

The Future of Forestry: Markets, Workforce, and Operational Reality

+ *Communication in 2026*

Anthony Robinson

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





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

AT ANY GIVEN

My Journey in Forestry

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 →
Focus of my research @ UBC was Mountain Pine Beetle and 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



Forestnet Media ?

TimberWest Magazine (Western USA, est. 1975)

Logging & Sawmilling Journal (Canada, est. 1969) - recently renamed to Forestnet Magazine

- Continue to print 12 magazines a year
- Podcasts
- Video storytelling
- Social media distribution
- Shop & mill tours
- Product features
- Media Agency



The Current Reality

- Volatile lumber markets and mill curtailments
- Continued trade tension between US and Canada
- Rising operating and energy costs
- Labor shortages
- Global uncertainty
- Increased competition between manufacturers
- Industry fragmentation

At the same time:

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

Forestry Equipment Suppliers

More competing, less sales volume

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

Some consolidation

- Komatsu acquired Malwa last month
- John Deere acquired Rusitec planting technology in February

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

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

Sawmill Technology: Rapid Acquisitions

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

Strategy = “Own the whole mill”



Comact (Formerly BID Group)

- Miller
- Deltech
- MoCo
- PHL
- Oleson Saw Technology

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

Burton Mill Solutions → acquired Quality Saw & Service



Lets talk about communication !!

How do we connect in 2026?

Industry-to-Industry (B2B) Communication

Public Communication (Social License)

Industry-to-Industry (B2B) Communication

How we talk *to ourselves*

- Trade magazines / media
- Conferences & associations
- Supplier / manufacturer communication

Key tension: “We are communicating - but mostly to the same people, over and over again.”

Trade magazines

- Revenue is volatile
- Cost of printing has doubled since 2020
- Marketing & communications are 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**
- **No longer the only influence**



Conferences & associations

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**



Fragmented Messaging



Forestry
is a solution
for BC, for
Canada.

- Same mission - **fragmented execution**
- Divided budgets = **diluted impact**
- Competing for attention - **instead of owning it**

What's Not Working

4 conferences in 5 weeks ? Is this progress or duplication

Interior Logging Association AGM & Conference - early May 1st *Kamloops*

BC First Nations Forestry Conference - May 12th *Kelowna*

BC Saw Filers Association Convention - May 22nd *Kamloops*

BC Community Forest Association Conference - June 3rd *Vernon*

Are we building momentum together or dividing an already strained industry into smaller and smaller rooms ?

BC INTERIOR FORESTRY EVENT CORRIDOR (May–June 2026)

