



## **BC Forestry Alliance calls out Sierra Club BC's misleading and damaging claims**

CAMPBELL RIVER, OCT. 13, 2020 – A campaign by Sierra Club BC is relying on misstated facts and selectively omitting key information in a crass attempt to sway voters against forestry during the current B.C. election campaign.

“Sierra Club BC’s ‘500 soccer fields a day’ campaign is wildly off the mark,” stated BCFA spokesperson Carl Sweet. “We’ve had enough of these deceptive tactics, clearly designed to curtail forestry through influencing votes. Fact is, forestry in BC is responsible and well-regulated, and this campaign could unfairly harm tens of thousands of working families and the nearly 10,000 businesses that support forestry in British Columbia.”

In a social media campaign last week, the Sierra Club campaign falsely states the BC government is approving more than “500 soccer fields a day of old growth forestry destruction,” while using statements and imagery to imply that logging is exclusively about large, living, old trees on BC’s coast.

In fact, in recent years more than 80 per cent of old growth logging in BC has taken place in the Interior, and almost all of that was to remove dead trees killed by the mountain pine beetle. The campaign also implies logging of coastal old-growth forests has increased in recent years, while in fact it declined 60 per cent between 2005 and 2017.

The BCFA calls upon candidates in the 2020 provincial election to be wary of slogans and misleading claims, and ensure they know the full picture about an industry as important as forestry before coming to conclusions.

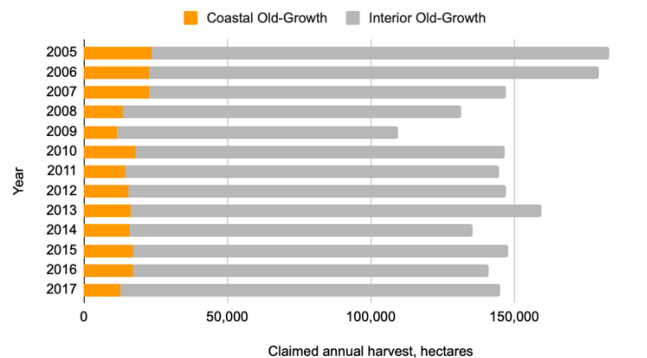
“During the pandemic, we’ve been getting our medical advice from medical professionals,” said Sweet. “People’s livelihoods deserve the same. Let’s make sure forestry information comes from forest professionals. Much as we’d prefer to be showing how forestry creates successful communities and provides climate-friendly materials, on this occasion we feel it is necessary to draw attention to this issue.”

The threshold for defining old forests in the British Columbia Interior is 140 years while it is 250 years on the Coast. The impression created by the Sierra Club BC is of mass harvesting of very old and large trees of a kind mostly found on the Coast, when in fact the vast majority of old forest timber harvest during the period cited was of small-diameter, relatively young trees in the Interior.

The BCFA encourages candidates in the current provincial election to familiarize themselves with these facts:

1. **The Sierra Club ignores that 80% of the total harvest in old forests is in the Interior rather than the Coast – a significant factor.** For the years for which data is cited, the Interior harvest was of dead trees killed by the native mountain pine beetle. Removal in the Interior of dead or dying lodgepole pine, of a relatively small size, was essential on a vast scale and allowed for rehabilitation of the land and the reduction of wildfire risk for the purpose of protecting habitats, people and property.
2. **Just 20% of old-forest logging took place on the Coast.** During the period in question, four fifths of the old forest harvesting that took place in B.C. was in the Interior. It is dishonest of SCBC to display imagery of Coastal old forests alongside grossly inflated claims about the size of the Coastal old-forest harvest.
3. **During the period Sierra Club BC refers to (2005 to 2017<sup>1</sup>), the Coast old forest harvest did not increase: in fact, *it declined by 60%*.** When challenged, SCBC insists that “overall, the rate has remained stable” – when in fact its own numbers show that both Interior and Coast old forest harvests declined.

Coastal Old-Growth vs Interior Old-Growth



4. **70% of the public forest land base on the Coast is conserved and the remaining 30% is available to sustain communities, families and businesses.** By 2017, the Coast accounted for only 9.5% of the old forest harvest. With over 500,000 hectares of protected old forests on Vancouver Island alone, there is no danger of old growth disappearing.

The recent Province of British Columbia report, “A New Future for Old Forests” found that “the public is not well informed or engaged regarding old forests and forest management.” BCFA condemns the Sierra Club’s persistent exploitation of this situation.

The BC Forestry Alliance stands for a stable forestry sector, as it contributes to our official climate action targets, low carbon and local building construction, world-class reforestation and research programs and essential products and next-generation fibre innovations that turn waste streams into new revenues.

British Columbia forest sector companies purchased \$7 billion in goods and services in the province last year, supporting 9,900 BC-based suppliers in 340 communities and 120 First Nations and affiliated organizations. Businesses include local stores, restaurants, contractors, truckers, and many more. They

<sup>1</sup> [https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019-Clearcut-Carbon-report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3m2sg\\_8sPEOP-oHpLPbSmUGfvRZq8evMIY0rWghS2FGj5Yjpbzh\\_nnYJGA](https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019-Clearcut-Carbon-report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3m2sg_8sPEOP-oHpLPbSmUGfvRZq8evMIY0rWghS2FGj5Yjpbzh_nnYJGA)

are owned by moms and dads raising children in our community, coaching our soccer teams, themselves purchasing groceries and supplies in local businesses.

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