

**Community
Forests
International**



ANNUAL REPORT

24-25





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“I want women to believe in themselves. Land is not only for men, the environment belongs to all of us.”

— Asha Ali Hamad, Kiuyu Minungwini,
Pemba Island | Mother, Business Owner &
Agroforestry Leader

Introduction



A note from Daimen

Wangari Maathai started a tree planting movement in rural Kenya to restore land and support women in providing for their families.

Her community tree planting groups then grew into the primary organizing spaces for the pro-democracy movement—allowing people to work together and challenge colonialism as the root cause of environmental harm. This movement would ultimately overthrow decades of dictatorship in Kenya and propel society toward greater freedom and equality; including historic legal protections for Indigenous and community land rights.

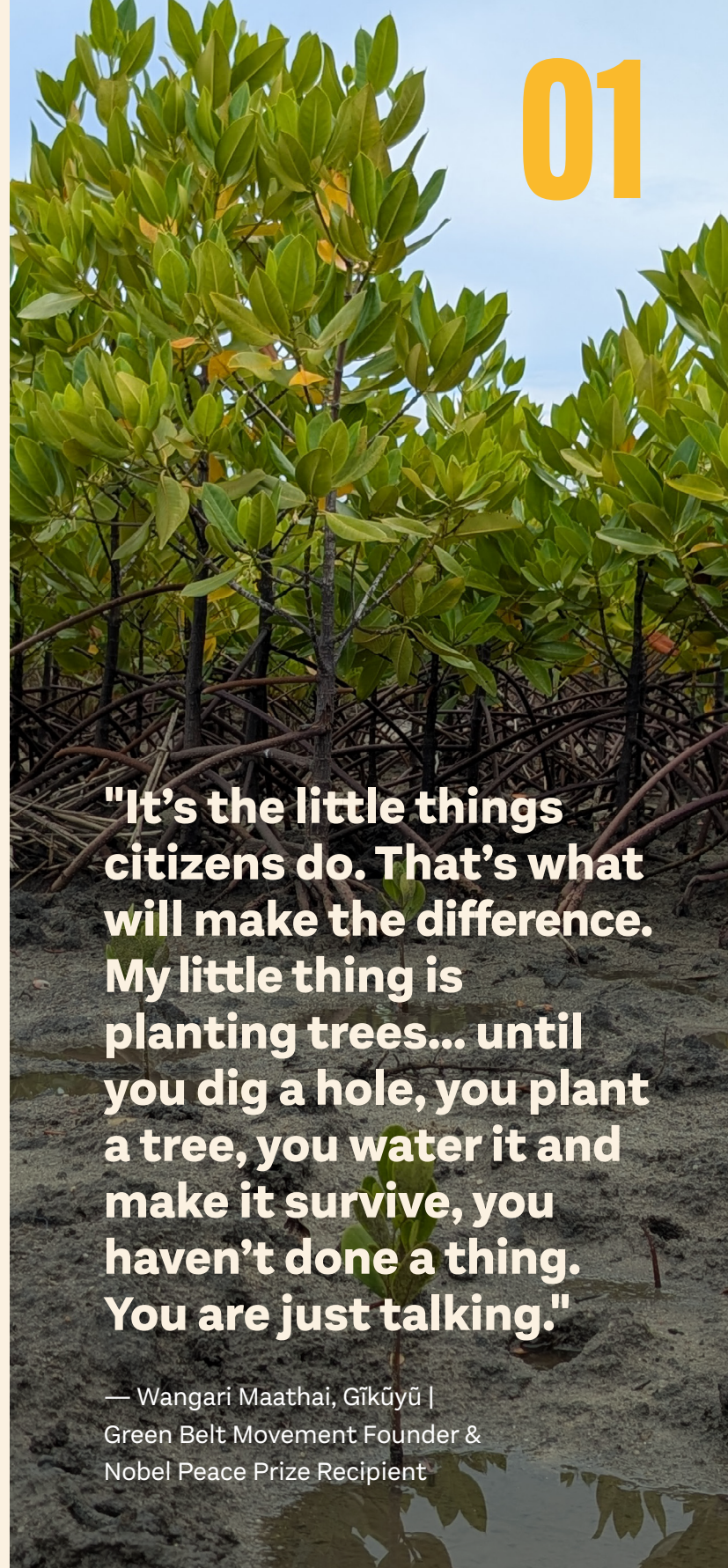
I hope you take heart in this as much as I do, and in the land-based leadership that community and Indigenous activists around the world have always upheld even through the most oppressive challenges and chapters in history.

