

FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Canadian Forest Service launched a program in 2004 to use trees in the climate change battle. The program called Forest 20/20 Plantation Demonstration and Assessment uses nature's principles to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it as carbon. The trees are planted in an area that was not forested previously then a new contribution is made to the climate change goals. That is the essence of the program.

The largest Forest 20/20 plantation in Canada is an 80 hectare area on the Matsqui First Nation's land near Mission, BC. Trees were planted in an area formerly covered with weeds and berries. Poplar trees were planted and, to the pleasant surprise of the project managers, grew at a fast rate. Equally fast was the response from nearby beavers which ate about two hectares of the plantation.

Even with this intervention from nature, members of the Matsqui Band planted close to 34,000 hybrid poplar trees giving them "first in show" status in the Forest 20/20 program.