

Canadian Forestry Today: Reality, Resilience, and the Road Ahead

Anthony Robinson

Ground-level perspective from events, mills, logging sites, and industry leaders across North America



FORESTNETMEDIA

TIMBER
WEST



**HOW PLYWOOD IS MADE
(EXPLAINED IN 60 SECONDS)**

AT ANY GIVEN

Who am I ?

South West, Western Australia → Sunshine Coast, BC
15 years in Canada

Education

BSc – Natural Resource Management (University of Western Australia)
MSc – Forestry (University of British Columbia)

Background

Forester → tree planter → mill worker → mining → environmental consulting → landscape ecology

Today

CEO & Owner, Forestnet Media (since 2019)



Radiata pine plantation – Western Australia



Thinned plantation approx. 20 -25 years old



WesPine – Dardanup, Western Australia



But how ?

- Strong ties to the CWF
- Demo 2016 – Site Development Manager
 - 150 + exhibitors
 - 8,000 people over 3 days
- UBC Malcolm Knapp Research Forest – Maple Ridge, BC
 - Large - 2nd growth Doug Fir, Cedar
 - Pre harvesting
 - Site development
 - Safety planning
 - Steep slope winch assist sites
 - **15 + WorkSafe BC officers onsite over the 3 days !!**



Forestnet Media ?

Legacy

Logging & Sawmilling Journal (Canada, est. 1969)

TimberWest Magazine (Western USA, est. 1975)



Today

- Podcasts
- Video storytelling
- Social media distribution
- Shop & mill tours
- Product features
- Media Agency



When Science Becomes a Target: Bruce Blackwell and the Stanley Park recovery...

Broad north American outlook

The Current Reality

- Volatile lumber markets and mill curtailments
- Rising operating and energy costs
- Labour shortages
- Global uncertainty
- Increased competition between manufacturers

At the same time:

- **Public misunderstanding of forestry greater than ever**

A Structural Shift Underway

Canada's largest wood-producing province is becoming uninvestable

- Business models are under pressure
- Long-term structural change is underway

- Growing Indigenous ownership and operational control
- Shift toward local, long-term stewardship
 - Community forests
 - Woodlots

Reality

Transition is slow, complex, and uncertain

Recent news

Western Forest Products – sold 154,000 hectares under Tree Farm License (TFL) sale to Tla'amin Nation entity (Powell River)

- \$80 million transaction

Gorman Brothers (Kelowna, BC) purchased Weyerhaeuser Princeton Mill, plus land tenure

- \$120 million dollars deal

- Secures **long-term fiber supply**

Forestry Equipment

More competing, less volume

- Large OEMs facing **cost pressure, regulation, uncertainty**
- **Lower-cost entrants (China)** reshaping pricing dynamics
- **Europe** – continues to bring new tech into NA
 - harvester / forwarders
 - mechanised planting equipment

Some consolidation

- Komatsu acquired Malwa , Quadco group
- John Deere acquired Rusitec planting technology

Used market surged during COVID → now **oversupplied**

- Prices softening, inventory building
- Direct impact on new equipment sales

Sawmill Technology: Rapid Consolidation

Movement toward **turnkey, end-to-end providers**

Strategy = “Own the whole mill”

Comact (Formerly BID Group)

- Miller
- Deltech
- MoCo
- PHL



Another example

Building a full mill platform through acquisition

Expanding across engineering, automation, and tooling

Wood Technologies International

USNR

Burton Mill Solutions

Timber Automation

Mid-South Engineering

VAB Solutions

Global tooling

Norwood Sawmills



Last week Burton Mill Solutions → *acquired Quality Saw & Service*

Even more !!

Acquisition not just happening at the top

Brunette Machinery



- D and L - Timber Technologies 2022



- Salem Equipment in 2026



Canadian manufactures – go abroad

Expand globally to follow capital investment

- US Southeast
- South America
- Australia and NZ

**Now that I've told you what you
already know**

Lets talk about communication !!

