

Old Growth Deferrals – Frequently Asked Questions

May 13, 2025

1. What does ‘deferral’ mean?

- Deferrals are areas where forest harvesting is being temporarily paused.
- Deferrals are a temporary measure to create space for discussion on holistic, long-term management approaches for old growth forests¹.

2. Will all of the Priority At-Risk Old Growth identified for deferral by the Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) be deferred?

- Approximately 81% of the 4.0 million hectares of priority at-risk old growth identified by the TAP is currently not threatened by logging because it is already protected, covered by deferrals or uneconomic to harvest.
- Conversations with First Nations regarding their approach to deferrals are continuing at a local level. Where First Nations support temporary deferrals, government will apply them.

3. Will priority old growth that wasn’t captured in the original TAP mapping be deferred?

- If a stand is not currently mapped as a TAP area of priority for deferral but meets the TAP criteria, the identified area can be deferred from harvesting if supported by First Nations.

4. How much old growth is currently deferred from development?

- Since 2021, we have worked in partnership with First Nations and stakeholders to identify old- growth deferral locations.
- As of February 2025, coordination between First Nations and forest licensees has resulted in approximately 2.4 million hectares of old growth being permanently protected or temporarily deferred since November 2021. This is on top of the nearly 3.7 million hectares that was already protected.
 1. 1.2 million hectares is “at-risk” old growth identified by the TAP; and
 2. An additional 1.2 million hectares were identified by First Nations.

5. How much old growth is protected?

- Approximately 9.2 million hectares (80%) of all the old growth forest on publicly managed lands in the province is currently not threatened by logging because it is already protected, deferred from harvest, or not economic to harvest.
- Approximately 3.21 million hectares (81%) of the priority at-risk old growth forests identified by the TAP is currently not threatened by logging because it is already protected, deferred or not economical to harvest.

¹ The area being considered for deferral or protection include the publicly managed old growth plus areas of older mature forest identified by the Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel

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6. How are deferrals currently being implemented?

- Deferrals can be implemented in three ways:
 1. by companies agreeing to voluntarily pause harvest;
 2. by a minister's order under Part 13 of the *Forest Act* to rescind approved permits and prevent new permits from being issued or
 3. as directed as in the case of the provincial government providing direction to BC Timber Sales.
- In almost all cases, companies have agreed to pause logging after the province reaches agreements with First Nations on deferral areas.
- This process is the fastest and most efficient way to implement such a large number of deferrals across BC.

7. When will temporary deferrals end?

- Deferrals will remain in place until the new forest management approach being informed by the old growth strategic review is implemented and local discussions on long-term management of old growth values are concluded through initiatives such as Land Use Plans, Forest Landscape Plans and Integrated Resource Management Plans.
- These processes will identify which deferral areas will be subject to longer-term protection or other management measures.
- Ultimately, the number of temporary deferrals will be reduced as these planning processes are concluded.

8. How will long-term stewardship solutions be achieved?

- Transitioning from temporary deferrals to stewardship planning requires local insights.
- Local First Nations, communities and stakeholders are best placed to identify effective long-term management solutions for these deferred areas.
- Planning processes such as Forest Landscape Planning and Modernized Land Use planning will inform old forest stewardship for multiple values.

9. If a deferral area is determined through a formal planning process (e.g. FLP, LUP or IRMP) to remain unavailable for harvest, what is the process for accomplishing this?

- There are several regulatory tools that could be used for temporary or long-term protection all which come with different implications (level of protection, applicability, timelines for implementation, etc.).
 1. A Government Actions Regulation which identifies “no harvest” areas
 2. Old Growth Management Areas (legal, non-legal and aspatial)
 3. Designated Area (Part 13)
 4. Park or conservancy
 5. Special Purpose Area
 6. Land Act Designation