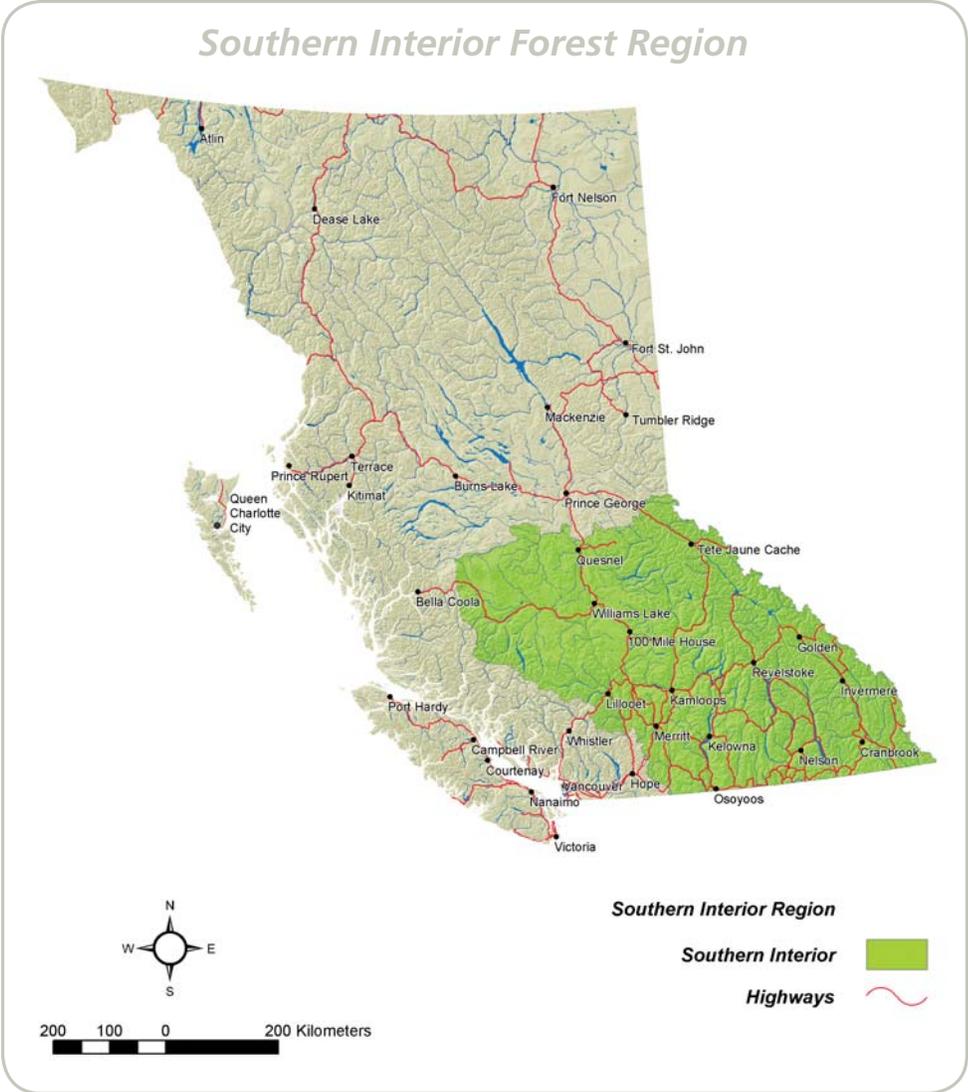




BC Southern Interior REPORT

»» British Columbia's astounding natural diversity is readily apparent in the Southern Interior Region with its dry grasslands, towering mountain ranges, fertile valleys, vast forests and mighty rivers. It even has a small desert. ««



The region is home to the world-renowned parks of Canada's Rocky Mountains, the vineyards and orchards of the Okanagan, the cattle ranches of the Cariboo, the mountain wilderness of the Kootenays. Its 750,000 residents live in cities such as Kelowna, Kamloops, Williams Lake, Quesnel, Cranbrook and Nelson, and in small communities along the rivers and in the mountain valleys throughout the region.

B.C.'s economy is built around the forest industry, and the Southern Interior Region is no exception. This report illustrates the diversity of the region and how government, the forest industry, communities and First Nations are working together to manage its many values.

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BC Southern Interior REPORT

»»» Every year, more than 200 million seedlings are planted in B.C. to reforest areas after harvesting, wildfire, insect infestations or major windfall events, and close to half are planted in the Southern Interior Region. «««

»»» SOUTHERN INTERIOR FOREST DIVERSITY



B.C.'s Southern Interior Forest Region covers 24 million hectares (almost 60 million acres). More than 15 million hectares (37 million acres) is productive forestland, and about half of this will likely never be logged because it is protected or currently unsuitable for environmental or economic reasons.

