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Stepping up to tackle climate change: options for the BC forestry sector

British Columbia's forestry sector can potentially make a major contribution to meeting the province's climate targets through using a mix of regionally-specific harvest and stand management techniques, bioenergy investments and creating more long-lived wood products.

That's a key message from a [public presentation](#) held this morning by the Forest Carbon Management Project, a multi-year collaborative effort created by the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS), involving scientists from Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), the University of British Columbia (UBC) and other agencies.

Project researchers from UBC showed that climate change is already impacting the region's 55 million hectares of forest lands, with some wetter areas benefitting from the warmer conditions and increased carbon dioxide levels, while drier areas are experiencing slower growth and increased tree mortality.

NRCan scientists then shared modelling results on the impact of different management options, including extracting more wood from harvested areas, using waste wood to create bioenergy instead of slash burning, and substituting more long-lived wood products in place of carbon-intensive steel and concrete.

Their results show that such a portfolio of regionally targeted carbon mitigation options has the potential to contribute 35 per cent of British Columbia's 2050 emissions reduction target at costs well below \$100 per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).

In terms of numbers, it shows the forestry sector could deliver 18.2 megatonnes of CO₂ equivalent (MtCO₂e) of the required 52.7 MtCO₂e reduction in BC's annual emissions, while also creating 2,000 new full-time jobs, among other economic benefits. BC has a legislated greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 80 per cent below 2007 levels by 2050.

Werner Kurz, the project lead and senior NRCan scientist, says the PICS project clearly demonstrates that the forest sector in BC can significantly help mitigate climate change but it will require investment and for that investment to start soon.

"The next step for the Forest Carbon Management Project is more refined analyses of mitigation options for different regions in BC that take into account future climate impacts on those forests," he says. "This information will be useful for policy decisions over how to manage forests under a changing climate and to maximize their carbon uptake potential."

For more information see other [event resources](#) including a [media backgrounder](#) and forestry primer. PICS is a collaboration of BC's four research intensive universities, hosted and led by the University of Victoria.

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