How do we connect in 2026?

Is print dead ?

Are tradeshow a thing of the past ?

What role does social media play ?

What is social license ?

Which organizations / events / non - profits / association should we support ?

Is print dead?

- Revenue halved in last 5 years
- Cost of printing has doubled since 2020
- Marketing & communications are often the first budget to be cut

The reality:

- Core buyers are still predominantly men 55 +
- They are still **reading print**
- Print still influences **purchasing decisions**
- **Is print the only influence though ?**



Are tradeshow dead?

The economics have shifted

“The number of hands has grown, and the budget has shrunk ”



- Major OEMs pulling back from Canadian tradeshow
- Stronger attendance in the U.S. (larger, more concentrated market)
- Manufacturers and dealers are reaching audiences in different ways
 - Social media
 - Manufacturer owned magazines
 - Email data bases
 - Direct content channels
- Rise of private events
 - Captive audience
 - More controlled spending
 - Measurable outcomes

The reality: Expectations around visibility and engagement continue to rise, yet budgets fall.

What role does social media play ?

- Brand awareness
- Trackable views and impressions
- A necessary evil ?

What It Actually Does

- Shapes public perception
- Influences social license and policy direction
- Controls the narrative - whether we participate or not

If we don't tell our story, someone else will.



What is social license ?

Social license = public acceptance and trust

Informal approval from:

- Local communities
- The public
- Policymakers

Allows industry to **operate without constant opposition or restriction:**

- Legal permits are easier to secure
- Government approvals move forward
- Broader public support exists

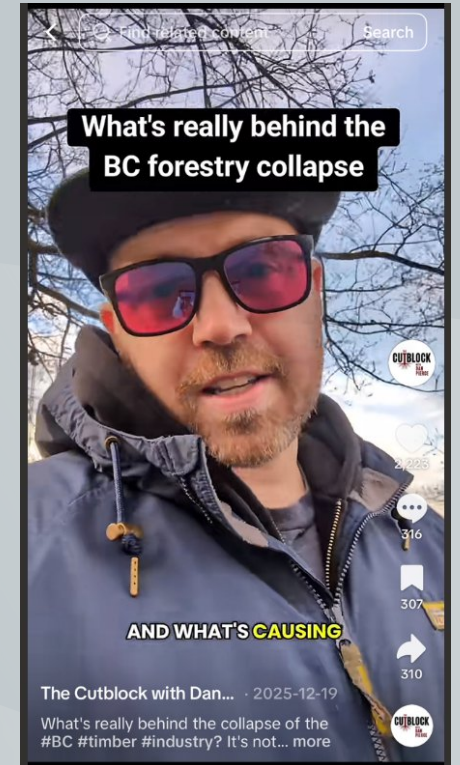
Social License isn't a “nice to have” - it's a requirement to operate.

The critics are winning the narrative

Not because they're right, but because they're clearer.

What the Public Is Hearing

- Clearcutting only
- Wildlife being depleted
- Increased floods & landslides
- Forestry increases wildfire risk
- Old growth fully liquidated
- Big corporations control the land
- Massive machines destroy the land
- BC Exporting only raw logs



What the Industry Knows

- World leader in sustainable forest management
- Management can reduce wildfire risk
- Landscape Diversity is a good thing
- Selective harvesting is used widely
- Forestry Supports
 - local communities
 - builds schools and hospitals
 - integral for rural communities
- Increasing focus on stewardship and resilience



Why This Matters

This is not a communication issue.

It's a business risk.

It directly impacts:

Policy and regulation

Workforce attraction and retention

Long-term social license

If we don't control the narrative, we lose control of the outcome.

Which organization / events / non - profits / associations should we support ?

Confused ? Me too

More organizations, more voices, more content
= **less overall impact.**

We're all trying to achieve similar goals:

- sustainable operations
- benefits for members
- public acceptance
- long-term stability

But we're doing it separately:

- Often with poor understanding of audience



What's Not Working



Forestry
is a solution
for BC, for
Canada.

