

our

forest future

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Sustainable
Forest Management
in British Columbia
Canada



Sustainable Forest Management in British Columbia Canada

British Columbia
is managing forests for
long-term environmental
conservation,
stable communities,
and high-quality
forest products.

A Commitment to Sustainability

British Columbia, Canada's westernmost province, is a leader in the development of Canadian forest policies and the implementation of Canada's international commitments to sustainable forest management. Ninety-four percent of the land in British Columbia is publicly owned. The Government of British Columbia has the constitutional authority to manage this land, and to authorize its use by private companies and the public for logging, mining, grazing, recreation and other activities. British Columbia is managing provincial forests for a range of values, including long-term environmental conservation, stable communities, and the production of high-quality forest products for customers around the globe.



Maintaining Natural Forest Ecosystems

Forests cover almost two-thirds of the province and fall into twelve distinct zones. Abundant rainfall and moderate temperatures along the Pacific coast have created temperate rainforests of outstanding age and ecological complexity. Hot dry summers and frequent wildfires in the interior plateau contribute to the development of forests adapted to regular renewal. The province retains and will continue to retain natural forest ecosystems and the species that inhabit these ecosystems. More than 60 percent of the forest land in British Columbia is protected, inoperable, or reserved from harvesting to protect fish and wildlife habitat or other ecological values. The overall forest landscape includes areas of healthy second growth within the undeveloped forest, and retains important natural ecosystem structures and processes.



Treeplanter



Boreal spruce forest: Southern BC

High quality products



Ensuring Long Term Benefits

Less than 40 percent of the forest land in British Columbia is currently within the timber harvesting land base. Each year less than one percent of this land is harvested. Government establishes an annual rate of harvest that takes current management priorities into account and ensures that the forest retains ecological values and the long term capacity to provide timber, employment, and economic benefits. By law, all harvested sites must be reforested soon after harvesting. British Columbia replants 19 different native tree species and many species regenerate naturally. Reforestation maintains the tree species diversity of the natural forest and ensures long-term forest productivity.

Working in Partnership

Private forest companies maintain the right to harvest timber on public forest land through formal tenure agreements with government. These companies operate according to provincial laws and work with government in developing their forest management plans. They also pay government a "stumpage" fee when timber is harvested on public land. Many provincial forest companies have adopted environmental performance reporting and are pursuing various approaches to forest management certification. Some companies are also implementing alternative management and harvesting approaches designed to enhance conservation.



Managed forest landscape: M. Wagle

Coastal temperate rainforest:

Timothy BC



British Columbia Forest Lands

Total forested area:	Area available for harvesting:	Area harvested annually:
587,000 square kilometres	230,000 square kilometres	~1,900 square kilometres



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British Columbia's approach involves full protection of some forest lands and ecologically sensitive, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the remainder.

Implementing Forest Stewardship

Forest stewardship in British Columbia is based on the understanding that through careful planning and practices it is possible to harvest in natural forests while maintaining important ecological structures and processes. The provincial approach involves full protection of some forest lands and ecologically sensitive, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the remainder. British Columbia has established a formal land use planning process to identify provincial lands that will be fully protected, lands where resource development can occur but management emphasizes special values, and lands that will form a permanent base for forestry and other resource development. Land use planning is completed or underway in most of the province.

Protecting Forest Biodiversity

Protected forests serve as a reservoir for biological diversity and a benchmark against which to assess the impacts of management activities. British Columbia has already protected almost five million hectares of forest land, and more than two-thirds of the protected forest is old growth. Protected areas are off limits to resource development, and their status is established in law. In selecting areas for protection, government considers ecological, cultural heritage, and recreational values as well as the needs and wishes of local communities and interest groups.



Streamside management



British Columbia has protected approximately 750,000 hectares of coastal temperate rainforest, including the Kitlope Valley, the largest undeveloped temperate rainforest watershed in the world.

Kitlope Valley:
C. Osborne



Rainbow trout: S. Wright



Old growth Sitka spruce



Site inspection



Managing for All Forest Values

Those forest lands available for resource development are managed according to the provincial Forest Practices Code act and its accompanying regulations and guidebooks. The code promotes the conservation of biodiversity, soil, water, fish, and wildlife, and the consideration of scenic, spiritual, recreational, economic and timber values. For example, it requires forest managers to maintain significant old growth forest and wildlife habitat across the landscape to help conserve biodiversity. It establishes a no-harvest reserve zone along streams and rivers to protect fish habitat and drinking water. In areas important for tourism and recreation, it requires that forest managers maintain the visual quality of the landscape.

