

# Forest Landscape Planning on West Central Vancouver Island

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MOWACHAHT | MUCHALAHT  
— FIRST NATION —



Ministry of  
Forests



# A New Direction for Forest Management: Forest Landscape Planning

The ongoing evolution of forest management in British Columbia is the result of many drivers. These include reduced fibre supply, climate change and the inclusion and development of First Nations decision making. In response to the economic and environmental challenges facing the forest sector, Forest Landscape Planning was introduced to ensure the province, First Nations, industry, and local communities have the tools to meet those challenges and that our work together is conducted consistent with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

## The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act was passed in November 2019. The Declaration Act establishes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) as the province's framework for reconciliation, as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. The Declaration Act aims to create a path forward that operationalises the principles of the UN Declaration with improved transparency for the public on progress being made by the Province and First Nations on implementation. There are four key areas of the legislation:

Section 3 mandates the government to bring Provincial laws into alignment with the UN Declaration.

Section 4 requires that the province develops and implements an action plan, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to meet the goals of the UN Declaration.

Section 5 requires regular reporting to the legislature to monitor progress on the alignment of laws and implementation of the action plan, including tabling annual reports by June 30 of each year.

Sections 6 and 7 of the Declaration Act allow the province to enter into agreements with Indigenous governments to exercise statutory decision-making authority together.

The Forest Statutes Amendment Act, which established Forest Landscape Planning, was one of the early legislative amendments made to meet the requirements of the Declaration Act.

## Forest Landscape Plans

Forest Landscape Planning was created to align forestry with the UN Declaration and address the long-term challenges facing the forest sector. FLPs seek to ensure the viability of the industry by identifying long-term timber supply opportunities within a framework that supports biodiversity and climate change resilience built through a consensus process with First Nations.

Each FLP has a designated Project Area that may cover multiple First Nations' territories and forest management units. During the development of an FLP, local government, industry stakeholders and communities are invited to participate. FLPs describe how forests will be

managed within the Project Area, set the desired outcomes for forest values, define the operational planning guidelines for how harvesting will be conducted, provide 10-year plans for public transparency, and monitor effectiveness against key ecological, economic and social/cultural values.

FLP design is guided by 5 key objectives, identified in the amended Forest Range and Practices Act, and include:

- Managing the values placed on ecosystems by Indigenous Peoples.
- Supporting the protection and conservation of the environment.
- Supporting production and supply of timber in the forest landscape area.
- Managing the values placed on ecosystems by local communities.
- Preventing, mitigating, and adapting to impacts caused by significant disturbances to forests and forest health.

### Forest Operations Plan (FOP)

The Forest Operations Plan (FOP) will replace Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP) and create legal obligations on behalf of licensees to follow the on-the-ground activities spelled out in government-to-government endorsed FLP planning guidelines. The FOP will show approximate location of planned blocks and roads for a 5-year period and will be consistent with the forest practices, silviculture systems, stocking standards, and any prescribed requirements established in the FLP. The FOP will provide public transparency over forest management activities and allow for greater feedback and input on those plans.

## Working together – West Central Vancouver Island

In 2023, the Province, Mowachaht/Muchatlaht First Nation, Ka:yu:'k't'h'/ Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations, and Ehattesaht Chinehkint First Nation established separate FLP planning tables through Terms of Reference. The work at these tables, in partnership with industry and local communities, is expected to take approximately two years to complete. Public engagement in 2025 is the first outreach and will be followed up with further direct discussions with industry and local governments. A survey is included with these materials as well as an opportunity to provide direct feedback through email.

### Key ecological, economic, social & cultural themes

The government-to-government planning tables have developed a suite of key themes to inform the development of the West Central Vancouver Island (WCVI) FLP. The planning tables are interested in public feedback and to understand whether these themes reflect your priorities.

### Conservation areas

Build a network of conservation areas to maintain or restore old forest ecosystems within West Central Vancouver Island

### **Aquatic Habitat and Salmon Restoration**

Develop management strategies that can prioritize healthy river and stream systems supporting a productive and resilient aquatic and marine environment, with a focus on salmon habitat protection.

### **Wildlife**

Develop approaches that support increased abundance of local elk populations and other keystone species, aligning with local community needs.

### **Cultural Heritage**

Develop planning guidelines for forest development that protect and safeguard First Nations cultural heritage features and maintain these values into the future.

### **Zoning**

Create forest zones that determine where commercial harvesting will be prioritized and zones where other values will be the primary focus of active management.

### **Harvest Levels**

As an output of planning, determine levels of harvest flow that are sustainable both ecologically and economically.

### **Carbon Offsets**

Through connected conservation initiatives that support climate change mitigation, ecosystem resilience and ecosystem management, confirm additional and incremental greenhouse gas reductions eligible for validation under the Greenhouse Gas Industrial Reporting and Control Act

### **Climate Change**

Develop forest management plans with the goal of building greater landscape resiliency and mitigating the impacts of a changing climate including increased wildfire risk.

## Next Steps and Data Modelling

Consistent with our strategic workplans, the three government-to-government planning tables will spend much of 2025 gathering data, engaging with industry, and beginning to build a suite of forest landscape models to explore different management approaches along with their ecological and economic implications. As the work progresses, more information will be made available on this website along with additional opportunities for the public to engage more directly.

