



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
(Committee of the Whole)
Agenda**

Thursday, March 17, 2022

<u>PAGE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>Agenda – March 17, 2022</u>	Approve
	<u>Supplementary Agenda</u>	Receive
	<u>MINUTES</u>	
2-7	Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes - January 13, 2022	Approve
	<u>DELEGATION</u>	
	<u>MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS, NATURAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT</u> Beth Eagles, District Manager, Nadina Natural Resource District Jevan Hanchard, A/Regional Executive Director, Skeena RE: Old Growth Update	
	<u>CORRESPONDENCE</u>	
8	Beth Eagles, District Manager, Nadina Natural Resource District, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development – Old Growth Update	Receive
9-14	Bulkley Woodlot Association – Proposed Old Growth Deferral Impacts to Local Woodlot Licences	Receive
15-16	Village of McBride – Old Growth Forest Deferral Announcement on November 2, 2021	Receive
	<u>SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA</u>	
	<u>NEW BUSINESS</u>	
	<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>	

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, January 13, 2022

PRESENT: Chair Shane Brienen – via Zoom

Directors Gladys Atrill – via Zoom
Mark Fisher– via Zoom
Dolores Funk
Tom Greenaway
Clint Lambert
Linda McGuire– via Zoom
Annette Morgan– via Zoom
Bob Motion
Chris Newell – via Zoom
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen
Michael Riis-Christianson
Sarrah Storey – via Zoom – left at 12:00 p.m.
Gerry Thiessen

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Deborah Jones Middleton, Director of Protective Services – arrived at 10:50 a.m.
Taddea Kunkel, First Nations Liaison – via Zoom
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Others Eamon, O’Donoghue, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development – left at 11:24 a.m.
Lori Borth, Regional Executive Director, Omineca, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development – left at 11:24 a.m.
Ken Nielsen, General Manager, Chinook Community Forest
Mike Hykaway, Assistant Deputy Minister, North, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development – left at 11:24 a.m.

Media Eddie Huband, LD News

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brienen called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Atrill
Seconded by Director Parker

NRC.2022-1-1

“That the Natural Resources Committee Agenda for January 13, 2022, be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes – November 4, 2021 Moved by Director Lambert
 Seconded by Director Atrill

NRC.2022-1-2 “That the Natural Resources Committee Meeting Minutes of November 4, 2021 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATION

MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS, NATURAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT – Eamon O’Donoghue, Associate Deputy Minister: Old Growth Deferral

Chair Brienen welcomed Eamon O’Donoghue, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

Mr. O’Donoghue provided an overview of the Province of B.C.’s Old Growth Deferral.

He spoke of the following:

- The Garry Merkel and Al Gorley Report “A New Future for Old Forests”
 - 14 Recommendations
 - Recommendation 6 Immediate Response to Ecosystems at Very High Risk
 - Old forests protected/deferred from development
- Short term temporary deferral announced by Province November 2, 2021
 - Engage with First Nations regarding the proposed at-risk old growth map developed by the Technical Advisory Panel
 - Technical Advisory Panel (TAP)
 - 5 people
 - Conservation focused panel
 - 2.6 Million ha.
 - Three categories of old growth forests
 - Large treed
 - Rare
 - Ancient
 - 500,000 ha. of the 2.6M ha.
- TAP Model map
 - Not an operational map
 - Field guide being developed and will be available shortly
- Government to Government discussions with First Nations and the Province
 - Province gave 30 day timeline
 - Challenging to meet timeline
 - Provide outreach to all 204 First Nations communities across the Province
 - Received significant response from First Nations
 - 13 First Nations have said ‘yes’ to deferrals as presented in the technical advisory group
 - Approx. 13 indicated ‘no’ to the deferral as they are already managing the forest
 - Approx. 50% no response or need more time
 - Capacity is a challenge for many First Nations impacted by emergency events – (flooding and wildfires)

DELEGATION (CONT'D)

MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS, NATURAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT – Eamon O'Donoghue, Associate Deputy Minister: Old Growth Deferral (CONT'D)

