



December 6, 2019

Old Growth Review

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for making this forum available for input and discussion on the logging of old growth on the coast of BC. The logging sector has provided a livelihood for me and my family since 1970. I am involved in the purchasing of logs and marketing of wood residuals. In the past I have been a log broker, an executive for two pulp companies – one in BC and one in Washington State – and involved on the biomass side of the industry.

Over the years, the industry has transitioned from cutting very little second growth to the point now where the split between old and second growth is about 50/50. With this change has come the evolution of different technologies to harvest and process the smaller coarser grained logs. Along with this change has been a drop in the number of jobs due to mechanization in the harvesting and a reliance on computer and robotics for manufacturing the logs into lumber or related products. Given that much of the road and bridge infrastructure is in place to access second growth, thereby negating the need for new construction, there has been additional job loss.

With the requirement to log more remote and higher altitude areas, the cost of logging old growth has increased. With this in mind the obvious question is why log old growth at all?

There are many reasons as follows.

The first and most obvious is that shutting down the logging of old growth will cause the demise of the coastal forest industry. It is not just that half the logs would be gone, shutting down logging, sawmills, and pulp mills. The other impact would be to the large remanufacturing industry which relies primarily on old growth for making window and door stock, mouldings, and a myriad of other high end products. These are labour intensive processes with which we are very familiar given that our company has a sister company, Pacific Lumber Remanufacturing, which employs 60 people.

One of the sustainable factors for any market is critical mass. With dramatically reduced volumes there will be fewer players supplying our historic markets. The Japanese buyers have been complaining that they do not like the fact that there are so few suppliers of coastal BC old growth lumber, particularly hemlock. They cite the case of wood from Europe and Scandinavia where they have fifty suppliers to our five.

The coastal industry has already lost significant credibility as a supplier. This has been due to labour issues, high costs, and environmental action. I was actively involved a pilot project whereby we logged 175,000m³ in Call Inlet to an FSC standard. As part of the discussions I met with senior people in FSC. Their comment re FSC in British Columbia was that rather than being used as vehicle for expediting sustainable and environmentally friendly logging, FSCBC was intent on using FSC to shut down logging on the coast of BC. Despite the platitudes and rhetoric, many in the environmental movement on the coast would like nothing better than to shut down our industry. They want to implement this by starting with stopping all old growth logging.

We will see a reduction in available timber to the industry but the bulk of this will be in the Interior due to bug kill and fire issues. There is little reason to reduce cut on the coast. Many of the old growth stands are post climax stands and for maximum value should have logged many years ago. Logging them now and getting a new forest growing is in our interests. Most of the areas to be logged will never have any tourists due to remoteness and bad weather. Having walked timber all over the coast I can attest to the fact that many of the old growth areas are extremely inhospitable. They are though, often excellent growing sites for timber. From a wildlife standpoint, we often see an increase in bears, deer and other animals in the second growth as there are more berries and shrubs for food there than in old growth areas.

Riverside Forest Products 2018 is designed as the mill of the future for the coast. While about 15% old growth is included in the furnish, the primary focus for the mill is on second growth. This is due to an expectation that the future will lead to an increased volume of second growth. However, our reman plant is 100% reliant on old growth. We have already seen a significant decrease in the availability of old growth and do not wish to see this situation exacerbated by alienating more of the cut.

Regards,

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