

# Report

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Date September 2, 2026  
Subject 2025 Annual Forestry Report

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File:

## PURPOSE

To provide an overview of the Forestry Department's activities, projects, and achievements in 2025.

## BACKGROUND

Since Council initiated the forestry review in 2019, operational harvesting practices in the Municipal Forest Reserve (MFR) have been suspended pending the outcome of the review. As part of the forestry review, Council directed staff to work with the UBC Partnership Group to develop four forest management scenario options and assess the feasibility of a forest carbon credit program within the MFR. A parallel public engagement process was undertaken to gather feedback from the community on the proposed scenarios. Concurrently, dialogue and information sharing took place with the Quw'utsun Nation to ensure their interests and perspectives were considered and incorporated into the decision-making process.

As part of the continued dialogue with the Quw'utsun Nation, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in August 2021 to support and guide meaningful discussions regarding the forestry review and identified priorities. Following the establishment of the MOU, staff continued to meet regularly with Quw'utsun Nation representatives to discuss areas of mutual interest and explore opportunities for collaboration. Through these discussions, several aspects related to the management, activities, and stewardship of the MFR were identified for further discussion. It was jointly recommended to the respective governing bodies that advancing discussions on a co-management framework and plan was the preferred approach for continuing to explore and discuss the various topics of interest. Consistent with the commitments outlined in the MOU, Council directed staff at its November 15, 2023, meeting to suspend consideration of future forest management recommendations until a co-management framework and plan for the MFR had been jointly developed in partnership with the Quw'utsun Nation.

To support the development of a co-management plan, North Cowichan secured \$200,000 through the Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program, including funding for a preliminary exploration of a forest carbon credit program. Through discussions with the Quw'utsun Nation, it was mutually agreed to prioritize the development of the co-management framework and plan as an important first step. As a result, all available funding was allocated to the co-management development project, and the forest carbon credit feasibility study was deferred pending completion of the co-management development project.

In February 2025, North Cowichan issued a Request for Proposals for development of the co-management framework and plan. Following a joint evaluation process with Quw'utsun Nation representatives, Your Wayfinders Management Solutions was selected to lead the project. While initial

phases commenced in 2025, progress was suspended in August following concerns raised by Quw'utsun Nation members regarding Council's decision to identify forest harvesting as a strategic priority.

At the November 19, 2025, Council meeting, staff presented a report outlining the implications of resuming forest harvesting within the MFR. The report emphasized the importance of advancing the co-management framework and honouring the commitments outlined in the MOU with Quw'utsun Nation, while also identifying the potential impacts that renewed harvesting could have on relationships with Quw'utsun Nation and other Indigenous partners. Following discussion, Council reaffirmed its commitment to the co-management process and confirmed that forest harvesting would not be considered until the co-management framework and plan are complete.

While work on the co-management plan continues in collaboration with Quw'utsun Nation, staff will undertake required forest management and stewardship activities within the MFR to address operational, safety, and regulatory requirements. These activities include danger tree removal, forest road maintenance, tree protection and planting, security patrols, silviculture treatments, fire prevention activities, and the continued implementation of FireSmart initiatives. Consistent with previous Council direction, staff will continue to award forest-related contracts to qualified Quw'utsun Nation contractors, where appropriate.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Harvest Summary**

Total Area = 0 ha  
 Total Volume = n/a  
 Harvest Cost = n/a  
 Gross Revenue = n/a  
 Net Revenue = n/a  
 Forestry Program Total Net Income = (\$503,658)

### **Log Sales Summary**

Domestic sales = n/a  
 \*Export sales = n/a  
 \*Includes United States

### **Planting**

|        |           |
|--------|-----------|
| Costs  | \$ 4,324  |
| Budget | \$ 15,000 |

In spring 2025, approximately 3.1 ha were fill planted with 1,920 tree seedlings by Khowutzun Forest Services (KFS) and forestry staff. Planting costs were ~\$1.70 per tree, while seedling costs were ~\$0.55 per tree (including seed purchase, cold storage, and shipping). The total cost for planting tree seedlings was ~\$2.25 per tree.