- The remaining First Nations have indicated not interested in Technical Advisory Committee map
 - Interested in old growth forests and are currently managing or want a new management plan
- Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
 - Involved in land use planning with the Province
 - Will address old growth through that process
- Other First Nations indicated they want new processes or will address through current land use processes with Province
- Lake Babine Nation
 - May consider old growth through resiliency process
 - Expect some First Nations may have new deferrals
 - Some indicated they want the Province to remove deferrals immediately
- Update will be provided to Provincial Cabinet at the next sitting
- Will work through remainder of old growth strategic review and remaining 13 recommendations in the Gorley/Merkel Report
- 2.6M ha. will not be deferred in its entirety
 - Deferral will take place only where First Nations agree
 - Will await Provincial Cabinet response
- Province will work with First Nations based on their response back to FLNRORD
- Number will change as more nations engage in the process
- Other two categories of old growth forests
 - Rare
 - Ancient
 - Government may seek a longer-term deferral
- Dynamic file – a lot of confusion on behalf of licensess
 - Can proceed with cutting license currently in place
 - Only BC Timber Sales proposed sales currently deferred from harvest.

Discussion took place regarding:

- BC Timber Sales
- Tariffs
- Pressures on the forest industry
- Old growth deferral within RDBN
 - Currently no specific deferral requests explicitly
 - A number of existing processes
 - Carrier Sekani Pathways Forward 2.0 Agreement
 - Lakes Resiliency Project
- Overlapping traditional First Nation Territories
 - Strength to Claim
- Impacts from Provincial initiatives/announcements
 - Economy
 - Socio-economic
 - Division within the Province
 - How will forestry based communities move forward?
 - Provincial plans may assist individual people and not the larger community
- Provincial worker transition supports
- Challenges in the forest sector across the Province
 - Mountain Pine Beetle
 - Wildfires

DELEGATION (CONT'D)

MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS, NATURAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT – Eamon O'Donoghue, Associate Deputy Minister: Old Growth Deferral (CONT'D)

- Diversifying forestry
 - Value from fibre
 - Examples in the region
 - Continue advocacy
- Forestry policy challenges
 - Some changes to make fibre more available
- General public engagement and community participation
 - Confusion regarding the Province's Old Growth Deferral
 - Need to find a way for public engagement in the process
 - Address public concerns
 - Public uncertainty creates public unease
 - A well-informed community is better
 - Province considering longer term communication/public engagement strategy
- Mr. O'Donoghue spoke of using a simple one-page communication
 - In the past FLNRORD has utilized web-based tools for communication
 - Encouraged communication with Assistant Deputy Minister Mike Hykaway, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
- Communities wanting to work with the Province on value-added opportunities
 - If there is a process to allow participation encouraged engagement
- Challenges of differing approaches to Old Growth deferrals
- Local Governments have a strong voice
 - Advocating through the Union of B.C. Municipalities
- Encouraged Province to include Local Government in the process with government to government discussions with First Nations.

Chair Brienens requested FLNRORD provide updates monthly to the Committee.

Chair Brienens thanked Mr. O'Donoghue for attending the meeting.

REPORTS

Input Request on the Design of Skeena Region Roundtable Moved by Director Atrill
 Seconded by Director Funk

NRC.2022-1-3

“That the Committee receive the First Nations Liaison’s Input Request on the Design of Skeena Region Roundtable memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following questions from the memorandum were discussed:

- What are the main objectives for the overall Roundtable process that are important to your organization?
 - Capacity
 - RDBN First Nations Liaison
 - Reconciliation starts at the beginning (on the ground)
 - Elected Official engagement
 - Differences across the region
 - Recognition that communities have different views moving forward

REPORTS (CONT'D)

- What should be the focus of the initial meeting to ensure a successful process going forward?
 - Require data
 - Rationale moving forward
 - Socio-economic data to illustrate impacts to communities
 - Same foundational understanding
 - Defining what will be included under Natural Resources
 - Enough time to work towards an agreement going forward
- How often should the Roundtable meet and for how long?
 - Every 4-6 weeks
- What are some key topics your organization would like to discuss at the initial meeting?
 - Start conversations at the beginning of the process
 - Local government inclusion from the beginning
- Clarity is required regarding who will be participating
 - Need to ensure First Nations inclusion
 - Important to work together
- What is your organization's preference for receiving material related to the meeting (e.g., by email, shared document site)?
 - Shared document site
- Any other information or comments you would like to provide?
 - Local Government participation in Province's government to government discussions with First Nations
 - Impacts to communities and lack of community engagement.