As you read about the humble accomplishments of Community Forests International that follow here, I want to thank you for everything you do that has allowed us to take these actions together.

Thank you,

Daimen Hardie
Executive Director

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"It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees... until you dig a hole, you plant a tree, you water it and make it survive, you haven't done a thing. You are just talking."

— Wangari Maathai, Gĩkũyũ |
Green Belt Movement Founder &
Nobel Peace Prize Recipient



Our Mission

At Community Forests International, we protect and restore forests by centering climate justice in everything we do. We understand that creating a more equitable and climate safe future depends on strong relationships between people and the land. Our work strives to create and share solutions that benefit both people and the forests they rely on.

Community Forests is committed to working with and following the people and communities who are experts in their own ecosystems. Our mission and ethic has grown from our longstanding partnership with friends and colleagues in Zanzibar at our sister organization, Community Forests Pemba.

Working with their peers and neighbours for the past 17 years to grow community forests, livelihood resilience, and gender equality in one of the most climate vulnerable regions of the world has made our co-workers in Zanzibar leading experts in this work and we look up to them constantly. Their commitment to community partnerships has inspired our own work in Canada, and our growing collaborations with Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati organizations to prioritize Indigenous-led conservation of the endangered Wabanaki forest of the east coast.

Community Forests is privileged to work with many committed people and organizations that shape our vision for a more caring and just world supported by diverse forests. We are grateful for these vibrant land-based partnerships.



Our Growing Team

The past two years have brought significant growth to Community Forests' committed team of professionals in both Canada and Zanzibar. New members have added fresh energy and expertise to our forest restoration work, helped bridge activities in Canada and Zanzibar, and allowed us to devote time and energy into supporting and growing meaningful partnerships with other allied organizations around the world.

MEET THE TEAM

Community Forests International

Daimen Hardie
Zach Melanson
Megan de Graaf
Anne Herteis
Dani Miller
Craig Tupper
Michelle Evans
Kirsten Campbell
Maria Hernandez
Natsuki Kyokane
Sonja Kovacev
Abdullah Ahmed Elashy
Katheryn Martin
Sara Savino
Eric Smith
Lilian Simule
Thai Hwang-Judiesch

Board of Directors

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Community Forests Pemba

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Waleed Rashid
Ali Said Juma
Rhoda Kadaso
Zulpher Bashir Mbwana
Shaaban Peter
Shabaaan Mussa
Ali Haji
Munira Kaoneka
Khadija Ally Ahmed
Asha Yussuf Nour
Twinzi Henry
Warda Ali Massoud



2024-2025 in Zanzibar

Early 2025 marked an unprecedented collapse of international assistance around the world and in Zanzibar. Abrupt cuts to USAID resulted in a loss of **\$570 million** in support to Tanzania, and included the cancellation of a **\$37 million** food security program serving Zanzibar.

Programs such as these were a lifeline for many in Zanzibar, and in particular for marginalized groups including women and girls and low-income coastal communities. Community Forests Pemba—with years of community building, strong relationships with local decision-makers, and committed staff teams—was pushed to respond and try to limit the negative impacts on local communities from these cuts. It is more important than ever to work for equity, livelihoods, and commitments to building locally-driven food and income security that enable the communities we work with to weather these shocks and uncertainties.

In 2024 and 2025, Community Forests built and strengthened partnerships and connections with the communities where we work as well as with regional and international experts. As a result of these collaborations, our partners in Zanzibar have made significant and measurable progress toward gender equality, land rights, food security, and climate resilience.

These milestones are more than just data. They represent the strength of relationships and commitment to community-led forest revitalization and climate resilience that succeed even in the most challenging conditions.