All within a 2-hour radius of each other

KAMLOOPS

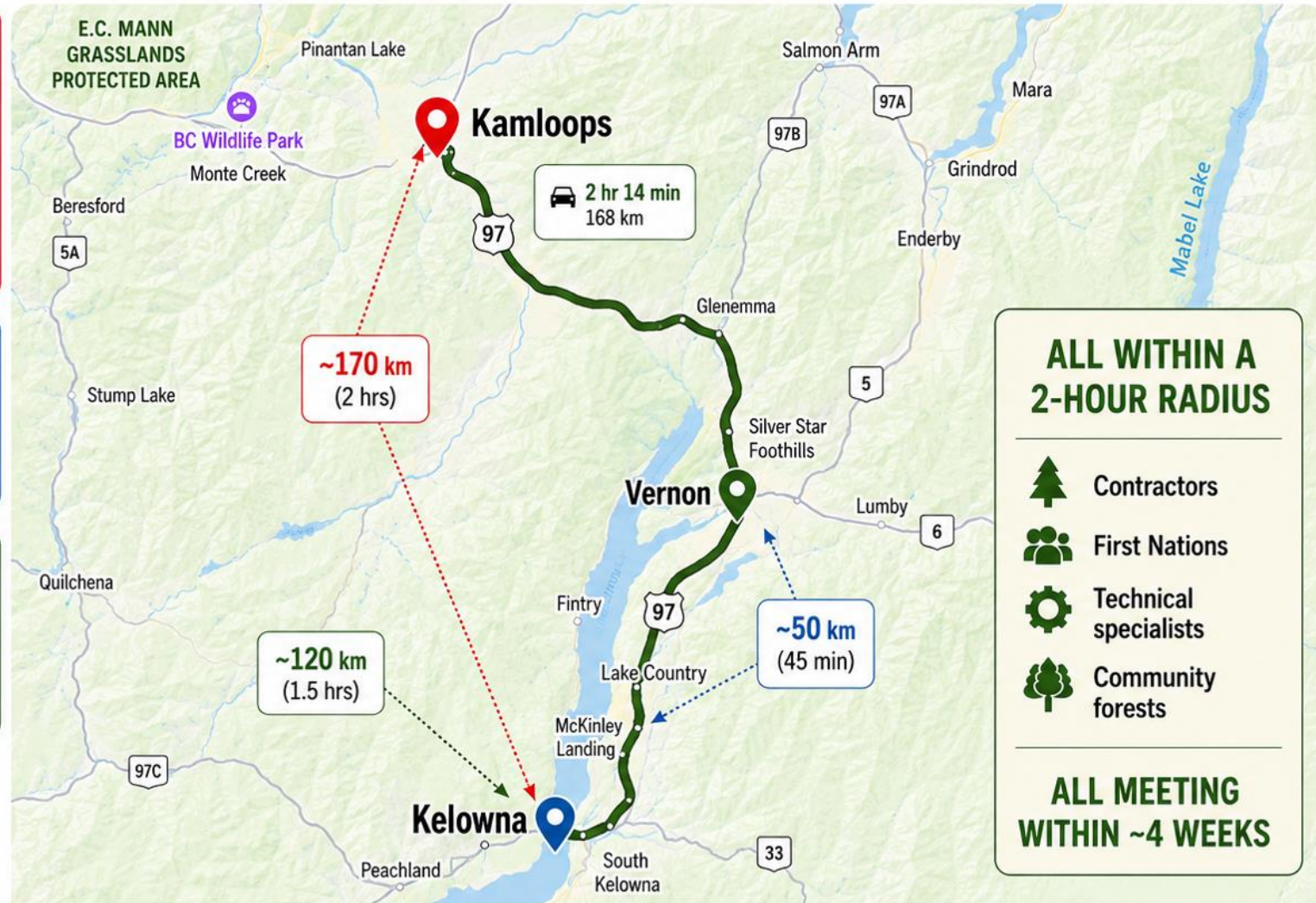
- Interior Logging Association AGM & Conference (Early May)
- BC Saw Filers Association Convention (May 22, 2026)

KELOWNA

- BC First Nations Forestry Conference (May 12–14, 2026)

VERNON

- BC Community Forest Association Conference & AGM (June 3–5, 2026)



ALL WITHIN A 2-HOUR RADIUS

- Contractors
- First Nations
- Technical specialists
- Community forests

ALL MEETING WITHIN ~4 WEEKS

THE ENTIRE FOREST SECTOR IS GATHERING IN ONE CORRIDOR... **JUST NOT TOGETHER.**

What is working ?

Collaboration. Alignment. Shared platforms.

Montreal Wood Convention – joint event built by multiple organizations

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



One event. One destination. One stronger voice.

The future of forestry communication is likely more coordination - not more silos

Supplier & Manufacturer Communication

Manufacturers and dealers now reach audiences directly through:

- Social media
- Owned media channels
- Email databases
- Podcasts and video
- Direct customer events

The rise of private / demo-style events

- More targeted audiences
- More controlled spending
- Easier ROI tracking
- Stronger customer relations

The reality: Expectations for visibility and engagement continue to rise - while marketing budgets become more selective.



Our Industry Problems

- Workforce shortage
- Struggling to attract young people
- Fragmented advocacy and education
- Government pressure & policy instability
- Strong, organized environmental opposition

These are not isolated issues.

They are all downstream of one thing:

How we are perceived

And perception today is increasingly shaped online

Social license = public acceptance and trust

Without it:

- Projects face delays and opposition
- Policy pressure increases
- Permits become harder to secure
- Public perception shapes political decisions

With it:

- Industry has greater freedom to operate
- Governments are more willing to support forestry
- Communities better understand forest management
- Long-term stability becomes possible

Social License isn't a "nice to have" - today it's a requirement to operate.

Tesla !!!

- Massive public support
- Strong policy backing
- Heavy investment
- Cultural momentum

What if forestry had that same level of public support?

Young people would be lining up to work in forestry.

Governments would accelerate projects instead of delaying them.

Forestry would be seen as part of the climate solution.

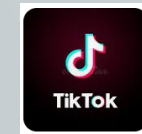
What role does social media play ?