CORRESPONDENCE

Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd. – Harmonizing Stumpage Policy for Community Forests Moved by Director Funk
 Seconded by Director McGuire

NRC.2022-1-4 "That the Committee receive the Correspondence from the Burns Lake Community Forest Ltd.- Harmonizing Stumpage Policy for Community Forests."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Write a Letter RE: Harmonizing Stumpage Policy for Community Forests Moved by Director Riis-Christianson
 Seconded by Director Funk

"That the Committee recommend that the Board write a letter in regard to the concerns and impacts of Harmonizing the Stumpage Policy for Community Forests."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- Village of Burns Lake Letter regarding Harmonizing Stumpage Policy for Community Forests
- Increased cost for Community Forests to operate
- Loss of community benefits
- Community Forests Tabular rates

CORRESPONDENCE (CONT'D)

- First Nations Woodland Licenses – MPS (market-based timber pricing system)
- Provincial Government’s policy intention to harmonize stumpage policy for community forests with the policy from First Nations Woodland Licenses
- Many Community Forests are area based
- Community Forests and wildfire mitigation works
- Bring forward for further discussion with Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development at a future Natural Resources Committee meeting.

Canfor Calls on BC
 Government to Rethink Old
 Growth Deferral Process
 -Together we can Protect Our
 Forests and Workers and
 Communities

Moved by Director Lambert
 Seconded by Director Atrill

NRC-2022-1-5

“That the Committee receive the Correspondence – Canfor Calls on BC Government to Rethink Old Growth Deferral Process – Together we can Protect our Forests and Workers and Communities.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Atrill
 Seconded by Director Lambert

NRC.2022-1-6

“That the meeting be adjourned at 12:08 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Shane Brienen, Chair

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services

From: [Shane Brienen](#)
To: [Curtis Helgesen](#); [Cheryl Anderson](#); [Gerry Thiessen](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Fw: Old growth update
Date: February 24, 2022 12:59:50 PM

Update from FLNRO Beth Eagles on old growth.

From: Eagles, Beth A FLNR:EX <Beth.Eagles@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2022 8:28 AM
To: Shane Brienen <mayor@houston.ca>
Subject: Old growth update

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or on clicking links from unknown senders.

Good Morning Mayor Brienen,

Hope you are having a great start to the new year.

I wanted to give you a brief update on some of the major milestones that have occurred recently as the Province continues to implement the old growth recommendations.

The first significant milestone is that the capacity funding agreements for First Nations have now been emailed out and the majority of the highway 16 nations who were eligible for funding capacities have received a letter. This occurred last week.

The second significant milestone is that further to the original technical assessment panel deferral recommendations, the supporting information on what stands and why these stands were identified as imminent risk stands, has been released to the forest industry and general public. Please see this link for the document: [og_tap_background_and_technical_appendices.pdf \(gov.bc.ca\)](#) This occurred this week.

The last significant part related to recommendation #6 that still has yet to be further released is the field verification process. We anticipate this document to be released in the near future.

With respect to processing cutting permits and operations in our area, it is still very much business as usual to this point.

As always, if you would like to discuss this further, please let me know.

Thanks,

Beth Eagles, RPF (*she/her*)
District Manager
Nadina Natural Resource District
250-692-1287

March 2, 2022

Town of Smithers Email: Mayor@Smithers.ca

Village of Telkwa Email: Councillordekens@telkwa.ca

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Email: inquiries@rdbn.bc.ca

Re: Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations Proposed
Old Growth Deferral - Impacts to Local Woodlot Licences

Dear Elected Officials,

The Bulkley Woodlot Association (BWA) represents 15 woodlot licenses located between Witset and Quick. Like other tenure holders in the forest industry, woodlot licensees have serious concerns about the recently announced provincial initiative to defer harvesting rights on identified "Old Growth" forests. Our Association will be expressing our concerns to the provincial government. However, we would appreciate your support in this endeavor.

