play an important role in how forest blocks regenerate. Regeneration strategy not only includes replanting, but also allowing trees such as aspen, pine, and poplar to regenerate naturally. Deciduous forests successfully regenerate naturally through suckering in the Meadow Lake, Slave Lake, and High Prairie regions.

In Alberta, Tolko is using state-of-the-art technology and satellite imagery to capture real-time forest metrics such as tree species, height, and volume. These data help predict future forests, discover climate change impacts, and understand the dynamic forest ecosystems landscape. Healthy forests maintain their ecological and carbon functions, which are essential to providing long-term ecosystem, economic, and social benefits achieved through proper forest management.

## Leading the way with modern manufacturing facilities

Over the past five years, Tolko has undertaken several initiatives to reduce its emissions

through facility modernization and clean energy systems, such as:

- Investing in a new thermal oil energy system modernization at its High Prairie Division with the plant reopening. This is a closed-loop energy system that uses wood waste to heat oil. The energy systems will reduce Tolko's natural gas consumption by 500,000 gigajoules per year, which will reduce its GHG footprint by 22,000 tonnes per year of CO<sub>2</sub>, equivalent to taking 4,750 cars off the road.

- Decommissioning High Level Division's beehive burner in August 2020 and replacing it with a thermal energy system that runs new world-class continuous dry kilns. These changes have enabled the utilization of over 100,000 bone dry tonnes per year of formerly incinerated sawmill waste.

- In a partnership with Pinnacle Renewable Energy Inc., a new pellet mill at Tolko's High Level Division that utilizes the sawdust from the sawmill to produce energy-rich pellets, greatly reducing wood waste and replacing coal for electricity generation.

## Innovative wood products

Wooden buildings store more carbon than competing products. Tolko's innovative engineered wood products allow architects, engineers, and builders to maximize their use of wood in new ways. Building more with sustainably-managed wood can deliver significant emissions reductions.

Additions to Tolko's engineered wood portfolio include Athabasca Division's new rip line to produce laminated strand lumber and Heffley Creek Division's engineered parallel-laminated veneer product. Both provide a consistent high-strength wood option for the industrial sector.



**The challenge for the forest industry is to remove 30 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year by 2030, representing 13 percent of Canada's overall target.**

Tolko's Soda Creek Division recovers short-length lumber produced in the sawmill from logs that would otherwise be left in the forest. This lumber is converted into a highly sought-after finger jointed stud product. To help mitigate climate change, Tolko is committed to building leading-edge manufacturing facilities, promoting wood products as viable building options, and supporting science-based forest management.

## About Tolko

*Tolko Industries Ltd. is a leading manufacturer of a wide range of forest products for customers around the world, including lumber, plywood and veneer, oriented strand board, co-products, biomass power, and a growing number of specialty wood products. It holds third-party certification on the forestlands it sustainably manages in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan and plays an active role in the communities where its employees live and work.*



**Bob Fleet**  
Vice President of Environment & Forestry, Tolko Industries Ltd.

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