

# **Logging in Saskatchewan**

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# Logging in Saskatchewan

*Well, I'm too old to cut the mustard anymore, but my health is good. I sure would like to take pack sack, my rifle, and one of those dogs I once owned and go back to those lakes, where those mills used to be, in the North Country.*

- Albert Johnson

## Introduction

Over the decades, logging has been practised on many levels in Saskatchewan: First Nations and settlers providing themselves with shelter and fuel, homesteaders and others cutting and hauling wood for extra income, small local milling, railroad tie production on small and large scales, First Nations communities logging and milling, and large mills operating for profit. Today, over 85% of Saskatchewan's forest products go to the United States, Japan, Mexico, Australia, England and other countries.

Despite its "rep" as a prairie province, more than half of Saskatchewan, about 288,000 sq. km. (111,065 sq. mi.), is covered with forests, principally in northern regions. The forest industry is our second largest manufacturing industry, contributing more than \$750 million each year to the provincial economy. Softwoods, mainly spruce and jack pine, comprise the majority of production at major centres such as Hudson Bay, Big River, Meadow Lake and Prince Albert. Today the importance of this resource is understood in a wider, more integrated, context than in the past. Government and business, newly recognizing the complexity and vulnerability of the ecology of forest, water, flora, fauna, and human culture, are working together to maintain the sustainability and essential biodiversity of our forests.

## 1. Early Use of Forests in Saskatchewan

The Dominion Lands Act set out the first commercial forest zones in what was to become Saskatchewan in 1872, allowing the first commercial logging in the area. In the early years there was little systematic, large scale harvesting.

### First Nations Co-Exist with Forests

Although not traditional harvesters of timber in Saskatchewan's forests, First Nations people have always used a variety of forest resources for fuel, lodge poles, tool and equipment making, transportation, foods, dyes, and medicinal and ceremonial purposes.

### Settlers Cut Cordwood

When homesteaders settled in Saskatchewan, almost everyone used wood burning stoves for heating and cooking. The harvesting of wood in preparation for winter was done by both men and women. Logs were used for shelter. Trees were felled with swede saws, limbed with broad axes and shaped with ax and adze for construction of houses and barns. Timber was dragged out of the bush by horse, mule or oxen during the winter months. Sometimes lumber was floated down-river to a homestead where it was collected for house construction. Trees cut for firewood were sawn into lengths and split for drying. It was usually stacked in cords, each 4 x 4 x 8 feet.

Some families piled their stocks in a mound or stood it upright in teepee shaped stacks to keep the snow off. Children were often detailed to top up the kitchen wood box each day.

Many households cut cordwood for cash, hauling it into town by horse or oxen where it was sold to businesses for burning in furnaces or for resale. Cordwood sold for 75 cents to one dollar a cord in the early days. Sometimes it was sold in pole lengths. Sometimes a gasoline-powered buzzsaw, a huge circular blade mounted on a wooden frame, was used. Odd job men often did wood splitting piece work, and sometimes a man with a portable saw would make the rounds in town, doing custom sawing of the stockpiles that families had hauled out of the bush.

One of the most appreciated gifts for a widow or handicapped person was a load of wood as it was quite a worry to be caught short of fuel. There was a sort of pride and good feeling in the fall to see your yard neatly stocked with plenty of firewood to see you through the winter months.

(Big River History Book Committee 1979:56)

## **2. The Lumber Era**

Logging in Saskatchewan began in earnest at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The practice at the time was to cut the biggest and best trees, and leave the smaller trees to regenerate the forests. Felling and limbing was done in winter with long two-man saws. The timber was then loaded onto sleighs and hauled by horses or mules to a mill or a staging area such as a lake or frozen river above a dam. When the dams were opened in the spring the logs would rush down to the mill; if a lake was used as a staging area, the logs were boomed, or corralled by logs chained together, and then floated to the mill for processing in the summer. As most logging was done in the winter there was little damage to the environment. However, in spring when the logs were sent downstream, wood debris in river bottoms often destroyed fish habitats. Another problem was the increased erosion which resulted from trees being harvested along waterways.