Planting summary:

| <b>Species Planted</b> | <b># Planted</b> | <b>% of Total Planted</b> |
|------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Douglas Fir            | 1200             | 63%                       |
| Western White Pine     | 720              | 37%                       |
| Western Red Cedar      |                  | 0%                        |

*Tea-bag fertilizer application at the time of planting = 0*

Since 1987, North Cowichan has planted 2,311,612 seedlings and harvested 1,567 ha – all of which have been replanted and carefully maintained.

#### **Road Maintenance**

|        |          |
|--------|----------|
| Costs  | \$45,731 |
| Budget | \$55,000 |

The Forestry Department is responsible for monitoring, inspecting, and maintaining the forestry road systems within the MFR to ensure safe access, road functionality, and environmental compliance. The following is a summary of the activities undertaken:

- Danger tree removal and road clearing along forestry roads throughout the MFR allows safe access for forestry activities, public users, and emergency vehicle access.
- Removed and replaced failing road culverts on Mount Prevost.
- Dust control applied along Mount Prevost forestry road.
- Culvert/ditch cleaning and road grading/repair of forestry roads completed on Mount Prevost, Mount Sicker, and Grace Road.
- Roadside brushing completed to maintain vehicle access on Mount Prevost and Mount Richards.

#### **Fire Protection**

|        |           |
|--------|-----------|
| Costs  | \$ 2,200* |
| Budget | \$ 22,600 |

\*Does not include FireSmart fuel mitigation related costs

The Forestry Department supports fire protection efforts within the MFR through proactive monitoring, fuel management, and coordinated response planning in partnership with the Fire Services Department. The following is a summary of the activities undertaken:

- There were no forest fires within the MFR in 2025.
- No additional firefighting equipment was purchased in 2025, as available budget funds were redirected to offset cost overruns associated with FireSmart fuel mitigation activities.
- The Mount Prevost, Mount Sicker, and Grace Road gates were closed due to high fire hazard on June 13 and reopened on October 1.

### FireSmart

The Forestry Department is responsible for FireSmart activities within the MFR, including implementing recommendations from the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, fuel reduction treatments, and supporting community education through FireSmart home assessments. The following is a summary of the activities undertaken:

- KFS completed the FireSmart fuel mitigation treatment area associated with project CRI – 610 on Mount Tzouhalem and approximately 50% completed in the Maple Mountain treatment area.
- Staff provided free FireSmart Home Assessments to nine North Cowichan residents.

### Security and Vandalism

|        |          |
|--------|----------|
| Costs  | \$ 3,476 |
| Budget | \$16,500 |

The Forestry Department is responsible for monitoring and patrolling the MFR to identify and act on security concerns, vandalism, and unauthorized activities. Staff periodically encounter issues such as garbage dumping, timber theft, campfires, and overnight camping in various areas within the MFR. Staff continued with the following initiatives:

- Promoting public awareness, education, and reporting by installing/maintaining/replacing signage and social media posts.
- Ongoing regular patrols within the MFR.
- Working with RCMP and the Bylaw Services Team on various initiatives.
- Illegal access removal/prevention.
- Quick detection and cleanup of encampments and garbage accumulations.
- Lock replacements and gate repairs.

