



Ancient forests Forever!

There is no solution available, I assure you, to save Earth's biodiversity other than the preservation of natural environments in reserves large enough to maintain wild populations sustainably. Only Nature can serve as the planetary ark.
—Harvard biologist E.O. Wilson!

New Laws Needed to Save BC's Forests and Jobs

Two-thirds of BC's land base – 60 million hectares – is covered in trees.

Only about 22 million hectares of this vast forest was ever suitable for logging, and much of this has already been logged.² These logged forests once harboured the biggest trees and the best wild life habitat in BC. Now big stumps mark where the great giants once stood tall.

Plantations, where second-growth trees were planted after the original wild forest was logged are now growing throughout much of BC and some areas are being logged for the second time.

Fortunately, some wild, never-logged forests remain. Approximately 60% of BC's original wild forests are still with us today.³ Known by many names including old-growth, natural, frontier, ancient, first growth or original, these forests were tended by nature, not people. In British Columbia, a debate is raging about what to do with these precious remaining wild forests. Globally, only a little over 20% of the world's original wild forests still exist.⁴

These natural forests provide for fish, wildlife and people in many ways, including clean water, climate stabilization, as a spiritual and cultural refuge for First Nations people, and a recreational retreat for everyone. Wild forests, with their

multi-aged trees, make better habitat for many species. In fact, many plants and animals cannot survive in the tree plantations with their younger, even-aged trees.

British Columbia is Canada's most biologically diverse province and has the most species at risk of extinction. In BC, 64% of reptiles and turtles, 58% of ferns, 46% of (dicot) plants and 45% of amphibians are at risk.⁵ BC is home to about half of Canada's grizzly bear population, and to more bird species than any other province in Canada with over 500 bird species including more than 300 breeding species.⁶

The sad fact is that over 1,900 species found in BC are "at risk"⁷, in many instances because of the continued logging of their wild forest habitat. Making matters worse, climate change has also impacted our forests. More than 9 million hectares⁸ of forest lands mostly on BC's central plateau have been hit by the pine beetle epidemic and other pests due to warming winters and forest mismanagement.

Near the rain drenched Pacific coast of BC, unlogged valley bottoms are home to giant rainforest trees such as Sitka spruce and Douglas-fir that can sometimes reach over 80 meters in height while red cedar trees can be as much as 18 meters in girth⁹ and live well over 1,000 years. Unfortunately, on Vancouver Island, over 90% of these valley bottom ancient wild forests have already been logged.¹⁰

The dry rainshadow wild forests of ponderosa pine in the south Okanagan are some of the rarest wild forests in BC. Yet less than

5% of this kind of forest have any kind of protection from logging or development.¹¹ Then there are the wet Inland Rainforests of spruce, hemlock and huge red cedars in the Robson Valley and Kootenay country, which support the mountain caribou, an

endangered species that relies on these wild forests for survival. Even here, some of these critical wild forests continue to be open to logging.¹²

You would think that with all this logging going on that woodworkers and their communities would at least be prospering. But nothing could be further from the truth. That's because since 2003 the big logging companies in BC, who used to be obligated by the provincial government to operate lumber mills within the province are now no longer required to do so.¹³

Log exports from public and private forestlands in coastal BC have been going up – way up. Between 2000 and 2007 annual log exports to mills in other countries have risen 75%! This increase amounted to 57,714 highway truckloads of logs, enough wood to keep two sizeable BC sawmills supplied for a whole year.¹⁴

It's time to take action to ban the logging of wild forests and ban log exports, so logs from the tree plantations can be milled right here in BC. Other countries have done it. We can do it too.

Read on to learn how you can help get the laws we need to ensure that BC's precious ancient forests and forest jobs survive into the future...



Photos this page: Goat River Valley, Inland Rainforest (by Jeremy Sean Williams)
Bottom shots:
Endangered spotted owlets (by Jared Hobbs); Mountain lion (by Gordon Court)

Time to protect the remaining wild forests of BC

'Ancient Forests Forever!
Now is the time to make this dream a reality in British Columbia. For decades, reports have shown the tremendous damage BC has suffered every time another grove of wild forest is cut down.

We have seen salmon runs reduced to a mere trickle of former abundance because the wild forests that once held the stream banks together are long gone. Wildlife populations including elk, deer and mountain goat are hit hard in tough winters because the ancient forest groves they use to shelter against the cold winds and snow have been eliminated.

Forest workers have also suffered as timber companies send more and more of their logs to offshore mills, even as they close their mills here at home.³⁷

For too long we have played around the edges of these problems. Our government has set aside protected areas that amount to a mere 15 percent of the province, when conservation biologists tell us that at least 50 percent is required for nature protection, especially under the increasing stresses of climate change.³⁸ Weak, toothless laws have imposed minor restrictions on log exports, but stronger regulations are needed to protect forests and forest workers.

It is true that the BC government has recently set aside more areas of wild forests for the conservation of endangered species such as the spotted owl and mountain caribou. But many fear it is too little too late as the BC government continues to allow the logging of ancient forest habitats critical to the survival of our growing list of endangered species.

It's time to follow the lead of other countries who have already taken the steps necessary to protect their environment and jobs. In 1987, the government of New Zealand, riding on a wave of citizen support for forest protection, banned the logging of their remaining wild forests. In 1989, the government of Thailand, horrified by the rapid loss of wild forests in their country, followed suit. Sri Lanka imposed a ban on wild forest logging in 1990 as did the Philippines in 1991.³⁹ The movement to ban the logging of the Earth's remaining natural

forest cover has been spreading from country to country ever since. Finland is the latest to be moving toward a total ban on wild forest logging.⁴⁰



Now it's our turn to pass legislation banning the logging of British Columbia's remaining wild forests and supporting forest workers by requiring all timber cut in BC's second-growth tree plantations be milled in the province.



Old-growth trees on logging truck; Log exports; Western red cedar, Clayoquot River Valley (by Mark Wareing)



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Write Now!

Let our leaders know how strongly you want new laws passed to protect all of BC's remaining ancient forests for the health of our environment and to stop all log exports to protect our forest workers' mill jobs.

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Yes!

Together we can save ALL of BC's remaining wild ancient forests, and forest jobs too!



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