This method required few major roads, but many skid trails had to be cut, one every two chains (132 ft.), to drag the tree-length logs out of the bush. Water, hauled in from lakes in heated tanks, was used to form a foot-thick bed of ice along the trail. Sleighs piled high with logs ran in two parallel ruts cut into the ice by hand with an axe. The ruts kept ganged sleds lined up, one behind the other, and under control. Soon, rut-cutting machines were developed which were pulled by a team of 16 horses and, later, tractors. “Chickadees” cleared the ice roads of horse droppings and the “road monkey” was kept busy making repairs to the all-important ruts.

On a good ice road a skilled teamster could haul loads weighing up to 65 tons as long as the haul was not greater than 10 to 12 miles. However, there were problems when distances became greater ...

(Morris 1999:4)

## The Phoenix Centiped Log Hauler

For the long haul, some lumber companies imported Phoenix Centiped log haulers,<sup>1</sup> half-tracked coal fired steam engines of immense power. These behemoths were equipped with runners at the front for winter work. Alternatively, these could be replaced with wheels. A Centiped carried about one and a half tons of coal in its tender. The powerful four cylinder engine could pull up to 30 sleighs piled high with logs on the ice roads. For many years the Sturgeon Lake Lumber Company's engine hauled about 150,000 board feet<sup>2</sup> of timber between the mill on Sturgeon Lake and the lumber yards at Prince Albert, a 30 mile trip which it made at about 4 mph.

When the Holt gasoline-powered tracked engines became available, they quickly replaced the steamers. The gas engines required no water and used about a barrel and a half of gasoline a day. They often ran day and night in winter to keep them from freezing up.

## The Lumber Companies

The early part of the century was the era of the big lumber companies and the "company towns". This was the heyday of the lumber era, with full production, full employment and big payrolls. Hundreds of people came and went in the lumber towns. Large outfits, owned variously by local men, lumber companies in other parts of Canada and U.S. outfits, applied for logging rights on large tracts of land. They set up huge saw and planing mills, fed by timber brought in from scattered lumber camps in the bush. The camps often moved, as trees in an area were consumed. Shipments of logs arrived by steam train, water, and log hauler. The Ladder Lake Lumber Company used two boats, the Alice Mattes and the Alligator. The stern wheeler Alice Mattes had previously operated on the Saskatchewan River. It was renamed for the daughter of the man who dismantled her and moved her to Big River to haul boom logs down Cowan Lake by winch against its centre pole anchor. The Alligator also operated by winch, and could haul itself overland from one lake to another on its heavy iron skids, reeling in its cable which was anchored by a deeply buried "dead man" on land. The Pas Lumber Company also owned a boat, the David and Winton. Its steam whistle is in the WDM collection.

The Big River mill, ready for production in 1911, was **the largest in the British Empire**, with a daily production capacity of one million bd ft. It consisted of a sawmill, a planing mill, a drying and storage shed for finished lumber, and a piling yard. Refuse was burned in a 142 ft. tall

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<sup>1</sup>Saskatchewan's first Centiped is thought to have been used in the north in 1905 by the Sturgeon Lake Lumber Company. Several companies in Saskatchewan used them over the next 30 years. The Centiped was dependable and powerful and its cleated belts gave it much greater traction than conventional wheels. Weighing nearly 35,000 lbs., it needed about three tons of coal per day and was expensive to run. The boiler required a fresh water supply to keep the engine from running dry and rupturing. The crew usually consisted of engineer, fireman, conductor, and one man to sit at the front of the engine and steer the huge machine. By WW2, most lumber companies had replaced their old Phoenix log haulers with gas powered engines. Many were sold for scrap, while others were abandoned in the bush. Two, of only six known to exist at present, were donated to the Western Development Museum in 1948 by The Pas Lumber Company.

