



# BC Forest Facts

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## »»» BRITISH COLUMBIA'S FOREST AND RANGE PRACTICES ACT

### *Quick facts:*

- › **In the last decade, British Columbia has established itself as a leader in forest management through stringent forest policies and innovative forest practices that continue to evolve to meet current needs and reflect the most recent scientific knowledge.**
- › **The latest milestone is the Forest and Range Practices Act, a world-leading model of forest management regulation that shifts the focus to on-the-ground results rather than process. Transition to the new act concludes at the end of 2006.**



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#### **MOVING TO RESULTS-BASED FOREST LEGISLATION**

British Columbia's ambitious new Forest and Range Practices Act legislates results rather than process – a method of forest regulation long advocated by policy experts. It is designed to achieve on-the-ground results efficiently, and is built on a foundation of professional skills and accountability.

Forest companies are expected to engage professionals to prepare forest stewardship plans that show how they will be consistent with objectives set by government for soils, timber, wildlife, water, fish, biodiversity and cultural heritage resources. The act provides professionals with flexibility to apply their skills and experience so they can achieve results in the best possible way, and forest companies are held accountable for the outcome.

British Columbia has a multi-faceted compliance and enforcement regime that concentrates on the highest-risk activities, with both routine and random audits, where results are reported publicly. Compliance and enforcement has been strengthened under the Forest and Range Practices Act.

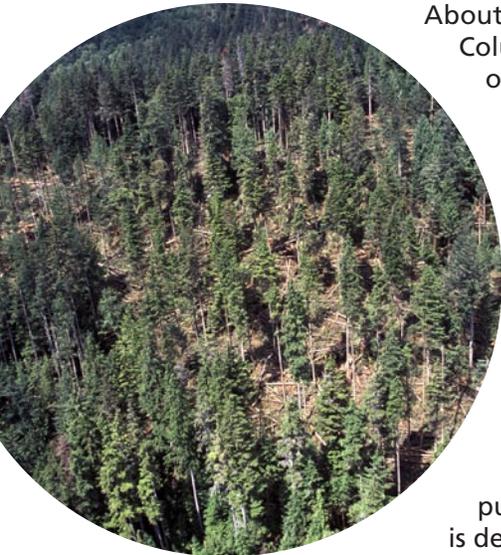
The independent Forest Practices Board says British Columbia's results-based model is a major innovation with the potential to become a world-leading system of forestry regulation.

Recognizing that innovation comes with challenges, government is investing \$4 million a year in a new science-based program to ensure practices under the Forest and Range Practices Act achieve sustainable forest management. The Forest and Range Evaluation Program will evaluate the effectiveness of resource management under the act and support continuous improvement of forest practices.

#### **A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT**

British Columbia is well positioned to move to results-based regulations for many reasons, including a well-established public process that sets management objectives for public forests, skilled resource professionals and a comprehensive suite of laws and regulations.





About 95 per cent of British Columbia's forests are publicly owned, and priorities for the use of these lands are developed through community-based strategic land and resource management planning.

The Forest and Range Practices Act fits within this larger context to deliver the mix of benefits such as timber, recreational opportunities, water quality, wildlife habitat and countless others identified through the public planning process. The act is designed to deliver economic and environmental benefits across the landscape simultaneously, and not one to the exclusion of the other.

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

Further to the land use planning process, the Forest and Range Practices Act requires that licensees prepare forest stewardship plans that indicate generally where forest development will be taking place. Before government approves the plan, companies must invite and consider public and First Nation comments. Under the act, the public, stakeholders and First

Nations are invited to identify their interests sooner in the development process.

The professions of forestry, engineering, biology, geology and agrology, among others, are strong in British Columbia. The province recently amended its laws to strengthen the professions of forestry and agrology, and is the first jurisdiction in Canada to register and license biologists.

### A RECENT CHRONOLOGY

- 1992** - British Columbia releases its protected areas strategy and begins land use planning in four regions.
- 1993** - British Columbia introduces its timber supply review process, one of the pillars of sustainable forest management.
- 1994** - British Columbia establishes the Forest Practices Code to ensure sustainable use of forested lands and watersheds.
- 1995** - British Columbia establishes the Forest Practices Board, an independent forest watchdog.
- 1999** - A Vancouver Island forest operation becomes the first in British Columbia to be certified to a sustainable forest management program — by June 2006 close to 40 million hectares (almost 100 million acres) had been certified
- 2002** - British Columbia introduces the Forest and Range Practices Act to maintain high environmental standards and achieve on-the-ground results efficiently.
- 2004** - The Forest and Range Practices Act takes effect, and a two-year transition period begins.
- 2004** - British Columbia establishes a provincial order to conserve values associated with old growth across forest landscapes.
- 2006** - British Columbia's vision for the future of its Central and North Pacific Coast regions brings the total amount of protected land in the province to 13.8 per cent.
- 2006** - Transition to the Forest and Range Practices Act ends.