Woodlot licenses are a unique form of tenure in the province. They are area based, managed on a sustained yield basis, include both private and crown land, and are typically owned by families. Woodlot licences were first established in BC in 1948, with the first local licence being awarded in 1983. Currently, there are 847 woodlots across BC. The woodlot program objectives are: to increase the amount of private forest land being managed on a sustained yield basis, to increase the productivity of small parcels of forested land, to promote local employment opportunities, and to promote excellence in forest management.

Locally, woodlot licensees in our Association have made, and are continuing to make, significant contributions to the community. Our members have been recognized regionally and provincially for their excellence in forest management. Collectively, the BWA licensees spend approximately \$800,000 annually to manage their tenures through planning, road development, harvesting, and reforestation. These operating costs, as well as the profits earned, are spent in the Bulkley Valley. Our Association also supports an annual bursary program designed for students pursuing post-secondary education. Our members are passionate about this community and have volunteered for years, supporting a variety of organizations.

Regarding the Old Growth initiative, our Association members and other forest tenure holders share many concerns, including:

1. Old growth forests are not static. They are most susceptible to a number of biological and climatic events, such as pest infestations and wildfire. Our changing climate is resulting in more catastrophic wildfire, as evidenced by the BC wildfires of 2017, 2018 and 2021. These wildfires released three times the carbon into the atmosphere than all other sources combined. The smoke events in those years affected many communities and contributed significantly to climate change. We must move forward with plans for wildfire prevention and preparedness, including an appropriate old growth strategy.

2. Currently there are plans and processes, such as the Bulkley Land and Resources Management Plan and the requirements for wildlife tree patches and riparian areas, that consider old growth values. These plans need to be fully evaluated before establishing additional set-asides.

3. The provincial old growth initiative lacked consultation with stake holders.

4. The old growth Technical Committee used the existing forest inventory to map old growth. This inventory was not designed for this purpose. More “boots on the ground” are needed to quantify the height, the diameter, and the age of trees.

5. Regarding this deferral initiative, the provincial government has a stated objective of avoiding “irreversible losses to biodiversity”. There is considerable debate among professional foresters and biologists regarding the need or effectiveness of this objective, particularly in the interior of B.C.

6. The old growth deferral or “pause” has created considerable anxiety and uncertainty in the forest industry. This will affect investment decision making.

As Woodlot Licensees, we have specific concerns with the deferral initiative. Woodlots are area based and are relatively small in size (400 ha to 1200ha). We do not have the ability to move our operations elsewhere in the Timber Supply Area. If the deferrals proceed to permanent area deletions, this would dramatically reduce the sustainable harvest volume on most woodlots, reducing revenues for a number of local businesses, and potentially eliminating a number of family- run businesses in the valley.

As an Association, we understand the importance of retaining some old growth as part of a healthy forest landscape. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss an old growth strategy with the provincial government and the Wet’suwet’en Nation. Together, we can continue the legacy of well managed woodlots in the Bulkley Valley.

Please contact the undersigned to discuss this letter in more detail (phone: 250-847-9879, Email: dshobenshield@yahoo.ca). The attached document, from the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations, provides further information on the Old Growth initiative.

Thank you for considering our request for support on this issue.

Sincerely,

Doug Hobenshield,
President, Bulkley Woodlot Association

Attachment

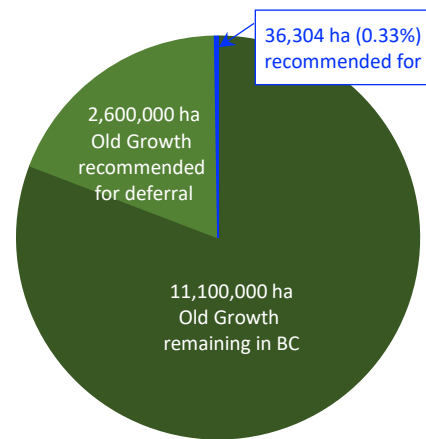
Federation of BC Woodlot Associations Old Growth Deferral & Recruitment on Woodlot Licences Communication Notes

General Information¹

- Woodlot Licences (WL) are small, area-based, forest tenures.
- There are 847 WLs in BC.
- The maximum size of a WL is 1,200 ha in the interior & 800 ha on the coast.
- There are 527,472 hectares of Crown land in WLs.
- The allowable annual cut (AAC) from Crown land in WLs is 1,354,694 m³/year which is 2.2% of the provincial AAC.

