

# Forests

**To safeguard British Columbia's forests through holistic, sustainable management that ensures ecosystem health, biodiversity, and community prosperity.**

## HOW WE'RE THINKING ABOUT THIS

Protecting British Columbia's old-growth and primary forests is not just important—it is crucial to securing a resilient future for our environment, economy and communities. To do this, we need a new approach. We must manage our forests holistically, recognizing the full range of values they provide. This starts with enacting legislation that makes the conservation of ecosystem health and biodiversity the top priority. Logging practices must also evolve to reflect this new approach, with a sustainable timber supply just one of the many benefits.

Through bold action, we can be a leader in forest management, establishing an industry that prioritizes long-term sustainability. We will actively support communities by ensuring small producers have access to sustainable wood, incentivizing value-added wood products, and encouraging non-traditional uses of wood fibre. Revenue-sharing with First Nations, municipalities and regional districts will ensure that the benefits of these practices are shared equitably.

## PROBLEM DEFINITION

British Columbia's forests are some of the most unique and diverse in the world, but a century of extractive logging practices and increasingly destructive wildfires have degraded these ecosystems with little regard for nature or culture. The result has been landslides, droughts, impacts on fish populations and the loss of both cultural values and biodiversity. These pressures are only intensifying as climate change and biodiversity loss accelerate, threatening the critical services and economic resources our forests provide.

For decades, Indigenous communities, scientists and environmental advocates have called for a fundamental change in how we manage our forests. While the BC NDP government has promised new legislation and protections, old-growth logging continues and communities—both Indigenous and non-Indigenous—are left facing mill closures and job losses.

The time for comprehensive protection is now. We must prioritize the health of our forests and the wellbeing of the communities that depend on them by embracing sustainable practices that protect ecosystems and create long-term prosperity.

## POLICIES FOR ANNOUNCEMENT

When elected, the BC Greens will:

### Prioritize Ecosystem Health and Biodiversity

- Immediately establish conservation of ecosystem health and biodiversity of BC's forests as an overarching priority, with timber supply being one benefit (for more information, see our Environment plank)
- Establish a Chief Ecologist as a counterpart to the Chief Forester to ensure multiple values are adequately incorporated into timber supply analysis and other decision-making
- Zone BC's forests into three broad categories:
  1. Primary forests
  2. Restoration in secondary forests
  3. Second-growth forests managed for timber production
- Reduce the Annual Allowable Cut to ecologically and economically sustainable levels.
- Scale up, fund, and prioritize Forest Landscape Plans and Modernized Land Use Planning processes.
- Stop clearcut industrial logging and adopt logging practices that emulate natural disturbance regimes, such as selective logging, commercial thinning, and longer stand rotations.
- Ban the use of glyphosate and other chemical herbicides.
- Improve silviculture practices.
- Amend the *Private Managed Forest Land Act* to ensure basic ecological and cultural protections on private land.

### Protect Old Growth/Primary Forests

- Implement all 14 recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review in partnership with First Nations.
- Defer harvesting in the most at-risk old growth forests, as outlined by the Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel.
- Fully fund the protection of old forests and compensate First Nations for any lost revenues due to deferrals.
- Implement effective targets for old and mature forest retention, and improve riparian protection province-wide, as an interim strategy before Forest Landscape Planning is finalized.
- Direct Ministry of Forests staff to improve transparency in government announcements, reporting, and monitoring. Make information about forests and logging accessible and current—including updated maps and data.
- Strictly prohibit pellet mills from converting trees logged in primary or old growth forests into wood pellets. Define ‘waste’ for pellet mills to ensure ecosystem health is protected.
- Dedicate funds for private land acquisition to protect old growth forests on private lands.

### Generate More Jobs and Revenue

- Expand the community forest program by increasing the number and size of community forests to promote wildfire protection, rural development, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships. Remove the requirement for community forests to maintain the Annual Allowable Cut.
- Ensure maximization of value-added production from available timber supply, prioritizing small value-added producers. Aim to allocate 30%-50% of current available volume for value-added production as a short-term goal.
- Investigate opportunities to diversify milling and secondary manufacturing to better utilize existing timber resources.
- Review the tenure and appraisal system to encourage best practices and partial cutting in forestry.
- Begin a process of tenure reform to redistribute tenures from large corporations. Increase the proportion of tenures held by First Nations and community forests.
- Ensure resource revenue benefits flow directly to local communities by sharing more revenues with First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts.
- Fund training and upskilling programs to support workers finding new job opportunities.
- End raw log exports and close regulatory loopholes that allow the export of rough sawn wood without penalty.

