



Bella Coola Community Forest

THE WOOD POST

OLD GROWTH RIPARIAN FOREST ALONG BELLA COOLA RIVER

IN THIS ISSUE

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Old Growth Forest Management

In this issue, we would like to focus on how old growth forests are managed in the Community Forest.

Old growth forests are of special value for a variety of reasons including biodiversity, unique habitats and aesthetic beauty. With trees many hundreds of years old, they generate a sense of awe and wonder for a natural environment untouched by the modern world. Old forests can also contain highly valued wood important for rural economic development. Given these attributes it is no surprise that the management of old growth is controversial.

Some of this controversy stems from different perspectives on what is 'old growth'. Technically, old growth was defined as forests older than 250 years, but now, old growth forests are defined not just by age but also by certain attributes that capture the 'old' state. These attributes include a variety of tree sizes and ages, multi storied canopy, well developed understory plant community, canopy gaps and trees in various stages of health and decay. Many of these stand attributes develop earlier than 250 years and some people believe anything older than 100 years is old growth. However, our forests are still going through developing stages at that age and the exact age of when a forest reaches it's old, climax state varies.

Currently, our forest inventory does not capture all the old growth qualities and so, for analytical purposes, age is still used as the main attribute to identify where old growth is located. It is a fair assumption that forests over 250 years in age will have the attributes associated with old growth.

In BC, old growth is managed in a number of different ways to ensure a natural forest legacy. Old growth is directly protected in parks and specially designated Old Growth Management Areas. There are also provincial limits on how much old growth must be maintained across ecosystems and landscapes. In certain areas, like the Great Bear Rainforest, there are stricter limits on how much old growth needs to be maintained.

Here in the Central Coast, we are fortunate that most of the forest remain as old growth and with huge tracts of land set aside as parks and conservancies, this is virtually guaranteed in perpetuity.



Coral root orchid grows on shady forest floor

- Old Growth Management
- Hwy sign
- 2020 Operations

The following map, diagrams and tables illustrate the state of old growth on the Community Forest and provides a glimpse into the future.



BCCFL volunteer Directors are:

- Rod Krimmer, President
- Ed Wilson, Vice-President
- Troy Gurr, Treasurer
- Barry Brekke
- Mark Nelson
- Keith Boutwell
- Wayne Bittner

Old Growth cont'd

The review on the proceeding pages demonstrates that there will always be a significant amount of old growth in the Community Forest. If harvesting continues at the same pace and barring any catastrophic fires or insect epidemics, the amount of old growth will actually increase over time, not decrease. Furthermore, given that today's forestry practices provide more riparian and habitat protection, low elevation

riparian forests previously logged will not be logged in the future and so those areas will continue to grow and return to their old natural state.

**Did you know –
It takes approximately 42 trees to
make a 2000 sq ft house?**



Old growth reserve corridor in Salloompt

2020 Operations

The first half of 2020 has been very busy despite the Covid pandemic crisis. The West Chilcotin pulp project continued through the winter and in March, over 15,000 m3 were sent away by barge. In April, we provided bundling and booming services for some private land logging. In May we finished off the block in Nusatsum that was started in the previous year. Also in May, under contract to the Ministry of Forests, we replaced all the wood timbers and decking on the aging Talchacko bridge, giving it another 30 plus years of life. Once the bridge was complete, we resumed operations in Noomst where we left off last year. We expect to be busy at Noomst well into the fall.

The second half of the year is expected to be equally busy. Nuxalk Forestry has begun logging in Talchacko and we will be providing bundling and booming services to assist with their log transportation. In July, the Chilcotin pulp project got going again and after a short break in August, we expect to be receiving pulp into late fall. If time permits, then we may log a small block in east Salloompt, near the start of the Lost Lake trail. As part of mobilizing for that project, we will do some seriously needed road maintenance on the Lost Lake Forest Service Road.



Firewood

Fall is coming and we encourage people to collect as much firewood as they can from areas where operations are complete. Currently, the best areas for firewood are at the start of Noomst and south east Nusatsum (take west Nusatsum forest road to 13 km then take left spur road north for 2 km). We are operating in back end of Noomst so best time to get firewood is after 4:00 pm or on weekends. In late October – November, we will likely burn the remaining slash piles to reduce fuel loading.



New Hwy Sign

Driving through Hagensborg you will note a new sign by the side of the highway showing the location of the Community Forest office on Hagensborg road. The sign is intended to be multi purpose by showing what the current fire danger rating is and any associated burning restrictions. There is also the option to hang other short public information notices. Contact our office to see about posting a notice.

Local contractor Black Sheep Timbers won the contract to construct the sign and it is another great example of the kind of products made out of wood from the Community Forest.

L to R: Rod Krimmer, Ed Willson, Wayne Bittner, Troy Gurr, Mark Nelson, Barry Brekke, seated Hans Granander.