<sup>2</sup>One board foot (bd ft, fbm, or BF) is the volume of a one-foot length of a "standard board" twelve inches wide by one inch thick. Thus a board foot equals 144 cubic inches, or 1/12 of a cubic foot, or approximately 2.360 litres. If lumber is stacked neatly, the number of board feet can be computed from the dimensions of the stack, no matter how wide or thick the boards are. One thousand board feet is abbreviated as MBF.

burner. Lured from eastern Canada and other parts by advertisements of steady employment, more than 1000 men worked in building the mill and in the bush. They were paid \$1.50 to \$8.00 per ten-hour day, depending on the job. Unfortunately, before the mill could be used, it burned and a second mill was constructed, with only half the capacity of the original.

In general, in the early days the large lumber companies showed little respect for the forest environment, damaging sensitive areas and wasting a great deal of useful timber while cutting roads. For example, in the winter of 1917-18, the Prince Albert Lumber Company cut more than 25,000 logs which were never removed from the bush.

### **The Lumberman's Life**

Life in a mill "town" could be rough. The lumber companies owned nearly everything except the post office, which they usually operated, and the church. The work was difficult and dangerous. Days off were rare. One lumberman remembers how "jostling, fighting, hard-working lumberjacks held sway in the streets" and "the great two-day contests when log rolling, and other sawing and lumbering feats were the source of keen competition between these expert lumbermen." (Big River History Book Committee 1979:14) Big River was very much a typical "company town", and few private businesses were tolerated. The company ran the housing, school, post office, hospital, and all the businesses, including barber and blacksmith. To house about 200 single men, the Ladder Lake Lumber Company built a large boarding house, one of the main buildings in town in the early years. A large dining area provided excellent meals 24 hours a day. There was also a pool room for recreation.

At The Pas Lumber Company, operating in the 1920s and 1930s in the Nipawin area, the best cooks available were hired. Talking was forbidden in the dining hall, as it was important to get the men fed as quickly as possible.

If the hall became noisy it was not unheard of for the cook to appear in the doorway carrying a butcher knife or cleaver while testing the cutting edge with his thumb. Noise wasn't much of a problem after that. (Morris 1999:4)

The cook had to start frying 150 pounds of sausage the afternoon before they were to be served with fried potatoes, toast, syrup and jam. About one and a half bushels of potatoes were peeled every night. Hot dinner was even transported out to men working more than half a mile from camp in the "gut wagon". The camp office supplied work clothes, boots, writing materials and tobacco. Snuff was very popular. Ernie Morris recalls that thermometers were forbidden in company camps: they might tempt workers to refuse to work at extremely low temperatures. He certainly remembers the smell of wet woollen socks hung up to dry on little crosses on a long wire above the bunks.

Chester Olson describes the small, crowded bunk houses at Meadow Lake where 16 men lived in a 12 x 16 ft bunkhouse eight feet high, with a barrel heater in the middle: the top bunks roasted and the bottom ones froze. There was straw or hay instead of a mattress. The large cookhouse had a big wood cook stove at one end and a bedroom behind for the cook, the helper and supplies.

Many a romance started doing dishes after supper. The women who did the cooking in camps did a great job, under some trying times and circumstances. They washed piles of dishes, peeled bushels of potatoes, baked bread every day, and always had cakes and pies on hand.

(Meadow Lake Diamond Jubilee Heritage Group 1981:18)

### *The Great Fires of 1919*

Local people still remember the disastrous forest fires of summer 1919. Huge areas burned, forcing the evacuation of many men and families. While the men stayed on to fight the inferno with pails of water, a special train was sent to Big River to remove the women, who scrambled to collect their children and possessions.

Mrs John Swanson, realizing that the fire was getting too close to her homestead, began to bury some of the family's more valuable possessions, those that one could never afford to purchase again.

