

Forêts de chez nous PLUS

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2019 Federal Elections

On October 21, 450,000 woodlot owners and their families will vote in the federal election. Therefore, the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners (CFWO) recently approached the political parties, through the Fédération des producteurs forestiers du Québec (FPFQ), to sound them out about their commitments to help Canadian forest owners. In doing so, the CFWO stressed that the woodlot owners can offer solutions to the issues of climate change, the social and economic development of rural communities and land use.

In our view, three conditions are essential today to support the work of woodlot owners. In letters sent to the leaders of the four main political parties, the CFWO asked if the parties were prepared to commit to:

- 1 Creating a personal silviculture savings and investment plan to shelter some of their income from wood sales from taxes, to carry out other silviculture work needed for the growth of the forest.**
Canada's current tax system does little to encourage woodlot owners to develop their forests, since it does not consider that incomes and costs occur during different years of production.
- 2 Ensuring an exemption for private-forest lumber from duties and quotas in a future trade agreement with the United States.**
The U.S. government is not concerned with activities on private land but rather the management of public forests. In fact, the situation of Canada's 450,000 private woodlot owners is very similar to that of the 10 million private woodlot owners in the United States.
- 3 Funding a Canadian reforestation and silviculture program targeting the country's 450,000 private woodlot owners.**
Silvicultural work contributes to carbon sequestration by increasing forest stocks, at the same time generating wood to supply mills.

Keep track of the parties' commitments on CFWO's website

The following table summarizes the parties' positions on measures to help Canadian private woodlot owners. We did not receive a response from the Conservative Party of Canada and the Green Party, and did not find any planks in their platform linked to these three issues.

Expectations				
Create a personal silviculture savings and investment plan	Establish a personal silviculture savings plan, which would allow woodlot owners to temporarily halt loan repayments during periods of economic difficulty, along with taxation changes that would have the effect of spreading out owners' taxable income over a number of years, thus encouraging reinvestment in forest management work.	Examine the possibility of a silviculture savings and investment plan for wood lot owners.		
Ensure an exemption for private-forest lumber from duties and quotas		Fight to have these tariffs removed, but also push in the meantime for specific exemptions from duties and quotas for roundwood from private forests.		

Expectations				
Fund a Canadian reforestation and silviculture program targeting the country's 450,000 private woodlot owners		Boost reforestation efforts to strengthen climate resilience and ensure the sustainability of the forestry sector. This will include a commitment to private woodlot owners that federal programs will reach them.		Plant 2 billion trees over 10 years. This will help create about 3,500 seasonal jobs in tree planting each year, and will be part of a \$3 billion commitment to better conserve and restore forests, grasslands, agricultural lands, wetlands, and coastal areas.
Others	Demand funding for the development of forest biomass and the diversification of forestry-based economies.	Help protect communities through forest management to mitigate forest fire risk, including by combatting the spread of the mountain pine beetle and improving coordination of fire prevention efforts across all levels of government.		Help cities expand and diversify their urban forests, invest to protect Canada's trees from infestations, and help rebuild our forests after a wildfire.

The [FPFQ](#) and [CFWO](#) websites have been in full election mode since the election was called. There, you can view the parties' main commitments to private forest owners, along with the actual [letter and the parties' complete responses](#). Finally, don't forget to watch our [video on an RRSP for woodlot owners!](#)

The next steps

By voting on October 21, you will help build the case that, when we develop the full potential of private forests, hundreds of rural communities across Canada will benefit through more jobs and other spinoffs. Making use of these forests' potential will also help support and maintain vibrant, dynamic rural communities across Canada.

When the new government is formed, the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners and the Fédération des producteurs forestiers du Québec will ask to meet with the ministers responsible for land, forests and the environment to educate them about the issues faced by woodlot owners.