### Silviculture

The Forestry Department is responsible for all silvicultural activities within the MFR, carried out by municipal staff and contractors. Staff regularly survey and monitor plantations to ensure healthy growth and the development of a well-established future forest.

| Activity                 | Type      | Area/# Treated                             | Cost                        | Budget   |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Plantation Brushing      | Manual    | 0 ha                                       | \$0                         | \$8,340  |
|                          | Herbicide | 0                                          | 0                           | \$0      |
| Invasive Species Control | Manual    | *see below                                 | \$17,414                    | \$15,000 |
|                          |           | ~60 trees<br>(completed by Forestry staff) |                             |          |
| White Pine Pruning       | Manual    |                                            | \$0                         | \$7,800  |
| Silviculture Surveys     | Various   | 39.1 ha                                    | Completed by forestry staff |          |

\*Invasive Species Control summary:

Tansy Ragwort – Various locations on Mount Richards, Maple Mountain, and Stoney Hill

Scotch Broom – Various locations on Mount Prevost, Mount Tzouhalem, Maple Mountain, and Stoney Hill

**Tree Protection**

The Forestry Department monitors and maintains young plantations within the MFR, often applying protective measures such as tree guards at the time of planting to reduce ungulate browse pressure. These protectors are removed once the trees have grown beyond the vulnerable stage.

|        |          |
|--------|----------|
| Costs  | \$24,784 |
| Budget | \$39,463 |

- KFS removed 8,372 browse protectors, with 7,314 re-packaged for future use.
- Re-used 1,200 browse protectors.

**Community Relations and Contributions**

The Forestry Department continues to provide limited community support while the forestry review is ongoing. The following is a summary of the activities undertaken:

- Annual high school scholarship and bursary winners were chosen - \$2,400 awarded.
  - ~\$166,600 total awarded since 1998.
- Annual high school woodworking contest winners are chosen with \$1,000 in prizes awarded. A total of 13 students entered their "Coffee Table" project into the contest.
  - ~\$22,050 total awarded since 2001.
- Annual firewood donations program is suspended until the conclusion of the forestry review.
- Zero firewood permits and six salal permits were sold to the public.
- There was no Forest Legacy funded projects in 2025.

**Other Notable Activities****Forestry staff:**

- Supported Cowichan Community Land Trust volunteers in removing invasive species from areas of high conservation value on Maple Mountain.
- Continued to support work by an independent research group that obtained funding through the federal Habitat Stewardship Program to conduct survey work for the endangered Sharp-tailed snake on Maple Mountain.
- Supported Cowichan Search and Rescue to conduct training events on Mount Prevost and Mount Richards.
- Supported the local Boy Scouts organization by coordinating the planting of ~200 trees by 30 students along the Stoney Hill Road right of way.

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council receives the 2025 Annual Forestry Report dated September 2, 2026, from the Director of Parks and Recreation, for information.

Report prepared by:



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Shaun Mason, RPF  
Director, Parks and Recreation

Report reviewed by:



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George Farkas  
General Manager, Planning, Development and  
Community Services

**Approved to be forwarded to Council:**



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Ted Swabey  
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- (1) 2025 Harvest and Profit Summary
- (2) 2025 Statement of Account