- Same mandate, same goal - **fragmented execution**
- Divided budgets → **diluted impact**
- We are competing for attention - **instead of owning it**

What is working ?

Consolidation/ collaboration / cooperation

Montreal Wood Convention – joint event across multiple organizations

- Maritime Lumber Bureau (MLB)
- Ontario Forest Industry Association (OFIA)
- Québec Forest Industry Council (QFIC)
- Québec Wood Export Bureau (QWE)



Highly successful show the largest gathering of mill manufacturers in Canada year after year !!

The industry should be moving towards shared platforms, events VS silos

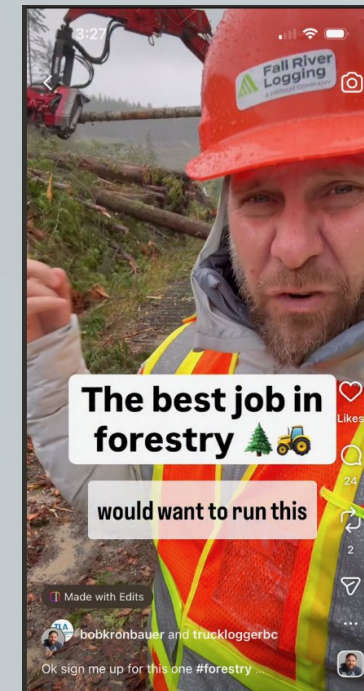
Combining resources , working together.

Public-facing partnerships

- BC Truck Loggers Association × BC Bob (creator collaboration)
- Real people → **real stories** → **real reach**
- Short-form video is breaking through
- **30 Million + views generated**
- Shot on iPhone - **simple, authentic, scalable**

The pattern is clear

- Modern communication wins
- Those willing to try new approaches are seeing results
- Collaboration > competition



