



# Protecting Old Growth

The Challenge

## An Indigenous led area-based approach to conserving old growth ecosystems is underway in British Columbia

Old growth forest ecosystems are found throughout British Columbia and are diverse in terms of their appearance, tree species composition and the wildlife habitat they provide. This diversity results from differences in location, climate and natural disturbance affecting the forest. Forests on the BC Coast and within portions of the Interior Wetbelt, where the annual rainfall is high, are considered old growth if they are 250 years or older. In the Interior of the province, outside the Wetbelt, the average age of old growth is 140 years or older.

**57 million**

hectares of forested public land in the province.



**11.1 million**

hectares (19.5%) are old growth.



**80%**

(or 9 M hectares) of BC's old growth is currently protected or unavailable for logging

The Value

## BC's old forests provide a range of values and services including:

- Ecological attributes important for maintaining biodiversity
- Conditions important for cultural and spiritual practices of local Indigenous (First Nations) communities
- Habitat for fish, wildlife and plant species
- Source and storage of fresh water
- Stores of carbon
- Unique opportunities for recreation, tourism, and intrinsic enjoyment
- Source of timber and non-timber products and significant provincial revenues, community stability and jobs.



The values associated with old growth forests underpin the need to conserve and protect them. In 2019 the government of BC commissioned an independent review of the province's approach to old growth conservation and management. The review resulted in a series of recommendations that were accepted by the BC government and are currently being implemented.

Paths Forward

## New solutions

Several new and interrelated policy measures for protecting old growth ecosystems in BC are currently underway along with others that will be implemented over the coming months and years:



### Land use planning at a landscape level

led by First Nations and the Province, while engaging local communities, businesses, and stakeholders, will provide a means for area-based designs to guide protection of old growth values, foster ecosystem resilience, secure timber harvesting opportunities and contribute to human and community wellbeing.



### Conservation financing

including the \$300 million Conservation Fund contributed by the BC Government and BC Parks Foundation is earmarked to support development of Forest Landscape Plans and creation of Indigenous protected and conserved areas.



### A Tripartite Nature Agreement

between the BC First Nations Leadership Council and the provincial government of BC and federal government of Canada will make up to \$1 billion (CAD) in funding available to support measures for old growth and biodiversity conservation.



## 1. Indigenous led area-based approach to conserving old growth ecosystems

- Government of BC - [Forest Landscape plans](#) (2024)

## 2. Forests on the BC Coast and within portions of the Interior Wetbelt are considered old growth if they are 250 years or older.

- Government of BC - [Old growth definitions and values](#) (2024)

## 3. In the Interior of the province, the average age of old growth is 140 years or older.

- Government of BC - [Old growth definitions and values](#) (2024)

## 4. 57 million hectares of forested land base

- Government of BC - [Timber Tenures in British Columbia](#) (2023)

## 5. 11.1 million hectares are old growth

- Government of BC - [Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel](#)

## 6. 9 million hectares, or 80% of BC's old growth is protected or unavailable for logging

- Government of BC - [Old growth definitions and values](#) (2024)

## 7. BC's old forests provide a range of values and services

- Government of BC - [Old growth definitions and values](#) (2024)

## 8. In 2019 the government of BC commissioned an independent review

- Government of BC - [Old Growth Strategic Review](#)

## 9. Land use planning at a landscape level

- Government of BC - [Forest Landscape plans](#) (2024)

## 10. BC's Conservation Financing Mechanism

- Government of BC - [Province launches made-in-B.C. conservation tool, takes further action on old-growth forest](#) (2023)

## 11. Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation

- Government of Canada - [Tripartite Framework Agreement on Nature Conservation between Canada, British Columbia, and the First Nations Leadership Council](#)