IMPACT AT A GLANCE

1,903

people from 8 communities across Pemba and Unguja Islands directly joined our work and benefited from forest and livelihood support.

81%

of the participants are women who are now leading climate-adaptation and restoration actions of their own across Zanzibar.

2,624

acres of biodiverse mangrove forests transferred to community ownership and protection.

1,593

people received tools and training to grow food and earn income through climate-safe and ecologically restorative agroforestry activities.



HIGHLIGHT Sharing Stories

Three colleagues from Community Forests Pemba, Sada, Zulpher, and Naushat, came to Canada in November 2024 to participate in the Pathways to Gender Equality conference hosted by Spur Change in Ottawa, Ontario. They shared their insights on gender equality and climate-resilient agriculture on a panel with other women experts and change-makers.

In addition to their panel presentation, Sada, Zulpher, and Naushat traveled to Sackville, New Brunswick to join Community Forests staff, family, and community members for a [webinar](#) highlighting their work followed by a snowy walk in the Wabanaki forest. The visit brought the expertise of these three partners to a new audience and helped deepen the partnerships between the two countries and ecosystems where we work.



Community Forest Management Agreements (CoFMAs)

One of our most ambitious endeavours over the past two years has been the development of Community Forest Management Agreements (CoFMAs) in **8 communities** spanning **2,624 acres** of vital coastal mangrove ecosystems in Zanzibar. A collaborative effort across organizations, communities, and government, these agreements return decision-making authority over mangrove forests back to communities.

Land in Zanzibar is held by the government by default, meaning that communities cannot directly own the title to their land or easily access their nearby mangrove forests for conservation and protection. Working closely with the Zanzibar Department of Forests, Community Forests helped facilitate these special agreements to overcome those limitations, built through dozens of community meetings and consultations.

The forest agreements themselves are designed to improve both gender equality and community control of land. The collaborative work between communities and governments enshrine legal land rights to communities and ensure that women are meaningfully represented in consultation, design, and eventually leadership of the committees that govern community forests.

This approach puts coastal communities in control of the protection of coastal mangrove ecosystems that also protect their homes from storms and rising sea levels. The foundational inclusion of women in their development addresses the disproportionate lack of decision-making power women have faced in natural resource management and governance historically. These legal land agreements offer much-needed agency and continuity to conservation and restoration projects that protect coastal communities from climate impacts.





“There were people who doubted me. Some said leadership in mangrove conservation was not for women... Today, my family is proud of me. Leadership is not about giving orders; it is about listening and making decisions together.”

— Semeni Suleiman



HIGHLIGHT

The Story of Semeni Suleiman

Semeni Suleiman is redefining community leadership. As chairperson of her local Community Forest Management Agreement (CoFMA), Semeni is expertly overseeing the protection of vital mangrove forests on Pemba Island.

Despite receiving pushback as a woman leader, Semeni remained determined. She participated in Community Forests activities that focused on gender equality and community leadership training. With her new skills, she successfully ran for formal leadership of her community's CoFMA and now advocates everyday for the protection of this critical ecosystem. Semeni supervises mangrove patrols to prevent illegal harvesting; coordinates the care and management of the forest; and promotes sustainable community use.

“She values collaboration and works closely with her fellow committee members. Whenever challenges arise, we come together and support one another to find solutions.”

— Khatibu Ali Hamad, Secretary of CoFMA

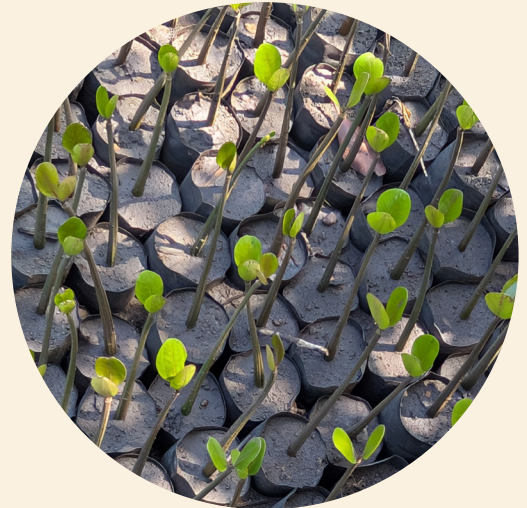
Cultivating Equality



In 2024 and 2025, Community Forests hosted more than **10 in-depth agroforestry training programs** and supplied hundreds of thousands of fruit, spice, and forest tree seedlings to individuals and communities that participated.

