

Summary of Current Condition Report for Old Growth Forest in the South Coast Region | 2021 Analysis

The current condition of old growth forest in the South Coast Region was developed as part of the provincial [Cumulative Effects Framework](#) (CEF). The CEF's [Interim Assessment Protocol for Old Growth Forest in British Columbia](#) provided a set of indicators to assess the current condition of old growth forest against legal orders.

The South Coast Region developed the [Old Growth Forest Stewardship Baseline Objectives Tool](#) (SBOT), an interactive and online mapping tool to report out on the current condition of Old Growth Forest for the Region as a whole, and the three Natural Resource Districts (NRD) namely, Chilliwack, Sea to Sky, and Sunshine Coast. These three NRDs align with the Fraser, Sunshine Coast and So0 Timber Supply Areas.

The purpose of this summary is to:

- Highlight results of the SBOT current condition of Old Growth Forest in the Region and the three districts.
- Provide a snapshot of the 2021 SBOT assessment and support the quantitative reporting on the legal targets.
- Support the more detailed information provided in the SBOT for collaborative discussions among government, natural resource industries, First Nations and other community stakeholders when managing old growth forests.

Disclaimer: This summary and report was developed solely by the Province of British Columbia (the Province) and aims to provide the best western science information currently available to the Province of B.C. This summary and report provides quantitative reporting on legal targets and does not discuss the overall effectiveness of those targets.

The Province acknowledges that this report was not developed in partnership with First Nations and therefore does not represent Indigenous views. The information is intended to be a starting point in supporting and informing future work and collaboration between the Province, First Nations, and affected stakeholders to ensure that cumulative effects are identified, considered, and managed appropriately.



Figure 1. Map of the South Coast Region

South Coast Region Assessment Area

The South Coast Region is in the southwestern corner of B.C. and covers an area of approximately 4.65 million hectares.

It encompasses the Greater Vancouver urban area, Sunshine Coast, Squamish and Whistler corridor, and the Fraser Valley.

It is bounded on the east by the Thompson-Okanagan Region, the United States to the south, the West Coast Region to the west, and the Cariboo region to the north.

The South Coast Region is a topographically and ecologically diverse landscape that supports a range of bio geoclimatic ecosystem classification (BEC) zones. The Coastal Western Hemlock BEC zone occurs dominantly throughout the three NRDs in the region. The Mountain Hemlock and Engelmann Spruce BEC zones are also predominant in many areas in the three NRDs in the region, with six other BEC zones occurring in smaller areas. A summary of the assessment result is described in detail below.

Old Growth Forest Management (OGMA) in the South Coast Region

There are 70 landscape units (LUs) in the South Coast Region that have been spatially established, 24 are in the Chilliwack NRD, 21 in the Sea to Sky NRD, and 25 in the Sunshine Coast NRD. **Legal Orders** have been established to manage old growth forests in these LUs. The amount of Old Growth Management Areas (OGMAs) protected within each LU is dependent on the Biodiversity Option chosen for each LU. **Landscape Unit Plans** for 58 of the 70 LUs have been developed to address elements of biodiversity within the three districts of the region.

Assessment Results

The current condition of old growth forest in the South Coast Region was assessed based on the indicators identified in the **Interim Assessment Protocol for Old Growth Forest in B.C.** To help understand old and mature forests with respect to the management of other wildlife and conservation values in the region, SBOT also reports on other levels of protection of old forest in the assessment units. SBOT also reports on the Old Growth Strategic Review Technical Advisory Panel (TAP)'s priority deferral areas in three categories: ancient forests, big-tree forests, and remnant ecosystems.

The indicator assessment scale and reporting are at the Regional and NRD scale by assessment units including: LU, Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC), Natural Disturbance Type (NDT), Biodiversity Emphasis Option (BEO). For the purpose of this summary, the indicators are presented at the Regional and NRD level, however, SBOT reports out at the LU and BEC unit with various options to filter by NDT, leading species, height, and site index.

