

Our History

Over the course of the Sumitomo Forestry Group's history, we have continued to achieve growth by pursuing the possibilities of trees, based on the Sumitomo's Business Spirit of fairness, integrity, and sound management. And we engaging in management from a long-term perspective without being swayed by short-term profits.

1691 Company Founded

The Sumitomo family opened the Besshi Copper Mine in present-day Niihama, Ehime Prefecture in 1691. The Sumitomo Forestry Group's origins can be traced back to the management of the forest surrounding the copper mine. Timber for charcoal essential to copper smelting and wood used for tunnel support posts were sourced from the forest, as were building materials for the homes of the workers.



Picture scroll depicting the Besshi Copper Mine in Iyo Province, present-day Ehime Prefecture (Sumitomo Historical Archives Collection)

1691

Company founded

1894

The Large-Scale Reforestation Plan created

1894 The Large-Scale Reforestation Plan and the Beginnings of Sustainable Forestry

In the late 19th century, the forests surrounding the Besshi Copper Mine were in danger of being devastated after a long period of excessive logging and smoke pollution. The then manager of the mine, Teigo Iba, believed that "allowing this land to be degraded while moving forward with business made possible by its fruits runs counter to the proper course of our relationship with nature. We must return all the mountains of Besshi to their verdant state." With this belief, he launched The Large-Scale Reforestation Plan in 1894 to restore the forests that had been lost. Through a process of trial and error, and by implementing large scale planting efforts of more than two million trees per year, the mountains were eventually returned to a state of rich greenery.



Teigo Iba (Sumitomo Historical Archives Collection)



1956 Started the timber import business

Sumitomo Forestry established

1948 1955

Toho Norin Co., Ltd. and Shikoku Ringyo Co., Ltd. merged to form Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd. and established a nationwide network to procure and sell domestic timber



1970 Established PT. Kutai Timber Indonesia (KTI), in Indonesia and started full-scale building materials manufacturing business focused on plywood



1986 Medium density fiberboard (MDF) production plant ramps up operations at Nelson Pine Industries Ltd. (NPIL), established in New Zealand

Listed on the First Section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange



1975 Started the custom-built detached housing business



2003 Started housing business in the United States (Seattle, Washington)



1991 Established Tsukuba Research Institute to integrate R&D in the fields of building materials, housing, and resources

2003 2005 Developed wooden beam rahmen structure method (the Big-Frame construction method), a first in Japan



2007 Started elderly care business



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2011 Started MOCCA (timber solutions) business Started environmental energy business



2008 Started housing business in Australia



2016 Acquired roughly 31,000 ha of forest in New Zealand, increasing total forest managed and owned in the country to about 36,000 ha

W350 Plan

In February 2018, Sumitomo Forestry announced its W350 Plan. The plan targets construction of a 350-meter-tall wooden high-rise building by 2041, which will mark the 350th year since the company's founding. Sumitomo Forestry envisions research and technological developments in the fields of resources, materials and architecture in order to realize this concept.

We strives to bring about innovation that encourages a sustainable cycle for timber utilization and forestry management, and realize a vision to "Change Cities into Forests" where people, trees, and diverse plant and animal life can coexist with the planet.

Through the W350 Plan, The Sumitomo Forestry Group will contribute to broadening the possibilities for wooden architecture, and the realization of a sustainable society.



Image provided by Sumitomo Forestry / Nikken Sekkei