



Dear Mr. Merkel and Mr. Gorley,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Old Growth Strategic Review.

We wish to point out several characteristics of old growth forests that make them invaluable to the people of BC and rest of the world.

Incredible biodiversity: old growth forests are living natural communities that are stable and balanced, and support an extremely high level of biodiversity. The diverse ecosystems of old growth forests have a high degree of resilience in the face of negative impacts. They provide habitat for a rich variety of flora and fauna that cannot not thrive in the reduced diversity of second and third growth forest. Habitat loss is the leading cause of loss of diversity worldwide, and thus old growth forests provide a final refuge for many plant and animal species.

Resiliency: the characteristics of old growth forests such as a variety of age of their trees, open and varied canopies, diversity of understory growth, and quantity of standing or fallen dead trees result in an ecosystem that is diverse, self-sustaining and resilient to disease, parasite infestations, effects of climate change and wildfire

Water and fire management: old growth forests shade and slow melting of snowpack, and retain and store water from heavy rains and melting snow, thus reduce the risk of flooding while allowing water to be more available during warmer, drier seasons. The roots of trees and understory plants stabilize soil and hillside reducing soil erosion. They filter sediments and pollutants and thus improve water quality. Due to the amount of water they sequester and varied species and ages of their trees, old growth forests tend to be more resistant to forest fires than younger forests.

Carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation: Old growth forest are excellent long-term carbon sinks and thus can help to mitigate the effects of the burning of fossil fuels on climate. A 2008 study by D. Knowler and K. Dust from Simon Fraser University strongly suggests that value of the carbon sequestration “services” provided by old growth forests far outweighs their value in lumber.

Benefits of old growth forests on industries other than logging or resource extraction: many industries in BC depend upon old growth forests. The tourism, recreation, and fishing (especially salmon) industries, for example, all benefit from intact old growth forests.

On the basis of the above, we recommend that forestry management practices be based on the understanding the enormous value of our dwindling old growth forests that goes far beyond the value of

the lumber that may be obtained through logging. Since old growth forests are complex, interconnected and integrated ecosystems, forestry management must also take an integrated and sustainable approach based on the best available science, not on short term economic pressures. We also recommend that assessment, monitoring and stewardship of all forests be the focus of forestry management. Since old growth forests take many years to evolve, since only a fraction of our old growth forests remain, since they provide crucial habitat for an incredible variety of species—many of which are threatened or endangered, since old growth forests provide invaluable and irreplaceable services to humankind, we also recommend a moratorium on all clear cut logging in BC's remaining old growth forests.

Elizabeth Miles

Vice President

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