Mr Nicholson's two year old daughter observed the commotion of the fire. She ran to save something and when she returned from the house she held the strap that was used for punishing her, securely under her arm.

Mrs McKnight[']s most vivid memory of the fire is ... of her furniture being dumped into the swamp. (Big River History Book Committee 1979:19-20)

In the end, the Big River area fire burned itself out before it could enter the town and before it reached the yard where reserves of lumber and cordwood were stored. By the 1920s, the effects of the fire and extensive logging made reforestation necessary. The Big River Forestry Reserve began **one of the first tree nurseries in Saskatchewan** and sent seedlings all over the province. Other fires devastated timber in the Montreal Lake area.

Between the wars, lumbering continued to be important around the province, but on a smaller scale than during the Lumber Era mills. Many small outfits logged trees, loaded the logs, hauled them by various methods and sold them to planing mills and other companies; some operated their own planing mills as well. With the influx of new homesteaders during the Depression, a great deal of pressure was put on forest resources, and unwise land clearing and improper brush disposal contributed to the increased number of forest fires which burned many square miles of forests.

### **3. The Depression: Boxes, Pulpwood and Anything Else**

In 1930, the responsibility for Saskatchewan's natural resources was transferred to the province and a new Forestry Branch of the Department of Natural Resources administered forest resources and fire control. Many individuals and partnerships did logging, and contracts were also taken out to produce railway ties, a complicated procedure requiring a great deal of manual labour. A by-product of this industry was slab faces often used for fencing and sheds. Many small box and shingle factories also bought lumber. Sometimes, especially during the Depression, a load of

pulpwood might be sold for a dollar, just to get something for it. At the small mills and lumber camps, small communities often sprang up. Families sometimes lived in cabooses that had been used in lumber and fishing camps. Some people exchanged their wood for groceries and seed. In Meadow Lake, Northern Millworks bought a great deal of wood to make baskets for local berry harvesters and fish processors in 1935.

With government encouragement, some prairie families moved north during the Depression years and, as well as homesteading, many worked in private mills which received permits from the DNR. Some started their own small mills and part-time sawmilling became an important source of extra cash for homesteaders. Newbern Wilson of Lintlaw tells how he custom sawed thirteen carloads of cordwood one winter, at \$4.00 a car in the late 1920s. In 1927, he set up a small gas-powered sawmill which he used in the Okla area until 1932. He then improved it with steam power, added a planer in 1936, and sawed for another 20 years, selling the lumber locally and as far away as Estevan and Moosomin. In the 'thirties, the price varied between \$7 per MBF for rough poplar to \$22 for planed spruce. By 1936, lumber in Meadow Lake sold for \$36 per MBF.

As a demand for pulpwood became apparent in the 1930s, numerous pulpwood camps sprang up in the unsettled regions of Big River, Meadow Lake and many other areas. Two-man crosscut saws and axes were used to cut poplar, alder and birch. It was peeled in spring when the bark was easily stripped off. Workers were paid about one dollar for a dawn-to-dusk day. Until roads were improved, horses were used to haul the pulpwood into town where it was dumped in large piles near the railroad tracks ready to be shipped to pulp mills. It was common for people to cut and haul pulpwood in winter for extra income, especially in the 'thirties when cash was hard to come by. Into the 1930s, Porcupine Plain was known as the Cordwood Capital of Saskatchewan and became the province's largest cordwood shipping point.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, sawmill operations boomed in many regions as "emergency cutting" was carried out for the war effort. There was logging in National Parks during the war also. At Prince Albert, for example, four work camps for Conscientious Objectors involving more than 200 men worked at fire road construction and cutting cordwood. Roads were extended into previously remote areas for easier extraction of forest products. In the Meadow Lake area, at least 100,000 railroad ties were shipped out in 1940. The result was serious over-cutting in many areas, which had to be addressed by the new government at the end of the war.