Harvest and Profit Summary

1987 To 2025 Harvesting Summary

|    | Year    | Ha      | Volume<br>m³ | Volume<br>/Ha | Net Revenue<br>(Harvesting) | Net<br>Revenue<br>\$/m³ |
|----|---------|---------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | 1987    | 63.4    | 13,159       | 208           | \$204,772                   | \$15.56                 |
| 2  | 1988    | 73.9    | 18,602       | 252           | \$354,256                   | \$19.04                 |
| 3  | 1989    | 43.2    | 14,798       | 343           | \$272,913                   | \$18.44                 |
| 4  | 1990    | 36.1    | 10,969       | 304           | \$254,831                   | \$23.23                 |
| 5  | 1991    | 32.2    | 12,740       | 396           | \$271,217                   | \$21.29                 |
| 6  | 1992    | 63.3    | 12,935       | 204           | \$289,102                   | \$22.35                 |
| 7  | 1993    | 55.2    | 14,907       | 270           | \$542,821                   | \$36.42                 |
| 8  | 1994    | 58.6    | 16,160       | 276           | \$692,414                   | \$42.85                 |
| 9  | 1995    | 78      | 21,556       | 276           | \$1,205,329                 | \$55.92                 |
| 10 | 1996    | 48.7    | 14,427       | 296           | \$639,017                   | \$44.29                 |
| 11 | 1997    | 32.3    | 13,371       | 414           | \$625,437                   | \$46.78                 |
| 12 | 1998    | 30.2    | 12,085       | 400           | \$444,933                   | \$36.82                 |
| 13 | 1999    | 41      | 16,428       | 401           | \$564,867                   | \$34.38                 |
| 14 | 2000    | 35.9    | 13,378       | 373           | \$564,778                   | \$42.22                 |
| 15 | 2001    | 39.34   | 15,538       | 395           | \$660,924                   | \$42.54                 |
| 16 | 2002    | 39.9    | 13,880       | 348           | \$580,631                   | \$41.83                 |
| 17 | 2003    | 49.2    | 15,841       | 322           | \$661,089                   | \$41.73                 |
| 18 | 2004    | 64.47   | 19,126       | 297           | \$773,940                   | \$40.47                 |
| 19 | 2005    | 54.6    | 16,018       | 293           | \$672,876                   | \$42.01                 |
| 20 | 2006    | 53.4    | 17,518       | 328           | \$792,562                   | \$45.24                 |
| 21 | 2007    | 65.6    | 21,153       | 322           | \$804,375                   | \$38.03                 |
| 22 | 2008    | 39.5    | 13,703       | 347           | \$619,866                   | \$45.24                 |
| 23 | 2009    | 46.5    | 14,296       | 307           | \$439,936                   | \$30.77                 |
| 24 | 2010    | 42.1    | 16,418       | 390           | \$451,287                   | \$27.49                 |
| 25 | 2011    | 45.5    | 17,775       | 391           | \$664,170                   | \$37.37                 |
| 26 | 2012    | 42.7    | 17,142       | 401           | \$618,045                   | \$36.05                 |
| 27 | 2013    | 60.4    | 24,355       | 403           | \$1,110,159                 | \$45.58                 |
| 28 | 2014    | 51.7    | 20,226       | 391           | \$1,063,196                 | \$52.57                 |
| 29 | 2015    | 46.7    | 22,271       | 477           | \$1,003,533                 | \$45.06                 |
| 30 | 2016    | 36.6    | 17,268       | 472           | \$1,020,010                 | \$59.07                 |
| 31 | 2017    | 21.8    | 10,585       | 486           | \$832,043                   | \$78.61                 |
| 32 | 2018    | 25.1    | 11,562       | 461           | \$977,787                   | \$84.57                 |
| 33 | 2019    | 45.1    | 15,255       | 338           | \$840,922                   | \$55.12                 |
| 34 | 2020    | 5.4     | 2,734        | 506           | \$117,125                   | \$42.84                 |
| 35 | 2021    | 0       | 68           | 0             | \$4,433                     | \$65.19                 |
| 36 | 2022    | 0.3     | 253          | 0             | \$24,357                    | \$96.27                 |
| 37 | 2023    | 0.2     | 607          | 0             | \$23,726                    | \$39.09                 |
| 38 | 2024    | 0       | 0            | 0             | \$0                         | \$0.00                  |
| 39 | 2025    | 0       | 0            | 0             | \$0                         | \$0.00                  |
|    | Total   | 1568.11 | 529,107      |               | \$21,683,680                | \$40.98                 |
|    | Average | 40.2    | 13,567       | 337           | \$555,992                   |                         |

Summary 1987 to 2025      337 m³/ha      \$13,828 /ha  
Total Net Revenue from harvesting =      \$1,972,791      \$3.73 \$/m³

Profit distribution for 2025

\$ (503,658) to Forest Reserve Fund  
\$ - to Forest Legacy Fund  
\$ - to General Revenues

