

Old Growth Strategic Review  
December 17, 2019

The coastal forests of British Columbia are a very complex and unique ecosystem. The biodiversity values and characteristics support not only the terrestrial plants and wildlife, but also have a significant impact on the marine ecosystems. Coastal forests also contribute to the social and economic values of the Province, Canada, and the rest of the world. Managing a complex ecosystem with such a wide range of values is not a simple task.

British Columbia has had a long history of intensive forest management and forest stewardship guided by the members of the Association of British Columbia Forest Professionals. This group of professionals has been recognized since 1947 and have protected the public's interest while having the exclusive right to practise forestry. Balancing the various values and pressures on the forest has been a goal of forest stewards for many years. Over time, values do change, and management practices must adapt and evolve while being incorporated into sound forest management decisions.

First Nations consultation and input on forest management decisions is an example of how our management practices have adapted over time. Recognition of the First Nations values and resource needs for cultural sustainability has changed how the provincial forests are managed.

The size of the old growth coastal forests has decreased due to habitation/development, harvesting, and other natural events (wind & fire). Thankfully, previous sound forest stewardship decisions have ensured that many similar representative areas are protected. The "unprotected forest" that remains to be managed is comprised of economically harvestable timber (Timber Harvesting Land Base – THLB) and non-economical timber. **Proper management of the THLB is critically important to the rural communities of British Columbia.** Harvesting, manufacturing, and silviculture jobs remain the backbone of many small communities of British Columbia. Without these jobs, there is no doubt in my mind that communities would suffer, and many people would have to re-locate to find work elsewhere.

Annual Allowable Cut calculations and assumptions made by industry and reviewed/approved by government have never considered the curtailment of Old Growth harvest. The harvest levels across the province are designed to provide long term economic stability while providing for long term ecosystem management. Changing policy due to non-science-based pressures is contrary to years of professional forest management decisions.

As a Professional Forester working in the forest industry and living in a rural community, I am deeply concerned that the BC Government is being influenced by special interest groups that are campaigning for the preservation of old growth. We need to continue the path of long-term sustainable planning for all values and ensure there is not only Old Growth present for future generations, but jobs and communities to support the forest industry and the Province.

Trust the management of our forests by Professional Foresters and don't let the future of British Columbia be harmed by international environmental groups and other organizations with motives based on emotion and votes rather than progressively adaptive forest management principles.



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RFP #3656