Old Growth in BC

- According to the Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel², there are:
 - 11,100,000 hectares of old growth remaining in BC, of which 3,500,000 hectares is already under some form of protection.
 - 5,000,000 hectares of unprotected, at-risk old growth of which the panel considers 2,600,000 hectares to be a priority for deferral.
 - 36,304 hectares of at-risk old growth on WLs.
 - 17,438 hectares of recruitment forests on WLs.
- The recommended old growth deferral areas and proposed recruitment forests are based on inventory information and have not been field validated or verified.



**At-risk old growth on Woodlot Licences represents
only 0.33% of the remaining old growth in BC.**

Woodlot Licences

- A WL grants the holder exclusive right to harvest timber from the WL area in exchange for managing the land and forests.
- The province's stated purposes for creating WLs³ are to:
 - increase the productivity of small parcels of forested land,
 - promote local employment opportunities, and
 - promote excellence in forest management.
- The province selected and approved the crown land included in WLs, thereby deeming it acceptable for forest management, including timber harvesting.
- A woodlot licensee must have an approved Management Plan that shows the age class distribution that will result in sustainable forest management in perpetuity.

¹ Statistics are from the Issued WLs Report, Forest Tenures Branch.

² [Priority Deferrals: An Ecological Approach - Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel report, Oct 2021.](#)

³ Office of the Auditor General of BC – Managing the Woodlot Licence Program, 1999/2000 report, pg. 4 - <https://www.bcauditor.com/sites/default/files/publications/1999/report4/report/managing-woodlot-licence-program.pdf>

- The chart below depicts a hypothetical 600 hectare WL with an appropriate age class distribution.



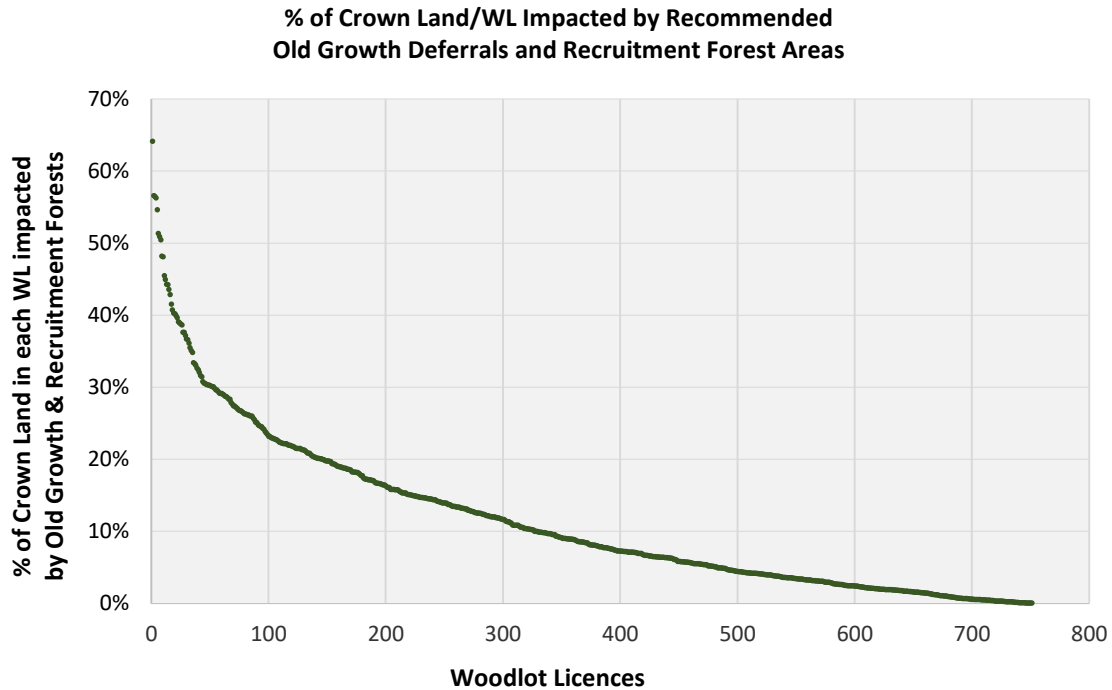
- The chart above illustrates that:
 - A WL is constantly growing forests over time, and mature forests are an inherent part of sustainable management.
 - Harvesting begins when trees reach their culmination age⁴. In this example, at 120 years of age. It is not uncommon for some forests on a WL to reach 140 to 160 years of age or older before they are harvested.
 - The *Forest & Range Practices Act* (FRPA) requires that each WL set aside a minimum of 8% of the crown land in wildlife tree retention areas (right hand column). Provincially, this equates to ~108,375 hectares. WL licensees are not allowed to cut, damage, or remove trees from these areas without government's approval. In effect, this means that the forests in wildlife tree retention areas are destined to become old growth unless government decides otherwise.
- In addition, FRPA establishes various practice requirements for a variety of resource values such as ungulate winter ranges, scenic areas, visual quality objectives, cultural and spiritual values, riparian and wetland areas, watersheds including special provisions for community watersheds, etc. – all of which contribute to the retention of mature forests.
- 450 of BC's 847 Woodlot Licences have been in existence on the same piece of land for more than 40 years! 730 WLs have been in existence for more than 2 decades!