Community Forests has long supported agroforestry—a combination of agriculture and forestry that focuses on growing food trees like a forest—but has recently redoubled efforts to support women in particular; improving women’s access to resources and training to make climate-adaptive agroforestry livelihoods more accessible and achievable for them.

Women that participate in agroforestry activities increase their income significantly, allowing them to provide more food for their families and bring additional income to their communities. In this way, efforts toward gender equality also increase climate resilience in participants’ communities. Agroforestry training and resources are delivered alongside leadership and enterprise training, adding additional economic and social benefits for participating women. Women that practice agroforestry have told us that they experience improved independence and equality in their households as a result of their skills and employment. Crucially, their personal income allows them to exercise more decision-making power over household spending and family decisions.



752,862

agroforestry seedlings distributed.

18+

species of spice, fruit, and forest trees.

1,903

community members with improved access to land, trainings, and resources.



“Before we were using traditional [farming] methods and not really motivated. After the project came, we got training and seedlings, we’re better equipped now and farming seriously. In my farm I have plantains, pineapples, fruit trees and I’m preparing to plant grains and more.”

— Bi. Eshe, Agroforestry trainer and participant,
Uzi Islet, Zanzibar

2024-2025 in Canada

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Community Forests International continues to work for the protection and restoration of the Wabanaki Forest. Our efforts push for a change in business-as-usual forestry, focusing on caring for and promoting climate resilience in forests within the unceded territories and homelands of the Mi'kmaq, Peskotomuhkati, and Wolastoqey Nations.

We move forward with respect and guidance from wonderful colleagues within these nations, to conserve and restore the forests that we all wish to see returned to their rightful care.

In expanding our work for climate-focused forest care, we have committed to making sure these activities respect and elevate the multiple goals of the Wabanaki Nations. In practice, this has meant careful consideration of our role in the conservation sector and intentionally increasing collaboration and partnerships that foster reconciliation in our forest conservation efforts.



IMPACT AT A GLANCE

4,872

additional acres of Wabanaki
forestland conserved by
Community Forests International.

522

people trained in climate-adaptive forestry
practices and forest carbon inventory.

