

# Shaping the Future of our Forests

Registered Professional Foresters are trusted with our forests

# Forestry 101

Professional foresters in Ontario are crucial in managing and sustaining the province's forests that make up 20% of Canada's forests (State of Ontario's Natural Resources, 2021). Professional foresters' careers are integral to environmental sustainability. Their responsibilities include sustainably managing forests while considering wildlife habitat, fires, insect and disease, cultural values, soil and water protection, forest aesthetics, wood production for timber and carbon and recreation. Competent and accountable forest professionals are essential to deal with today's environmental challenges.

In Ontario, professional forestry is a regulated profession in order to serve the public interest. Registered Professional Foresters (R.P.F.s) are highly educated, experienced, and held to the highest professional standard of practice. They work within a legislated Code of Ethics and can be held accountable for their actions. R.P.F.s undertake comprehensive analyses and write forest prescriptions and plans so that the public interest is protected.

Sam Nsiah, R.P.F. ▲



**Registered Professional Forester (R.P.F.):** responsible for forest management and protection of forest values

## A Career in Professional Forestry

“As a Municipal Forester I get to have a positive impact on the environment and the people within my community. My favourite thing about my job is that it gives me the opportunity to make a lasting difference in the world around me, not only for today, but for future generations.”

—Catherine Edwards, R.P.F. ▼

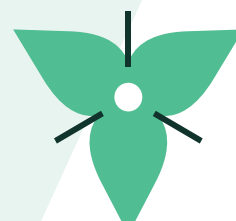
### Why Choose a Career in Forestry?

Choosing a career in forestry is a good match for those who love nature and want to make a real, positive impact on our environment. It's a field that blends your passion for nature with science and management. Foresters are important in ensuring forests are sustainably managed and forest ecosystems remain resilient and healthy. This career is not only about working with trees. It also involves protecting biodiversity and contributing to the fight against climate change. Additionally, forestry offers diverse career paths, from fieldwork and research to policymaking and education. It's a rewarding choice for those who love the outdoors and are eager to contribute to forest sustainability.

Working in forestry allows you to live where you work! Living in forestry communities is more affordable than buying a house in the city. Housing prices are cheaper, and the communities are often tight-knit and in the midst of nature. At the same time, forestry has career options that can allow you to work from a city or office space, with opportunities for remote work and travel.

### Education Requirements

If you have a passion for nature, the outdoors, and forests, consider a career as an R.P.F. The most straightforward way to become an R.P.F. is to complete a Canadian Forestry Accreditation Board university program. If you don't have this training, but have a relevant degree or diploma, you may still be eligible to become an R.P.F. in Training and work towards becoming a professional forester. However, you will need to have your education and experience evaluated, and may need to complete some additional training if competency gaps are identified. Remember that professional forestry is more than biology and ecology, you will need knowledge in all laws that apply to resource and land development as well as modelling forests, etc. All applicants, regardless of their education, post-graduation will need to gain 18 months of relevant mentored experience and submit sponsorship and character witness forms before finally applying to become an R.P.F. or Associate R.P.F.





## Frequently Asked Questions

### Do I have to be good at maths and science to work in forestry?

Forestry is a science based discipline. As there are many different career options, from communications and public consultation to analyses of large databases, you can seek a job that meets your level of competency.

### Is forestry bad for the environment?

Forestry is not about uncontrolled removal of trees, it's the opposite! R.P.F.s are trained to protect forest ecosystems and biodiversity by ensuring forestry operations are carried out responsibly and sustainably. They work with a legislated Code of Ethics and their actions are held accountable.

### Is forestry just about the forest industry and government policies?

No, there are MANY different jobs and employers in forestry. Professional foresters can run small businesses providing services to landowners, work for cities, Conservation Authorities, non-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations, consulting firms, schools and more!

### Will I get hired after I graduate?

It is very likely you will have lots of job opportunities after graduation. A significant portion of the forestry workforce is expected to retire by 2030, so there will be a shortage of skilled workers for many years to come.



**100%**  
of university graduates from a forestry program are hired in the industry within two years of graduating

(Ontario's Universities, 2022, Graduate Survey).

## Forester Journeys



**Gerard** is an Operations Forester. He is part of a team working collaboratively to manage Crown land forest under a Sustainable Forest License (SFL).



**Janice** works as an urban forester. She is involved in community engagement, GIS, field research and environmental monitoring in Toronto.



## Career Pathways

Just like a well-maintained forest, there are multiple different pathways you can travel within the forestry career sector. These are some options:

### TECHNOLOGY

**Forest Modeling Specialist:** Utilizes advanced computer models and data analysis to predict forest growth, assess environmental impacts, and guide sustainable forest management practices.

**GIS Analyst:** Uses Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to map and analyze forest landscapes to aid in forest management, conservation planning, and resource allocation.

**Planning Forester:** Uses science and technology to balance ecological, social and economic values in cooperation with forest stakeholders, to create long-term forest management plans. These plans look forward more than 100 years to ensure all future generations and wildlife will continue to benefit from the forest.

### HANDS-ON

**Operations Forester:** Oversees forestry activities such as timber harvests and reforestation projects to ensure compliance with approved plans, and environmental and labour regulations.

### SCIENCE

**Silviculture Forester:** Specializes in forest regeneration, ensuring the new forest meets planned wildlife habitat and timber objectives while protecting human safety, as well as soil and water quality.

**Carbon Forester:** Plays a crucial role in climate change mitigation by implementing forest management and modelling to maximize their carbon absorption and storage.

**Wildfire Ecological Specialist:** Plans fire management actions, evaluates impacts of wildfires, maps and projects spread of wildfires.

### URBAN

**Urban Forester:** Manages and maintains urban woodlands in cities and towns to enhance green spaces, air quality, and city aesthetics, among the many other benefits of urban trees.

### WRITING & ADVOCACY

**Forest Policy Analyst:** Develops and analyzes policies related to forest management, ensuring they support sustainable forestry practices.

**Indigenous Policy Advisor:** Collaborates with Indigenous communities to integrate traditional knowledge and practices into forest management and policy-making, ensuring respectful and sustainable use of forest resources.

Matt Corbett, R.P.F. ▶





## Think a career in Professional Forestry might be in your future?

Learn more at [opfa.ca/future-foresters](https://opfa.ca/future-foresters)



◀ Cover photo by Ying Hong, R.P.F.

"I took these photos from a helicopter where a silviculture forester and I were on our way to assess the regeneration of harvested areas. Professional foresters analyze the regeneration of harvested areas to ensure the new forest is developing as planned and that wildlife habitat, soil, and water are protected."