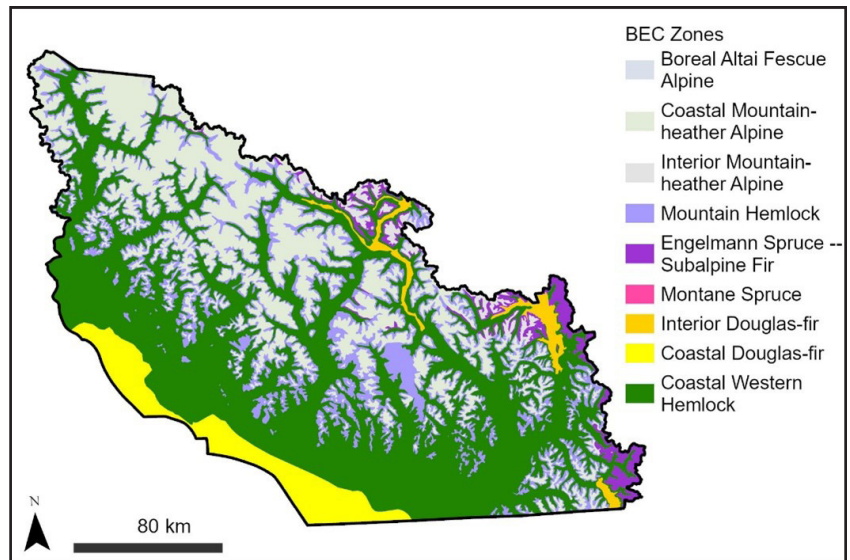


Figure 2. Bio geoclimatic zones of the South Coast Region

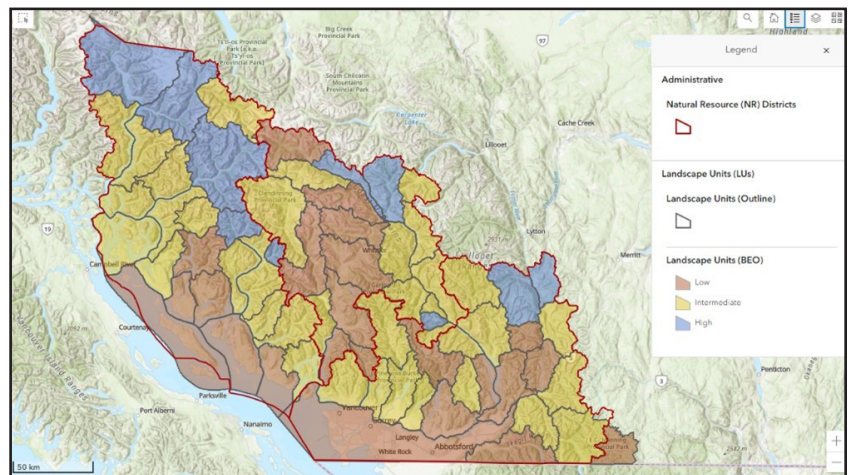


Figure 3. Landscape Units by Biodiversity Emphasis Option (BEO)

Indicator #1: Amount of Old Growth Forest

Indicator Description: This non-spatial indicator determines the current amount of old growth forest within each assessment unit based on SBOT-Total Vegetation Cover¹ that was regionally developed. SBOT also reports out on the protected forests based on the forest protection categories defined in the [Generalized Forest Harvesting Restrictions](#) layer.

Assessment Results:

	Old Forest (ha)	%	Protected Old Forest (ha)	%
South Coast Region	591,122	30	308,143	40
Chilliwack NRD	232,966	25	142,164	33
Sea to Sky NRD	172,090	41	95,935	54
Sunshine Coast NRD	186,036	28	70,044	47

Indicator #2: Amount of Mature-Plus-Old Forest

Indicator Description: This non-spatial indicator determines the current amount of mature-plus-old forest within each assessment unit.

Assessment Results:

	Old + Mature Forest (ha)	%	Protected Old + Mature Forest (ha)	%
South Coast Region	1,288,094	65	622,348	81
Chilliwack NRD	583,047	64	335,785	78
Sea to Sky NRD	296,988	71	158,474	89
Sunshine Coast NRD	408,059	62	128,089	86

Indicator #3: Amount of Old Growth Forest in OGMA's

Indicator Description: This indicator determines the amount of old growth within Legal and Non-Legal OGMA's.

Assessment Results:

	OGMA (Gross area, ha)	OGMA (Site Index 5+, ha)	Legal OGMA (ha)	Non-Legal OGMA (ha)
South Coast Region	193,167	182,172	137,832	44,340
Chilliwack NRD	80,081	78,867	56,653	22,214
Sea to Sky NRD	49,461	43,790	30,893	12,898
Sunshine Coast NRD	63,625	59,515	50,286	9,229

	Legal OGMA				Non-Legal OGMA			
	Old (ha)	%	Mature (ha)	%	Old (ha)	%	Mature (ha)	%
South Coast Region	81,043	59	48,083	35	31,924	72	11,398	26
Chilliwack NRD	28,095	50	24,712	44	16,827	76	4,928	22
Sea to Sky NRD	21,610	70	8,391	27	10,745	83	2,103	16
Sunshine Coast NRD	31,337	62	14,981	30	4,352	47	4,367	47

¹ SBOT-Total Vegetation Cover Layer is a regionally developed product which serves as the primary analysis layer for the SBOT Dashboard and Assessment tool. This layer is comparable, however may differ from the Crown Forest Land Base layer (CFMLB) used for some District operational needs. A detailed methodology can be found under the Metadata section of the [Old Growth Forest SBOT](#).