Monitoring Performance

Government places a high priority on compliance with the Forest Practices Code and carries out regular monitoring activities. Forest operators are meeting all legal requirements in 95 percent of inspections. British Columbia has also established an independent Forest Practices Board that audits the forest management performance of both government and the forest industry.

Conserving Species at Risk

British Columbia is conserving species at risk by protecting the habitat these species depend on. Some of this habitat is incorporated into protected areas. Other habitat is managed through the Forest Practices Code.

Fort Nelson Land and Resource Management Plan

-  Full protection (IUCN categories I, II and III)
-  Special management of environmental, recreational, scenic, and community values along with some resource development
-  General resource development (integrated with tourism, recreation, and wildlife conservation)
-  Enhanced resource development (oil, gas, minerals, forest products)

Grizzly bear
at night



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In managing public lands and resources, government has invited input from the public, forest companies, workers, communities, and environmental and other interest groups.

British Columbians and the Forest

British Columbians have a strong interest in ensuring long term forest health and the stability of the provincial forest sector. Many communities, including aboriginal communities, retain strong spiritual, cultural, and recreational links with the forest. A number of these communities also rely on it for their livelihood. The forest sector provides more than half of provincial export revenues and 6 percent of employment. In addition to timber, pulp, and paper, provincial forests provide medicines, mushrooms, floral greenery, berries, drinking water, habitat for fish and wildlife, and opportunities for recreation and tourism. In managing public lands and resources and in developing forest management initiatives, the provincial government has therefore invited input from the public, forest companies, forest workers, communities, and environmental and other interest groups.

Democratic Land Use Planning

Public participation and consensus-building are fundamental to the provincial land use planning process. Through this open, democratic process, local planning tables provide government with recommendations for land use. Government makes final land use decisions based on these local recommendations.



Forest worker



Forest recreation:
Tourism BC



Edible chanterelle



Haida mask: *Museum of Anthropology/Tourism BC*



Central Coast: *P. Armstrong*

Such a process will help determine a sustainable future for the central coast, a region famous for its outstanding ecological values. Land use planning is a way for local communities, resource companies, organizations active in forestry, fisheries, and tourism, environmental groups, government and aboriginal First Nations in this region to work together to find common ground.

Opportunities for Public Participation

Forest management in British Columbia provides ongoing opportunities for input from the BC public. Provincial legislation requires that companies make detailed forest development and harvesting plans available to the public for a period of review and comment. It also requires that government approve these plans before companies can build roads or harvest trees, and address any public concerns or comments. The public also has the right to ask the independent Forest Practices Board to review decisions made and actions taken under the Forest Practices Code.

Addressing Aboriginal Rights

Government and industry also take into account the rights of aboriginal people when making resource management decisions. Aboriginal rights relate to hunting, fishing, gathering and other traditional activities carried out by aboriginal peoples within the territories they have occupied and used for countless generations. Government consults with aboriginal First Nations as part of forest management planning to obtain information about these rights and to determine if proposed forest activities will infringe upon them. Government also invites First Nations to participate in land use planning processes that include their traditional territories. Some forest companies have entered into joint business ventures with individual First Nations. In addition, the governments of British Columbia and Canada, along with more than two-thirds of the First Nations in the province, are engaged in treaty negotiations. Final treaty settlements will further clarify issues of land and resource ownership, management and use in British Columbia.



Forest management planning



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■ British Columbia is managing forests for a full range of values, including environmental conservation, stable communities, and high-quality forest products. ■ The province retains and will continue to retain natural forest ecosystems and the species that inhabit these ecosystems. ■ British Columbia has already protected almost five million hectares of forest land. Protected areas are off limits to resource development, and their status is established in law. ■ Those forest lands available for resource development are managed according to the provincial Forest Practices Code, which recognizes ecological, social and economic values. ■ Provincial law requires prompt reforestation of all harvested areas. British Columbia replants 19 different native tree species and many species regenerate naturally. ■ British Columbians have a strong interest in ensuring long term forest health and the stability of the provincial forest sector.



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

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