148+

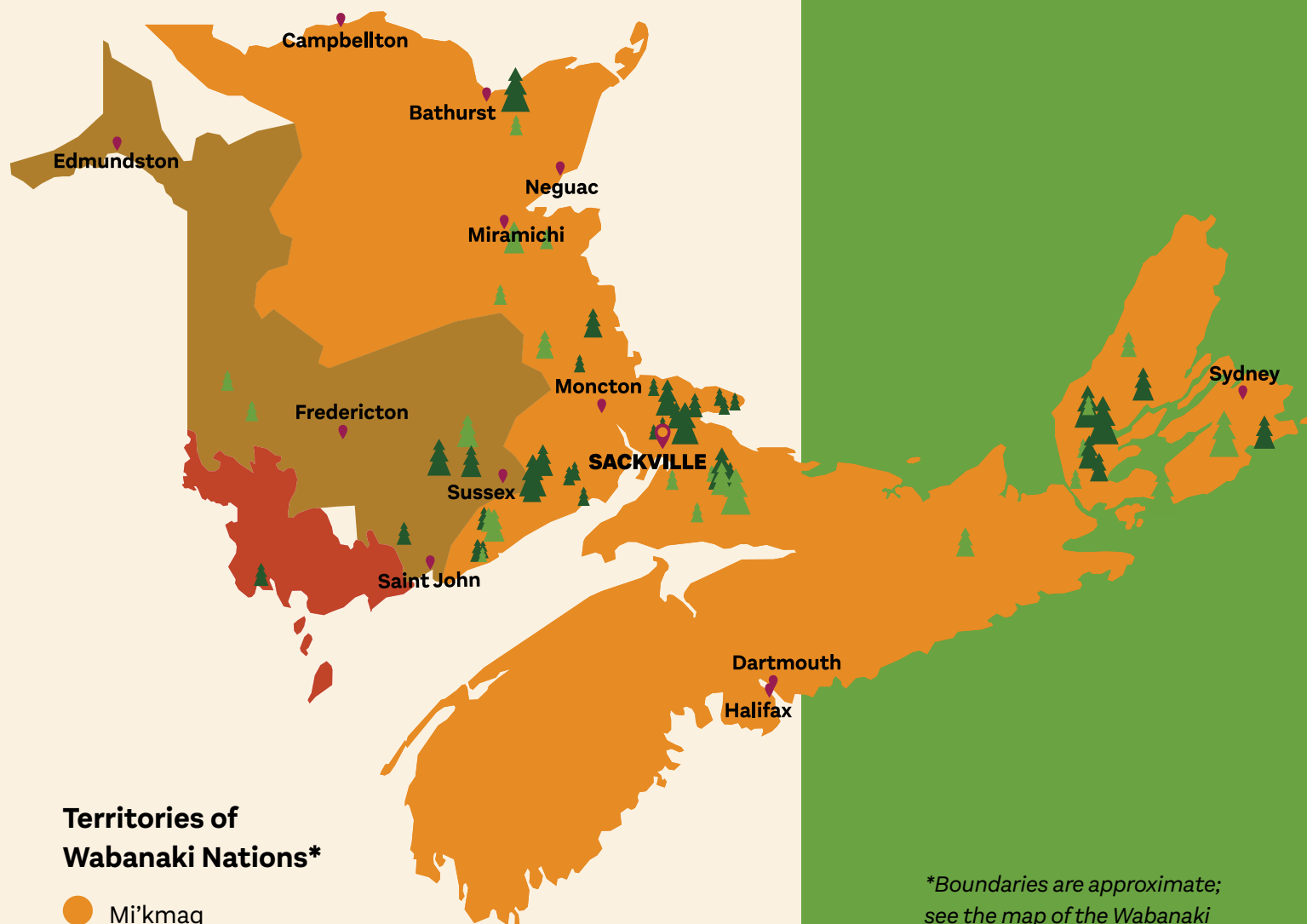
acres of forest treated with
climate-adaptive forestry techniques for
restoration and improved forest health.

636,616

trees planted for forest restoration.

IMPACT MAPPED

Community Forests International acquired **4,872 acres** of land in 2024-2025 — bringing our land conservation total up to **13,505 acres**. All of these forests will be protected and restored for the benefit of the environment and communities across the Wabanaki forest region.



Territories of Wabanaki Nations*

- Mi'kmaq
- Wolastoqey
- Peskotomuhkati

CFI Forests**

- 🌲 New Forest
- 🌲 Old Forest

**Boundaries are approximate; see the map of the Wabanaki Confederacy for broader context on how colonization and modern borders have reshaped these lands.*

***Tree size corresponds with the size of the property. Our smallest property is 47 acres while our largest is 759 acres.*

The Wabanaki Land Back Initiative



Funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund, we launched the Wabanaki Forests, Climate, and Land Back Partnership (Wabanaki Land Back Partnership) in late 2023. The project is in partnership with the Peskotomuhkati, Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqey Nations and the conservation sector in New Brunswick.

In just two years, the Wabanaki Land Back Partnership protected over 10,000 acres of endangered Wabanaki forest in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick for Indigenous cultural uses, climate values, and biodiversity preservation.

“Returning lands to Wabanaki communities is not only the best pathway to honouring our collective responsibilities under the Peace and Friendship Treaties, but also the most effective way to preserve the health and biodiversity of this land. Community Forests, working together with colleagues at Amlamgog First Nation, Mi'gmawe'l Tplu'taqnn, Nature Trust of New Brunswick, Passamaquoddy Recognition Group, and the Wolastoqey Nation in New Brunswick have undertaken this project to support goals of reconciliation, Indigenous-led conservation, and Land Back.”

— Anne Herteis, Grants and Operations Manager

We are excited to continue this collaboration and put our energy and resources toward supporting the Wabanaki Nations in their goals for the care of the forest.





