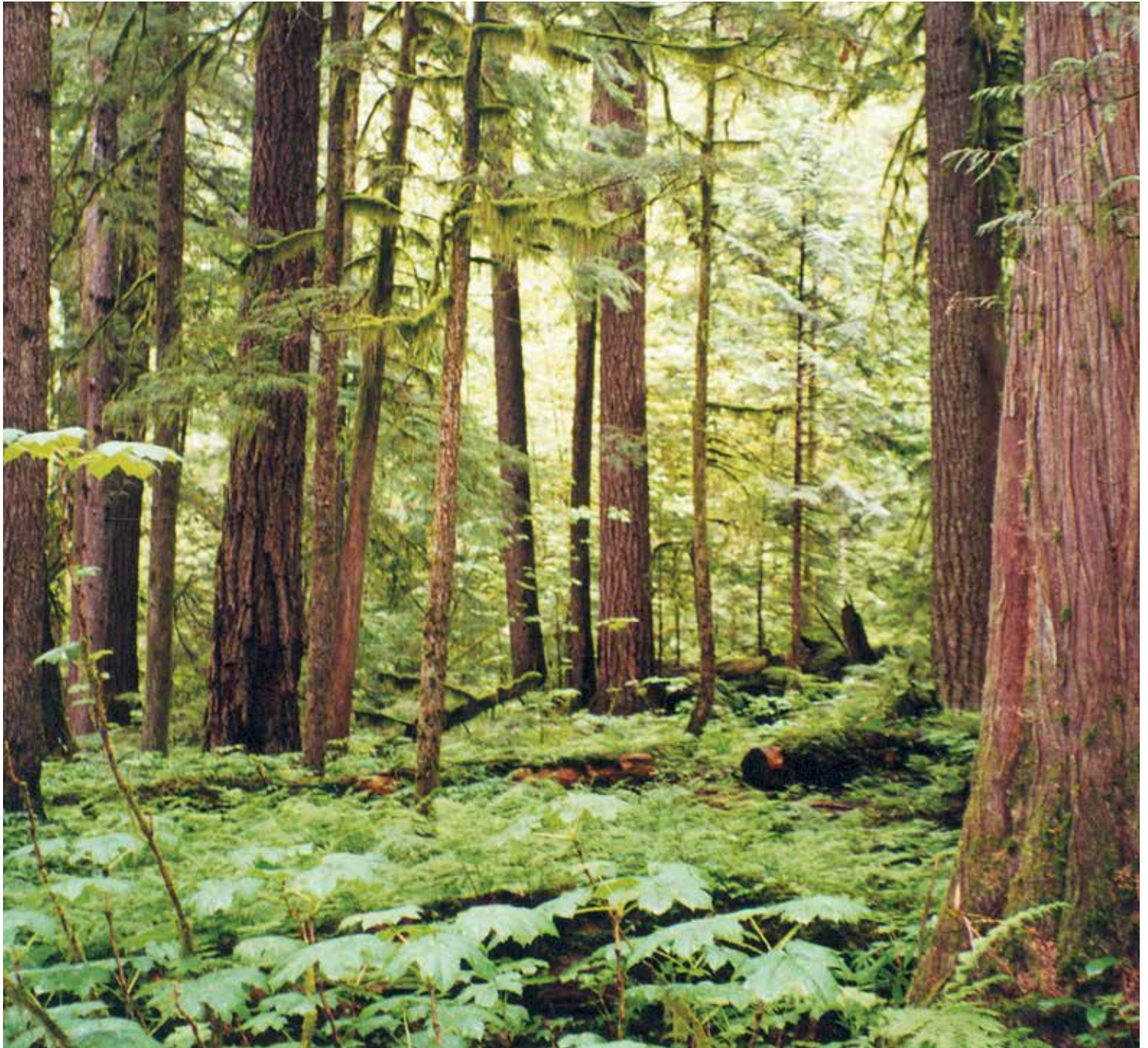


# SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

## British Columbia's Forest Leadership

British Columbia (B.C.), Canada is recognized as a global leader in sustainable forest management, meeting the environmental, social and economic needs of current and future generations.

Stringent forest laws, skilled forestry professionals, comprehensive monitoring, compliance and enforcement strengthen the Province's leading reputation. Canada is the international leader in forest certification with B.C. contributing more than any other province.







# BRITISH COLUMBIA IS A WORLD LEADER IN SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

## Keeping Forests as FORESTS



**200**  
MILLION  
SEEDLINGS

Since the 1930s, more than 7.5 billion seedlings have been planted in B.C. to reforest areas after logging, wildfire or insect infestations.

