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To the panel members: It was such a pleasure meeting with you on Monday. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss the wording or content of your report. I am happy to help in whatever capacity I may be of use. Thank you for your good work.

### **Two main goals for today**

1. provide the panel with a useful framework (used by the United Nations 1992 Convention on Biodiversity) from environmental ethics
2. bring testimonials from children at Caulfeild Elementary school concerning the value of old growth forests

### **The Framework: instrumental vs intrinsic value**

- Instrumental value: The value something possesses as a means to an end.
  - Intrinsic value: The value something possesses in of itself.
  - Example: our kids possess instrumental value because they can help us with chores like taking out the trash and washing the dishes, but they are also intrinsically valuable. They have value beyond what they can do for us
- **Usefulness to the panel**
  - When asking "What is the value of old growth forests?" we can ask whether we are inquiring about intrinsic or instrumental value. Both can provide us with compelling reasons to preserve our old growth forests in BC.

### **Instrumental value is not the same as economic value**

- The market price of a good may not reflect all the instrumental benefits and costs to society (and these may be difficult to measure in some cases in economic terms)
- Environmental economists are concerned with making the market price of a good reflect these further costs and benefits
- they factor in things like an activity's impact on our health and wellbeing

### **An example in BC**

Currently BC Timber auction prices don't include the environmental costs of logging on climate change

- The logging of old growth forests in BC contributes to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, in part through the decomposition of wood waste left over from the logging process. What is the cost of these extra emissions?
- The BC government estimates there are about 43 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> released from BC logging woodwaste alone a year  
(<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/climate->

change/data/provincial-inventory)

- These CO2 emissions are not counted as part of BC's official emissions in greenhouse gas inventories
- The BC government is thus failing to factor in the true cost of logging with respect to their policies on climate change

### **Instrumental Value of Old Growth Forests**

#### 1. Physical health benefits

spending time in forests is associated with lowered blood pressure, cortisol and heart rate, amongst other benefits.

*Reference:*

Twohig-Bennett, Caoimhe, and Andy Jones. "The health benefits of the great outdoors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of greenspace exposure and health outcomes."

*Environmental research* 166 (2018): 628-637.

#### 2. A sense of identity

- Simone Weil coined the term 'deracinement' or 'uprootedness' to diagnose an aspect of modern culture that compromises human well-being.
- In this condition people lack deep and living connections with their environment.
- Rootedness - where part of this involves being connected to the land - is necessary for human well-being.

*Reference:* Simone Weil (1952), *The Need for Roots: prelude towards a declaration of duties towards mankind*, Gallimard.

#### • 3. Beauty and awe

- Old growth forests are beautiful, and provoke a sense of awe in those who are in their presence.
- They are unique sources of aesthetic value for humans.
- We should therefore promote and preserve these environments.
- Analogy to paintings: we seek to preserve human-made artworks, and to promote the creation of new artworks, because of their unique value and role in enhancing our lives.

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#### • **Instrumental value: Putting it all together**

- Human well-being is dependent on a sustainable environment
- The survival of old growth forests and trees is necessary for a sustainable environment
- Therefore, human well being is dependent on the survival of old growth trees and forests

### **Intrinsic value of old growth forests**

Human chauvinism/anthropocentrism:

This is when we treat nature as nothing more than a means to an end, not recognizing it has value in of itself.

If nature just has instrumental value, this means that to harm nature is only wrong insofar as it makes other humans less well off.

So killing an elephant is only wrong if this takes away jobs from people in a game

reserve, say.

### **Routley's 'last person' thought experiment**

Suppose there's a catastrophe that wipes out all human beings except one. This person then goes about systematically destroying everything else he finds: forests, animals, all life. Do you think his acts are morally wrong? From the perspective that all of nature has mere instrumental value, it looks like he's doing nothing wrong because there are no other humans.

*References:* Routley, Richard. 1973. Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic? Proceedings of the XVth World Congress of Philosophy 1: 205-210  
Routley, Richard and Val Routley. 1980. Human Chauvinism and Environmental Ethics. In Environmental Philosophy, ed. D.S. Mannison, M. McRobbie and R. Routley, 96-189. Canberra: Australian National University

### **Old growth forests are intrinsically valuable**

- All living things are intrinsically valuable
- Old growth trees are living things
- Intrinsically valuable things should be preserved from destruction
- Therefore, old growth trees should be preserved from destruction

### **Giving Nature Rights**

- Several countries have granted rights and legal standing to nature
- These countries include: India, New Zealand, Ecuador, and Bolivia
- This also includes over 35 municipalities in the USA such as Santa Monica and Pittsburgh
- This means that instead of viewing nature as mere property, it can be a party in a dispute (like corporations)
- This is a return to some traditions of indigenous law

*References:* David Boyd (2017), The Rights of Nature, ECW Press.  
John Borrows (2010), Canada's Indigenous Constitution, University of Toronto Press.