



# STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

DEVELOPING THE FORESTRY WORKFORCE FOR THE FUTURE

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**Presented by: Dennis Bedford**  
**April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**D.BEDFORD**  
FORESTRY SERVICES



Canadian Woodlands Forum

**FORUM**

Forum canadien  
des opérations forestières

**Pathways to Progress**



# Welcome and Thank you!

- How I got here...
- Frustration → Motivation
- Focused on the **workforce challenge**
- This is no longer just a vision –  
**it's HAPPENING**



**Be the Change you Wish to See – In Motion**





# A Glimpse Inside Our Living Classroom

(Excerpt from FORSEC interview – Summer 2024)



**Forestry**  
Sector Council

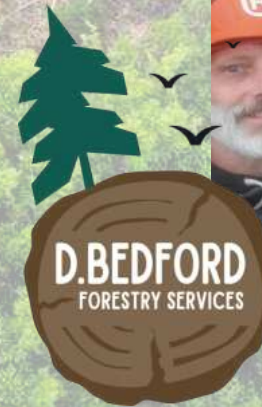




# Redefining the Ideal Worker

- Focused training = *\*successful\** *\*productive\** operators
- Mindset shift → Not repeating old patterns
- Reimagine traits, characteristics

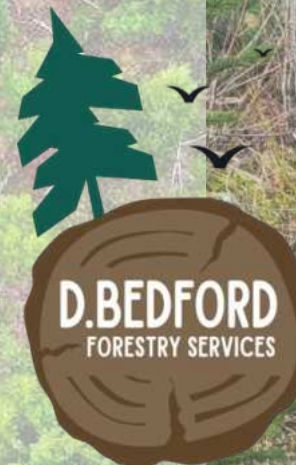
Find who truly **thrives** doing this work





# From Job to Calling

- *\*Coachable\* \*Observant\* \*Purpose-driven\**
- O2 and Co-op students looking for meaningful work
- Focusing on selection ➡ Greater retention
- Right People = Real Momentum





# Steward

- Care deeply about the forest—
  - its health
  - Regeneration
  - and future
- In sync with the land





# Stewards, Continued

- **Curiosity**

- Always asking questions, eager to understand

- Want to know *everything*—from tree species to treatment history

- **Pride**

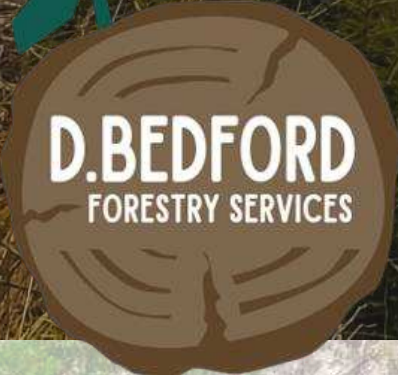
- They care about the quality of their work

- **Accountability**

- They take ownership, even when no one is watching





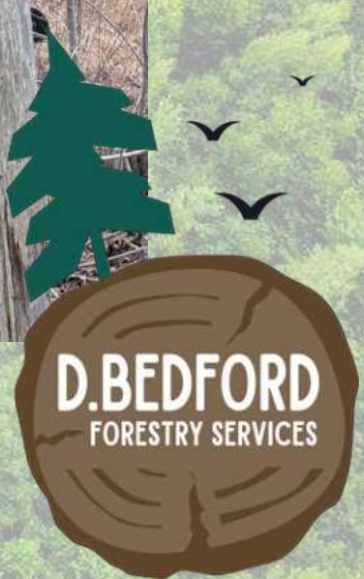


**D.BEDFORD**  
**FORESTRY SERVICES**



# Stewards, Continued

- Value + Belonging + Purpose = RETENTION
- Enjoy Working Autonomously
- Inspired by independence
- Strong team mentality
- **Purpose isn't taught – it's cultivated**







# Meet Jayde

(Excerpt from FORSEC interview – Summer 2024)