Nearly 95 per cent of B.C.'s land base is Crown land, which means it is owned and regulated by government on behalf of British Columbians. The privately owned lands in the Southern Interior are often located along the railway routes that opened up B.C.'s Interior or in the fertile mountain valleys.



The region's diversity is reflected in the large number of native tree species. It has all the important commercial species found across B.C., such as subalpine fir, lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, white pine, western larch, western hemlock and balsam poplar. It is also home to Douglas-fir, grand fir, western redcedar, Engelmann spruce and white spruce that are more common elsewhere in the province.

Many of the conifer species are used for a wide variety of forest products manufactured in the region and shipped throughout the world, including plywood, construction lumber, panels, pulp and paper and a host of value-added wood products. In fall 2003, an Interior Douglas-fir from the Okanagan region was shipped to

Quebec City where it was planted in a Commemorative Garden created as a tribute to the XII World Forestry Congress.

One of many interesting forest landscapes in the region is found on the slopes of the Columbia and Rocky mountains in the southeast where moist, wet conditions have created what is commonly called the interior wet belt. The rich, fertile sites and ideal growing conditions result in productive forests and more tree species than any other ecological zone in the province.

Soon after any public land is harvested, it must be reforested with species suited to local ecological conditions to maintain natural diversity. Every year, more than 200 million seedlings are planted in B.C. to reforest areas after harvesting, wildfire, insect infestations or major windfall events, and close to half are planted in the Southern Interior Region.

»»» REGULATING FOREST ACTIVITIES

In 1995, B.C. consolidated and strengthened its forest policies, regulations and guidelines in the Forest Practices Code, which is evolving now to a new Forest and Range Practices Act. The goal of the new act is to maintain the high level of environmental protection in an efficient and effective manner. It will shift the focus from a prescriptive approach to one based on field results aimed at conserving and protecting forest resources.

Under the new law, forest companies will develop forest stewardship plans that are available for public comment and that describe the results they will achieve and the strategies they will use. Companies are held accountable for these results and strategies.

»»» The region's diversity is reflected in the large number of native tree species. It has all the important commercial species found across B.C. «««

1984

The UN World Heritage Committee designates national parks along the B.C.-Alberta border as the Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site. Provincial parks are included in 1990.

1992

B.C. announces its intent to develop a protected areas strategy and begins land use planning in 4 regions.

1993

B.C. introduces its timber supply review process, one of the pillars of sustainable forest management.

B.C. releases its protected areas strategy, with the goal of doubling its protected areas to 12 per cent by 2000.

»»» Forest laws in B.C. are backed by a tough compliance and enforcement regime. «««



By law, forestry activities on B.C.'s public lands, including harvesting and road construction, must meet objectives for forest values such as timber, fish and wildlife habitat, biodiversity, old growth, soil, water quality and streams, recreation, scenic vistas and spiritual or traditional uses.

Harvest plans must set aside areas where no logging is allowed and must also outline how lands with specific values will be managed. These reserves can be small areas, such as a wildlife tree patch to provide habitat for birds and small animals, or they can be much larger to meet visual quality or old-growth objectives.

Forest laws in B.C. are backed by a tough compliance and enforcement regime involving various provincial and federal agencies, which focus their attention on high-risk activities, such as effects on community water supplies, public safety or critical fish and wildlife habitat.

»»» **THE SOUTHERN INTERIOR FOREST INDUSTRY**



Like its forests, the Southern Interior Region's forest industry is extremely diverse. It has processing operations of all sizes that manufacture dimensional lumber, boards, poles, plywood, oriented strand board, medium-density fibreboard, particleboard, pulp and paper, laminated veneer lumber, engineered and value-added products – from log homes to musical instruments, specialty

furniture and windows and doors to window sashes. There are 60 forest dependent communities in the region.

The Interior industry includes independent companies, many of which started as family businesses more than 50 years ago. A survey of global forest and paper companies in 2002 noted that several of B.C.'s Interior forest companies were among the top performers during what was a difficult year for the industry worldwide.

»»» **WILDFIRES AND INSECTS**

Recent wildfires and the mountain pine beetle epidemic have had a severe impact on forests in the Southern Interior Region.

