

**From:** [FLNR Old Growth BC FLNR:EX](#)  
**To:** [Old Growth Strategic Review](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Old Growth Review  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 4, 2019 8:02:39 AM

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**From:** Douglas Hodgins <DHodgins@westernforest.com>  
**Sent:** December 3, 2019 10:57 AM  
**To:** FLNR Old Growth BC FLNR:EX <Oldgrowthbc@gov.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** Old Growth Review

To Al Gorley and Garry Merkel,

I am currently a Forester-in-training with the ABCFP working for WFP in Port McNeill BC. I am young and hope to have a long career as a Registered Professional Forester within BC. I am passionately driven by my love of the outdoors and nature, and I feel extremely lucky to have true, 'boots on the ground' impact on the proper management of British Columbia's forests. As I am continuing to learn and develop, the most important point surrounding forest professionals (in my opinion) is that they are required to act towards the public good. Forester's are expected to advocate for good stewardship and sound environmental policies. They are expected to help educate the uninformed and promote meaningful discussion on topics related to the management of land within British Columbia, citing scientific data, while balancing both the intrinsic and extrinsic value of a landscape. As a forester-in-training, I am expected to uphold these values as well. It is due to this association with forestry that I feel obligated to comment on the management of old growth across British Columbia.

In order to have meaningful discussion on the management of coastal old growth, first we must contextualize the area for which we are referring to. 1. When referring to old growth I am referring explicitly to stands which have not yet been harvested, some are over-mature, some at their climax stage, others still only younger in the mature seral stage of stand development. 2. The area I am referring to includes crown land on both Vancouver island, Haida Gwaii and the mainland coast of BC. I believe a large portion of the conflict arising between individuals in BC dependent on the forest economy and individuals who are not, surrounding the management of old growth forests stems from misinterpretation of the true amount of old growth which is harvested every year, as well as the context of that harvesting as it relates to the larger land base. It is my belief that a number of factors give the false perception that the forest industry will not be satisfied until every stick has been removed from the forest. Forests have immense value, economic and otherwise. Humans feel a strong connection to the forest and an obligation to help support biodiversity and ecologic integrity as it pertains to the forest. Some consider the economics to be secondary. It is understandable then that some feel it necessary to protect the forest at all cost. **Since 1991, protected forests on the coast have tripled.** Forests ARE being protected. As someone with an educated background in the forest industry, as well as continued intimate knowledge of modern forest management practices, I strongly believe that BC's forest's are being extremely well managed. Forest Professionals continue to manage for any and all values which are asked of them. For further context on the scale of old growth logging (remember, including the island and the

mainland, regions which as far as BEC is concerned, are extremely similar in terms of ecology and biodiversity) 8.4 million hectares of the coast is forested, 3.5 million of that is old growth. Of the 3.5 million hectares of coastal old growth, **2.8 million hectares (81%) will never be logged** due to the current constraints and protected areas. (Forsite (2016) Coastal BC GIS Dataset Development. Prepared for Coastal Forest Products).

On the coast, and throughout the province for that matter, many communities are forestry dependent. Take the current labor dispute as example enough. All businesses suffer when forestry workers are not employed. Throughout the already established THLB's, tenure holders are beginning to approach the second rotation of stands. **Every year the harvesting of second growth increases (from approx. 5% in 1991 to approx. 50% today)**. Tenure holders are approaching a normalization of the forest on their THLB and will be able to continually and sustainably harvest nearly the same volume of timber every year, **indefinitely**. Truly sustainable. The reality is that if old growth restrictions are suddenly implemented throughout THLB's which are established as enhanced forestry zones meant for intensive production of timber volume, the establishment of a normal forest as well as a truly sustainable supply chain will be completely disrupted to an **irreparable degree**. Within TFLs the coastal forest industry is beginning to have less and less **harvestable** old growth. This is not an accident, this is part of the process of establishing a normal forest (the basis of any land management) and a sustainable rotation age/volume. The outcry that the old growth is disappearing seems to miss the oversight that the vast majority of coastal old growth is already not harvestable due to its protection status or other constraints. The issue is that much of this old growth currently exists in places where there are few people, so few people are able to understand that these large swaths of virgin forest exist unless they are well trained in GIS or have spent a good amount of time sifting through the validity of various published statistics.

I support the current management of old growth and endorse alternative silviculture systems such as variable retention which leave larger amounts of standing timber behind in pockets or as single trees. I believe that the continued establishment of parks and connected wildlife/wilderness corridors are extremely important and beneficial. I also believe that within intensive forest management zones, where communities work in the interest of the public good to produce a sustainable, economically important product (not just for the community but for the province and country as a whole), they should be allowed to continue to do so, within the predetermined THLB area. I understand that within a managed land base, the goal is to harvest the harvestable areas on a rotation and by nature, apart from the pockets left behind, a majority of the old growth within these areas will eventually be harvested. It is because of this understanding however, that I believe BC's priorities moving forward should centralize on the proper management of soil sustainability, biodiversity, ecology, wildlife, fish, spiritual values, water, riparian features, and NTFP's within these intensive forestry zones, not merely on whether a stand has or has not been harvested yet. I believe that all values can be effectively managed for within a managed forest, and strongly encourage the government to invest the time and money into the continued establishment of parks and conservation areas that protect unique, biodiverse, culturally significant, and/or sensitive areas/ecosystems.

Regards,  
Doug

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