Indicator #4: Amount of Old Growth Forest in other Protected Areas

Indicator Description: This indicator determines the amount of old growth forest in other protected areas by category. Protected areas include categories from the **Generalized Forest Harvesting Restrictions layer**, “Protected”, “Prohibited”, and “Highly Restricted”.

Assessment Results:

	Total Protected (Site Index 5+)	Protected		Prohibited		High Restricted	
		Old	Mature	Old	Mature	Old	Mature
South Coast Region (ha)	761,733	126,047	129,337	142,055	139,383	40,041	45,485
(%)		42	43	43	42	30	34
Chilliwack NRD (ha)	433,159	67,177	92,730	43,758	72,148	31,228	28,743
(%)		35	48	30	50	33	30
Sea to Sky NRD (ha)	179,144	47,040	18,805	45,733	37,225	3,162	6,508
(%)		67	27	49	40	20	42
Sunshine Coast NRD (ha)	149,430	11,830	17,802	52,564	30,010	5,650	10,233
(%)		34	51	56	32	27	49

Indicator #5: Old and Mature Forests by BEC Zones

Assessment Results:

Coastal Western Hemlock and Mountain Hemlock are the predominant BEC zones in the three NRDs. The Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir is also dominant in the Chilliwack District and occurs in some areas of the other two NRDs. The summary table below illustrates the amount of old and mature forest within these BEC zones. Specific reports out, by individual BEC variants at the LU level, is possible using [Old Growth Forest SBOT](#).

BEC Zones by NRD	Total Area		Old Forest		Mature Forest	
	(ha)	%	(ha)	%	(ha)	%
Chilliwack NRD	916,481		232,996	25	350,051	38
CDFmm	1,165	0.13				
CWH (dm, ds1, ms1, vm1, vm2, xm1)	576,515	62.91	126,497	22	206,165	36
ESSF (dc2, dcw, dh1, dh2, mw1, mw2, mww)	119,879	13.08	26,145	22	64,337	54
IDF (dk2, ww)	41,956	4.58	3,095	8	25,139	60
MH (mm1, mm2)	171,852	18.74	74,896	44	52,206	30
MS (dm2)	5,122	0.56	2,361	46	2,186	43
Sea to Sky NRD	418,453		172,090	41	124,899	30
CWH (dm, ds1, ms1, vm1, vm2)	267,492	63.92	92,276	35	81,383	30
ESSF (dvw, mw2, mww)	20,803	4.97	7,962	38	10,565	51
IDF (ww)	21,882	5.23	1,725	8	10,201	47
MH (mm1, mm2)	108,276	25.88	70,127	65	22,750	21
Sunshine Coast NRD	659,666		186,036	28	222,023	34
CDFmm	9,213	1.40	579	6	5,902	64
CWH (dm, ds1, mm1, ms1, vm1, vm2, xm1, xm2)	537,253	81.44	112,584	21	197,563	37
ESSFmw	1,144	0.17	1,045	91	99	9
MH (mm1, mm2)	112,056	16.99	71,828	64	18,460	16

Opportunities

The following opportunities related to old growth management are identified for consideration:

1. Review seral stage within OGMA in assessment units that do not meet their legal targets for old growth forest in comparison to non-legal OGMA locations. The establishment of OGMA was intended to retain old growth forest in line with those targets.
2. Determine if there is an opportunity to adjust the OGMA boundaries to include additional old and mature stands if they will better support old growth forest biodiversity objectives. There is consistently sufficient old and mature forest available across the Region, however these areas are currently not included within legal OGMA.
3. Improve the tracking and monitoring of OGMA incursions and amendments, by firstly adding the old growth incursion assessment as a baseline for tracking OGMA incursion.
4. Apply the findings in this SBOT into planning and decision-making processes (e.g., Land Use Planning Timber Supply Review, Land Act application review) where there is an overlap with existing OGMA.