

OLD GROWTH STRATEGY REVIEW PANEL

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Gary Merkel and Al Gorley,

The Quesnel River Watershed Alliance (QRWA) has been involved and working on the ground in the Interior Inland Rainforest of the Cariboo Region since 1994. It is clear that the current management of old growth is not effectively protecting this valuable resource and the true value of these forest ecosystems in this area and across BC.

There are more than 350 different species of wildlife that are known to inhabit the Inland Rainforest alone, which runs from the headwaters of the Fraser River through the US boarded into Montana and is one of the rarest ecosystems on earth. The declining Caribou herds within this old growth ecosystem are a sign of the loss of habitat these animals and many other species depend on. These rare old forests should not be managed for timber harvest.

We feel there should be legislated protection of the remaining old growth in BC. Also to date there is very little known about old growth management areas, their status, condition, and whether the OGMA's are actually achieving the outcomes desired.

We (QRWA ) are recommending an immediate moratorium on all harvesting old growth. We feel there is a need to have a better understanding of these systems, considering the high value and exceptional importance to help mitigate climate change. Old Growth forest provide fish and wildlife habitat, clean water and recreation and tourism opportunities. We recommended and would like to see a significant change in how old growth is protected in all areas across the province.

Regards,

Chris Blake, QRWA project manager