What made me glad about choosing



# Benefits of Youth | 16–30

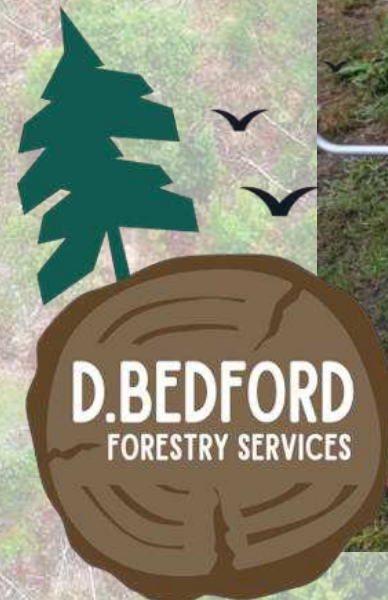
- **Current** Average Age – 17
- Open to Hiring Anyone **Who Fits Criteria**
- High Schoolers Can Earn, Save, **and** Gain Real-World Skills Before Graduation
- Shift from 3–5 year cycle → 5–7+ years





# Industry Challenges

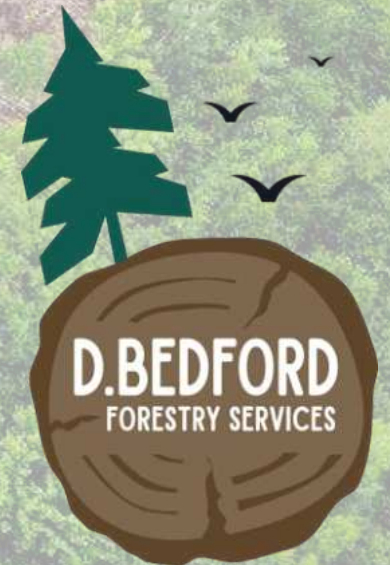
- PCT Training is Expensive
- Barriers to Entry
- Rate Structure doesn't support:
  - Attraction
  - Training
  - Retention
- Minimum Wage is *Low*





# Industry Challenges, Continued

- Minimum wage is unsustainable for *Most Contractors*
  - As a result, we often hear:
    - “Only hire someone with three years experience”
    - “Not babysitting in the woods anymore”
  - ***Simply can’t afford to***





# Industry Challenges, Continued

- Offering something different from the norm
  - Provide everything but boots
  - Pay a **fair wage** while training
- 600 hours =
  - **Safe**
  - **Knowledgeable**
  - **Productive**





