BEC-Tree Species Description: CWHwh1

The CWHwh1 is 60% mature and old forest (age class 7 to 9). An additional 6% consists of age class 4 to 6 forest, some of which is natural immature/young forest resulting from windthrow, landslide and (some) fire disturbance. Very old logging, occurring in the early to mid 1900s, likely accounts for up to half of this 6% mid-age class forest. A bustling logging history on Haida Gwaii through the middle to late 1900s and continuing today, though at a much slower pace, has resulted in nearly 35% of the CWHwh1 being in immature (age class 1 to 3) managed forest. The bulk of this is within the TFLs. Old forest is dominated by western redcedar (45%) and western hemlock (34%) with some Sitka spruce (8%) in many stands. Shore pine (7%) and yellow cedar (6%) occur mainly on wetter, poorer sites. Middle-aged forests are hemlock – spruce mixes with some red alder and redcedar (likely established prior to high deer populations).

On average, regenerated harvested blocks are 55% western hemlock and 33% Sitka spruce. Redcedar amounts to about 6% overall in harvested blocks. It is absent or very scarce in most blocks. These shifts in species percentages in regenerated areas occupying over one third of the subzone represent a significant impact on tree species composition at the landscape level. Of greatest significance is the well documented decline in redcedar on Haida Gwaii, in a large part due to browsing by introduced deer, but also due to the overwhelming emphasis on Sitka spruce in regeneration strategies. This combined with vigorous natural regeneration of western hemlock have resulted in the decreased diversity of second growth forests on the islands. Efforts to establish redcedar wherever possible must increase.

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Note: the above write-up is based on VRIMS as well as TFL forest cover/regeneration information.