

BEC-Tree Species Description: CWHwh2

About 74% of the forest area within the montane CWHwh2 is mature and old forest (age class 7 to 9). The remainder of the area (26%) is age class 1 to 3 forests resulting primarily from timber harvesting. Old forests are western hemlock – dominated (and including some mountain hemlock), generally with a component of western redcedar (22%), yellow cedar (16%), and Sitka spruce (13%).

Regenerated second growth is dominantly western hemlock (63%) and Sitka spruce (31%) with just 3% redcedar and 2% yellow cedar. With 25% of the CWHwh landscape being managed second growth comprised almost exclusively of just two tree species – hemlock and spruce, the result is a significant change in tree species diversity and composition at the landscape level. Of greatest significance is the well documented decline in redcedar and yellow cedar 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, even at montane elevations. 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 and yellow cedar 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.