



Dear Garry Merkel and Al Gorley,

Re: Whistler Naturalists strongly support protecting old-growth forests in BC

The Whistler Naturalists Society is a non-profit organization that aims to increase local knowledge of, and appreciation for, the natural world in the Whistler area. Through our events such as BioBlitz and Fungus Among Us, we have documented over 2,000 of species new to Whistler's master list, many of which were only found in old-growth ecosystems.

Ecological benefits of protecting old growth

Old-growth forests in BC are some of the last still standing on Earth. Once they are gone, they're gone, since it would take many centuries or even millennia for those ecosystems to regain their former complexity. We know logging is not only killing old growth trees but also killing animals, plants and other organisms that depend on old growth ecosystems, many which are facing extinction.

Economic benefits of protecting old growth

Old-growth forests also play a critical role in the tourist industry in BC and specifically Whistler. Many of our most popular trails go through old-growth—and these same forests have either been logged by our Community Forest or are planning to be logged. We join the many in BC communities who are beginning to realize that they are not getting the most benefit from cutting down the last of the great stands; and, instead, are starting to see greater value in protecting them.

Climate change benefits of protecting old growth

Finally, coastal temperate rainforests are among the best carbon storehouses on the planet and are some of humanity's best assets to limit climate warming, keeping it out of the atmosphere where it destabilizes the climate and jeopardizes the future of life on Earth.

Ethics

We still have a chance to protect some of the Earth's oldest ecosystem, if we make the right choices. We urge the province to protect old-growth forests.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Whistler Naturalists Society

Kristina Swerhun

Leslie Anthony

Kris Shoup

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Julie Burrows

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