

United We Stand for Old Growth Forests!

Declaration, March and Super-Rally

Saturday February 25, BC Legislature

September 2022 marked the 2nd anniversary of the British Columbia government's release of the report of its Old-Growth Strategic Review (OGSR) panel, "A New Future for Old Forests". The report recommended **immediate action to stop logging of the most at-risk old growth forests in BC**. It called for a major shift in BC forestry practices, namely to "Declare conservation of ecosystem health and biodiversity of British Columbia's forests as an overarching priority and enact legislation that legally establishes this priority for all sectors." It called for the full involvement of First Nations communities, the inherent rights and title holders of this land. It called for public reporting that is "vetted, trustworthy, accurate and shared," and included a three-year framework.

In light of overwhelming support for old growth forest protection, the Horgan government made clear [2020 election promises](#) to implement all 14 recommendations of the OGSR report. However, two years later, the NDP's response has been poor. Our main critiques are as follows:

- Without on-the-ground measures, the talk-and-log status quo continues, and thousands of hectares of at-risk forests continue to be logged across the province. More than three million hectares of at-risk forest remain vulnerable to logging, and ancient giants are felled daily.
- The government earned a record \$1.8 billion in stumpage fees in 2021, but has not provided sufficient funding to First Nations to support immediate deferrals, long term solutions, and their transition to sustainable second growth forestry.
- Despite only one year remaining on the OGSR framework, the government has not established an implementation plan with clear measurable objectives, timelines, accountability, and steps for well-resourced enforcement and evaluation. Limited reports to the public continue to be 'variable, biased, often inaccurate.'
- While we are in a **Code Red** global climate crisis, this is a dangerous failure. Healthy forests are essential to maintaining safe, sustainable communities, critical water ecosystems, biodiversity, salmon habitat and so much more. With more extreme weather, wildfires and flooding, the failure to protect vital forest ecosystems is already life threatening and has decimated some communities in B.C.
- Since the release of the OGSR, well over 1100 people have been arrested, while peacefully defending old-growth forests in multiple parts of B.C., demonstrating the widespread frustration with the NDP government and its failure to keep its promises on this vital issue.

Urgently needed is a just transition for Indigenous nations and forest-dependent communities that protects these carbon-rich ancient forests and their critical role in ensuring a livable future for all.

Today, and every day, we, the undersigned, stand together in an unprecedented show of unity amongst working people, Indigenous land stewards and knowledge-keepers, activists, scientists, youth, educators, communities, celebrities, environmental and social justice groups, faith organizations and more. Standing united against the destruction of old growth forests. Standing strong for future generations.

Our coalition is bringing a broad-based mass mobilization to the BC Legislature on February 25th, 2023 that reflects the majority of public will in BC for progressive solutions to the crisis in the woods. Based on the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Resolution 2022-32, and supported by independent reporting, the scientific data on old growth, and the urgency of the climate crisis, we demand that the BC NDP government:

- **Immediately halt logging in at risk old growth forests** and additional areas suggested by First Nations
- Provide **fulsome and immediate financial support for First Nations** to implement logging deferrals and resilience planning on their unceded territories, including
- Indigenous conservation strategies and compensation for any lost revenues and employment as a result of deferrals
- Pursue **full protection as the goal for all deferral areas**, and invest to make protection the best economic option
- Fulfill its election promise to **implement all 14 recommendations** of the OGSR panel by September 2023, within the 3-year timeline which government promised, including biodiversity legislation for all sectors, and provide regular progress reports
- Urgently move toward the paradigm shift and resilience planning outlined in the OGSR recommendations, **prioritizing ecosystem integrity and biodiversity** as the highest priority of forest management and as essential in the climate crisis
- Implement a **just transition for all communities** while moving toward a sustainable, second-growth forest industry
- Provide: regular and detailed updates on deferrals and long-term solutions to safeguard and restore at-risk old growth; communications on all forest stewardship related decision making; and reports on timelines and progress to ensure **transparency and accountability for all OGSR recommendations**
- Ensure forestry related decisions are fully compliant with **free, prior, and informed consent and uphold the Title and Rights of First Nations** pursuant to the government's responsibilities under the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Acknowledge the role of intact forests and sustainable forest practices in both limiting and mitigating climate change, and incorporate **increased conservation targets into the CleanBC climate plan**