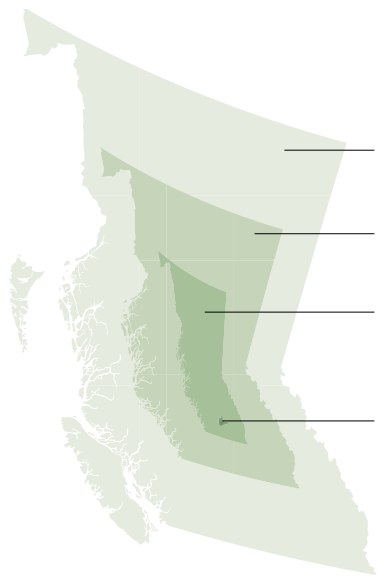
On average, over 200 million tree seedlings are planted annually on public forest land in B.C.

**3%**

B.C. has roughly the same amount of forested area as it did before European settlement. Only 3% of its land has been permanently converted to other uses such as farming, ranching and urban development.

**0.2%**

A fraction of 1% of B.C.'s forests (approximately 200,000 hectares) are harvested annually. By law these lands are reforested promptly.



Total area of B.C.  
95 million hectares

Forested land  
55 million hectares

Land available  
for harvesting  
22 million hectares

Annual timber harvest  
about 200,000 hectares

Top Left: Few places on earth can match the diversity and richness of B.C.'s forests. The province has more than 40 different species of native trees. Broughton Island, B.C. Photo: Moresby Creative

## Regulating Forest Practices

B.C. has advanced forest policies that evolve to meet current needs and to reflect the latest research. Three independent studies comparing forestry regulations in jurisdictions around the world found that B.C.'s forest sustainability requirements are among the most stringent in the world.<sup>1</sup>

About 95% of B.C.'s forests are publicly owned and priorities for the use of these lands are developed through community-based consultation and strategic planning that establishes land use direction and objectives.

B.C.'s Forest and Range Practices Act governs the activities of forest and range licenses in B.C. and legislates on-the-ground results. It is built on a foundation of professional skills and accountability and ensures public lands provide a mix of benefits such as timber, recreational opportunities, water quality, wildlife habitat and

countless other values. The Act requires that licensees prepare forest stewardship plans that show how operations will be consistent with objectives set by government.

The regulatory regime specifies requirements to conserve soils, provide sustainable reforestation, and protect riparian areas, fish and fish habitat, watersheds, biodiversity and wildlife. It also regulates construction, maintenance and deactivation of forest roads.

B.C. is well-positioned to support results-based forest regulations. It has registered professionals and a multi-faceted compliance and enforcement regime.

*Canada is the international leader in forest certification with B.C. contributing more than any other province, providing added assurance of sustainable forest management.*

## Ensuring Forests for the Future

B.C.'s Chief Forester is required by law, at least every 10 years, to determine how much wood can be harvested from each of the province's 70 management units (timber supply areas and tree farm licenses) through the province's timber supply review. These allowable annual cut determinations are independent and based on detailed technical analysis, public comment and consideration of forest resource values such as wildlife and fish habitat, soils, water and recreational opportunities.

*The timber supply review is the foundation of B.C.'s sustainable forest management, considering ecological values while allowing long-term economic benefits for communities.*



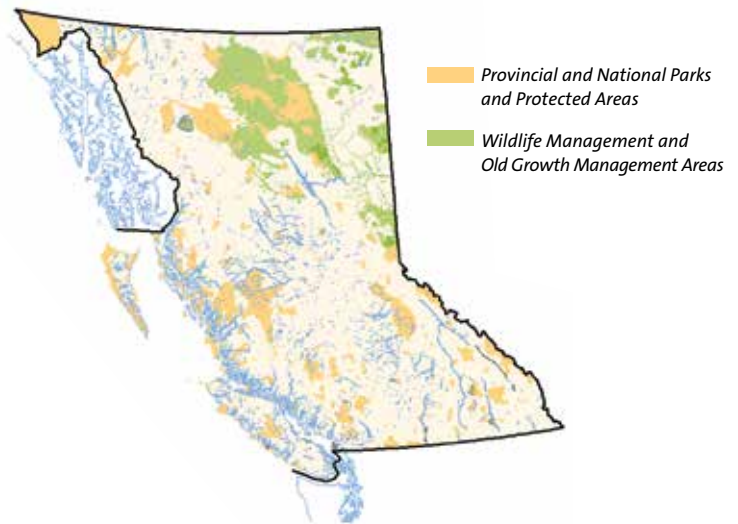


## Conserving B.C.'s Forest Diversity

Resource managers in B.C. maintain forest diversity by planting native tree species in combination with natural regeneration. This approach maintains natural forests suitable for supporting habitat for a wide variety of animal, flora and fauna species.

B.C.'s approach to natural regeneration differs from other jurisdictions using plantations or intensively managed forests, as defined by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

After harvesting on public land, forest companies in B.C. remain responsible for regenerating the forest site until the trees have grown into a new, healthy forest.



