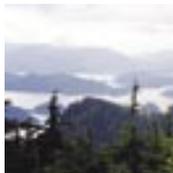




# BC Forest Facts

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## »»» *British Columbia forests are a global treasure*



– from the subalpine region of the Canadian Rockies to the great boreal forest in the north to the ancient rainforests along the Pacific Coast. Few places on earth can match this diversity and richness; few can match B.C.'s care for this precious resource.



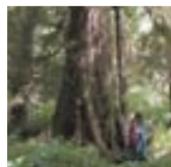
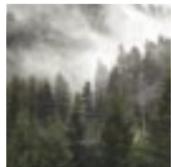
B.C. forests cover 60 million hectares (149 million acres), an area larger than France and twice the size of all the New England states and New York state combined. The forest industry is the heart of B.C.'s economy yet only one third of one per cent of its vast forests is logged each year.

Ninety-five per cent of B.C.'s land base is publicly owned, and British Columbians demand strict regulations that balance the environmental, recreational and economic values of their forests. They want to know B.C.'s forests will address provincial and local needs today and into the future.



»»» *The views of British Columbians are key to every stage of forest management.* <<<





## GUARDING A GLOBAL TREASURE

B.C. is Canada's most ecologically and biologically diverse province, in large part due to its forests. It has 35 million hectares (87 million acres) of forest that will likely never be logged because they are protected or are currently unsuitable for logging for environmental or economic reasons. This is an area as big as all of Germany.

B.C.'s forestland includes 25 million hectares (62 million acres) of old-growth forest, which means it is more than 250 years old on the coast and more than 120 to 140 years old in the Interior where trees typically have a shorter life span and wildfires are more common. B.C.'s old-growth forest includes 3.9 million hectares (9.6 million acres) of coastal rainforest where wildfires are rare and trees can live more than 1,000 years.

Across the province, B.C. has protected almost 4 million hectares (10 million acres) of old-growth forest, and another 11.5 million hectares (30 million acres) will likely never be harvested due to conservation, inaccessibility or other operational restrictions. B.C.'s forest management laws include specific regulations for harvesting older forests to ensure their biological diversity is maintained.



## PROTECTING B.C.'S UNIQUE FOREST DIVERSITY

B.C.'s environmental diversity is a unique trust for the people of British Columbia, Canada and the world. Laws and policies protect land and forest values; conservation strategies help protect habitat for at-risk species such as grizzly bears and spotted owls. Ecological reserves, provincial parks and recreation areas contain the best representative features of the province's natural heritage.

B.C.'s parks system is the second largest in Canada – only the national parks system is bigger. More than 12 per cent of B.C.'s land base is protected and another 14 per cent is designated for special management where other values take precedence over logging.

B.C. has protected areas in its coastal rainforest, including Khutzeymateen Valley, Canada's first grizzly bear sanctuary, and Kitlope Valley, the largest protected intact coastal temperate rainforest watershed in the world. It has identified huge tracts of northern boreal forest for protection or special management, including Tatsheshini-Alsek, part of the largest international protected area in the world, and Muskwa-Kechika in the northern Rockies, one of North America's last true wilderness areas south of the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel.



## INVOLVING BRITISH COLUMBIANS IN FOREST MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

The views of British Columbians are key to every stage of forest management – from planning how public lands should be used to reviewing forest development proposals.

B.C.'s comprehensive land use planning process is open and community based, and decisions take into account the needs of communities, the economy and the environment. The process encourages participation by the public, stakeholders and various levels of government, including First Nations (aboriginal people). Over the last 10 years, planning has been completed in more than 70 per cent of the province.



B.C.'s new Forest and Range Practices Act requires that public views be considered before forest companies can conduct any activities on public lands. The act itself was developed through an open and inclusive process, and allows for the formation of a public advisory committee to advise the Minister of Forests on forest practices legislation.

Modern-day treaties and protocol agreements are being negotiated to clarify First Nations interests and to clarify resource management issues. The B.C. government is also committed to increasing opportunities for First Nations participation in the forest economy, and has developed a strategic policy to support negotiated agreements that provide access to timber and revenue sharing.

The new code will allow us to meet and exceed B.C.'s stringent environmental requirements





»»» **SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN B.C.**

Forest companies operating in B.C. consider it critical to meet or exceed the high standards demanded by their customers, the community and the government. They practise sustainable forest management and incorporate the latest scientific advancements in order to protect ecological values while allowing stable economic benefits for B.C. today and into the future.



The independent Forest Practices Board, B.C.'s forestry watchdog, has found that forest practices in B.C. have improved, and continue to improve. Government inspectors are finding that compliance rates are exceeding 90 per cent.



**Forest and Range Practices Act**

Under the Forest and Range Practices Act, forest companies must develop forest stewardship plans that describe what they will achieve and how – and they are accountable for the results. This encourages efficiency and innovation, and allows greater flexibility to address certification and local interests.



Forest stewardship plans are available for public comment and must meet specific objectives to conserve the full range of forest values, including fish and wildlife habitat, biodiversity, old-growth retention, soil, water quality and streams, recreation, scenic and spiritual values. All activities must address the particular values of each site and must be consistent with local land use plans.



**Setting harvest levels**

At least once every 5 years, B.C.'s chief forester determines how much wood can be cut in each of B.C.'s 71 management units. This process involves a detailed technical analysis, including public comment and a review of non-timber values such as wildlife and fish habitat, soils, water and recreation values. It ensures that all harvest levels are based on the latest information, practices and government policies – economic and environmental. If the chief forester expects the annual harvest will not change significantly the new harvest level can be postponed for up to 5 more years.

**Enforcement**

Forest management laws are backed by compliance inspections and enforcement involving various provincial and federal agencies. The Ministry of Forests has dedicated compliance and enforcement staff across the province, and forest companies must prove they took every reasonable measure to achieve the required results or they risk fines and administrative penalties.

**CERTIFYING B.C.'S FOREST MANAGEMENT**

Virtually every major B.C. forest company has either achieved or is pursuing certification under one or more certification systems. By the end of 2003, about three quarters of the allowable harvest in B.C. was coming from forest operations that met the International Standard Organization's environmental management requirements or have achieved sustainable forest management certification under the Canadian Standards Association, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative or the Forest Stewardship Council.

**For more information:**

The BC Market Outreach Network delivers facts about B.C.'s sustainable forest management on behalf of B.C.'s government, industry and communities.

Visit our website at [www.bcforestinformation.com](http://www.bcforestinformation.com) to learn more about B.C. forests and how the province has become a world leader in forest management.

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