Canadian Forest History: A Path Forward?

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Looking Back, Looking Forward: The Ongoing History of Canada's Forests
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Cdn Forest History Preservation Project goals:

• Locate valuable forest history records in danger of loss or destruction

• Identify appropriate Canadian archival repositories to act as permanent homes

• Facilitate relocation of at risk records to an appropriate repository.

• Encourage forest history research and writing
Canadian Forest History Preservation Project

www.niche-canada.org/foresthistory
www.foreshistory.org/Research/fhscanada.html
Project Rationale:

Historical record is vanishing, because of
• Demographic shifts
• Corporate consolidation

Preserving our stories.
• Whose story do you want to tell?
• Who do you want to tell your story?
• What information do you want them to have access to?
Facilitation of donations

2. Chilliwack Forest Inventory Maps
3. Canadian Forest Inventory Committee
Regarding Standards for Implementation of Metric System.
What do archives collect? Primary sources!

Ideally, a collection will be:
• Unique
• Hold some relationship to other records
• Represent range of Dates and time-span
• Usable/good physical condition

What’s not collected?
Publications, artifacts, copies or duplicates.
Things to consider when making a donation:

• Physical ownership
• Intellectual ownership
• Have you finished using the records?
• Access restrictions
• Do you have a repository preference?
In general space limitations are the greatest obstacle, followed by staff limitations and lack of funds.

Overwhelmingly, finding aids are ‘local’.
Consult brochure for more info:

Préserver l’histoire forestière du Canada

Comprendre le passé pour façonner un meilleur avenir.

- Identifier des collections de documents importants pour l’histoire forestière
- Repérer des centres d’archives qualifiés
- Établir des liens entre donateurs d’archives et centres d’archives
- Collaborer avec la communauté intéressée par l’histoire de la forêt
- Encourager la recherche et les publications sur l’histoire de la forêt

Preserving Canada’s Forest History

By understanding the past, we shape a brighter future.

- Identify valuable forest history records
- Locate appropriate archival repositories
- Bring together donors and archives
- Collaborate with forest history community
- Encourage forest history research and writing

http://www.foresthistory.org/research/Canadian_archives_Fr.pdf
http://www.foresthistory.org/research/Canadian_archives_brochure.pdf
Opportunities for FH in Canada

• growing interest because of demographic shifts

• more communication between regions, CIF emerging as possible national venue

• strong professional community, academics, undertaking national projects
Challenges

• deluge of records because of demographic shifts
• apathy of those who control records
• difficulties facing archives: decentralization, modernization, cutbacks, lack of space and staff
• appropriate scale of FH, local/provincial, other?
What you can do:

• Distribute the project brochure

• Join your local society, or the FHS, read and critique historical narrative

• Get active in your local archive

• Tune in next week on session “Intro to writing historical narrative”

• Write for newsletter, or *Forestry Chronicle* “Old Growth” column, or FHS journal *Forest History Today*
A path forward.

- What are your aspirations for Cdn Forest History?

- What is the ideal structure/venue of Cdn Forest History?
  - none; existing societies; CIF; dedicated national organization
  - is there any possibility of a forest history assn in Atlantic Canada?

- What is the ideal relationship between professional historians and the interested lay public? Meeting ground of public history?

- A common project?
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