

Old Growth Strategic Review

December 18, 2019

Any additional restrictions with respect to old growth harvesting on the current THLB is unacceptable in my opinion.

I grew up in the largest clear cut in the province and was influenced growing up in the public-school system by teachers actively protesting and getting arrested at the Clayoquot Protests. Although I had limited access to the true outdoors, and really had no idea what kind of jobs existed in forestry, I loved the thought of pursuing a career in forestry. Upon graduation from High School I was accepted into the Forestry Program at UBC. Since my first summer student job on Vancouver Island in 1995, I have been working and living up and down the coast in small communities such as Gold River, Woss, Port Clements, and most recently in Campbell River.

The reason for this short autobiography is to help with perspective. If my decision after High School did not take me down the path of working in the forest industry and living in forestry-based communities, my general opinion on Old Growth Management would likely be to stop all further OG harvesting in BC. I find when I visit family and friends, or even in discussions with individuals recently moving to Campbell River from larger urban areas, that their understanding of the forest industry in general is very limited. What they know is what they read and hear in the news and in Social Media. It is easy for individuals and advocacy groups to pull on the heart strings of the youth and urban populations, and to paint the picture that there is limited OG forests left. Most people do not understand the complexity of the industry, the economic importance, what is the current state of the forests and levels of protection currently exist, nor understand even what OG forests are or what they look like.

The province as a whole needs to have a healthy and sustainable forestry sector. My understanding is that approximately 70% remaining OG is already protected. The remaining 30% should be left in the TLHB to harvest over the next 10-20 years until the working forest is 'normalized'. Any further substantial reductions in amount of OG harvest will result in an immediate falldown effect which would be devastating to the industry, forestry-based communities, and the entire province. Many of the remaining sawmills in the province are still set up to harvest OG logs. There will be transition as mills are converted over time to harvest smaller and smaller piece size. An immediate end to OG harvest would result in an overabundance of small logs (which have limited value and margin) being harvested with no where to go but exported.

If the province wanted to stop harvesting OG, we should have been preparing for this over the last 20+ years with intensive silviculture to help mitigate falldown. Instead there has been very limited incentive on public lands to do any intensive silviculture – namely regular fertilizations, spacing and pruning.

We should be proud of our current forest practices and generally a sustainable industry compared to other parts of the world. What we need to do is educate the public and reassure people that the forests are in good shape and in good hands. We need to do a better job to counter the rhetoric or 'fake news' put out by certain individuals and advocacy groups. Obviously, there is work to do in understanding how climate change and its effects (increase fire, pest, disease risk) will shape our forests and future forest management. There might be certain additional unique ecosystems and stands of OG forests that

should be protected, however generally other areas should be opened up for harvest to compensate for this.

We need to protect the remaining working forest that exists to maintain a forest industry. There is enough struggle in the industry today with the current market conditions, labor disputes, and limiting government legislation – we cannot add another impediment to a financially struggling industry.

Respectfully,

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