\$ (503,658) Net Income

Forestry Program Profit

| Annual Profit | Annual<br>Profit \$/m³ | Annual Forestry Profit Split As Follows: |                        |                       |                  |                   |          |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
|               |                        | General<br>Revenues                      | Forest<br>Reserve Fund | Forest Legacy<br>Fund | Scholarship Fund | Land<br>Purchases | Hectares |
| -\$24,825     | -\$1.89                | \$0                                      | -\$24,825              | \$0                   |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$115,885     | \$6.23                 | \$0                                      | \$115,885              | \$0                   |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$38,486      | \$2.60                 | \$0                                      | \$38,486               | \$0                   |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$48,571      | \$4.43                 | \$0                                      | \$48,571               | \$0                   |                  | \$0               |          |
| -\$12,370     | -\$0.97                | \$0                                      | -\$12,370              | \$0                   |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$67,231      | \$5.20                 | \$45,000                                 | \$22,231               | \$0                   |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$272,276     | \$18.27                | \$240,000                                | \$32,276               | \$0                   |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$275,880     | \$17.07                | \$250,000                                | \$25,880               | \$0                   |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$755,771     | \$37.24                | \$489,230                                | \$33,313               | \$92,308              |                  | \$140,920         | 14.2     |
| \$131,057     | \$9.08                 | \$65,000                                 | \$51,057               | \$15,000              |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$24,815      | \$1.86                 | \$24,815                                 | \$0                    | \$0                   |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$47,420      | \$3.92                 | \$0                                      | \$37,935               | \$9,485               |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$97,579      | \$6.04                 | \$29,274                                 | \$48,789               | \$19,516              |                  | \$0               | 10.5     |
| \$33,745      | \$2.52                 | \$9,865                                  | \$17,057               | \$6,823               |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$111,851     | \$7.20                 | \$100,666                                | \$11,185               | \$0                   |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$95,375      | \$6.87                 | \$28,612                                 | \$47,688               | \$19,075              |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$94,484      | \$5.96                 | \$52,162                                 | \$22,273               | \$18,609              | \$1,440          | \$0               |          |
| \$121,932     | \$6.38                 | \$29,183                                 | \$68,880               | \$19,455              | \$4,414          | \$0               |          |
| \$29,901      | \$1.87                 | \$14,951                                 | \$0                    | \$14,950              |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$30,343      | \$1.73                 | \$15,171                                 | \$0                    | \$15,172              |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$65,344      | \$3.09                 | \$0                                      | \$65,344               | \$0                   | \$0              | \$0               |          |
| -\$20,393     | -\$1.29                | \$0                                      | -\$20,393              | \$0                   | \$0              | \$0               |          |
| -\$119,382    | -\$6.24                | \$0                                      | -\$119,382             | \$0                   | \$0              | \$0               |          |
| -\$137,409    | -\$8.37                | \$0                                      | -\$137,409             | \$0                   | \$0              | \$0               |          |
| -\$55,879     | -\$3.14                | \$0                                      | -\$55,879              | \$0                   | \$0              | \$0               |          |
| \$9,602       | \$0.56                 | \$0                                      | \$9,602                | \$0                   | \$0              | \$0               |          |
| \$435,606     | \$17.89                | \$130,682                                | \$217,803              | \$87,121              |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$409,430     | \$20.24                | \$122,829                                | \$204,715              | \$81,886              |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$359,381     | \$16.14                | \$239,381                                | \$0                    | \$120,000             |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$412,195     | \$23.87                | \$206,098                                | \$123,659              | \$82,438              |                  | \$0               |          |
| \$130,165     | \$12.30                | \$39,049                                 | \$65,082               | \$26,033              |                  |                   |          |
| \$261,077     | \$22.58                | \$78,323                                 | \$130,539              | \$52,215              |                  |                   |          |
| \$275,255     | \$18.04                | \$82,567                                 | \$137,634              | \$55,054              |                  |                   |          |
| -\$469,046    | -\$171.56              | \$0                                      | -\$453,846             | -\$15,200             |                  |                   |          |
| -\$509,476    | -\$7,492.29            | \$0                                      | -\$509,476             | \$0                   |                  |                   |          |
| -\$310,641    | -\$1,227.83            | \$0                                      | -\$310,641             | \$0                   |                  |                   |          |
| -\$430,322    | -\$708.93              | \$0                                      | -\$430,322             | \$0                   |                  |                   |          |
| -\$184,465    | \$0.00                 | \$0                                      | -\$184,465             | \$0                   |                  |                   |          |
| -\$503,658    | \$0.00                 | \$0                                      | -\$503,658             | \$0                   |                  |                   |          |
| \$1,972,791   | \$3.73                 | \$2,292,858                              | -\$1,186,781           | \$719,940             | \$5,854          | \$140,920         | 24.7     |
| \$50,584      |                        | \$58,791                                 | -\$30,430              | \$18,460              | \$150            | \$3,613           |          |

