



Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board, BVCRB

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Re: Forest Landscape Planning Request: Retaining Valued Old-growth Deferral Areas

Dear Sir, Chiefs, Elders, Councillors, Advisors and Staff,

This letter is a request from the Bulkley Community Resources Board to First Nations leadership, to address how old-growth forests are being identified and managed. The mapped Old-growth Deferral Areas and Landscape Connectivity Corridors are two key areas needing significant improvements to meet biodiversity objectives and habitat connectivity.

The Ministry of Forests Cassiar-Stikine District Manager Cam Bentley and a Project Planner recently described the Bulkley Forest Landscape Plan (FLP) pilot to the Bulkley Community Resources Board members. This pilot process is an important opportunity to set more effective standards and expectations. It is also an opportunity to address several problems the Community Resources Board and others have identified for implementation and effectiveness.

Old-growth-forest habitat, once common, is systematically being replaced by commercial second-growth plantations which lack the structure and complexity needed to maintain many species of plants and wildlife into the future. It is critical that this new watershed planning include functional old-growth areas as part of future forest ecosystems. Currently it does not.

As the most influential voices in this FLP pilot, we encourage the

Cheslatta Carrier Nation, Gitksan First Nation, Lake Babine Nation, Office of Wet'suwet'en, Wet'suwet'en First Nation and Witsset First Nation

planners to support the inclusion of functional old-growth planning across the landscape, particularly in the more productive lower elevation sites. The original, theoretical plan to maintain old-growth connectivity through stand-age representation, parks and connectivity corridors has been very eroded over time. Nonspatial, timber-based accounting, weakened definitions and over-riding licensee interpretations have resulted in this important habitat being rapidly eliminated from landscapes. A clear plan showing where and what quality of old-growth will remain, over time, is essential.

The Community Resources Board is supportive of the government-to-government process and can contribute information from current and past members, as well as from the groups representing the nine public values.

Respectfully,

Anne Hetherington,

Bulkley Community Resources Board
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