BC Timber Sales Sustainable Harvesting Practices and Old-growth Management

In the Province of British Columbia:

- About 57 million hectares (60%) of B.C.’s 95 million hectares of land is forested.
- About 13.7 million hectares or 23% of forest lands are old forests.
- Nearly 10 million hectares of old forest are already under some form of protection or are not considered available for harvesting.
- About 3.75 million hectares of old forest lands are available for harvesting.
- Old-growth forests are generally defined as trees more than 250 years old on the coast and in the interior wet belt, as well as, forests more than 140 years old in the rest of the interior.
- Annually about 0.35% of B.C.’s forests are harvested; of this, 27% is considered old.

Old growth is recognized for its unique ecological, economic, social and cultural values and there are many legal protections to ensure that it will remain in perpetuity:

- Detailed landscape level planning is undertaken to identify areas of old growth that are necessary to support important values such as conservation of biodiversity and including habitat for wildlife species.
  - These areas are legally protected from harvest and designated as parks, Old Growth Management Areas, Ungulate Winter Ranges, Wildlife Habitat Areas or other protected areas.
- At the forest stand level, harvest planners must identify and protect riparian areas, wildlife tree retention areas, culturally important areas and features, wildlife habitat features, and exceptionally large trees. Regulations require a minimum of 7% of each cutblock area be retained as stand-level reserves for wildlife and other values.
- B.C. recently introduced new regulation to protect exceptionally large, individual trees when they are discovered during harvest planning. These trees are surrounded by a 56 m radius (nearly one hectare) protected area.
- BCTS has been voluntarily applying a best management practice (BMP) for the protection of exceptionally large old-growth trees (aka Legacy Trees) in its coastal operations since 2017.
- Large Cultural Cedar (LCC) are protected by regulation as a cultural heritage resource. In some areas, BCTS has gone well beyond legal requirements and worked with local Indigenous Peoples to develop detailed procedures to identify and protect these trees for future cultural use such as longhouse construction, canoes, carving, etc.
- For more information:
  - Forest Tree Administration - updates on old growth and special tree protection
  - BCTS Best Practices for Coastal Legacy Trees
Ecosystem Based Management:

- The Great Bear Rainforest, Haida Gwaii and Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve are examples of large areas on the coast where significant biological and cultural values are recognized, and Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) is implemented to ensure commercial harvesting is secondary to other values.
- EBM is an adaptive approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the co-existence of healthy ecosystems and human well-being.
- The Great Bear Rainforest legal order establishes targets for retention of approximately 70% of the natural range of old-growth forests over time. This includes recruitment of younger forests to old growth over time where targets are not immediately achievable.
- For more information:
  - Great Bear Rainforest
  - Haida Gwaii Land Use Planning
  - Clayoquot Sound Watershed Plans

Continual Improvement:

- While British Columbia does have numerous protections in place for old growth, government operates under the principle of continuous improvement and is always looking to enhance management of forests.
- Recently an independent panel was tasked to engage with Indigenous Peoples, communities, stakeholders and industry across the province and to provide recommendations to government to improve old-growth management.
- Recommendations from the panel will inform a new approach to old-growth management and has already led to creation of additional protected areas.
- For more information:
  - A New Approach to Old Forests
  - Modernizing Land Use Planning

BCTS Certified Forest Management:

- 100% of BC Timber Sales’ operations are certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Forest Management Standard.
- The SFI Standard exceeds the stringent legal requirements in B.C. and requires harvest planning and operations meet objectives such as Conservation of Biological Diversity, Protection of Special Sites, and Recognize and Respect Indigenous Peoples’ Rights.
- BCTS staff, contractors and licensees must be qualified and trained in principles of sustainable forest management and follow operating procedures.
- BCTS Business Areas are audited annually to verify conformance with all legal requirements and SFI requirements.
- For more information:
  - BCTS Sustainable Forest Management Certification
  - Managing our Forest Resources
  - 2019 BCTS Commitment to Environment Stewardship Sustainability Report
  - Sustainable Forest Management in BC
  - Sustainable Forestry Initiative