## 2025 Statement of Account

|                                          | 2025<br>Budget    | Year to Date<br>Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2025 |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>                           |                   |                                       |
| Log Sales                                | 0m <sup>3</sup> - | 0m <sup>3</sup> -                     |
| <b>A SUBTOTAL - LOGGING SALES</b>        | -                 | -                                     |
| Grants                                   |                   | 35,672                                |
| Rentals (Cell Towers)                    | 98,320            | 103,698                               |
| Other Revenue                            | 9,880             | 10,040                                |
| <b>B SUBTOTAL - OTHER REVENUE</b>        | <b>108,200</b>    | <b>149,410</b>                        |
| <b>C TOTAL REVENUE</b>                   | <b>108,200</b>    | <b>149,410</b>                        |
| <b>Expenses</b>                          |                   |                                       |
| Harvesting                               | -                 | -                                     |
| Scaling                                  | -                 | -                                     |
| Contract Engineering                     | -                 | -                                     |
| Road Construction                        | -                 | -                                     |
| <b>D SUBTOTAL - LOGGING COSTS</b>        | -                 | -                                     |
| Road Maintenance                         | 55,000            | 45,731                                |
| Road Deactivation                        | -                 | -                                     |
| Site Preparation                         | -                 | -                                     |
| Planting                                 | 15,000            | 4,324                                 |
| Brushing and Weeding                     | 8,340             | -                                     |
| Brushing and Herbicides                  | -                 | -                                     |
| Pruning                                  | 7,800             | -                                     |
| Tree Protection                          | 39,463            | 24,784                                |
| Administration                           | 254,019           | 233,198                               |
| Fire Protection                          | 222,600           | 210,764                               |
| Security & Vandalism                     | 16,500            | 3,476                                 |
| Tours                                    | 3,400             | -                                     |
| Integrated Resource Mgmt                 | 5,000             | 4,450                                 |
| Municipal Forest Review                  | 80,000            | 96,553                                |
| Forestry contractor                      | -                 | -                                     |
| Recreation Roads Maintenance             | 10,000            | 8,643                                 |
| Scholarships                             | 2,475             | 2,400                                 |
| Grants in Aid                            | 2,550             | 1,331                                 |
| Invasive Species Control                 | 15,000            | 17,414                                |
| Vehicles (included with Admin)           |                   |                                       |
| <b>E SUBTOTAL - FORESTRY OPERATIONS</b>  | <b>737,147</b>    | <b>653,068</b>                        |
| <b>F TOTAL LOGGING OPERATIONS (A-D)</b>  | -                 | -                                     |
| <b>G TOTAL FORESTRY OPERATIONS (B-E)</b> | <b>(628,947)</b>  | <b>(503,658)</b>                      |
| <b>NET INCOME (F+G)</b>                  | <b>(628,947)</b>  | <b>(503,658)</b>                      |