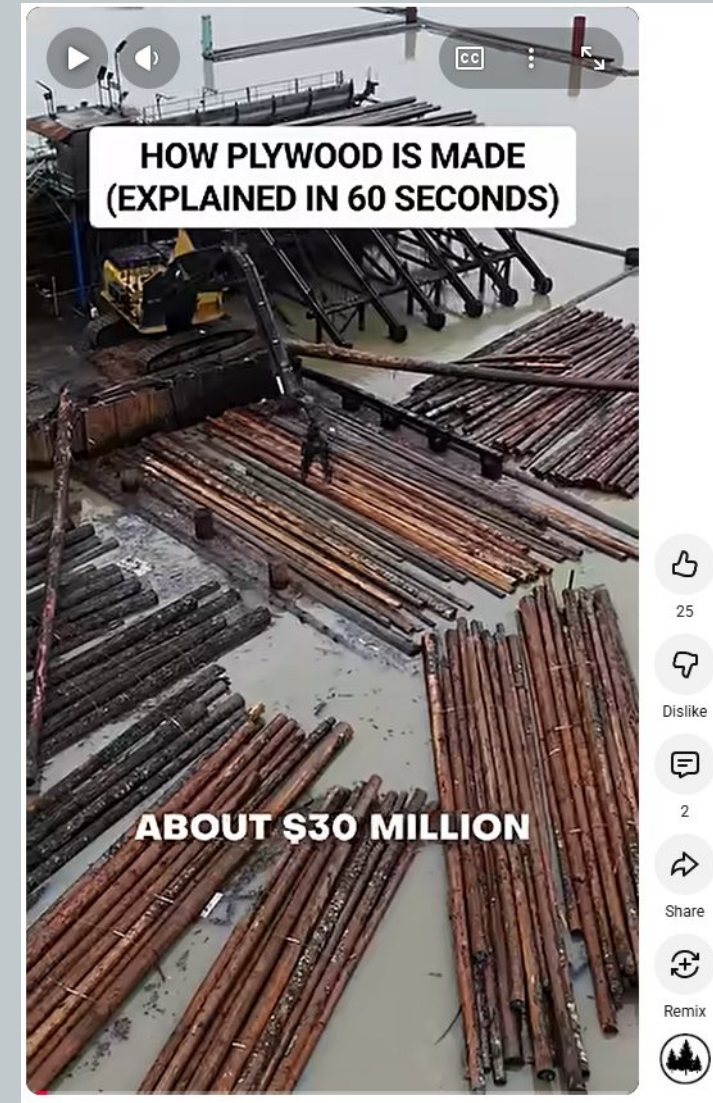
What is working

- Short-form, high-impact video
- Simple, visual storytelling
- Positive messages

Public platforms - *Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube Shorts*

How many views do you think that video got... ??

1,288,000 +



What We've Learned

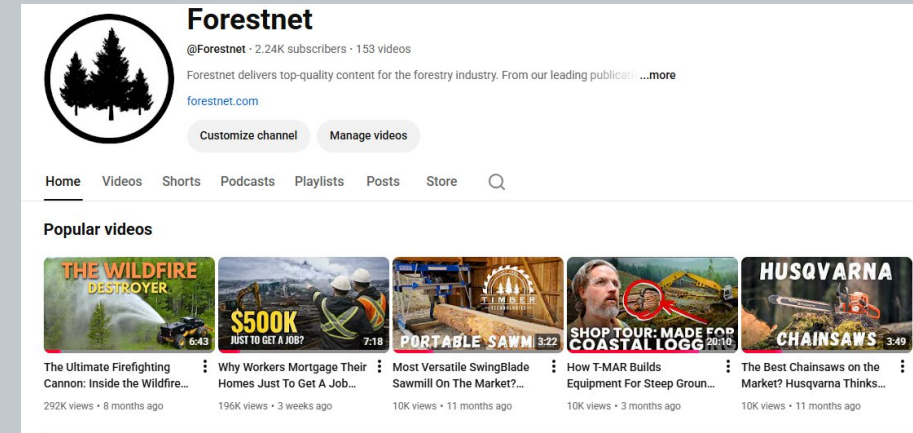
We've produced over 153 videos.

Attention is earned, not assumed.

- Short-form, high-impact content
- Clear, simple messaging
- Strong hooks in the first few seconds
- Good content, will always outperform ad spend \$\$

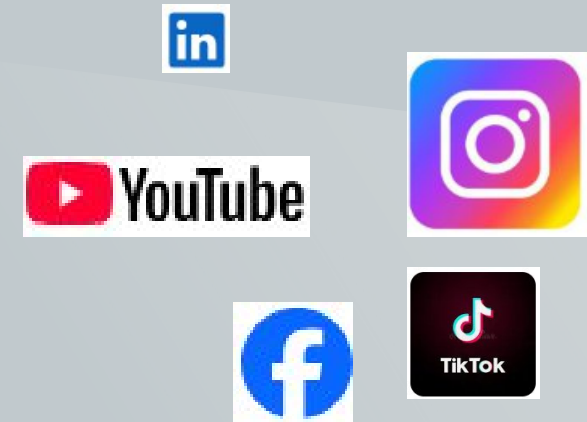
What doesn't work

- Long-form, slow-paced content (unless highly targeted)
- Overly technical or internal messaging
- Content without a clear audience



Know your audience !!

- **Instagram / TikTok** → public perception, younger audience, viral reach
- **Facebook** → older demographic, community conversations (very relevant to forestry)
- **YouTube** → long-form credibility
- **LinkedIn** → industry, policymakers, B2B



The Shift Required

We are on all the same team:

- Stop talking to each other and further engage the public
- Reduce duplication and fragmentation
- Focus on what works, not what we've always done

This isn't about doing more it's about doing **fewer things, better.**

The Big Picture

Forestry is not dying

The sector is restructuring

Future belongs to adaptable, transparent operators

The future of Canadian forestry will be shaped by those willing to evolve

Clear leadership

Smart investment

Honest communication matter

Questions ?

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