

Sebastien Lecours, RPF

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Old Growth Strategic Review Panel
Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
oldgrowthbc@gov.bc.ca

Attention: **Old Growth Review Panel**

Dear Sirs:

Re: The Importance of Old Growth Forests and Trees

I am a Registered Professional Forester with the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP). I live, work, and play on Vancouver Island. I reside in Campbell River and work primarily out of Woss for the Western Forest Products (WFP) Englewood Forest Operation.

The following is my perspective on ecological, economical, and cultural importance of old growth trees and forests. Please note, despite being employed and as a result affiliated with WFP, my opinions and values expressed in this submission are entirely mine and independent of WFP's.

I believe if we want to balance not only ecological and cultural values, but also economics, we need and I emphasize "NEED" to continue allowing harvesting of old growth near or at current levels. I believe this is possible and appropriate as large amounts of old growth forests, stands, and trees are already protected through landscape to stand level strategies such as Provincial Parks, Wildlife Habitat Areas, Old Growth Management Areas, Ecological Reserves, Wildlife Tree Retention Areas, and Big Trees. I'm not suggesting we do not continue to challenge ourselves to continue to be world leaders, but instead we need to make sure the amount of protected old growth is evenly distributed across the provincial landscapes with appropriate ecological representation. How we do this largely needs to be done by involving and collaborating with First Nation groups.

Yes, sustaining current harvest levels on the coast means relying on harvesting a large amount of old growth stands, which will deplete harvestable old growth inventories within the next 10 to 15 years as the profile transitions to second growth harvesting. The decade long transition is essential for BC's economy and those who depend on forestry such as employees, communities, and businesses to adapt and adjust to the different profile. Drastically and significantly reducing the amount of available old growth for harvesting would not allow for a smooth transition and would be economically devastating to many people and communities. The reality is harvesting of virgin old growth forests will soon come to an end, we just need to determine if striking the correct balance is by limiting it now or allowing the decade long period to take place for this to happen to allow for a balanced transition. I believe the latter is the best

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and only balanced approach to ensure ecological, economical, and cultural values are ALL equally balanced.

I think one of the reasons we are having this important conversation about old growth now is not only because values are always changing and the amount of harvestable old growth areas will soon be depleted, but also because we of the misinformation and lack of education surrounding the actual state of old growth. We generally have all been doing a poor job of educating the public. We, the province, the ABCFP, members of the profession, all need to do a better job at education people about what is still and will continue to be available for old growth.

In summary, I believe it's critical to continue with harvesting of old growth at or near current levels while also continuing to balance ecological and cultural values. Thank you for reviewing my submission.

Sincerely,

Sebastien Lecours, RPF