



To: Old Growth Strategic Review panel, FLNRORD

Dear Mr. Merkel and Mr. Gorley,

The Slocan Lake Stewardship Society (SLSS) mandate focuses on quality, quantity and timing of flow in our lake and tributaries through science, education and advocacy. We are in the West Kootenay inland temperate rainforest, a rare ecosystem. SLSS is committed to the conservation of Old Growth (OG) forests as they produce the best quality water, store and filter floodwater and make the largest contribution to the moisture transpiration cycle.

In 2017, SLSS held a Priority Conservation Action Forum focused on the Slocan Lake watershed; representatives from provincial and local government, land managers, conservation groups and 13 research scientists attended. Three of the seven Priority Actions that emerged were: Identify & Conserve Remaining Old Growth Forest, Map Critical Habitat for Suites of Species at Risk, and Develop an Ecosystem Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. These three priorities are interlinked; our old growth cedar/hemlock forests are hotbeds of biodiversity, which will be part of providing refugia for species at risk as climate change evolves.

We are alarmed that OG is being targeted by the logging industry and cut at a record pace. The present provincial government 'consult and log' policy is resulting in the destruction of Old Growth in our inland temperate rainforest and the loss of critical biodiversity and habitat, especially at low elevations. We would strongly suggest a moratorium on logging OG until your Review is complete and changes are made to Old Growth management policy. The long-term ecosystem services that OG provides (i.e. highest terrestrial carbon sequestration, plant and animal habitat with high biodiversity, oxygen production, climate regulation etc.) far outweigh OG's value as a one-time lumber product. We support the joint recommendations made to your Old Growth Management Review by the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, Wildsight, and West Kootenay EcoSociety.

Old Growth forests are one of the wondrous aspects of the natural world, inspiring awe and tranquility in an increasingly chaotic world. For this, and in order to maintain biodiverse ecosystems, let's allow Old Growth its full life cycle and utility.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sally Hammond".

Sally Hammond, Vice President, on behalf of SLSS Board of Directors