HIGHLIGHT Climate Leadership



We expanded our work in climate-focused forestry to Unama'ki (Cape Breton, Nova Scotia). Partnering with local forest professionals, the Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative (MFI), and local contractors, we've enhanced the resilience of our demonstration forests in Melrose Hill and River Denys.

Through strategic thinning interventions like 'climate crop tree release', our team and local partners are transforming formerly harvested stands into diverse, resilient woodlands. These demonstration forests serve as a model for future restoration across the region.

Community Forests International actively develops and tests strategies to increase the climate change resilience and carbon storage capacity of the Wabanaki forest. You can learn more about some of the strategies we have implemented on the land in our care here:



[From Plantations to Forests: Our Experience
Trialling Five Assisted Natural Regeneration
Techniques in the Wabanaki Forest Region](#)

Our Financials

In 2025, we launched the **Protect and Restore Fund**. This fund will enable long-term stewardship and care of forests held by Community Forests International. The fund will support:

- The protection and restoration of forestland cared for by Community Forests International, with a primary emphasis on enhancing its climate resilience.
- Our ability to respond to climate disasters or threats – such as hurricanes or fire.
- Making lands accessible for educational, cultural, and scientific purposes.
- Funding the eventual transfer of some of these forestlands to Wabanaki Nations or Indigenous land trusts to be cared for and available for present and future generations.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT TABLE 2024 & 2025

REVENUES	2024	2025
Land Acquisition Grants*	\$1,904,454	\$2,263,493
General Fund Donations	\$235,924	\$323,285
International Project Revenues	\$1,491,318	\$1,984,792
Consulting & Other Services	\$53,000	\$77,152
Grants & Contribution Agreements	\$6,380,485	\$6,266,553
Total Revenues:	\$8,160,727	\$8,651,782

EXPENSES	2024	2025
Land Acquisition*	\$1,904,454	\$2,405,004
Wabanaki Forest Protection**	\$3,762,578	\$3,717,316
Zanzibar Projects	\$1,173,057	\$1,984,792
Canada Projects	\$318,722	\$445,388
Personnel	\$955,064	\$1,091,371
Professional Services	\$346,904	\$508,275
Overhead	\$152,363	\$161,076
Total Expenses:	\$6,708,688	\$7,908,218

*** Excess of Revenue Over Expenses:	\$1,452,039	\$743,564
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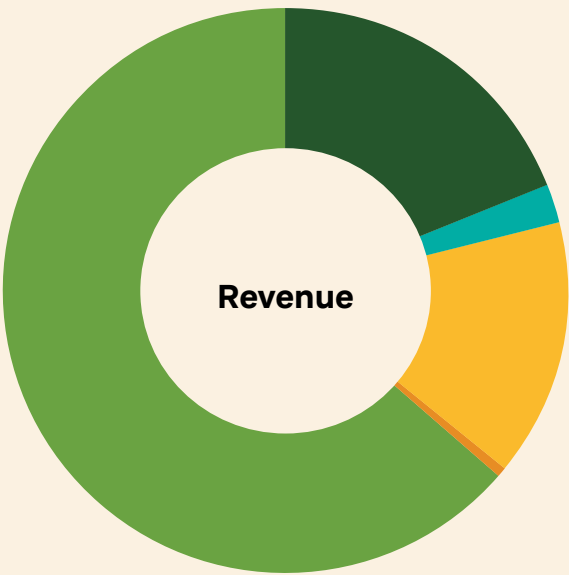
* Land acquisition is excluded from expense and revenue totals.

