

Ministry of Forests

British Columbia, Canada's Pacific province, is immense — about 95 million hectares. It is more than twice the size of Japan, four times the size of Great Britain, or equal to France, Germany and Switzerland combined. In fact, only 30 countries are larger than our province.

British Columbia stretches from the Pacific Ocean to the Rocky Mountains and offers some of the world's most spectacular and diverse landscapes, including various types of forests: coastal, interior, old-growth, maturing second-growth and newly regenerated.

British Columbia's climate is as varied as its geography. Abundant rain and mild temperatures on the coast produce Canada's longest frost-free period. The interior is warm and dry in summer and cold with snow in winter.

Because of its diverse geography and climate, British Columbia has an extremely rich variety of animal and plant life: 600 species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians; and towering old-growth, healthy, young and mature forests, snowed vegetation of the alpine tundra, sub-alpine parklands, grasslands and salt and freshwater wetlands.

We have 35 tree species, of which 19 are

managed for commercial use. Major tree species range from spruce, lodgepole pine, hemlock, balsam, western red cedar and Douglas-fir to birch, aspen, maple and elder.

Our forest resources are the mainstay of our economy and we are working to ensure that the quality of our envi-

ronment is sustained for future generations.

ronment is sustained for future generations. To ensure that future generations will also have old-growth forests to enjoy, we are identifying more areas for preservation.

About half the province is forested. Less than half of this forested area, about 26 million hectares or 25%



of the provincial area, is considered suitable and available for harvesting.

And a quarter of 1% of our province is harvested each year. Our forests provide:

- high-quality lumber and pulp;
- critically important timber products industry which generates about 250,000 direct and indirect jobs and is valued at approximately \$12 billion annually; and,
- many of society's benefits, including a high quality of life, which allows us to afford our social programs.

Extensive forest fires that have burned in the interior throughout its history make old-growth forest there different from and much smaller than, those on the coast.

More than 185,000 hectares of coastal old-growth forests are already

approved before any trees are harvested. We require forest companies study all the features of a forest area: tree age and species, the slope of the land, soil conditions, grown vegetation, and fish and wildlife habitat.

By law, forest companies must reforest the areas they harvest and tend the stands until they are well established.

Today, we are planting a record number of trees in our province — about 200 million seedlings annually, or two billion in ten years — that's equivalent to six trees every second.

Through our research, we are also working to balance timber harvesting with the need to maintain and improve wildlife and fisheries habitats and to protect water and biological diversity.

Each year, more than 40 million visits are made to provincial forests by British Columbians alone to enjoy nature's beauty, learn outdoor skills and have memorable experiences.

We are committed to protecting, renewing and enhancing our forests. We continually work to protect our valuable forest resources from insects, disease and fire.

Our forests have much to offer us and we are working to keep it that way.