Across Canada, hundreds of thousands of diverse Canadians work hard to bring us the paper cups for our offices, the wood we use to build our decks, or the screen of our smart phones. All parts of the trees, even that which was traditionally considered waste, are used in the process. Below we follow the path wood takes before it gets to consumers and some of the many people that make it possible from the management of forests to the conversion of timber into high value products in a car.

SITE RECONNAISSANCE

As a forestry student in Vancouver at the University of British Columbia, Michael Vela did a co-op with Interfor Corporation, assisting logging engineers with cut-block layout and road location/design. Logging engineers are integral in the planning stages of harvesting, working with people and complex technology to ensure that soil, water, and other natural resources are protected during harvesting.

HARVESTING

John Fleming is a fourth generation logger and current vice-president of Fleming's Trucking and Logging in St. Joseph Island, Ontario. His company uses a "cut-to-length" technique, where trees are de-limbed and cut to length directly at the stump, as opposed to dragging the felled tree through the forest, to increase efficiency and reduce environmental impact. Multi-generation logging families have a unique perspective and a wealth of historical knowledge that they can incorporate into sustainable harvesting.

SAWMILL

Wade Lariviere is a member of the Canoe Lake Cree First Nation in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. Wade started in various entry level jobs at the local NorSask Forest Products sawmill before passing the annual NorSask trade apprenticeship exam. Now Wade is a fourth-year Industrial Mechanic apprentice at the same sawmill. The growing bioeconomy can create additional opportunities for Indigenous communities – for example, the NorSask sawmill is owned by the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and is one of the largest First Nations-owned sawmills in Canada.

PULP MILL

Starting out as a nurse, Kathy Stull decided to change her career in her thirties and went back to university, with the goal of finding a career that would allow her to remain in St. John, New Brunswick. Kathy now works at JD Irving Pulp and Paper in Saint John as a certified power engineer. Power engineers complete rigorous technical training and are responsible for the safe operation, maintenance, and repairs of critical process machinery at the mill.

BIOREFINERY

Dr. Minh Tan Ton-That is a scientist at the National Research Council Canada in Boucherville, Québec. He and his team of researchers and technicians have developed a number of innovative and patented technologies for using lignin and wood fibres from the pulp and paper industry to create bio-based plastics and biocomposites. These innovative products are used for the manufacturing and transportation industry, among others, and help Canadian forest companies establish a strong and competitive foothold in emerging markets.

BIOFUELS

Did you know that your own car likely contains wood products? Cellulose nanocrystals are currently used in electronic displays, paints, abrasion-resistant transparencies, and bioplastic interior components such as dashboards and door panels. Lignin is used in carbon fibre panels and replaces carbon black to make lighter tires, improving fuel efficiency. And biomethanol is a fuel additive created using waste from pulp mills.