# Innovative Training And Support

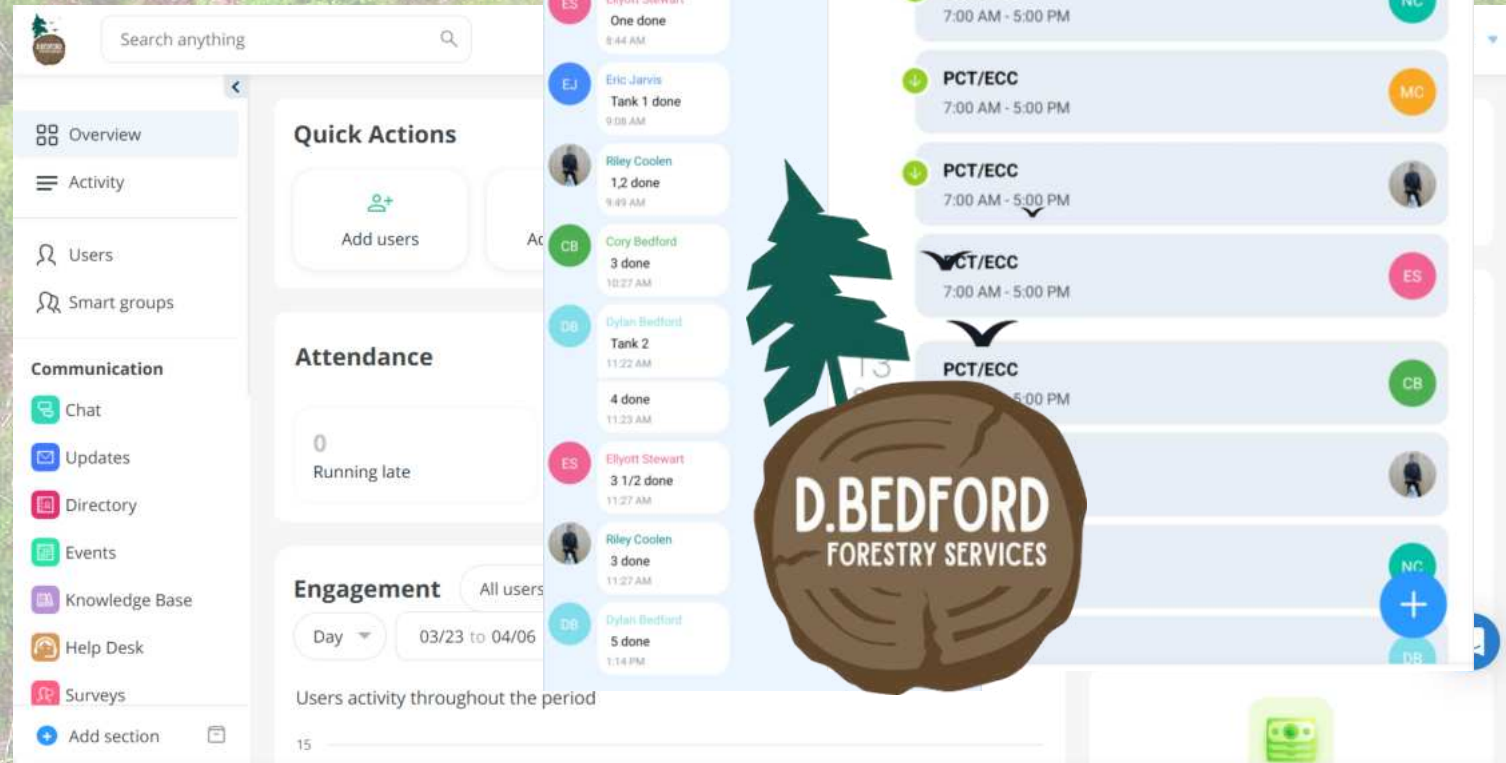
- Small Piece Sizes – One-on-One Training
  - Purpose Before Skill
- ISO Tunes Headsets
  - Real-time Coaching
- Drones and Cameras for Training and Feedback





# Innovative Training

- Stand Alone Platform/App
  - Scheduling
  - Maps
  - Documents
  - Communication
    - +Safety
- *All From Phones*





# Innovative Training – Health and Wellness

- Certified Health and Nutrition Coaching
  - Nutrition
    - Hydration + Sustenance
- Recovery
  - Conditioning/Stretching
- Mental resilience
- Natural / Nature



  Tina's Health Hacks 

 Tina McAuley  
INCOMING!!  
FOOT CARE! 🌙  
9:31 PM

Swamp Feet 101:  
"Swamp feet" (also known as trench foot or jungle rot) happens when your feet are constantly damp, warm, and compressed. It creates the perfect breeding ground for:

- Fungal infections (like athlete's foot)
- Blisters, peeling, and raw skin
- Itching, cracking, and odor bombs 🤢
- Risk of infection if left untreated

✅ Swamp Feet Prevention: The Golden Rules

1. Rotate Your Socks Like a Pro
  - Bring at least 2-3 pairs/day.
  - Change socks midday—even just a quick switch makes a HUGE difference.
  - Go for merino wool or moisture-wicking materials (not cotton).
2. Let Boots Breathe
  - Swap boots between days.
  - At night and stuff boots with cloth.
  - Use boot dryers or set them near a fire (not too close).

Friend  
with antifungal powder or natural powders before putting on socks.  
Natural Mix: Arrowroot, baking soda, tea tree oil, and zinc oxide.  
(Zinc-Based Diaper Cream)

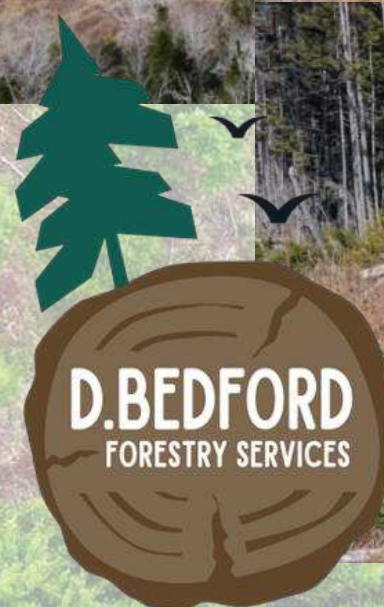
It acts as a moisture barrier on the skin, preventing chapped skin and protects against bacteria.

