


# Involving British Columbians

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British Columbia Forest Facts

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*Through community-based land use planning, British Columbians help determine how public lands, which make up 95% of the province, will be used now and in the future.*

## MANAGING FORESTS FOR EVERYONE

British Columbia's forests offer countless social benefits, including recreational enjoyment and economic opportunities. The views of British Columbians are key to forest management – from planning how public lands should be used to commenting on specific forest development activities.

British Columbians want to know that qualified resource professionals are using the latest science and most up-to-date information to manage public forests in a sustainable way. They want to know their forests will continue to address local, provincial and global needs.





## STRATEGIC LAND USE PLANNING

Comprehensive land use planning involves British Columbians in decisions that determine how public lands will be used today and in the future, and how resources will be managed to benefit current and future generations.

The process, which grew out of land and resource use conflicts in the 1970s and 1980s, has strengthened environmental standards, protected critical habitat and biodiversity, and improved investor certainty. It has also increased communication and cooperation among diverse and sometimes competing interests.

Land use planning allows people representing a variety of sectors and views to develop a shared vision for the use of their public lands and resources. While it is often hard to achieve the required balance, the result is stability and certainty that is important to communities in British Columbia and to international markets.

Over the last 10 years, planning has been completed in close to 90 per cent of the province. While the planning process is consistent across British Columbia, each plan is unique so it can meet local needs.

For example, plans in northeast British Columbia must accommodate oil and gas development and in the Cariboo region they must deal with ranching matters. On Vancouver Island, they recognize the region's immense natural diversity, its growing population, its First Nations communities and its reliance on forestry and tourism.



## THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

In 2006, British Columbia announced a vision for the future of 6.4 million hectares (15.8 million acres) along its central and north Pacific Coast that respects both the unique coastal environment and the needs of the people who live and work in the area. The outcome of intense and complex community-based planning, this vision acknowledged the global importance of this sensitive region, also known as the Great Bear Rainforest.

Individuals from resource sectors, environmental groups, First Nations, local communities, tourism, labour and government worked hard together to find innovative solutions. With scientific advice from the independent, multidisciplinary Coast Information Team, they developed models that became the cornerstone of consensus agreements.

The consensus agreements were formally presented to the British Columbia and local First Nations governments in July 2004.

This launched government-to-government discussions involving the province and more than 25 First Nations with traditional territories in the area, and led to agreements that support cultural values and provide economic opportunities for First Nations.

The land use planning decisions resulted in full protection for almost 1.8 million hectares (4.4 million acres) and bring the total amount of protected land in British Columbia to 14.8 per cent. Where resource development is allowed in the two coast regions, it will be guided by principles based on ecosystem-based management, which seeks to ensure the well-being of natural ecosystems and human communities.

In 2007, participants in the land and resource management planning process for the coast regions received the Gift to the Earth award, WWF International's highest international accolade for conservation outcomes.

## WATCHING OVER FOREST MANAGEMENT

British Columbia's Forest and Range Practices Act fits within the strategic land and resource management planning process. It ensures that the mix of benefits identified through the land use plans is delivered, such as timber, recreational opportunities, water quality and wildlife habitat. The act requires that all public views and forest values must be considered

before forest companies can harvest timber, build roads or undertake other forest activities on public forest land.

The Forest and Range Practices Act itself was developed through an open and inclusive process, and includes the appointment of an independent Forest and Range Practices

Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Forests and Range regarding forest practices. The council represents a range of interests including First Nations, communities, labour and the forest and tourism industries.

The foundation of sustainable forest management in British Columbia is the timber supply review through which the independent chief forester determines how much wood can be harvested in each of the province's management units. This process involves a detailed analysis, public comment and consideration of non-timber values, and it ensures that the harvest level is based on the latest information, practices and policies – economic, environmental and social.

The Forest Practices Board has an arms-length relationship from government, and a mandate to hold both government and the forest industry publicly accountable for forestry practices. The board conducts audits on forest practices and government enforcement of legislation, investigates public complaints and undertakes special investigations of forestry issues. By law, it must report its findings directly to the public and government.



## BRITISH COLUMBIA'S FOREST ECONOMY

British Columbia's forest economy supports at least 15 per cent of the province's total economic activity, and about seven per cent of provincial employment is linked to the forest industry. Many communities and regions depend entirely on the timber

resource. Forests also provide a magnificent backdrop and support fisheries, wildlife and recreational opportunities that make British Columbia a popular tourist destination for visitors from around the world.

*Forest companies must consult the public and consider all forest values before beginning any forest activities on public land in British Columbia.*

*The Central and North Coast land and resource management plans respect the unique coastal environment and the needs of the people who live and work in the area.*



## INVOLVING FIRST NATIONS

Forests have been economically, culturally and spiritually significant to First Nations (Aboriginal peoples) for thousands of years. The British Columbia government is committed to increasing First Nations participation in the forest sector. In 2008, it had reached multi-year agreements with

nearly 145 First Nations with forest interests in the province, providing access to more than 39 million cubic metres of timber and sharing nearly \$230 million in forest revenues. The government's target is to have eight per cent of the province's annual harvest held by First Nations.



## THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATION

The three globally recognized forest certification programs used in British Columbia all require public disclosure of audit findings and all involve environmental organizations in their standard development. Third-party forest certification offers customers assurance that harvested areas are reforested, that laws are obeyed and that there is no unauthorized or illegal logging.

Canada and the United States manage forests sustainably, ensuring they are there for future generations to be used for the many things that society values; including recreation, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and forest products. All major forest certification programs in North America are recognized by companies and governments around the world.

## SOURCES

### MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS

**Aboriginal Affairs Branch**  
[www.for.gov.bc.ca/haa](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/haa)

**Forest and Range Practices Act**  
[www.for.gov.bc.ca/code](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/code)

**Forest Practices Board**  
[www.fpb.gov.bc.ca](http://www.fpb.gov.bc.ca)

**Coast Forest Conservation Initiative**  
[www.coastforestconservationinitiative.com](http://www.coastforestconservationinitiative.com)

**Land Use Planning**  
[www.ilmb.gov.bc.ca](http://www.ilmb.gov.bc.ca)

**Coast Land Use Planning**  
[ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/slrp/lrmp/nanaimo/central\\_north\\_coast](http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/slrp/lrmp/nanaimo/central_north_coast)

About 50% of wood products exported from Canada come from the Province of British Columbia's sustainably-managed forests. This publication is part of the 'Forest Facts' series, published by Forestry Innovation Investment. Visit [www.naturallywood.com](http://www.naturallywood.com) for details.

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