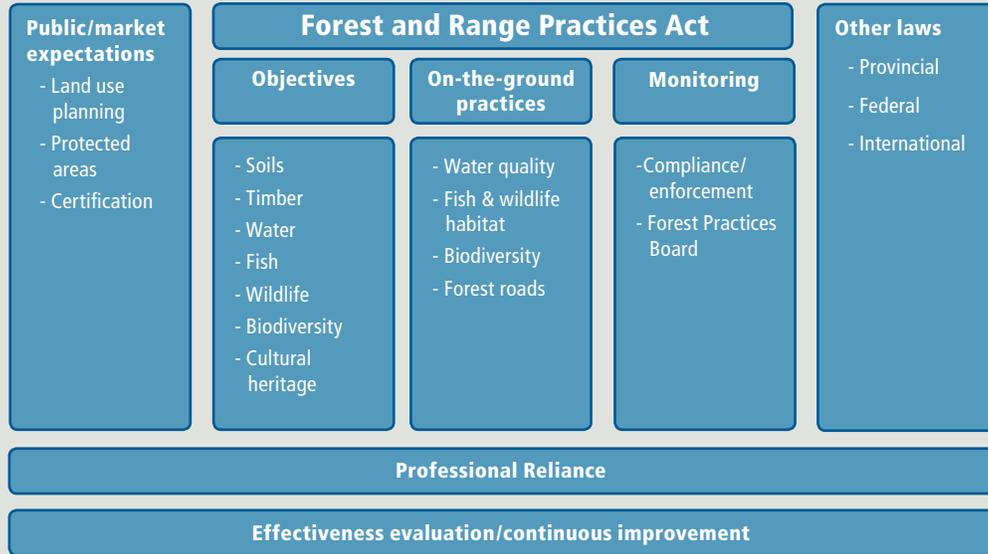
*"It is an exciting and liberating time for the strong group of practising resource professionals who are working together in British Columbia. They are being told they can use their best professional judgment, creativity and innovation, as long as they come up with measurable, verifiable results that meet stated objectives."*

*- British Columbia Chief Forester Jim Snetsinger*



## A COMPREHENSIVE REGIME OF LAWS

### British Columbia has a multi-faceted forest management regime



In addition to compliance under the Forest and Range Practices Act, forest companies must continue to address the legal requirements contained in other British Columbia laws regarding forest lands and resources.

**Here are some examples:**

- Under the **Forest Act**, British Columbia's independent Chief Forester must regularly determine how much wood can be harvested annually from public forest lands. The determinations are based on detailed technical analysis, public comment and the consideration of all forest values.
- The **Land Act** governs the disposition, management and administration of Crown land, including zoning and higher-level plan objectives that influence activities under the Forest and Range Practices Act.
- The management of wildlife is regulated under the **Wildlife Act**, including establishing and protecting wildlife management and critical wildlife areas, and protecting endangered species.
- Under Canada's **Species at Risk Act**, British Columbia must take steps to prevent the extinction or extirpation of species at risk. It meets these requirements in many ways, including the **Identified Wildlife Management Strategy**, which provides special consideration if wildlife species and plant communities are at risk in British Columbia and their habitat would be affected by forest or range activities on public land.
- Under the **Protected Areas of British Columbia Act, Park Act, Ecological Reserve Act and Environment and Land Use Act**, British Columbia's many nationally and internationally significant natural and cultural values are protected. The amount of protected land has increased to 13.8 per cent from six per cent in 1992 when the protected areas strategy began.
- It complements Canada's **Fisheries Act**, which has many sections to protect fish habitat from physical damage and pollution.
- Under the **Water Act, Water Protection Act** and other laws, British Columbia cares for water resources and aquatic ecosystems, which include community watersheds and wetlands.
- The **Heritage Conservation Act** provides the authority to protect designated sites that have heritage value to British Columbia, a community or an aboriginal people. This includes culturally modified trees scarred due to a First Nation's cultural activity predating 1846.
- Under **old-growth protection provisions**, a specified amount of old growth must be reserved from harvesting in landscape units across the province.

British Columbia's forest industry is also a world leader in voluntary, independent third-party forest certification, which complements the province's comprehensive forest management laws. As of June 2006, 39.6 million hectares (97.8 million acres) of land was certified to one of three globally recognized forest certification programs.



»»» **PROTECTING THE PUBLIC INTEREST**



Anyone practising forestry must be a registered member in good standing with the Association of BC Forest Professionals. The association was created in 1947 after foresters agreed to protect the public interest in the forests in return for the exclusive right to practise forestry in British Columbia. It has continuous learning requirements and binds its more than 5,300 members to standards of practice and a code of ethics. Other regulated professions in British Columbia operate similarly, providing assurance of professional competency.

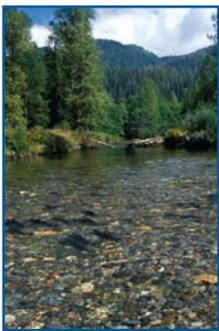
ground forest practices are contributing to the management and conservation of forest and range values.

The evaluation and monitoring program was launched in 2003 and along with professional reliance is considered a foundation of the results-based forest legislation. It will assess the effectiveness of the Forest and Range Practices Act in achieving stewardship of 11 values: biodiversity, cultural heritage, fish/riparian, forage and associated plant communities, recreation, resource features, soils, timber, visual quality, water and wildlife.

Each year, the list of priority evaluation questions that guides the monitoring and evaluation activities is updated with input from resource professionals, researchers and the public. Experts will analyze data collected at hundreds of randomly selected sites across the province to identify issues and recommend ways to improve forest practices.

The results are peer reviewed and final reports made publicly available. Further information is available at [www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/frep/](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/frep/)

**FOREST AND RANGE EVALUATION PROGRAM**



The Forest and Range Practices Act will maintain British Columbia's high environmental standards while encouraging innovative forest practices. The British Columbia government has created the Forest and Range Evaluation Program to assess scientifically whether the legislation and resulting on-the-



**For more information:**

The BC Market Outreach Network delivers facts about British Columbia's sustainable forest management on behalf of the British Columbia government and the forest sector. Visit our website at [www.bcforestinformation.com](http://www.bcforestinformation.com) to learn more about British Columbia forests and the province's commitment to sustainable forest management.

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