Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners

What is the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners?

The Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners (CFWO) is a national federation of provincial woodlot owner organizations. The CFWO promotes the economic and social interests of Canadian private woodlot owners by representing their views through a united national voice. The Federation is committed to the sustainable management of private forest resources to ensure they will continue to contribute to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of rural communities across Canada.

Canada's private woodlots

Across rural Canada there are over 18.9 million hectares of private woodlots representing about 6% of Canada's forested landscape. Ownership of these woodlots is very diverse. It includes an estimated 450,000 families as well as some larger companies. For some families woodlot ownership is new, while for many others, the woodlot has been in the family for many generations.

Canada is diverse in many ways and the size and the species composition of woodlots is no different. Private woodlots range in average size from 30–40 ha in the eastern provinces to >60 ha in the prairies. In the southern regions of Ontario and Quebec the woodlots are dominated by tolerant hardwoods while in the Maritimes and western provinces they are home primarily to a mixture of deciduous and conifer species. One commonality is most of these forests are located in Canada's most populated regions and represent a significant component of our settled natural landscape. For example, about one third of Canada's population lives in southern Ontario where 90% of the forests are privately owned and managed.

Canada's private woodlot owners

Canada's woodlot owners are very diverse in terms of age, occupation, objectives and reasons for owning a woodlot. They include blue collar workers, farmers, professionals, retirees, etc. Many woodlot owners have adopted the values and principles of sustainable resource management. These three aspects of sustainable management – economic, ecological and social benefits – are well represented in the ownership motivations of woodlot owners.

Table 1: Ownership profile of Canada's forest landscape

	Area of non-reserved productive forest land (000 ha)						
Province	Public lands	Private industrial forests	Private woodlots (non-industrial)	% of private woodlots (non-industrial)	Number of woodlot owners *	Average area of ownership by woodlot owner (ha)	Range of private woodlot size, non-industrial (ha)
Quebec	35,500	1,094	5,520	13	130,000	42	4–3,000
Ontario	36,350	744	4,795	12	169,000	28	10–4,000
New Brunswick	2,960	1,210	1,740	30	42,000	45	5–4,000
Nova Scotia	1,030	850	1,780	49	31,000	57	10–2,000
Alberta	21,700	25	1,535	7	17,500	88	2–2,000
Manitoba	13,500	None	987	7	13,500	73	4–4,000
British Columbia	46,700	900	1,200	3	22,500	53	40–8,000
Saskatchewan	11,500	None	400	3	15,000	27	20–2,000
Prince Edward Island	35	None	238	87	14,000	17	5–200
Nfld & Labr.	1,100	1,668	37	1	4,000	9	–
Canada	170,375	6,491	18,232	9.3	458,500	43	

* Estimate

Sources: Dansereau, Jean-Pierre and deMarsh, Peter, "A portrait of Canadian woodlot owners in 2003", The Forestry Chronicle, 2003. Various personal communications and unpublished reports: Hardie K. 2013 and Cote M-A. 2013.

Although the majority of Canada's woodlot owners don't depend on earning a full-time living from their woodlot, many rely on their woodlot as an important source of income. Sawlogs, pulpwood, firewood, maple syrup, and Christmas trees are common products from woodlots. Other common motivators for ownership include conservation, wildlife management, nature appreciation, investment, and recreational activities such as hunting, hiking, and cross county skiing.

The social-economic benefits of Canada's private woodlots

Private woodlots are not only an important source of economic and environmental benefits for the owner, but also for neighbouring communities. They contribute direct and indirect social, environmental and economic benefits to local economies including employment, clean air, recreation, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, water, and soil conservation.

Canadian private woodlots represent about 9.3% of Canada's total non-reserved productive forest land base (refer to Table 1). In terms of a worldwide perspective, if private woodlots were Canada's only forests, Canada would rank #11 in the developed world, between Finland and Spain in total forest cover.

Regional Economic Importance

In some regions of Canada private woodlots are an especially important contributor to their local economy. For example, in a 2012 report on New Brunswick's private woodlots, *New Approaches for Private Woodlots — Reframing the Forest Policy Debate*, it was reported that for each additional cubic metre of wood harvested and processed about $220 would be added to the provincial GDP, and for each additional 10,000 m^3 of wood processed, it would result in the creation of 13 direct and 12 indirect jobs.

While the annual revenue for individual woodlots in Canada is quite small, the aggregate value of production from all woodlots is significant. For example, in 2011 revenues from Canada's forestry and logging sector contributed $5.2 billion to Canada's gross domestic product (GDP). This included contributions from private woodlot owners who provided over 9% (13.6 million m^3) of the forest industry's total round wood supply, worth close to $500 million.

In addition to timber products private woodlots also support other economic activities within our communities. The two most prominent products are maple syrup and Christmas trees. In 2010 these two business activities contributed an additional $321 million to Canada's economy.

For more information

As they have done for many generations Canadian woodlot owners will continue to be an important contributor to the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being our rural communities. For more information about the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners contact the Woodlot Association of Manitoba www.woodlotmanitoba.com.

CFWO member organizations include: Federation of British Columbia Woodlot Associations, Woodlot Association of Alberta, Woodlot Association of Manitoba, Ontario Woodlot Association, Fédération des Producteurs Forestiers du Québec, New Brunswick Federation of Woodlot Owners, and the Federation of Nova Scotia Woodland Owners.