

PROFILES IN SUSTAINABILITY

Triton Logging Company Inc.

“Mother Nature never intended for trees to be underwater,” says Christopher Godsall. But water has submerged trees in many parts of the world — perhaps as many as 300 million trees worldwide. And Godsall has come up with an innovative, eco-friendly method of harvesting them.

Godsall is President and CEO of Triton Logging, a Canadian firm described on its Web site as “committed to providing the world’s preferred environmental wood choice.” Based on Vancouver Island off the coast of British Columbia, Triton, which Godsall founded in 2000, has shown that underwater logging — long regarded as an unprofitable sideline by the foresting industry — can turn a profit without damaging the surrounding environment.

Working year-round, Triton recovers Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, hemlock and other species in British Columbia and will soon be harvesting overseas. The Rainforest Alliance has certified Triton’s milled wood under our SmartWood Rediscovered program, which recognizes environmentally sound practices for the recovery, recycling and reuse of wood products.

The key to Triton’s efforts is the Sawfish™, an underwater logging machine invented by the company. Operated by remote control, the Sawfish clamps onto trees, to which it attaches inflatable air bags, then cuts the trees with an electric chain saw. The air bags float the logs to the water’s surface, where they are loaded onto a barge.

There are several environmental advantages to the Sawfish method:

- It serves as an alternative to conventional above ground logging, which produces 25 percent of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions.
- When submerged trees are cut, the lake floor is not disturbed and no silt — which can threaten the surrounding ecosystems — is created.
- The habitats of fish and other marine species are left undisturbed.
- The Sawfish does not pollute the water — it runs on an electric motor and uses biodegradable and vegetable oil-based hydraulic fluids.



Triton Logging At-a-Glance

Established: 2000

Headquarters: Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

Products: Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, hemlock and other wood species

Honors and Awards: President and CEO Christopher Godsall named to *Men’s Journal* annual “Environmental Affairs Hall of Fame” as one of “Fifteen Unsung Heroes Fighting to Save Our Damn Planet” in May 2007 issue. Triton lumber products named to Environmental Building News and GreenSpec Directory’s annual list of Top 10 Green Building Products in 2006.



OUR MISSION

The Rainforest Alliance works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior.

www.rainforest-alliance.org

Godsall first became interested in underwater logging in 1999, while working as general manager for a Canadian log salvaging company. He came to realize that the company's practice of removing submerged trees from riverbeds and shallow lakes was not only time-consuming and unproductive, but also damaging to the environment.

Then a client showed Godsall a photo of an entire forest that had been submerged by a reservoir. He learned that there were a number of such forests in Canada — and elsewhere in the world — that had been created when dams flooded surrounding areas.

"The picture of a whole forest of trees underwater," he says, "seemed at once surreal, obscene and too good to be true."



Triton Logging aims to harvest 45,000 trees a year from Ootsa Lake.

Godsall proposed to his bosses that the company work to develop technology for large-scale underwater forestry, but they were not interested. And so he resigned — and founded Triton.

Today, Triton's largest logging operation to date is Ootsa Lake, a 154-square-mile reservoir in northwestern British Columbia, formed in 1954 when the Alcan aluminum company built a hydroelectric dam to power its smelter. Godsall has set the ambitious goals of harvesting 45,000



The Sawfish™ method has numerous environmental advantages over traditional underwater salvage methods.

trees a year from Ootsa Lake and hundreds of thousands more from other reservoirs.

The demand is certainly there: According to a study by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the market for underwater logs and other "good wood" grew to \$5 billion by 2005. Big-name retailers such as the Home Depot, Lowe's and IKEA have all expressed interest in stocking Triton's products.

And Godsall is expanding Triton worldwide. Having assessed submerged forests in reservoirs on every continent but Antarctica, he believes the estimate of 300 million submerged trees worldwide may be low. "We're continually discovering reservoirs with trees in them," he says. "And with our experience and technology, we can harvest anywhere in the world."

About the Rainforest Alliance's Sustainable Forestry Program

Established in 1987, the Rainforest Alliance is an international, nonprofit conservation organization that works to conserve biodiversity and ensure sustainable livelihoods by transforming land-use practices and consumer behavior. Our SmartWood program, founded in 1989, helped establish the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) — which sets standards for environmentally and socially responsible forestry worldwide and accredits certifiers. We are currently the leading forestland certifier for the FSC, having certified more than 100

million acres (40.5 hectares) of forestland in 58 countries to date — about three percent of the world's forests that are designated mainly for production. These forests produce a variety of goods we use every day, including paper, lumber, furniture and flooring. Our international offices and the work of our partner organizations allow us to offer certification services around the world. We also guide companies that are planning to use sustainably-produced forest and agriculture products, and link them with producers.

Leading retailers, including the Home Depot and IKEA, and important corporations like paper products giant Domtar and Tembec, a major integrated forest products company, already use products from FSC-certified forests — and because of growing consumer interest in such products, forestry companies have economic incentives to manage their lands responsibly. *The SmartWood Rediscovered Wood Program is not within the scope of Rainforest Alliance accreditation by the Forest Stewardship Council.*

For more information about the Rainforest Alliance's sustainable forestry program, please visit www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/forestry



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