All Out! Saturday February 25

DECLARATION SIGNATORIES

Initial Signatories

**Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC)
Elders for Ancient Trees
Sierra Club BC
Wilderness Committee
Stand.earth**

Additional Signatories to Date

**Anglican Diocese of New Westminster
Awi'nakola Tree of Life Foundation (Kwakwaka'wakw Nation)
Alberta Regional Chapter of CAPE, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment
Avalon: Secrets of Aquaculture
BC Chapter of CAPE, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment
BC Chapter of CANE, Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment
BC Poverty Reduction Coalition
BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists)
BC-Yukon KAIROS
Be the Change Earth Alliance
Bluewater Adventures
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society -- BC
Chemainus Climate Solutions
Citizens' Environment Network in Colwood (CENIC)
Clayoquot Action
Climate Caucus, a non-partisan network of 500+ locally elected leaders working on climate change, biodiversity, and social justice across Canada
Climate Convergence
Climate Emergency Institute
Climate Justice Victoria
Community Trees Matter Network
Conservation North
Council of Canadians, Campbell River Chapter
Council of Canadians, Duncan Chapter
Council of Canadians, Mid-Island Chapter
Council of Canadians, Powell River Chapter
Council of Canadians, Terrace Chapter
Council of Canadians, Victoria Chapter
Cowichan Climate Hub
Cowichan Valley Naturalists
Creatively United for the Planet Society
David Suzuki Foundation
Denman Island Climate Action Network (DICAN)
Denman Islanders for Climate Action and Social Justice
Discovery Islands Forest Conservation Project
Doctors for Planetary Health - West Coast
Dogwood
Duncan United Church
Ecojustice
Elphinstone Logging Focus**

Esquimalt Climate Organizers (ECO)
Esquimalt United Church Justice Team
Evergreen Alliance
Extinction Rebellion Nanaimo
Fairfield United Church
First Metropolitan United Church
For Our Kids, Burnaby
For Our Kids, Sunshine Coast
Fraser Headwaters Alliance
Friends of Carmanah-Walbran
Friends of Clayoquot Sound
Galiano Conservancy Association
General Delivery Date Corporation
Georgia Strait Alliance
Greater Victoria Acting Together (GVAT)
Greater Victoria Teachers Association (GVTA)
Green Up, Oasis United Church
Greenheart Education
Greenpeace Canada
Halfmoon Bay Environmental Society
Holy Cross Anglican Church (Vancouver)
Invermere Wildsight
Island Forest Futures
Juan de Fuca Forest Watchers
Koksilah Watershed Working Group
Leadnow
Living Language Institute Foundation
Maple Leaf Adventures
Metchosin Climate Action Team
Mount Work Coalition
Nanaimo Climate Action Hub
NADPH, Nurses and Doctors for Planetary Health
Nature Vancouver
Nonviolence International Canada
Old Growth Options Group
One Cowichan
Our Lady of Guadalupe Tonantzin Community Society
Pacific Wild Alliance
Parents 4 Climate
Pender Ocean Defenders
Polster Environmental Service
Programs in Earth Literacies
Protect The Planet Stop TMX
Protectors of the Salish Sea
Public Service Alliance of Canada, BC Region
Rainforest Flying Squad
RAVEN: Respecting Aboriginal Values and Environmental Needs
Red Cedar Community Association
Refocus Consulting
Rolling Justice Bus
Saanich Eco Advocates

Saltspring United Church
Save Old Growth
Shawnigan Basin Society
Social Environmental Alliance - SEA
Socially Responsible Investing Cowichan
SOFT-CV (Save Our Forests Team - Comox Valley)
South Island Climate Action Network
Spuzzum First Nation
Sunshine Coast Conservation Association
Sustainable Environment Network Society
Thriving Roots Preschool
Transition Kamloops
Transition Salt Spring Society
Tree of Life Nature Preschool
Valhalla Wilderness Society
Vancouver Island Water Watch Coalition
Vancouver Unitarian Environment Team
Victoria Climate Action Team
West Coast Environmental Law
West Kootenay Climate Hub
Where Do We Stand North Cowichan
Whistler Naturalists
Wildcraft Forest Foundation
Wildsight
Worker Solidarity Network
Yellow Point Ecological Society
350 Canada
350 Vancouver