Mountain pine beetles have reached epidemic levels several times in the last century, mostly in areas south of Quesnel. Fire control measures have contributed to an accumulation of mature lodgepole pine in much of the region which, when combined with recent hot, dry summers and mild winters, have led to the most extensive mountain pine beetle infestation in B.C.'s recorded history. Sustained frigid winter temperatures are needed to slow the infestation. The mountain pine beetle infestation will not affect the timber supply in the next 10 to 15 years while the mid- to long-term

1994

B.C. establishes the Forest Practices Code to ensure sustainable use of forested lands and watersheds.

Cariboo Chilcotin land use plan is approved, with creation of 17 new parks and protected areas as a result of the process.

1995

B.C. establishes the Forest Practices Board.

B.C. protects 106 areas as Class A provincial parks, including the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy.



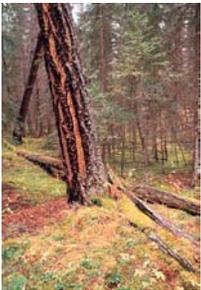
BC Southern Interior REPORT

»»» Abundant mature lodgepole pine, hot, dry summers and mild winters have led to an extensive mountain pine beetle infestation. «««



impact can be reduced if harvesting is focused on pine to slow the spread, reduce losses and speed up reforestation.

While insect infestations play an important role in the natural life cycle of a forest, this epidemic needs to be managed because it threatens forest values such as timber, recreation, biodiversity, scenic vistas, cultural heritage, fish and wildlife habitat and watersheds. The most effective management response is to slow the spread by harvesting infested trees and trees at the leading edge of the infestation that are not yet infested.



Wildfire is common through most of the region, and some Southern Interior tree species have adapted to it. Lodgepole pine needs fire or heat to release its seeds from cones. Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine and western larch have thick bark that helps the trees survive surface fires that clean out competing vegetation.

Wildfire renews the forest, keeping insects and disease in check and opening up dense forest to allow the growth of shrubs and grasses, creating browse for deer, moose, elk and bear. However, record drought, high temperatures and wind resulted in catastrophic wildfires in B.C.'s Interior in the summer of 2003. A total of 260,000 hectares (more than 640,000 acres) burned across the province and most of this was in the Southern Interior Region. This compares with 30,000 hectares (about 75,000 acres) burned provincewide in an average year.

»»» SETTING HARVEST LEVELS

In 1992, B.C. introduced its timber supply review, a process that continues to be a pillar of its sustainable forest management. At least once every 5 years, B.C.'s chief forester is required by law to determine how much wood can be harvested in each of the province's 71 management units. This



»»» High-quality wood for most products can be harvested for a number of years after mountain pine beetles have killed a tree. It has the same properties and structural integrity as other wood products although it may have a blue or grey stain as a result of a fungus carried by the beetles. The stain does not affect the wood's strength, gluing characteristics or its ability to be finished. Because the beetle and fungus remain just below the bark, there is no risk associated with transporting manufactured lumber. «««

2000

B.C. reaches its goal of 12 per cent protected status with approval of the Cassiar Iskut-Stikine and Mackenzie land and resource management plans.

2001

Kootenay-Boundary higher-level land use plan is approved.

Weldwood of Canada Ltd. becomes the first company in Canada to achieve both ISO and CSA certification company-wide.

20 wildlife habitat areas are designated in the region for species that include tailed frog, prairie falcon and bighorn sheep.

»»» *In addition to protected areas, land use plans in the Southern Interior Region identify areas where other important values such as water, wildlife and wilderness take precedence over resource development.* «««

ensures that all harvest levels are based on the latest technical information, both economic and environmental.



The chief forester can postpone a timber supply review for up to 5 more years if the annual cut level is not expected to change significantly or set a new harvest level earlier than 5 years to deal with abnormal situations such as the recent wildfires and mountain pine beetle infestation. This has led to several increases, which allow forest managers to deal with the devastation from catastrophic events and can also speed up the regeneration needed for a new, healthy forest.

On average, the Southern Interior Forest Region makes up about a third of B.C.'s total allowable annual cut, or roughly 26 million cubic metres.

»»» **LAND USE PLANNING AND PROTECTED AREAS**

In the 1980s, B.C. began making an unprecedented shift toward protecting forest values. By 2001, it had become the first Canadian jurisdiction to achieve the general guideline of a United Nations commission to protect 12 per cent of its land base.

Two key activities were started in 1992 – a protected areas strategy aimed at doubling the amount of protected land to 12 per cent of the provincial land base and a land use planning process that helped implement this strategy and improve regional and sub-regional land use planning.