- Awareness
- Marketing
- Advocacy
- “A necessary evil” ?

What It Actually Does

- Shapes public perception
- Influences social license and policy
- Attracts (or repels) the next generation
- Controls the narrative - whether we participate or not

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



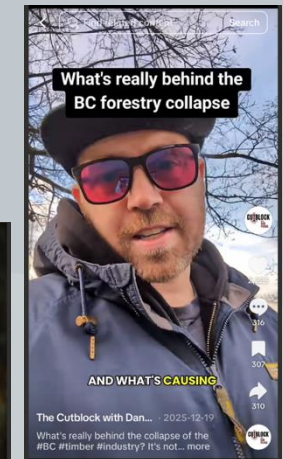
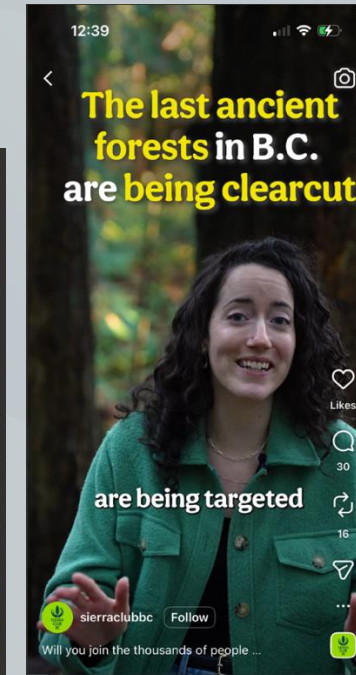
What the Public Hears

- Clearcutting is destroying forests
- Wildlife is disappearing
- Forestry increases floods, landslides and wildfire risk
- Old growth is being fully liquidated
- Big corporations control public land
- Massive machines destroy ecosystems

The critics are winning the narrative

Not because they're right

But because they're more clear.



What the Industry Knows

- Stewardship and resilience are the norm
- Sustainable forest management is an incredibly complex and integrated system
- Active Forest Management reduces wildfire risk
- Diverse landscapes improve resilience
- Not all old growth is the same and vast portions are already protected
- Forestry supports rural communities, schools, and infrastructure

Public perception now shapes operational reality.

It affects:

- Policy and regulation
- Workforce attraction and retention
- Public trust and social license
- Investment confidence and project momentum

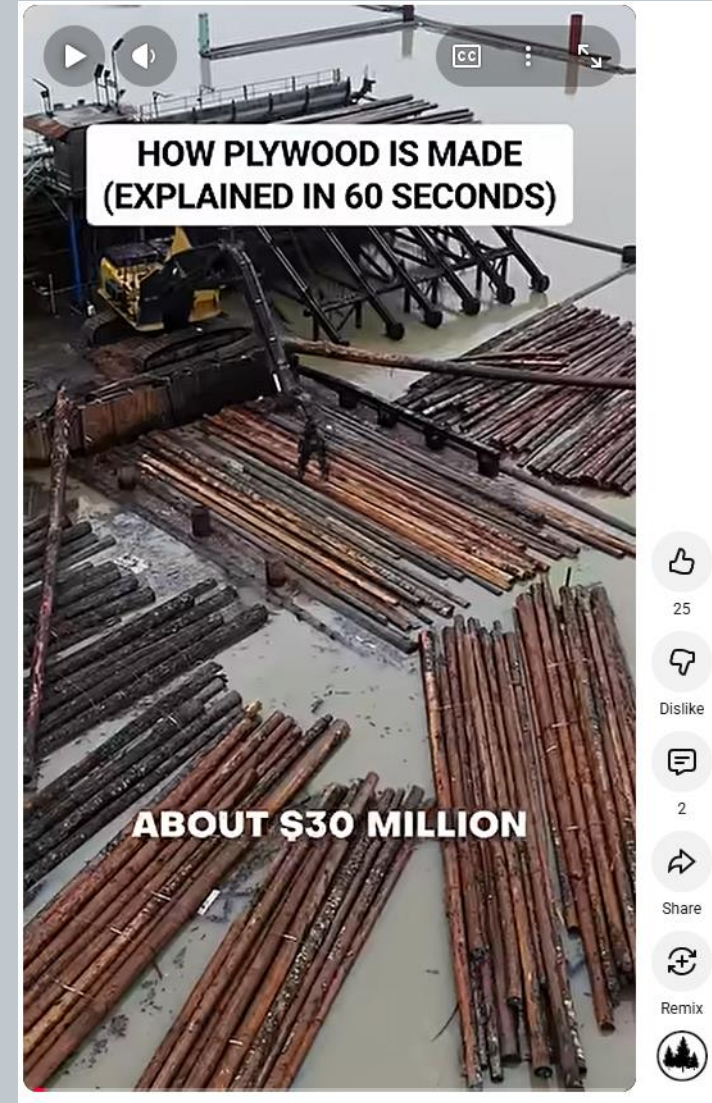
If we don't help shape the narrative, others will define forestry for the public.