A Woodlot Licence is constantly growing trees, including mature and old forests. The 36,304 ha of old growth identified by the Technical Advisory Panel on WLs after decades of harvesting and forest management is evidence that old growth deferrals on WLs are not necessary.

⁴ Culmination age is the age at which the average annual growth of the trees in a forest is maximized.

Old Growth Deferrals & Recruitment Forests on WLs

- Old growth and/or recruitment forests have been identified on 751 of BC's 847 WLs.
- The chart below shows the % of crown land in each WL that will be impacted by old growth deferrals and the retention of recruitment forests.



- Old growth deferrals and recruitment forests target mature forests that have reached their culmination age. For most WLs, the next harvest is in a mature forest.
- WLs are small businesses providing local jobs and a source of revenue upon which licence holders, their families, and people/contractors who work for them rely. Even a short term deferral of harvesting from a small area on a WL can have major impacts.
- Old growth deferrals and retention of recruitment forests can compromise sustainable management. Old trees and forests are susceptible to pest (beetle) infestations. Controlling pests and maintaining beetle populations at endemic levels⁵ are key to sustainably managing a WL, and that involves harvesting older trees. Failing to address infestations allows bark beetles and other pests to spread unchecked into nearby old and young forests. Controlling insects and diseases and utilizing dead and damaged timber is responsible forest management and, in some cases, a legal obligation.
- Old growth, particularly on fire-based ecosystems, often has high fuel loads which means volatile wildfires are inevitable. Given the location of many WLs, communities, people, infrastructure, and important resource values such as watersheds and viewscapes are at risk.

Old growth deferrals and retention of recruitment forests on WLs will impact sustainable management. It will also have socio-economic impacts on WL licensees, their families, and local communities.

⁵ Endemic levels means the population that would normally or naturally occur in nature.

FBCWA⁶ Proposal to FLNRORD Old Growth Strategy

- WLS acknowledge that old growth is ecologically important; but also believes socio-economic analyses, including the impact on WL licensees and their families, needs to be part of the old growth deferral decision-making process.
- In December 2021, the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations (FBCWA) sent Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations a letter outlining reasonable next steps.
 - Big-Tree Old Growth: WLS should be exempted from deferrals for big tree old growth and, if necessary, an additional +/-36,000 hectares identified from the 4,100,000 hectares of unprotected big tree old growth in the province.
 - Ancient Old Growth: Only 470.9 hectares of the 400,000 hectares of ancient old growth recommended for deferral is on WLS. WLS should be exempt from deferrals for ancient old growth. If not, then each WL licensee must be consulted and ancient old growth field verified and validated.
 - Remnant Ecosystems: This category of old growth warrants closer examination. 1,424 hectares was identified as remnant ecosystems (rare old growth) on 75 WLS, with the large majority being on WLS in the Peace and Nadina Natural Resource Districts. It appears the criteria used to select these areas may have unfairly targeted working forests on WLS.
- A response to the Minister's letter was received on Jan. 31, 2022. It did not address the Federation's proposed approach, was non-committal in terms of when validation & verification procedures will be made available, or when the technical advisory panel's survey methodology for determining recommended old growth deferral areas and recruitment forests.
- For WLS not exempted from deferrals, field verification and validation procedures are needed to confirm or deny that the identified forests are, in fact, old growth. The procedures need to engage with First Nations at the field level.
- If a WL is subject to an old growth deferral, then it should be compensable. Fair monetary compensation is one option; but changing a WL boundary or area to replace the deferred area should also be an option. Section 6 of the Woodlot Licence Regulation provides for minor changes up to 10% of the WL area. Amending the regulation to allow for changes greater than 10% to address those WLS with larger old growth deferrals may be necessary. Replacement areas for old growth deferrals on WLS should be part of the old growth deferral discussions with First Nations.