B.C.'s comprehensive land use planning process is open and community-based, and decisions take into account the social, environmental and economic needs of the region. The process encourages participation by the public, stakeholders and various levels of government, including First Nations. To date, planning has been completed in more than 90 per cent of the region.



The Southern Interior Region demonstrates the value of plans that meet the special needs of each area. They also identify areas where resource development must consider other important values such as water, wildlife and wilderness. While the planning process is consistent across B.C., each plan is unique to meet local needs. Regional land use plans that create a vision for the use and management of public lands and resources over large geographic areas have been developed in 3 areas of B.C. – on Vancouver Island and in 2 Southern Interior regions, Cariboo-Chilcotin and Kootenay-Boundary.

- The Cariboo-Chilcotin land use plan covers 8.3 million hectares (20.4 million acres) in an area that supports a growing tourism industry as well as forestry, ranching and mining. It ensures that forest activities conserve important values such as timber, mule deer winter range, caribou habitat, fisheries, visual quality and biodiversity. Seventeen new parks and protected areas were created as a result of this planning process.
- The Kootenay-Boundary land use planning area covers 10 million hectares (almost 25 million acres) in the drainage systems of the Columbia and Kootenay rivers. Values or features protected include biodiversity, old and mature forests, caribou habitat, connectivity corridors for wildlife movement, scenic views, sensitive streams within watersheds, grizzly bear habitat, and fire-maintained ecosystems restored through prescribed burning.

B.C. is renowned for its spectacular scenery. In 1984, the United Nations World Heritage Committee designated the world-famous national parks along the B.C.-Alberta border as the Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site in recognition of their extraordinary scenic and ecological importance.

»»» *While the planning process is consistent across B.C., each plan is unique to meet local needs.* «««

2002

Kootenay-Boundary regional plan is approved.

B.C. introduces the Forest and Range Practices Act, which will maintain high environmental standards and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of forest regulations.

B.C. plants its 5 billionth tree in Prince George; 200 million seedlings are planted in the province every year, close to half in the Southern Interior Region.

The Forest Practices Board's 2002 annual report shows that on-the-ground forest practices continue to improve in B.C.'s public forests.



BC *Southern Interior* REPORT

»»» Resource managers make sure there are areas where animals such as caribou and bighorn sheep can forage for food and seek shelter during winter. «««

»»» SOUTHERN INTERIOR WILDLIFE



The Southern Interior supports a diversity and abundance of native species that are protected in parks, riparian reserves, old-growth forest areas and other areas where resource development is not allowed or where values such as wildlife habitat take precedence.

Before harvesting activities begin on public land in B.C., the habitat needs of wildlife must be considered. Resource managers make sure there are areas where animals such as caribou and bighorn sheep can forage for food and seek shelter during winter.



Government wildlife experts identify special wildlife habitat areas to meet the needs of identified wildlife and plant species that must be protected under B.C.'s forest practices laws. Forest companies integrate how they will respond to these special habitat values into their operational plans. This can involve protecting an area around a nest or burrow or protecting larger areas such as wildlife corridors.

Land use plans also include management guidelines for wildlife such as seasonal restrictions or limited access on forest roads to protect migration routes for species such as bighorn sheep and mule deer. North of Kamloops, a number of special resource development zones collectively protect provincially significant mountain caribou habitat and provide a migration corridor between the Wells Gray and Kootenay caribou populations, essential for genetic viability.



B.C. constantly reviews and updates its laws related to habitat conservation and protection to reflect changing scientific knowledge and public interests.

In 2003, the Canadian government proclaimed the Species at Risk Act, which provides the authority to prohibit the destruction of endangered or threatened species and their critical habitat. It requires the production of recovery plans for threatened and endangered species and management plans for species of special concern. B.C. is reviewing its legislation, policies and programs for protecting species at risk, and is committed to recovery and management planning for species such as grizzly bears and mountain caribou. Recovery Action Groups for many species are currently active in preparing recovery action plans throughout the Southern Interior.

Due to its small size and isolation from other populations, the grizzly bear population in the region's North Cascades area is the highest conservation priority under B.C.'s Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy. In southeastern and south-central B.C., forests are being managed to sustain both timber harvest and habitat for the threatened mountain caribou. The Mountain Caribou in Managed Forests program has led to improved knowledge and better regulations to allow timber harvesting and provide habitat for the wide-ranging mountain caribou.

»»» FIRST NATIONS

First Nations have traditionally and culturally depended on forests for economic, environmental and spiritual values. Under the new Forest and Range Practices Act, forest companies are to make reasonable efforts to meet with First Nations and discuss information regarding the Forest Stewardship Plan or amendment with them, and to consider aboriginal interests that are raised.