*In addition to protected areas, B.C. has lands under special management, which means other values take precedence such as wildlife and old growth conservation. Map: GeoBC*

## Protected and Special Management Areas

B.C. has more than 14.1 million hectares (34.8 million acres) of protected lands. The province's parks system is the second largest in Canada – only the national parks system is bigger. In B.C., 1,029 provincial parks and protected areas contain some of the best representative elements and special features of the province's natural heritage.

In addition to its fully protected lands, B.C. has a significant amount of area designated under some type of special management regime, where other values such as wildlife habitat, biodiversity or recreation take precedence.

These include:

- **OLD GROWTH MANAGEMENT AREAS**  
Maintain the biological diversity of old growth forests by ensuring that stands from different ecosystem types are protected.
- **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SPECIAL AREAS**  
Provide special management for species listed at risk or regionally important species habitat through designations such as Wildlife Management Areas, Wildlife Habitat Areas, Ungulate Winter Ranges (e.g. goats, deer, caribou, moose) and Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds.

- **SCENIC AREAS**  
Provide special management of forest activities to conserve important scenic values of the public, visitors and other resource users.
- **COMMUNITY WATERSHEDS**  
Protect the drainage area for drinking water used by local communities.
- **RECREATION AREAS**  
Provide for special management of important recreation sites, trails and features.
- **CULTURAL SITES**  
B.C. laws provide for the conservation and protection of First Nations (Aboriginal) cultural heritage resources that are the traditional uses of a First Nation. Archaeological resources, such as pre-1846 archaeological sites and artifacts, are also protected. If these are encountered during resource development activities, companies must cease activities until the site's significance can be assessed.



*B.C. conserves or manages important species and habitats while still allowing some development activities. Photo: Moresby Creative*



*Left: B.C. ensures public lands provide a mix of benefits such as timber, recreational opportunities, water quality and wildlife habitat. Photo: Moresby Creative*

*Right: B.C.'s skilled forest professionals protect the public's interest in the province's forests. Photo: Brudder*

## Meeting the Needs of Each Forest

Long before a tree is cut, forest professionals identify the silvicultural system that keeps the forest as natural as possible. A silvicultural system covers all activities such as early planning, logging and planting new trees.

It is important to conserve all forest values while achieving the commercial value from the timber. This means identifying reserves to protect scenery and to keep dirt out of waterways, timing the harvest to avoid soil damage, ordering seedling stock well in advance and more. British Columbia legislation limits cutblock size to 40 hectares (100 acres) in coastal regions and 60 hectares (150 acres) in interior regions, except under specific circumstances.

Harvesting techniques that remove some of the trees, such as retention or selection cutting, are used in specific situations including areas where soils are dry, where terrain is steep or where

other methods may affect scenery, wildlife habitat, old growth areas or other values.

Clearcutting, which removes most of the trees from an area and leaves patches and buffers to protect other values, is often used because it mimics natural forest disturbances such as wildfires. It is also best suited to the ecology of sites with tree species that thrive in full sunlight such as lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir.

When used appropriately, clearcutting is less disruptive because the site is left to grow once it is regenerated. Stumps, branches and fallen trees are left behind to maintain biodiversity and provide habitat. The three certification standards used in B.C. – the Canadian Standards Association’s Sustainable Forest Management Standards, the Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative – all recognize clearcutting as a legitimate silvicultural practice.



Forest professionals identify the silvicultural system that best meets the unique needs of each site. Photo: Moresby Creative



The average cutblock size in B.C. for all silvicultural systems is about 30 hectares (74 acres). Photo: Brudder

Cover photo: A B.C. coastal forest including Douglas-fir and western redcedar trees. Photo credit: Candace Kenyon  
The wood grain featured at the top of this factsheet is western redcedar.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

B.C. FOREST PRACTICES BOARD [www.bcfpb.ca](http://www.bcfpb.ca)

B.C. MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT [www.env.gov.bc.ca](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca)  
B.C. Parks  
Identified Wildlife Management Strategy

B.C. MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS AND NATURAL  
RESOURCE OPERATIONS [www.for.gov.bc.ca](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca)  
Forest and Range Evaluation Program  
Forest and Range Practices Act  
The State of British Columbia’s Forests

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF FOREST MINISTERS  
[www.sfmcanada.org](http://www.sfmcanada.org)  
British Columbia Forest Governance  
Sustainable Forest Management in Canada

CANADIAN FOREST SERVICE [www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests)  
State of Canada’s Forests

About 50% of wood products exported from Canada come from British Columbia’s sustainably managed forests. This publication is part of the ‘Forest Facts’ series, published by Forestry Innovation Investment, the Government of British Columbia’s market development agency for forest products.

To learn more about sustainable forest management in B.C. and other forest facts, visit:

[naturallywood.com](http://naturallywood.com)