**The Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations and
FBCWA need to collaborate and figure out the best way to manage
mature and old forests on Woodlot Licences.**



**FEDERATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
WOODLOT ASSOCIATIONS
Forests in Good Hands**

⁶ Federation of BC Woodlot Associations - For more information, please go to www.woodlot.bc.ca



Corporation of the Village of McBride

P.O. Box 519
McBride, B.C.
VOJ 2E0

Phone: 250-569-2229

Fax: 250-569-3276

Premier John Horgan
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

January 17, 2022

RECEIVED

FEB 02 2022

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF
BULKLEY-NECHAKO**

RE: Old Growth Forest Deferral Announcement on November 2, 2021.

Dear Premier John Horgan,

I am writing to you regarding the Old Growth Deferral announcement made on November 2, 2021, by the Provincial Government. At Council's last Regular meeting on January 11, 2022, the following motion was passed:

Green/Hruby

Resolved: THAT Council directs Administration to send a letter to Premier John Horgan, regarding the Old Growth Forest Deferral Announcement on November 2, 2021, and the detrimental effects it is having on the Village of McBride, Neighboring Communities and The First Nations in the Robson Valley.

CARRIED

Resolution # 170111.22

In December 2021, Council sent a letter to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, Tara Faganello, related to a circular from the Ministry, which was intended to demonstrate the suite of supports that the Province was providing to workers impacted by this announcement. In our letter, it was underscored how these new programs would not support the demographics of our labour force. We have not yet received response to our concerns.

Given the importance of the subject to the Village of McBride and surrounding communities, Council made the unanimous decision to write another letter directly to your office.

The shutdown of McBride's local sawmill several years ago, due to the provincial government's policy on appurtenance, led to crippling economic losses, reductions in population and losses of many local businesses; therefore, we have serious concerns surrounding the new forestry harvest restrictions. The new support programs attempt to transition forestry-tied employment to other industries, which simply will not work given our lack of local options along with an older workforce. Another consideration for our community is that a large proportion of our local forestry is value-added forestry, so it appears contradictory that one of the Provincial support programs aims to create jobs in this space, when in fact, it will have the opposite effect.

The recently announced harvest restrictions may impact as much as half of the harvestable area for our local Community Forest, which will require a more regional and local approach to the potentially devastating impacts that this announcement will have on our community.

Corporation of the Village of McBride

I would like to take this opportunity to raise some of the concerns that we've been hearing from our residents and businesses:

1. This deferral in the Robson Valley and McBride area is disproportionate to the rest of the province. When added to previous caribou closures, establishment of parks, Old Growth and other protected areas (also disproportionate in the province), it has the potential to close down forestry in our area, which is one of our main economic drivers;
2. The Province has advised that there would be significant programs and opportunities by those in the industry that are impacted from the deferrals. It is not clear what those jobs or opportunities would be within remote, rural areas such as ours;
3. There is a direct contradiction between the Provincial announcement that the end product or value-added industries are being encouraged when in fact, this deferral will actually decrease the quantities of fibre sources for the value-added mills in our area; and
4. Exception is taken to the fact that the surrounding First Nations were not properly consulted in this process. By only being given a short 30-day window for feedback, you have effectively removed many First Nations from having a voice.

I await your response to the above concerns and would welcome Provincial representation to visit the area to witness first-hand the impacts of this announcement.

Respectfully,



Gene Runtz

Mayor

Village of McBride

cc: Shirley Bond, MLA and Leader of the Opposition
 Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations,
 and Rural Development
 Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation
 Members of the NCLGA
 Chief and Council Simpc'w
 Chief and Council Lheidli T'enneh
 Robson Valley Old Growth Roundtable