



SAVE
BC's Biggest Trees,
Grandest Groves,
& Old-Growth Ecosystems!



NEW LEGAL PROTECTION URGENTLY NEEDED - TIME IS RUNNING OUT

When people think about beautiful British Columbia, what comes to mind for many are majestic, towering old-growth trees – trees so huge that they dwarf the people standing beside them.

Millions of visitors from around the world come to marvel at our magnificent, mossy forest giants in many areas, such as: Cathedral Grove, Avatar Grove, Carmanah Valley, Walbran Valley, Meares Island, the West Coast Trail and Rainforest Trails of Pacific Rim Park, Goldstream Park, the Juan de Fuca Trail's Sombrio and China Beaches, Vancouver's Stanley Park, Lighthouse Park, Manning Park's Sumallo Grove, Chilliwack Lake, Garibaldi Park's Cheakamus Lake, Windy Bay in Gwaii Haanas, the Ancient Forest Trail near Prince George, and Mount Revelstoke Park's Giant Cedar Trail.

Sadly, the days of colossal trees are quickly coming to an end as the timber industry cherry-picks the last unprotected, lowland ancient forests where most of the "classic" giants grow. A century of high-grade overcutting has eliminated most of the biggest, best old-growth trees on the richest growing sites, including about 95% of the high-productivity, valley-bottom old-growth forests on BC's southern coast.

The San Juan Spruce east of Port Renfrew is one of the largest Sitka Spruce trees on Earth. The vast majority of valley-bottoms where monumental Sitka spruce like this grow have now been logged on Vancouver Island.



Today, most remaining old-growth forests consist of much smaller trees growing on steep, rocky mountainsides, at high elevations, and in bogs, and in many cases have little to no commercial value. Second-growth forests now dominate the province's productive growing sites.

Our ancient forests are not only fundamental pillars of BC's multi-billion dollar, nature-based tourism industry, but also support species at risk, climate stability, clean water, wild salmon, recreation, and many First Nations cultures.

Front page photo captions (all photos by TJ Watt):

1) The Castle Grove in the endangered Upper Walbran Valley was threatened with logging in 2012. The company, under public pressure, backed off from logging it - for now. It is Canada's most significant, densely-packed, and extensive stand of monumental ancient redcedars and is a national conservation priority.

2) This giant redcedar stump is in the Klanawa Valley, which was once home to some of the finest ancient temperate rainforests found anywhere. Today the Klanawa is heavily clearcut, with small tattered pockets of old-growth remaining. Old-growth logging is not a rare occurrence, but is a large-scale, widespread activity in large parts of coastal BC - with the BC government's complicity.



Big Lonely Doug near Port Renfrew was found and measured in March 2014 by Ancient Forest Alliance campaigners. It is the second largest Douglas-fir tree in Canada. Until the surrounding trees were clearcut in 2012, Big Lonely Doug was once part of an extremely rare, valley-bottom ancient forest nicknamed the "Lower Christy Clark Grove", some of which still remains but is under threat.

By any rational measure, including economically for tourism, the exceptionally large trees and grandest groves far outstrip their value for a few timber companies and short-term logging jobs. This is particularly true when considering what a minuscule fraction of BC's forests these giants constitute today – the biggest and best are largely now gone. Only those with the narrowest vision, stuck in an outdated ideology, still believe that the last forest giants are better off logged.

Yet this is exactly what is happening. Many of our grandest old-growth stands outside parks are still being logged or are at risk. This includes those on public (Crown) lands in the Castle Grove in the Upper Walbran Valley, the Lower Edinburgh Grove (aka. Lower "Christy Clark Grove") in the Gordon River Valley, the Echo Lake Ancient Forest near Mission, the East Creek Valley west of Port Hardy, and the Fraser Headwaters ancient cedars east of Prince George.

The BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations is currently working on potentially fulfilling a 2011 promise to develop a new "legal tool" to protect the province's biggest trees and grandest groves.

Such a legal mechanism, if effective, would be a greatly welcome step towards protecting some of the finest forests on Earth. **It would hugely bolster BC's tourism industry, significantly enhancing the province's status as a preferred destination for nature-lovers far and wide.** More comprehensive legislation would still be needed to protect the province's old-growth ecosystems on a larger scale in order to truly sustain biodiversity, clean water, and the climate. To sustain forestry jobs, the BC government must ensure the development of a sustainable, value-added second-growth forest industry and end the export of vast amounts of raw, unprocessed logs to foreign mills.



The Cheewhat Giant is the largest tree in Canada in total size: It is 6 metres (20 feet) wide in trunk diameter and towers 59 metres or 192 feet tall. Fortunately, the redcedar was protected over 40 years ago in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve when old-growth forests were more abundant. Today, just outside the park boundaries, the sea of giant trees has now largely been turned into a sea of giant stumps and tree plantations.



This 4 metre (13 feet) wide old-growth redcedar was cut down in the 2010 in the Gordon River Valley in what was one of the grandest groves of ancient trees anywhere on Earth – but is now a stump field. The logging of this particular grove triggered a Forest Practices Board complaint, resulting in a report by the board that spurred on the BC government in 2011 to promise to develop a new “legal tool” to protect the province’s biggest trees and monumental groves, which they are still working on.

Let the BC Liberal government know you want them to:



- Fulfill their 2011 promise to protect the province’s biggest trees and, most importantly, the grandest groves.
 - There should be a forested buffer zone retained around the biggest trees.
 - They will be greatly thanked should they do this.
 - This would hugely bolster the tourism economy and help protect the environmental, recreational, and cultural values of BC.
- Enact more comprehensive, science-based legislation to protect all endangered old-growth forests across BC, while ensuring a sustainable, value-added, second-growth forest industry.

Write to:

- Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia at: premier@gov.bc.ca
 - Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations at: FLNR.minister@gov.bc.ca
- Both at: Legislative Buildings, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Produced by the Ancient Forest Alliance in May 2014. Visit us online at www.AncientForestAlliance.org
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