#### **4. The Government Takes Control of the Lumber Industry**

##### **The Saskatchewan Timber Board**

With the change in government at the end of the Second World War, northern development entered a new phase. The CCF had campaigned on a platform of renewed use and conservation of northern renewable resources. A royal commission on forestry was set up, which resulted in increased attention to fire fighting and regulation of the timber industry. The activities of the Northern Conservation Service were expanded within the Department of Natural Resources. Many private mills were closed. The new Saskatchewan Timber Board (STB) Crown

corporation of 1945-46, now controlling all timber contracts<sup>3</sup>, put in place a program to rebuild the lumber industry after the ravages of wartime harvesting. The Saskatchewan Forest Inventory of 1947 exposed the depredations of over-cutting and forest fires, and the DNR moved to reduce harvests to sustainable levels. In Fort a la Corne Provincial Forest, which had been heavily exploited for trading posts, homesteads and fuel over the years, harvesting was restricted after the war.

Despite the STB changes, many small manufacturing operations thrived. Products ranged from boxes to fence posts and grasshopper bait. **Canada's first plywood manufacturing plant** opened at Hudson Bay in 1948 and shipped 40 million sq. ft. of unsanded plywood across Canada each year. At Big River, Waites Fisheries established a sawmill at Dore Lake to produce lumber for fish boxes. When the STB bought the sawmill and opened a new planer mill in 1948, forestry employment in Big River surged. By 1956 the tree nursery at the Forestry Reserve also expanded.

### **Increased Mechanization and Efficiency**

During the 1960s and 1970s, traditional logging practices began to give way to mechanized harvesting with skidders, tractors, and machine harvesters. The danger of environmental damage was increased, because of heavier, mechanized equipment operating year-round to supply the mills. During summer when soil was vulnerable to compaction and plant life in sensitive areas was sometimes overrun, rainwater runoff caused sedimentation in lakes and streams.

New larger mills with greatly increased capacities required more wood. Logging increased dramatically in many areas and forestry companies invested heavily in equipment and manpower. Timber killed by forest fire killed timber was also harvested and, after the clean-up, harvesting was allowed to continue at increased levels. At Big River trees were not so plentiful as they once were, and the mill moved southeast to Bodmin where it operated as Saskatchewan Forest Products (SaskFor). The Big River Nursery, in co-operation with the Prince Albert Nursery, supplied reforestation stocks to replace cut-over, burned-over and understocked forests throughout Saskatchewan.

The Prince Albert Pulp Company<sup>4</sup> opened officially in 1968, Saskatchewan's **largest single industrial employer** at the time. The government also set up a Crown company, Saskatchewan Pulpwood Ltd., to provide wood for the mill and reduced stumpage fees as an incentive, and promised to spend about \$2,000,000 on roads from the forest area to the mill site.

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<sup>3</sup>The Saskatchewan Timber Board contracted out all forest products and supervised the harvesting, marketing and financing of all material harvested from provincial forests, not including farm permits and First Nations reserves. Through the regional allocation system, the senior forester allocated quota to the district superintendent, who then distributed contracts to various operators based on local criteria.

<sup>4</sup>The Province of Saskatchewan owned 30 per cent of the Prince Albert Pulp Mill, the remainder held by a U.S. company. The operation contributed greatly to the province's economy in an area classified as depressed, employing 310 workers in the mill and 400 in the woods operation. Nearly all of the raw materials are being purchased in Saskatchewan. Other products purchased in the province for the mill included 500,000 cords a year of pulp wood; 80,000 tons a year of chemicals (60,000 tons of that from Saskatchewan producers); 25,000 kilowatts per hour of electricity from Saskatchewan Power; 8,500 cubic feet per day of gas from SPC; 36,000,000 gallons of water per day; and 1,500,000 gallons of petroleum products a year. (Hinds 1968:50)

## 5. The Forest Industry Modernizes

Responsible and sustainable management and harvesting of forest resources has become the new goal of the industry in Saskatchewan, as elsewhere. New owners and new partnerships are providing increased employment in Saskatchewan as the forest industry continues to improve and integrate production, efficiency and corporate responsibility.

