

OLD-GROWTH FORESTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The province of British Columbia (BC), Canada, has some of the most abundant, ecologically and climatically diverse forests in the world. Almost all of the forestry in the province occurs on public lands which are managed by professionals under strict laws for the present and future benefit of British Columbians. Most healthy forests are comprised of trees and plants of various species and ages. Old forests are more than old or big trees. They are unique ecosystems, and their characteristics vary greatly across the British Columbia, by tree species and location. Legislated and third-party certified forest management and logging practices ensure that BC will always have old forests. About two-thirds of British Columbia's old forests are currently protected or not available for harvest.

While British Columbia's wood supply has always been impacted by forest fires and conservation measures, the province will continue to be a significant and consistent supplier of forest products to international markets.

Sustainable forest management and logging practices

Sustainable harvest levels in BC are enshrined in legislation – The Forest Act. A fraction (one-third or one percent) of BC's total forest area is harvested each year. These sustainable harvest levels are set by an independent Chief Forester.

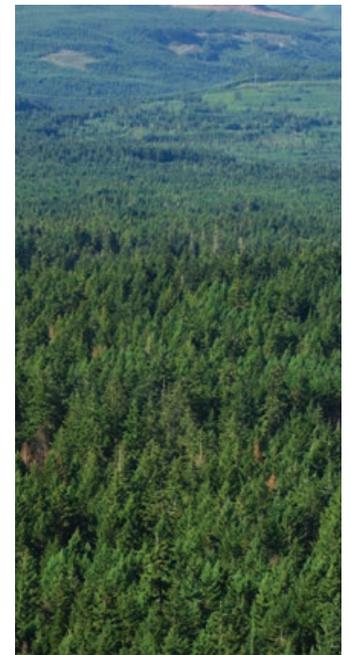
In addition to the Forest Act, the Forest & Range Practices Act sets out mandatory forest practices and resource-based activities in the Province including the protection of water, wildlife, ecosystems, biodiversity and cultural uses.

Forest practices, and government enforcement, are audited by an independent watchdog, the Forest Practices Board, to ensure companies comply with laws and regulations.

Independent studies confirm BC's comprehensive regulatory forestry regime

BC and Canadian forest management frameworks for public forests meet and exceed third-party certification standards and have been confirmed in independent studies:

- BC requires that harvest levels are sustainable, forest conversion is avoided, forests are protected from fires and pests, and that ecological and conservation values are protected.
- BC's laws and legislation cover all 16 internationally-recognized elements of sustainable forest management.
- BC's forest management and conservation regime is one of the most advanced in the world.



This document is published by Forestry Innovation Investment, the Government of British Columbia's market development agency for forest products. For more information visit naturallywood.com.



140-250 YEARS

Old-growth forests are generally defined as trees more than 250 years old on the coast of BC and in the BC interior wetbelt, and more than 140 years old in the rest of the BC Interior.



20%

Of forest lands are considered old, of which over 2/3rds is under some form of protection or is not available for harvest.

Forests are dynamic, change over time, and are impacted by natural forces including wildfires and insects. By law, BC's forests are:

- managed for the flora and fauna indigenous to the region to protect the province's vital ecosystems and biodiversity.
- reforested promptly using a mix of native tree species in combination with natural regeneration.

Forest areas of high conservation value are protected by law and through ongoing evaluation and consultation with the people of BC. This includes regular collaboration with Indigenous governments, communities and industry stakeholders all over the Province to evolve and improve land use planning:

- 90 percent of BC's land base has undergone some form of public land use planning.
- BC has protected over 20 percent of its land base including 1,035 provincial parks and protected areas. This exceeds international protection targets.

A new approach to old growth forests

The BC Government has committed to a new approach to old forests following a province-wide engagement process with thousands of British Columbians. As a first priority, government is engaging with the Province's Indigenous leaders to work together on further policy and strategy development. This reflects British Columbia's respect for Indigenous Peoples as decision makers in resource activities in their territories.

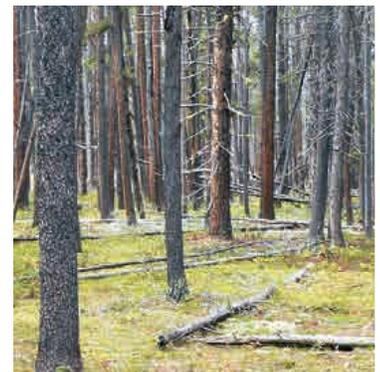
A temporary deferral of old growth stands in 2.6 million hectares of BC's most at-risk old growth forests has been announced by the BC government. The deferrals are considered a temporary measure to prevent irreversible biodiversity loss while First Nations, the Province and other partners develop a new approach to sustainable forest management that prioritizes ecosystem health.

The BC government is also protecting some of the province's largest trees. It is expected that 1,500 of the largest trees will be protected through the Special Tree Protection Regulation.

These efforts will continue to enhance the ecosystem health of old growth forests while enabling sustainable management of natural, healthy and diverse forests in BC.



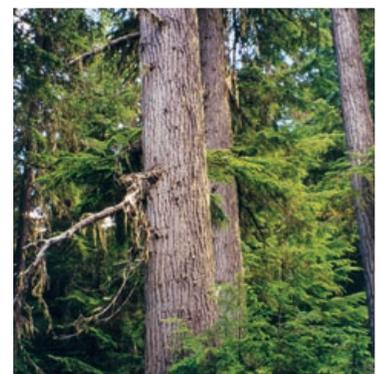
Northern White Spruce Bog



Interior Lodgepole Pine



North Coast Mixed Age



Southern Interior Mixed Age

Top two images credit: BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

High conservation forests are also managed and independently verified through PEFC or FSC forest certifications. Today, nearly all of BC's managed forests are third party certified. These standards require that harvesting is sustainable and biological diversity must be conserved.

Learn More.

[BC government Old Growth Strategic Review](#)

[BC Forest Act](#)

[BC Forest Practices Board](#)

[Summary of the parks and protected areas system](#)

[Forest certification in BC](#)

[Comparing BC to the world forest regulations and certification](#)

[State of BC's forests: a global comparison](#)

[Special tree protection regulations](#)