Wayne Bittner, Kelly Wilson & Lorne Moody

CONTACT US

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Bella Coola Community Forest Landbase By Forest Age Class

Landbase & Age Class in CFA K3K							
Code	Description	Non-Prod.	Prod.	WHA	THLB	Total	Total Prod.:
1	1-20 Yrs	0	24	4	383	411	411
2	21-40 Yrs	127	811	91	1971	2999	2873
3	41-60 Yrs	1142	1409	247	1715	4513	3371
4	61-80 Yrs	4596	1422	342	723	7082	2486
5	81-100 Yrs	6798	2424	899	424	10546	3748
6	101-120 Yrs	3953	3098	1651	212	8914	4961
7	121-140 Yrs	1586	3107	1461	172	6326	4740
8	141-250 Yrs	5993	14534	4245	916	25688	19695
9	>251 Yrs	1537	10154	2256	2144	16091	14554
None	N/A	44535	2	0	7	44544	9
Total:		70266	36984	11197	8668	127115	56849

How is Old Growth Managed in the Bella Coola Community Forest?

This map illustrates the Bella Coola Community Forest landbase (pink boundary). The coloured area is productive forest and the grey area is non-forested rock, ice, alpine and scrub. The different colors show the different age classes of the forest, with reds and orange the youngest (0-80 yrs), yellow and light green is mature (80-140 yrs) and darker green is >140 yrs old. The large green areas outside the Community Forest are Park and Conservancies.

Analysis of the inventory shows that the majority of the productive forest is old (>251 yrs) at 14,554 ha and mature (>141 yrs) at 19,695 ha while the total Timber Harvesting Land Base (THLB) is only 8,668 ha, the majority of which is less than 100 years old. This means there will always be more old growth than logged areas in the Community Forest.

However, as shown on the map, younger age forests are located in the lower, more productive, portions of the valleys. This is due to a history of over 100 years of logging and so the majority of old forests are in the inaccessible areas. **So, what is the status of lower elevation old growth?**

By Provincial regulation, we are required to retain between 9% and 19% old growth by landscape units and different ecosystem elevations. As per our Forest Stewardship Plan analysis, these targets are easily met in the ecosystems where harvesting takes place and there is only one landscape unit where there is a small deficit in old growth retention, but this can be satisfied by surplus in the adjacent landscape unit.

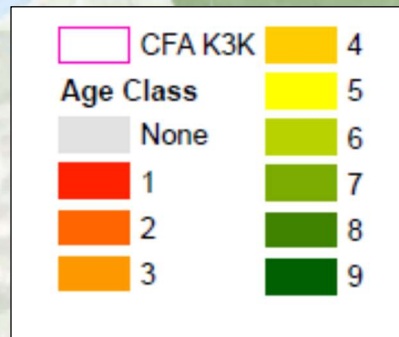
Why harvest old growth at all?

Review of the age class table shows that the majority (5,216 ha, 60%) of the THLB is still too young for harvesting so until this second growth comes on-line, the older age classes are required to support the harvest. But all the harvest is not old growth and the transition to harvesting second growth has begun. Since start up, approximately 55% of the harvest has been from old forests, 42% from mature and 3% from second growth. The trend is towards harvesting more mature and second growth age classes and less old growth.

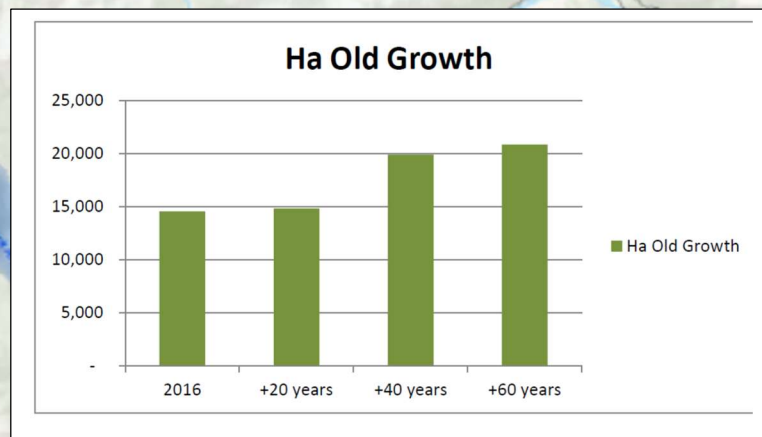
What about old growth in the future?

Looking into the future, the forest will keep growing and the harvesting of trees will continue. With the aid of computers, we can grow and harvest the forest to see what the forest would look like in terms of age class distribution in future years. As an example, we can analyze forest growth in 20 year increments to see how younger age classes shift to older age classes and at the same time how harvested forest is converted to young plantations. Although we only harvest about 60% of our annual allowable cut, if we were to harvest the full 100 % quota, we would log approximately 54 ha per year, which amounts to 1080 ha in 20 year period. To account for the harvest, this area is deducted from the older age classes in the THLB and converted to young plantations to simulate the harvest cycle. The natural forest loss due to fire can be accounted for in a similar way by turning a proportion of all forest ages to young during the rotation.

The results of this basic analysis shows that over time, the amount of old growth in the Community Forest will actually increase (see inset bar graph) due to the relatively small area harvested annually and the large amount of middle age forest that will become old growth.



CFA – Community Forest Agreement
 WHA – Wildlife Habitat Area
 THLB – Timber Harvesting Land Base



Inventory analysis and mapping prepared by local consultant Heartwood GIS & Forestry using Ministry of Forests data.