### **New Forestry Companies Operate in Saskatchewan**

As part of a new movement to privatize the forest industry, the Prince Albert Pulp Company was sold to U.S.-owned Weyerhaeuser in 1986. Weyerhaeuser Canada purchased the P.A. Pulp Mill, the chemical plant, the sawmill at Bodmin and a five million hectare Forest Management Licence Agreement (FMLA) area. After 1988, Prince Albert Pulp & Paper converted much of its pulp production into fine sheet paper products. With the acquisition of MacMillan Bloedel in 1999, Weyerhaeuser added a sawmill in Carrot River and the plywood mill and two oriented strand board mills in Hudson Bay to its holdings. The company has been committed to reducing the environmental impact of its forest operations, and has greatly reduced the amount of electricity and gas it buys by creating its own electricity with a generator fuelled by wood waste. Reforestation is also important to Weyerhaeuser. More than 50 million seedlings have been planted in vulnerable areas in its 13.1 million acre licensed area since 1967.

In 1988, the Meadow Lake Sawmill became NorSask Forest Products Inc. and during the 1990s supplied a pulp mill in Meadow Lake for paper production. NorSask and its Alberta partner, Millar Western, created Mistik Management Ltd. to supply, track forest regrowth, and oversee reforestation and the building of roads.

**Mistik became the first-ever Saskatchewan forest management company to receive Ministerial approval** for their environmental impact statement on a Twenty-Year Forest Management Plan. The plan went far beyond short-term logging goals, instead producing guidelines that reach 220 years into the future. (Kryzanoski, 2001)

A new co-operative approach was developed with northern residents to establish a forest management plan based on both science and traditional knowledge.<sup>5</sup> This Integrated Resource Management approach is **unique in Canada**.

### **First Nations Mills and Partnerships**

Recently, First Nations organizations have become very involved in new endeavours in northern forests. Many partnerships are now being formed between First Nations communities and lumber companies, resulting in new facilities and increased employment.

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<sup>5</sup>Mistik consulted scientists, naturalists, elders, trappers, fishermen, loggers, saw millers and pulp makers. In response to initial strong opposition to the new methods, communication with northern residents was increased to assuage local fears, and new First Nations representation on management boards ensured that forestry industries heeded traditional ways and community concerns when planning harvesting and replanting, and in any decisions concerning wildlife, hunting, tourism, and recreational resources.

### *NorSask*

In 1998 the Meadow Lake Tribal Council became the sole owners of NorSask, the **largest First Nations forest products company in Canada**. Within five years, the mill had improved its efficiency with computerized equipment, doubling its 1988 production and supplying North American markets with premium lumber. During 1997, the mill produced a record 101 million bd ft of lumber.

### *The Prince Albert Model Forest*

Established in 1992, the highly successful Prince Albert Model Forest,<sup>6</sup> comprising 367,000 ha of forest land north of Prince Albert, is a partnership administered by ten diverse groups, including four First Nations organizations, the Canadian Forest Service (CFS), the Canadian Institute of Forestry (Saskatchewan Section), the Prince Albert National Park, the provincial Environment and Resource Management Department, the Resort Village of Candle Lake, and Weyerhaeuser Canada.

## **6. Integrated Forest Management and Innovative Product Development**

Because Saskatchewan harvests less than 50% of its sustainable wood resources, there is great potential for new activity in sawmill and logging operations, manufacturing, agriforestry and research and development. New regulations to ensure forest resource sustainability for the future, embodied in the Forest Resource Management Act which came into effect in the spring of 1999, govern modern practices.