After cleaning feet, to raw or irritated skin.



# Stewardship. Sustainability and Carbon Capture

- PCT – Climate solution
  - Climate resilience
    - Accelerate growth
    - Reduce disease
    - Mitigate fire risk
    - Sequester carbon
- Silviculturists =  
Frontline climate stewards





# Industry-Wide Momentum

- 40 Letters of Support from Industry
- Endorsements from
  - Contractors
  - Landowners
  - Government
  - Schools
- Clear Message – We need this

**Signature of Support**  
I, the undersigned, fully support the D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. training initiative and its efforts to address the challenges of the forestry workforce in Nova Scotia.

Name: Debbie Reeves

Title: President/Manager

Company: Murray A. Reeves Forestry Ltd

Signature: Debbie Reeves

Date: March 4, 2025

**Signature of Support**  
I, the undersigned, fully support the D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. training initiative and its efforts to address the challenges of the forestry workforce in Nova Scotia.

Name: Breck Stuart

Title: General Manager

Company: WestFor Management Inc

Signature: Breck Stuart

Date: 2025-03-04



**Signature of Support**  
I, the undersigned, fully support the D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. training initiative and its efforts to address the challenges of the forestry workforce in Nova Scotia.

Name: Blair Penruik

Title: Executive Director

Company: The Federation of Nova Scotia Woodland Owners

Signature: Blair Penruik

Date: 12 March 2025

**Comments/Feedback (Optional):**  
The Federation is very pleased to support its sustainable careers in Nova Scotia's Forestry results in the training overview. It's clear that it is dedicated to their mission of empowering the operators and we owe a debt of gratitude for it.

**Feedback (Optional):**  
The forestry business has retained D Bedford Forestry Services on my land. I have witnessed first hand the impact of their training and mentorship of the recruits to effectively manage commercial Thinning Silviculture. In hiring Mr Bedford we have the enthusiasm of the recruits to the work. The impact of these forestry treatments and the positive impact on their skills. This gives me hope that with a positive development of a young workforce we will grow the healthy, productive economy and healthy environment.

**Comments/Feedback (Optional):**  
WestFor is proud to fully support D.Bedford Forestry Services Inc. Dennis and Tina have put forward a tremendous effort toward exposing younger Nova Scotians to silviculture and forest management which will benefit not just the forestry sector but all Nova Scotians for a long time. The fruits of their effort will be seen in woodlots across the province for generations and WestFor hopes to see more of D.Bedford Forestry Services Inc. continuing to encourage new folks to join this great sector!

**Signature of Support**  
I, the undersigned, fully support the D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. training initiative and its efforts to address the challenges of the forestry workforce in Nova Scotia.

Name: Quentin Forester

Title: Regional Forester

Company: DNR

Signature: Quentin Forester

Date: March 6, 2025

**Signature of Support**  
I, the undersigned, fully support the D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. training initiative and its efforts to address the challenges of the forestry workforce in Nova Scotia.

Name: Stephanie Masters

Title: Manager of Forest Resources

Company: Natural Resources

Signature: Stephanie Masters

Date: March 4, 2025

March 2025  
To Whom It May Concern,  
I am writing to express my strong support for D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. and their invaluable training program. As a high school teacher in the community, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the positive impact this initiative has on our students and the future workforce of Nova Scotia's forestry industry.  
D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to providing opportunities for young individuals to enter the forestry sector. By hiring students and offering co-op placements, they have created meaningful pathways for our youth to gain hands-on experience in the field.  
The program not only equips students with essential skills but also instills a strong work ethic and a passion for the outdoors. Their structured training and mentorship are now seeing the fruits of their labor as students enter the workforce, ready to take on the challenges posed by an ever-evolving industry.