** The Wabanaki Forest Protection line includes restoration and forest care activities.

*** Excess of Revenue Over Expenses = Total Revenues - Total Expenses

ANNUAL FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

2024

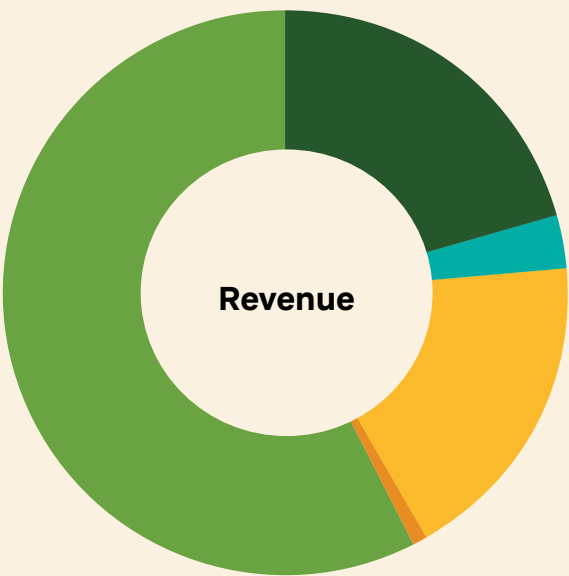


- Land Acquisition Grants
- General Fund Donations
- International Project Revenues
- Consulting & Other Services
- Grants & Contribution Agreements



- Land Acquisition
- Wabanaki Forest Protection
- Zanzibar Projects
- Canada Projects
- Personnel
- Professional Services
- Overhead

2025



- Land Acquisition Grants
- General Fund Donations
- International Project Revenues
- Consulting & Other Services
- Grants & Contribution Agreements



- Land Acquisition
- Wabanaki Forest Protection
- Zanzibar Projects
- Canada Projects
- Personnel
- Professional Services
- Overhead

Our Generous Partners

We would like to extend our gratitude to our generous supporters and ongoing partners for making our work possible. We are thankful for the support of the following foundations, organizations, businesses, and governments.

Government, Foundation and Philanthropic Donors

Environment & Climate Change
Canada (ECCC)
Global Affairs Canada
Natural Resources Canada
Nova Scotia Community College
MapleCross Fund
Peterborough K.M. Hunter
Charitable Foundation
RBC Tech for Nature
TD Ready Challenge
The Catherine Donnelly
Foundation
The Chawkers Foundation
The McConnell Foundation
The Metcalf Foundation
The Peter Gilgan Foundation
The Salazar Center for North
American Conservation
The Waltons Trust

Supporters

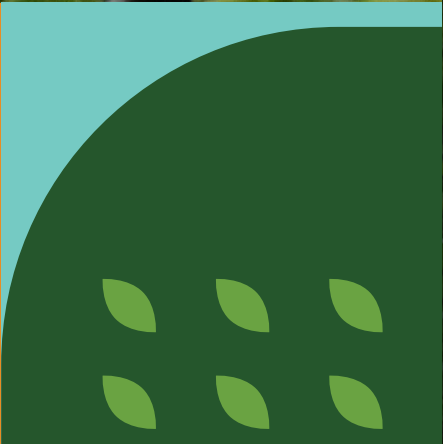
22m Hour Productions
B.E.L Rotary Club
Bistro Le Chat Bleu
Blue Collar Silviculture
Brinkman Group
Brinkman Reforestation
Brite Dental
Costa Recycling
Crimson Oak Company Limited
Dillon Consulting Limited
Fener's Place
Impact Wealth
Kennarshore Inc.
Makeship
MakeWay
MaxMantis
Net Zero Atlantic
Pacific Reforestation
Sackville Rotary Club
Spirit Garden Books
Terres et Cimes
Whitehorse Liquidity Partners Inc





**"It's about
the land. It's
always been
about the
land."**

—Katsi'tsakwas (Ellen Gabriel),
Kanyen'kehá:ka | Knowledge Keeper &
Human Rights Defender





THANK YOU

Community Forests International is deeply grateful to all of our supporters for helping to protect and restore forests in Canada and around the world. We couldn't do it without your continued support.

You can support in many ways, including monthly and one-time donations, gifts of stock, gifts of land, as well as bequests. To learn more about giving options, please visit forestsinternational.org, or contact Sonja Kovacev at sonja@forestsinternational.org to discuss what pathways might be best for you.



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Community Forests International's office and the forests that we care for are on the unceded and unsundered lands of the Wolastoqey, Mi'kmaq, and Peskotomuhkati Nations. We commit to respecting the underlying Indigenous title to these lands and working in the spirit of the Peace and Friendship Treaties.