Saskatchewan's forest fire risk is high due to old growth and insect infestation. A new Northern Strategy of increased harvesting is being guided by innovative principles of forest management, diversity of the forest economy and expanded corporate responsibility for environmental assessment and northern community participation.

Today's integrated forest management (IM) is defined "as managing the whole forest ecosystem, including soil, water, trees, animals, and plants, to meet a variety of objectives" and allows all those affected to be involved in the planning process. Biodiversity and continuity in natural and cultured forest succession are important aspects of IM. Watercourse zones are usually left intact, as are standing dead trees and snags that may be used by raptors and hole-nesting birds. SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) monitors harvesting and the current assessment of IM practices concludes that growth exceeds harvest. (SERM, 1995) Several large forestry companies operating in the province have been national leaders in their inclusive approach, involving stakeholders in developing sustainable harvesting plans.

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<sup>6</sup>The Prince Albert Model Forest partnership is funded largely by the CFS. Many commercial, subsistence, and educational activities occur in the model forest. Much of the area is an active part of Weyerhaeuser Canada's Forest Management Licence Agreement. Fibre acquired from land belonging to the Montreal Lake and La Ronge Indian Bands is also processed. Protected areas and recreational use occur in Prince Albert National Park and Candle Lake Provincial Park. Partnership research into sustainable integrated resource management was a strong influence in the construction of the Wapawekka sawmill in Prince Albert. Operating as a partnership between Weyerhaeuser, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, the Montreal Lake Cree Nation and The Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, the sawmill uses small log technology to manufacture lumber from wood that previously had been chipped for pulp. The model forest partnership is also important in a provincial forest practices and land management monitoring task force, which includes all forest industries in the province. (Kryzanowski 2001 "The New Forest Model")

It is not only in IM that Saskatchewan leads. The paper plant at Meadow Lake is the **first in the world to have no liquid effluent discharge**. Waste water is cleaned, recycled and then reused. Only a small amount of fresh water is needed to top up water lost to evaporation. The process is chlorine-free, produces no dioxins or other chlorinated organics, and no sulphur dioxide or related odours are released into the air.

With rising electricity and natural gas costs, new initiatives such as sharing the cost of building power generation plants and co-generation plants using wood waste are being promoted. Saskatchewan-made portable sawmills are now being exported to Russia and other areas of Canada.

In 2001, the Saskatchewan Forest Centre opened in Prince Albert. The SFC makes information available to Saskatchewan's forest industry on such topics as forest science, value-added manufacturing and tertiary industries in Saskatchewan, marketing and agroforestry. Agroforestry is seen as having particularly good potential in Saskatchewan. The provincial government encourages new forest development, in combination with grain and other crops, on lands traditionally considered to be agricultural. Six million seedlings are expected to be planted in several large scale reforestation projects by 2003.

Not all operations are large, however. Perhaps one of the last bastions of the independent seasonal sawmill owner, Saskatchewan, through support programs and the SFC, encourages new forest-related industries such as re-manufacturing and specialty wood products. Other innovative enterprises include ecotourism and wildcrafting. Specialty forest products include wild berries, herbs, spices and mushrooms, pine needles which produce essential oils and even jewellery, mosses and lichens for dyeing and other uses, and tree bark for use in crafts.

First Nations have been quick to take advantage of the new, broader awareness of Saskatchewan's forests. With the support of the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP)<sup>7</sup>, a partnership between First Nations and the federal government introduced in 1996, Mistawasis First Nation has developed a project that provides a chance for elders to share their traditional culture with both residents and visitors. With FNFP funding, hiking trails and a cultural site were created to enable this First Nation to share its history and culture in the beauty of its natural surroundings.

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<sup>7</sup> The Program is aimed at improving economic conditions in status First Nation communities by promoting increased First Nation involvement, in operating and participating in forest-based businesses, in increased employment in the forest sector and in improving the ability of First Nations to manage reserve forests sustainably.