

## BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

### Forest Stewardship Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation

British Columbia's over-arching [Climate Change Adaptation Strategy](#) calls upon government to:

1. *Build a strong foundation of knowledge and tools to help public and private decision-makers across B.C. prepare for a changing climate;*
2. *Make adaptation a part of B.C. Government's business; and,*
3. *Assess risks and implement priority adaptation actions in key climate sensitive sectors.*

Climate change is already affecting BC's forests and communities through changes to dynamics of insects and fire. Adapting BC's forest practices to a changing climate is both an immediate imperative and long term proposition that must begin now. This Action Plan aims to reduce risks, capture opportunities, and improve the ability of BC forests to withstand the full amplitude of climate change and variability.

British Columbia's [Forest Stewardship Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation](#) outlines a new vision and signals an important new policy direction for climate change adaptation within the sphere of forest management in British Columbia. It envisions that:

*BC's forests provide a broad suite of goods and services that benefit society now and in a changing climate.*

The three goals in the Action Plan will contribute to healthy forests, a sustainable renewable resource for our communities now and for future generations; maintain jobs; and support development of new job opportunities for British Columbians across all regions of the province. Each goal is supported by a suite of **objectives** and **actions**.

This plan outlines actions underway and planned to adjust BC's existing forest management framework to foster resilient forests and improve the sustainability of BC forests, communities and

industries. It's the first step in a broadly based strategy that will build and evolve as we move forward. Actions to foster resilient forests will also enhance other values such as water quality and wildlife. Further work will identify gaps and address other resources. Highlights of this Action Plan are:

### Goal One: Foster Resilient Forests

This aims for managed forest ecosystems that are healthy, productive and resilient.

**Objective 1.1 Anticipate and manage for a changing climate.** The desired outcome is forests that are well adapted to the full amplitude of both current and future climatic conditions.

#### Action

- Develop a climate-based seed transfer system. This will provide a foundation to adjust BC's forest regeneration framework appropriate for a changing climate.

**Objective 1.2 Maintain and enhance diversity:** The desired outcome is complex and diverse forest ecosystems and landscapes that are resilient to climate change impacts and other stressors. This does not mean that the diversity will remain unchanged. Rather, the intent is to avoid undue simplification of ecosystems at the stand and landscape levels.

#### Actions

- Develop, communicate, and implement Chief Forester policy on tree species diversity objectives.
- Develop and communicate current tree species diversity levels, and mechanisms for tracking and addressing problems.

### Goal Two: Maintain Future Options and Benefits

**Objective 2.1 Manage and protect resources and values:** The desired outcome is maintenance of a full suite of forest resources and values to safeguard future management options and benefits in a changing climate.

### **Objective 2.2 Manage risks and capture**

**opportunities:** The desired outcomes include enhanced benefits and reduced climate change impacts and risks over the decision-making life cycle.

#### **Actions**

- Develop strategies at the TSA level to address climate change considerations at scales larger than the stand. Include tree species diversity objectives and forest health strategies.
- Strengthen the content of district-level forest health strategies by including revisions to stocking standards as appropriate, recommendations on changes to current practices on the ground, and other relevant information.
- Demonstrate leadership by applying the best adaptation principles, goals, objectives and tools through the Land Based Investment Strategy and its Forests for Tomorrow program.
- Investigate options and devise an approach to free growing that ensures all harvested stands are stocked with healthy crop trees at age twenty.
- Build fire-resilient landscapes: conduct landscape wildfire risk assessments, and implement treatments on priority areas.
- Incorporate diversity and ecosystem resilience principles into BC forest carbon project opportunities and help leverage investments into public forest lands.

## **Goal Three: Build Adaptive Capacity**

### **Objective 3.1 Develop adaptation information, knowledge and tools**

The desired outcome is that forest managers have easy access to information and tools to adapt to a changing climate. Actions below will help develop adaptation expertise in BC's forest and natural resource management, support development of technology and services that provide business opportunities, and help build BC's knowledge-based green economy.

#### **Actions**

- Work with partners to provide forest managers with the science, data, methods and decision

tools to facilitate consideration of climate change adaptation in forest management decisions.

- Create a 'knowledge and tools' website to provide easy access to all available information, guidance, and tools to support forestry professionals and decision-makers in addressing climate change in Forest Stewardship Plans.

**Objective 3.2 Increase extension and collaboration** among natural resource agencies, universities, forest managers and other research organizations working towards climate change adaptation to leverage limited funds and resources.

#### **Actions**

- Incorporate results from Future Forest Ecosystems Scientific Council projects into BC's forest management practices wherever appropriate.
- Continue extension and collaboration on educational, training and extension tools for climate change adaptation.
- Leverage resources across government and other institutions at national, regional and local levels.

### **Objective 3.3: Ensure guidance and coordination.**

The desired outcome is that Ministry's adaptation actions are appropriately guided and coordinated strategically both internally and externally.

#### **Action**

- Review organizational reporting structures and mechanisms to promote coordinated guidance for adaptation actions going forward.

### **Summary**

This [Adaptation Action Plan](#) sets clear goal posts to guide the process and also recognizes the need to provide flexibility to account for uncertainties associated with impacts from climate change. It is designed to be modular, in that various components can fit into the structure as science and policy evolve. It will take some time to unfold in its entirety; hence, it includes both short and long term actions. By using a strategic, phased and incremental approach these actions will be undertaken within the resourcing capacity of government and its partners.