

From: [FLNR Old Growth BC FLNR:EX](#)
To: [Old Growth Strategic Review](#)
Subject: FW: Old Growth Strategic Review (submission)
Date: Thursday, January 30, 2020 9:55:25 AM

From: Paula Gordon <paulagordon.tpgs@me.com>
Sent: January 29, 2020 11:24 PM
To: FLNR Old Growth BC FLNR:EX <Oldgrowthbc@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Paula Gordon <paulagordon.tpgs@me.com>
Subject: Old Growth Strategic Review (submission)

Paula J Gordon
Submitted to the British Columbia Old Growth Strategic Review Panel
January 29, 2020

From my childhood bedroom window, I witnessed the destruction of an enormous cattail marsh — once alive, ancient, productive and intact. It was utterly destroyed to enrich a handful of individuals. The myriad consequences were disastrous. I cite this small but haunting experience as the bellwether for my conviction: It is of paramount importance that British Columbia protect, defend and preserve intact our Old Growth Forests and the individual trees that constitute them.

My reasoning and my feelings coincide in urging the strongest possible defense of B.C.'s Old Growth Trees and the Forests which -- above ground and below it -- weave together fragile ecosystems of which these mighty beings are keystones. Maximal protection and minimal disruption to them is the wisest, most foresighted and productive path forward.

This dual approach addresses near-term as well as long-term needs of individuals, of our society and all British Columbia's constituent cultures, whatever our origin. And for the cultures of B.C.'s First Nations people, Old Growth Forests and healthy *salmon* frequently dependent on them are inextricably and intimately connected.

In my experience, the first step in addressing how we "manage" nature must recognize, as First Nations do, that people are part of nature and not apart from it. If we destroy (or even "just" diminish) the majesty of Old Growth Forests by prioritizing *anyone's* short term economic goals, ecosystem degradation will be the inevitable result, not matter how well-intended the initiators. And kiss good-bye those burgeoning eco-tourists' dollars.

We must simultaneously pay attention to "the parts" and the whole of this majestic and complex natural system. Trees individually -- but more importantly in "community" -- interact with each other and the atmosphere (some say they "call the rains"); by holding precipitation, they help minimize wildfires; trees are the planets' lungs (the Old Growth Forests most spectacularly) providing oxygen while capturing carbon dioxide; they stabilize and enrich soil (supporting the seen and unseen lifeforms living among their roots and beneath our feet); they protect the forest floor

while stopping erosion which helps soil act as a cleansing filter; they support other keystone species not the least of which are salmon, bears and eagles which in turn nourish the trees; and so on.

Absent trees, this stunning tapestry unravels. And humanity suffers, as is all too clear when we witness the ravages of clear-cutting in communities across the province. The same is too true in “selective harvesting” with its roads and incursions in something as sensitive as Old Growth.

My husband and I chose to make our home in British Columbia having considered (literally) the entire world. In large part, we did so because we believed B.C. has an enlightened approach to sustaining life on earth. Up to now, I have too often been disappointed. Trees are as intimately and immutably in the hearts of many of us from other cultures as they are to First Nations. (I have the pictures to prove it.)

How our Province addresses the complex interests in play around our Old Growth Forests will tell us, and the world, who we really are. We have the opportunity to demonstrate international leadership: economically, politically, culturally and in all the ways people express connections to the ineffable.

But we don't have much time. The fate of Old Growth Forests -- as well as any serious attempt to address our global climate emergency -- hang in the balance. What a *privilege* that we can choose to protect and forward the well-being of all life -- starting with the transcendent significance and importance of Old Growth Forests -- for generations of *all* species including people, especially for those yet unborn far into an unmistakably vulnerable future.

613 words

Paula J Gordon
355 St Mary Avenue
Kimberley, BC V1A 2K2
January 29, 2020