**Signature of Support**  
I, the undersigned, fully support the D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. training initiative and its efforts to address the challenges of the forestry workforce in Nova Scotia.

Name: Jillian Weldon-Gerge

Title: Regional Forester

Company: Natural Resources

Signature: Jillian Weldon-Gerge

Date: March 3, 2025

**Comments/Feedback (Optional):**  
I can't say enough great things about the D. Bedford Forestry Training initiative. My son is part of this initiative and has been learning about forestry and really enjoying it. He is doing a job that many 12 year olds wouldn't be able to do because of lack of experience. But with Dennis support and guidance he is not only able to get experience, but is also a pleasure to explore something that can lead to a future in forestry. We are appreciative for this opportunity and feel this is a great initiative.

**Signature of Support**  
I, the undersigned, fully support the D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. training initiative and its efforts to address the challenges of the forestry workforce in Nova Scotia.

Name: David Macmillan

Title: President

Company: Macmillan Forest Inc

Signature: David Macmillan

Date: March 05 2025

**Comments/Feedback (Optional):**  
High School O2 leaders throughout rural N.S. are looking for opportunities like this for students.

**Signature of Support**  
I, the undersigned, fully support the D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. training initiative and its efforts to address the challenges of the forestry workforce in Nova Scotia.

Name: John Burgess

Title: Executive Director

Company: Forest Management

Signature: John Burgess

Date: March 4, 2025

**Comments/Feedback (Optional):**  
D Bedford's efforts and commitment are extraordinary! They understand the sector, know their clientele and have a system of training that works. Their efforts need to be supported by the forest sector, industry and government for the benefit of all of us who work in forestry in Nova Scotia.

**Signature of Support**  
I, the undersigned, fully support the D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc. training initiative and its efforts to address the challenges of the forestry workforce in Nova Scotia.

Name: Colin Hughes

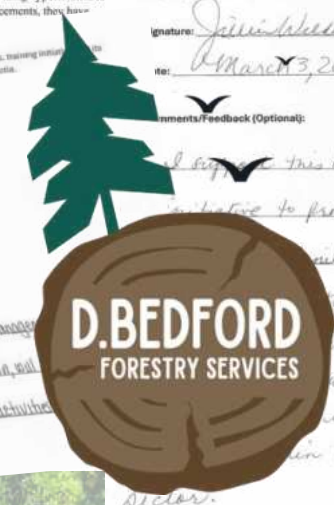
Title: Co-Owner

Company: Colin Hughes Forestry Ltd

Signature: Colin Hughes

Date: March 3 2025

**Comments/Feedback (Optional):**  
This is a necessary component for good forest management in maintaining a healthy forest. This is true, and forest fires and enhance the many other activities such as wild life, hunting and skiing.





# Long Game Vision

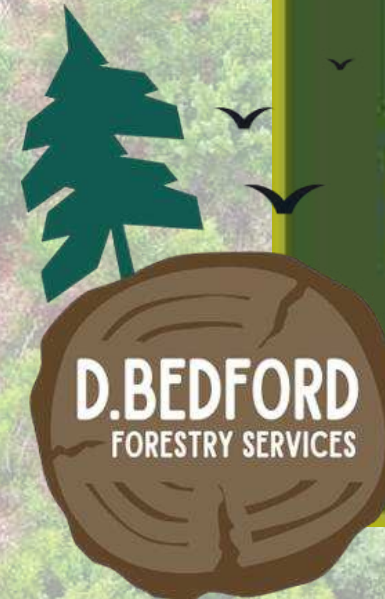
- 600 Hours of Training
  - + Continued Support
- A Path From Beginner to Seasoned Pro
  - Not Just a Program—A Pipeline
- Train 15–20 People Each Season





# Long Game Vision

- **Long Game Vision**
  - Find Aligned Partners
    - Not Just for Us—But for Everyone
      - Remove Barriers to Entry
      - Wage Support
  - Plan for the Industry

