

# Structure of the British Columbia Forest Sector

Total area: 95 million ha (62% in forest)

Volume of mature timber: 7.4 billion cubic metres (m<sup>3</sup>)

231 million seedlings  
planted annually

Fire loss:  
326,000 m<sup>3</sup>

97,250 direct jobs

Annual harvest:  
199 thousand ha  
68.6 million m<sup>3</sup>

Log exports:  
.2 million m<sup>3</sup>

30%  
Value added  
Plywood & veneer

Pest damage:  
6.2 million m<sup>3</sup>

Sawmill

60%

Pulp & Paper  
Mills

10%

30%  
Sawmill residuals

Exports \$14.6 billion

U.S.A 58.2%

E.C. 10%

Japan 21.6%



# Forests - British Columbia's Most Renewable Resource

## Geography and Ecology of British Columbia

British Columbia is Canada's third largest province, occupying nearly 10% of the country's land surface. At 94.7 million hectares, British Columbia covers about the same area as France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland combined, and it is more than twice the size of California.

Mountains dominate the topography, but the province also contains large areas of lowland and plateau country. While over 60% of the landbase is forested, British Columbia comprises a rich variety of other habitats including grasslands, meadows, wetlands, lakes, rivers, and tidal zones. These habitats support the greatest diversity of plants and animals of any province in Canada.

## Forest Types and Log Harvest

British Columbia has a greater diversity of forest types than any other jurisdiction in Canada or the United States. Evergreen coniferous forest is the dominant vegetation, and therefore almost all commercial forestry relates to the harvesting, processing, and manufacturing of coniferous wood. For the last century, forestry has been British Columbia's most important industrial sector.

In terms of cubic metres of wood, about one-third of the province's annual log harvest comes from Coastal forests; **hemlock** comprises the largest volume, followed by western **redcedar** and **Douglas-fir**. The other two-thirds of the annual log harvest come from the Interior area of the province where **lodgepole pine** makes up the largest volume, followed by **spruce** and **true firs**.

Overall, a larger volume of lodgepole pine is harvested than any other type of wood.

## Land Ownership and Forest Stewardship

The land management system in British Columbia is unique in that most of the land is publicly owned. This land is called **provincial Crown land**, and the provincial government, through the **British Columbia Forest Service**, is the steward of the resources on the forested portions, which covers about two-thirds of the province. The Forest Service manages this land for many uses, including recreation, range, timber, and wilderness. The Forest Service also cooperates with other government agencies to manage for water, fish, wildlife, tourism, heritage, energy, and mineral values.

Forest companies, known as **Licensees**, acquire long-term rights to harvest trees on Crown land through the **tenure system**. For this privilege Licensees pay the provincial government a fee-called **stumpage**-for every cubic metre of wood they harvest. Stumpage accounts for a significant portion of provincial revenues.

The **allowable annual cut (AAC)**, set by the **Chief Forester**, is the total amount of wood that can be harvested in the province. Each year, less than 1% of provincial forest land is harvested. And, by law, all harvested areas on Crown lands must be reforested.

## Land Management Regulations

Forestry activities must comply with the **Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act** which is among the toughest and most comprehensive pieces of forestry legislation in the world. Introduced in 1995 and still in evolution, the Forest Practices Code provides for prudent management of the forests, sound resource stewardship, balancing of a variety of values, conservation of biodiversity, and restoration of environmentally damaged areas. The Forest Practices Code carries the force of the law; it is administered and enforced by the **British Columbia Ministry of Forests**.

## Public Involvement and Land-Use Planning

Planning processes ensure that all values within an area are considered, assessed, and protected before timber harvesting occurs.

With more than 200 new parks and protected areas established since 1992 through the **Protected Areas Strategy (PAS)**, the province has increased the protected areas total from 6% to 10.6% of the total landbase. The goal is to reach 12% by 2000.

British Columbia citizens are given opportunities to provide input to land and resource planning. In 1992 the Commission on Resources and Environment (**CORE**) emphasized public participation in developing regional land-use strategies. Today these strategies are continued through land and resource management plans (**LRMPs**) that involve the public, other stakeholders, and the government in a consensus-building process aimed at addressing regional and local resource management issues.

Members of the public sit on the **Forest Practices Board** and the **Forest Appeals Commission** which, respectively, audits forest management performance by government and industry, and reviews enforcement actions taken under the Forest Practices Code.

## Role of the Forest Alliance of British Columbia

The Forest Alliance of British Columbia is a coalition of citizens and organizations who recognize that all values of the forest are important. The Forest Alliance's objective is to ensure that the management of the province's forest resource balances environmental, social, and economic priorities. Nearly every major forest company is a signatory to the **Principles of Sustainable Forestry**, the Forest Alliance's voluntary code of environmental practice.



FOREST  
ALLIANCE  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Based on 1997 data.