What is working

- Short-form, high-impact video
- Simple, visual storytelling
- Clear, non-technical messaging
- Positive, public-facing content

Public platforms - Instagram • Facebook • TikTok • YouTube Shorts

1.5 million + views



BC Truck Loggers Association + BC Bob

Creator partnership focused on public-facing forestry storytelling

- 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 works
- Authenticity outperforms polish
- Collaboration creates momentum



What We've Learned

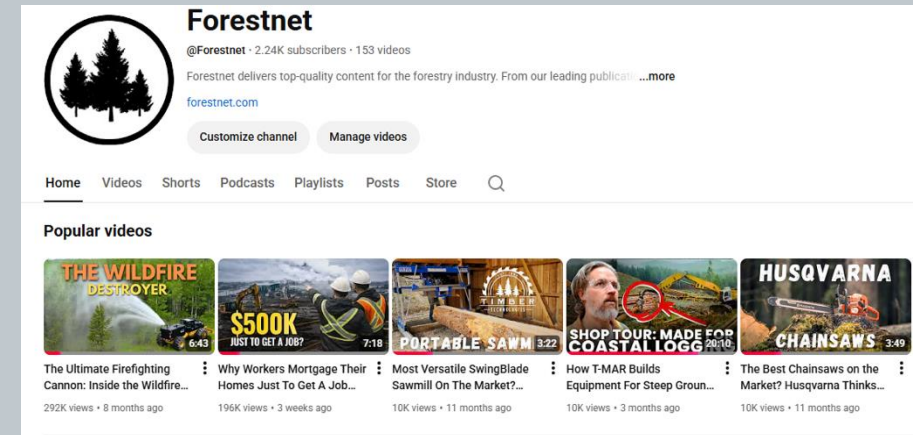
We've produced over 175 videos.

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 \$\$

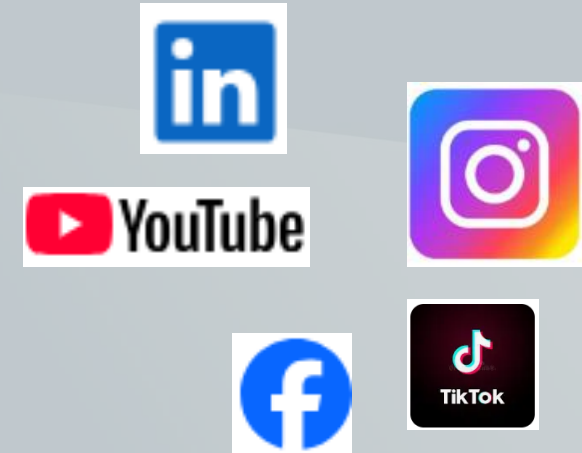
What doesn't work

- Long-form, slow-paced content (unless highly targeted)
- Overly technical or internal messaging



Different Platforms, Different Audiences

- Instagram/TikTok → reach & younger audiences
- Facebook → community & existing forestry audiences
- YouTube → credibility & deeper education
- LinkedIn → industry & policy influence



Not every platform does the same job.

The Shift Required

- Engage the public more directly
- Reduce fragmentation and duplication
- Invest in what actually works
- Focus on clarity, consistency, and collaboration

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

The future of forestry won't just be shaped in the forest - but in the public conversation around it.

The organizations that adapt will lead.

The future belongs to those who:

- Communicate clearly
- Build public trust
- Embrace modern storytelling
- Collaborate effectively

Questions ?

Anthony Robinson | Owner / CEO

Ph: +1-778-991-3500 | E: arobinson@forestnet.com

www.forestnet.com | [Forestnet YouTube](#) | www.forestnetmedia.com



FORESTNETMEDIA

TIMBER
WEST



FORESTNET MAGAZINE