

# Forest Management

## British Columbia, Canada

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Canada's western-most province is renowned for its rich and abundant forests which cover an area larger than the state of California. Many of these forests remain in a wilderness or near-wilderness state, and only 2% of forests have been converted to other uses such as farmland. Forests are critical to British Columbia's way of life, including the forest industry, tourism, biodiversity, wildlife, drinking water and spiritual values. B.C.'s approach to forest management aims to balance these environmental, economic and social needs.



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### *Land use*

The B.C. government, which owns about 95% of the land, gives local people a primary role in recommending lands for protection, resource development and other uses. Land use plans have been completed in over 70% of the province so far, based on recommendations from communities, industry, environmental groups, First Nations, government and others. B.C. recently received international praise for its consensus-based plan to conserve and manage coastal forests, also known as the Great Bear Rainforest.

### *Parks*

Land use planning has resulted in more than 450 new parks since 1992. B.C. now has one of the highest levels of parkland in the world, with almost 13% of the province protected — an area larger than the state of Pennsylvania. Parks protect ecological diversity, including large wilderness areas, rainforest, grizzly bear habitat, recreation areas and cultural sites.

### *Harvest levels*

A full 58% of B.C.'s forests are considered off-limits to harvesting because land is either protected in parks, has conservation or recreation values, or is considered inaccessible or uneconomic. On lands available for harvesting, sustainable harvest levels



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are set by law, and less than one-third of one percent of the total forest is harvested each year.

### *Forest practices*

B.C.'s Forest Practices Code helps conserve fish, wildlife, biodiversity, old growth, soil, water, recreation and spiritual values. Government is working with stakeholders to streamline regulations while maintaining strict environmental standards and increasing accountability. The new Code will focus on achieving on-the-ground results, including the protection of wildlife habitat, old growth patches, buffer zones along streams, and mandatory reforestation. In addition to these regulations, forest companies are voluntarily adopting more sensitive practices, including smaller cutblocks in coastal areas, and increased use of alternate harvesting methods.

### *For more information*

please see our web site at [www.growingtogether.ca](http://www.growingtogether.ca)



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### *Enforcement*

To enforce the Code, B.C. conducts about 50,000 inspections a year, with a compliance rate of about 98%. As well, an independent Forest Practices Board conducts random audits and acts as a public watchdog over all forestry activities.

### *Old growth*

Over 40 per cent of B.C.'s forests are made up of old growth. Well over half of B.C.'s old growth is protected in parks or otherwise considered off-limits to harvesting. Where harvesting is taking place, regulations help conserve old growth.

### *Certification*

B.C. has emerged as a North American leader in certification. More than 60% of the province's harvest now comes from operations that either meet the International Standard Organization's environmental management requirements or have achieved third-party certification under the Canadian Standards Association or the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. Rapid growth in certification is expected to continue.

### *First Nations*

Modern-day treaties are being negotiated to clarify aboriginal rights and resolve resource management. Meanwhile, government is addressing aboriginal interests through consultations, agreements and business opportunities to increase First Nations' involvement in forest management.