2003

Canada's wildlife ministers approve a stewardship agenda that encourages Canadians to work together in a landscape approach to protect habitat, contribute to the recovery of species and conserve Canada's natural heritage.

A survey of global forest and paper companies identifies several of B.C.'s Interior forest companies as top performers during a difficult year for the industry worldwide.

Canada proclaims its Species at Risk Act.

»»» *First Nations have traditionally and culturally depended on forests for economic, environmental and spiritual values.* «««



Modern day treaties and interim measures agreements are being negotiated in B.C. to address First Nations aboriginal interests and to clarify resource management issues. At the same time, the B.C. government is 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. As well, in the Southern Interior Region, a number of agreements have been signed with First Nations so they can harvest timber damaged by the 2003 wildfires.

First Nations and forest companies are currently expanding their working relationships under a variety of arrangements across the region, including joint ventures, partnerships and administrative contracts. For example:

- West Chilcotin Forest Products Ltd., which operates a timber processing facility in west-central B.C.'s Chilcotin Plateau, is an equal partnership involving the Ulkatcho First Nation, local community and forest industry.
- Tsi Del Del (Redstone) is a partner with Riverside Forest Products, and Esketemc (Alkali Lake) with Lignum Ltd.



- Xats'ull (Soda Creek) holds a community forest pilot agreement in partnership with the community of Likely.
- In the Cache Creek area, the Skeetchesin Indian Band and the Pavilion Indian Band are both involved in joint ventures with Ainsworth Lumber Co. Ltd.

Five forest companies operating in the Merritt timber supply area worked with Stuwix Resources Ltd., owned and managed by 8 local First Nation bands, so it could obtain a timber licence and participate in the Nicola-Similkameen Innovative Forestry Society. The society's goal is to create an environment where industry, First Nations and government are equal partners in managing the timber supply area.

BC Parks and First Nations also co-manage a number of protected areas in the province, including Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park, which protects the entire Stein River watershed, an area that has been extremely important to the Nlaka'pamux people for thousands of years, and includes a large number of pictographs.

»»» *First Nations and forest companies are currently expanding their working relationships under a variety of arrangements across the region.* «««



»»» *The B.C. Forest Practices Board's 2002 annual report shows that on-the-ground forest practices continue to improve in B.C.'s public forests.* «««

»»» **CERTIFYING B.C. LANDS**



Forest companies in B.C. have Canada's highest level of third-party certification, which gives customers and the general public added assurance of responsible forest management.

Across the province, forest operations on more than 18.2 million hectares (45 million acres) of land are certified based on achieving the standards of the Canadian Standards Association, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative or the Forest Stewardship Council. More than 46 million hectares (about 114 million acres) in B.C. are managed under the International Organization for Standardization's ISO 14001 international environmental standards.

In the Southern Interior Forest Region, roughly a quarter of the allowable annual cut, or 5.9 million cubic metres, is from lands certified under CSA, SFI or FSC and about 57 per cent is also managed under the ISO system. In 2001, Weldwood of Canada Ltd., which has 5 mills in the region, became the first company in Canada to achieve both ISO and CSA certification company-wide.

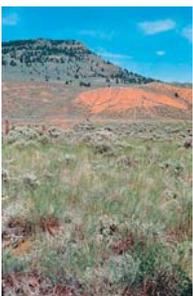
activities on public land, including the use of rangelands for livestock grazing and corridors cut through the forest for electric power lines or gas pipelines.

»»» **SUMMARY**

The Southern Interior Region is a popular vacation and retirement haven, and a remote mountain wilderness. It has Canada's only true desert and a rare interior rainforest, a fragile bunchgrass ecosystem and lush mountain valleys. It is home to wildlife species found nowhere else in Canada.

This diversity demands careful resource management in partnership with First Nations and communities large and small. British Columbia's resource management meets this challenge and is backed by comprehensive timber supply reviews, tough forest laws and enforcement and wildlife habitat protection.

»»» **FOREST PRACTICES BOARD**



The Forest Practices Board carries out random, independent audits to ensure that forest operations comply with forest practices legislation, and issues public reports on the results. The Board's 2002 annual report shows that on-the-ground forest practices continue to improve in B.C.'s public forests.

Since it was created in 1995, the Board has conducted more than 65 audits and investigations related to forest operations in the Southern Interior Region, including a regional special investigation related to caribou habitat. The board reflects the public's interests in all forest



BC Market Outreach Network

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 to learn more about B.C. forests and how the province has become a world leader in forest management.

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