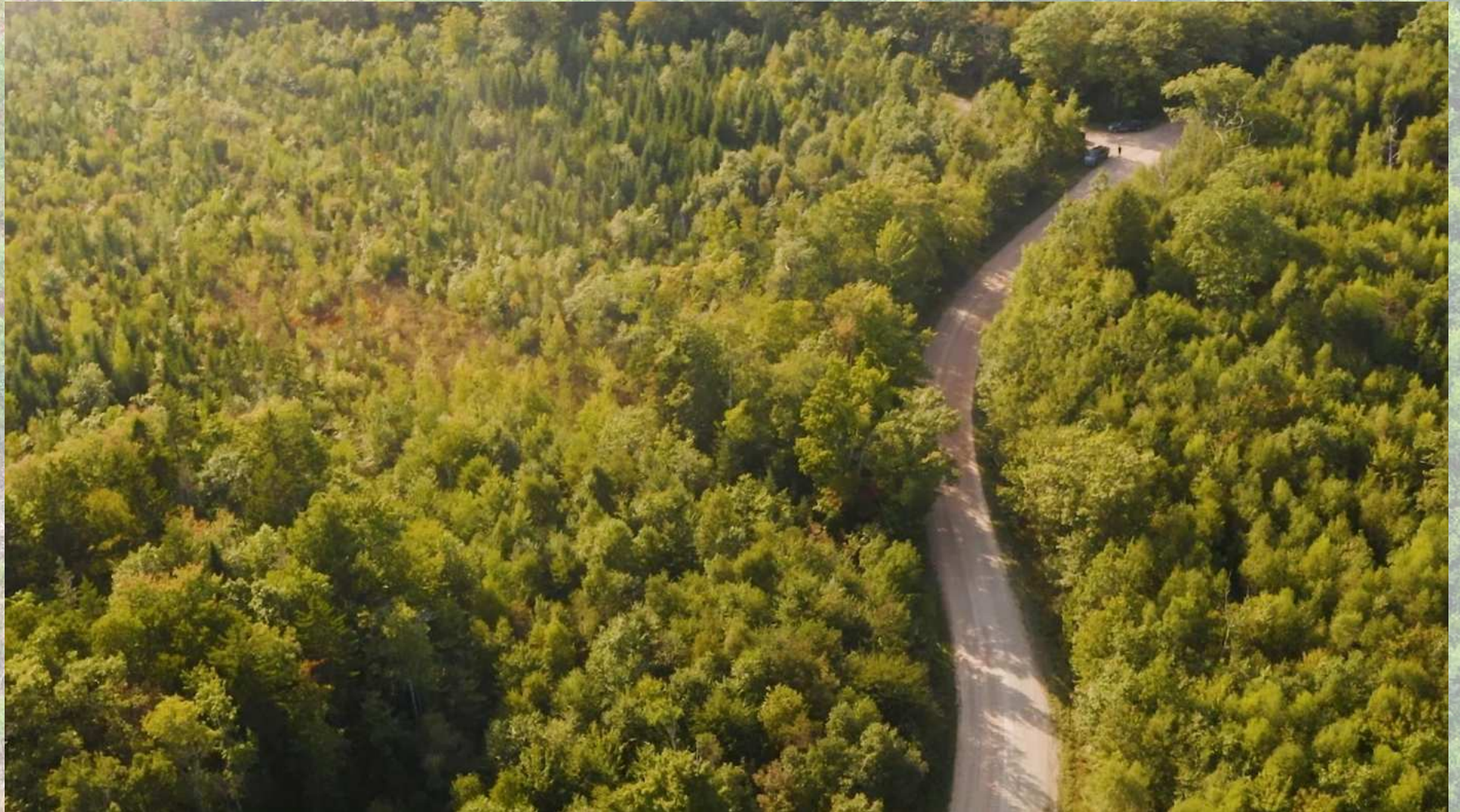








**THIS is The SHIFT ... THIS is THE FUTURE**







**Follow Our Journey**



**D. Bedford Forestry Services**



Facebook + LinkedIn



**DBedfordForestry@outlook.com**

**D. Bedford Forestry Services Inc.**

