

Friends of Clayoquot Sound Submission to Old Growth Strategic Review

There are 3 major recommendations that Friends of Clayoquot Sound is advising to the Old Growth Strategic Review for dramatic improvements in forests within “B.C.” that will support survival of the biosphere and humanity on Earth.

1. Permanently stop old growth logging by making “old growth logging” a crime against nature and humanity.
2. Obey the guidelines of the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the free, prior, and informed consent of Hereditary Indigenous Chiefs and Leadership.
3. Support Indigenous forest management, that is millenniums old, by ensuring Indigenous forest companies and communities are not being coerced into logging and destroying their territories to pay for a TFL in their territory or the “rights to log” and defend/guard against a non-Indigenous company attempting to acquire the TFL in their territory.

Lastly, please understand we are in a climate emergency and all standing old growth protects humanity and biosphere from the worst impacts of the crisis. Below are addition articles to help you understand our recommendations.

Seriously,

Friends of Clayoquot Sound

Massive Call for B.C. Government Action Targets Minister on Forests and Climate

- By Forests For Climate Coalition, with 40 groups including Friends of Clayoquot Sound.

On Vancouver Island alone, the equivalent of 34 soccer fields of the last remaining old-growth rainforests are logged every day.

On September 24th, as part of the global week of Climate Strike actions, over a hundred citizens picketed the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. This action received support from major unions, BCGEU and PEA, who instructed members to respect the citizens’ picket lines in solidarity with the global week of Climate Strike.

The goal of this action was to expose the undeniable link between bad forest management and the climate crisis, the elephant in the room in both forestry and climate policy in B.C. The

message targeted George Heyman: It is time to step in to address the crisis in the woods in this province as a basic duty of your mandate as Environment and Climate Change Strategy Minister.

On Vancouver Island alone, the equivalent of 34 soccer fields of the last remaining old-growth rainforests are logged every day. Meanwhile, in the last decade, 10,000 jobs were lost in the forest sector to raw log exports and a lack of leadership to ensure the maximum number of jobs per tree cut. First Nations and forest-dependent communities - those most immediately impacted by these disturbing trends - still struggle to gain control over land-use decision-making that has for too long been in the hands of large, unaccountable logging corporations that prioritize short-term profit over job stability, Indigenous land rights, biodiversity and a safe climate future.

Coastal old-growth temperate rainforests are a rare, globally significant carbon sink which play a critical role in buffering against catastrophic climate change. Less than 5% of the remaining low-elevation old-growth forests remain on Vancouver Island and they too are being systematically liquidated and replaced with with biologically barren tree plantations.

The B.C. Government has accelerated logging of some of the last stands of coastal old-growth forests through its own BC Timber Sales program, started by the BC Liberals in 2003 and recently found chronically non-compliant of the government's own inadequate regulations around old-growth forest management. The widespread practice of slash pile burning contributes to placing BC forestry at the top of all sectors in the province for carbon emissions. This is a backwards situation that dramatically needs to be fixed.

In a climate emergency, protection of old-growth forests is a key natural climate solution we cannot afford to waste. The world has now entered a wave of human-caused mass extinction, the result of endless capitalist growth and resource extraction. The world's leading climate scientists have given humanity eleven years to avoid runaway climate change, now considered the greatest existential threat facing humanity and currently displacing millions of people world-wide

This is a call to action Environment and Climate Change Minister George Heyman to:

1. Insist the B.C. Government protects the last low and medium elevation coastal and interior old-growth rainforests;
2. Recognize Indigenous authority, governance and stewardship in forest management; and
3. Implement sustainable forestry practices that protect the environment and local community jobs, once and for all, as a central and unavoidable feature of the B.C. Government's Climate Change Policy.

We are running out of time.

Tla-o-qui-aht demand protection of ancient forest

- By Tsimka Martin and Gisele Martin who wrote this on behalf of Tla-o-qui-aht Initiative for Interconnected Community Health. TIICH is a group of Tla-o-qui-aht members committed to upholding ancestral values. “Tiich” is also a Tla-o-qui-aht word meaning “alive.”

Nuu-chah-nulth people, since time immemorial, have always maintained respectful relationships with ancestral lands and waters. These relationships are the foundation of Nuu-chah-nulth cultural life — ways carefully nurtured according to ancient teachings, for the benefit of all generations and all forms of life.

The forest ecosystem was tended as a garden. It still is recognized as a living entity, with its own set of complex relationships among its many inhabitants, including people who continue to rely upon it for life.

Countless generations of Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations people have maintained abundant economies and ecosystems, until this way of life was interrupted by Canada’s colonialism, which introduced unrestrained resource extraction, commodification and exploitation of nature. This was accompanied by cultural genocide, widespread environmental devastation and severe impacts to First Nation economies that continue today.

British Columbia’s forestry policies and practices are founded on a colonial worldview that assumes there will always be more trees to cut and more profits to be made.

In 1984, the conflict between Nuu-chah-nulth people and the timber industry supported by the Canadian government reached a dramatic climax when the ancient cedar forests of Meares Island were threatened with clearcut logging.

Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht were not consulted about plans to log within ancestral territories. At that time, Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht became determined to uphold ancestral values and teachings of care, and to defend ancestral lands and waters.

In response to the planned logging, the Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht First Nations sought an injunction from the court, which eventually worked its way to the B.C. Court of Appeal. The court recognized the logging plans’ interference with aboriginal rights and title, and placed an injunction on the island that would halt the logging until land-claim issues were resolved between Canada and the Nations.

In 1984, the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht declared Meares Island a Tribal Park. The island represents a mere fraction of the unceded territories. First Nations played a pivotal role in the 1980s movement to protect the forests. In the summer of 1993 the

Clayoquot Blockades became known as the largest peaceful civil disobedience event in Canadian history.

Following the Clayoquot blockades of 1993, the Clayoquot Sound Science Panel was convened to develop recommendations for more sustainable forestry practices in Clayoquot Sound. While the recommendations are an improvement to the previous clearcut logging, they do not measure up to the practices of Nuu-chah-nulth ancestors in terms of sustainable forestry. Following the 1993 protests, a joint venture involving five First Nations in the Clayoquot and Barkley Sound regions assumed control of the tree farm licences in Clayoquot Sound. The venture formed into a logging company with the stated intent of implementing the scientific panel recommendations.

B.C. law requires logging companies to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual fees to maintain a logging licence. The pressure to pay these fees means that a company holding a tree farm licence must cut large volumes of trees to maintain financial solvency and retain the required logging licences.

The Canadian government continues to allow the timber industry to threaten and impact ancient forest ecosystems, cultural lifeways and Nuu-chah-nulth people's existence.

Old growth within Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation territory is now under serious threat. This September, damaging logging practices in the Kennedy Flats area were observed and documented by Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation citizens.

A petition is circulating asking elected and hereditary leaders to do what they can to stop any industrial logging of old-growth forests in Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation territory. Recent interviews and forums confirm that the majority of Tla-o-qui-aht members (interviewed to date) want all our existing old-growth forests protected.

Nuu-chah-nulth jurisdiction supersedes the colonial laws of British Columbia and Canada. Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation members have not been properly consulted and have not given consent for the current logging plans in Tla-o-qui-aht territory.

We, as Tla-o-qui-aht members, are committed to upholding our responsibilities to protect and defend the forests of our ancestral home to ensure that the sacred relationship with life-giving nature continues. There is grave concern within the Tla-o-qui-aht community that logging in the Tofino Creek area is beginning.

All remaining old-growth forest in Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation territory must be permanently protected from any industrial logging.
