

THE BC GOVERNMENT'S CAMPAIGN TO LOG BC PARKS AND UNPROTECTED OLD-GROWTH FOREST

For many decades the logging industry and the BC government have deceived the public that the rate of logging was "sustainable" indefinitely. Proof was repeatedly shown that this was false, but the government and industry denied it, seeking to maximize quick profits. Now BC is clearly running out of economically profitable wood. Much of the forest left is more expensive to log: too far from mills, poor quality, or on steep terrain. Long before the US raised the tariffs on Canadian wood, corporations that had made huge profits from overcutting BC's forests were moving investments to the U.S. BC spent millions of dollars on two old-growth forest panels that studied the remaining forest. Some forest types had less than 10% of their old-growth left ("Priority Deferrals", 2021). Now the forest industry is blaming government for closed mills, and the government is increasing the rate of logging to cover up the growing depletion of BC's forests. Using the increase of forest fires due to climate change as an excuse, the government claims that "thinning" the forest in parks and protected areas will prevent forest fires. That means permanent degradation of BC's parks for industrial profits.



Douglas Noblet

Extreme weather worsened by climate change has killed hundreds of people in BC. Wildfires have destroyed many houses and even whole towns. Yet governments are ignoring the science about forests, fires and climate change. Scientists say forests are one of the very few effective means of removing and storing atmospheric carbon from the atmosphere at a scale meaningful for reducing climate change. Yet in 2025 BC radically increased the Allowable Annual Cut (AAC), and fast-tracked the signing of logging permits. Minister of Forests Ravi Parmar began to advocate "commercial thinning" (aka logging) in parks and old-growth management areas, also under the names "active stewardship" or "active management. He claimed this was necessary to prevent fires and protect biodiversity. That is blatantly false and gross political propaganda.

Selective logging in protected areas will mean roads built into intact ecosystems, soil compaction, loss of biodiversity, and cutting down trees that are currently absorbing carbon. This will release their stored carbon into the atmosphere, increasing the cause of climate change.

fires, and thus must be logged and replanted to prevent the province from burning down. They don't tell the public that BC has Coastal and Inland Temperate Rainforests with trees up to 1,800 years old because they rarely burn, and when they do, the burns are usually low severity.

BILL 14: MISREPRESENTING SCIENCE TO JUSTIFY COMMERCIAL THINNING IN PARKS

Minister of Forests Ravi Parmar has publicly proposed "commercial thinning" in parks and old-growth management zones (Prince George Citizen, April 10, 2025). Commercial tree thinning is a major goal of his proposed amendment to Bill 14, the Forest Statutes Amendment Act 2026. Bill 14 was BC's law to fast-track development such as oil and gas and mining. Parmar's amendment would, among other things, fast-track salvage logging of burned forest, a practice known to be detrimental to the recovery of the forest.

Parmar's rhetoric on commercial thinning turns science upside-down, as when he claims (*Prince George Citizen*, Mar. 5, 2026) that it protects biodiversity and wildlife. Biodiversity is not protected by roads and skid trails necessary to bring in large equipment, which fragments forest needed by wildlife. It is well known that many species depend upon shady, cool and moist interior forest conditions, and that their habitat is deteriorated or destroyed in forest edges next to logging, or when tree thinning opens up the canopy to bring in light. The forest industry's drive to let more light into forests is about growing small trees faster, for future logging.

Some parties in the forest industry are upset that Bill 14 would relegate to Minister Parmar the authority to tighten logging regulations whenever he wishes. But they need not worry. That proposal clearly telegraphs a second set of rules for logging in parks and sensitive areas, by contract loggers that the government itself will hire. Minister Parmar is not the Minister of Parks, but he may well go down in history as the person who presided over the end of 100 years of protecting parks from industrial destruction.

MOIST OLD-GROWTH FORESTS HAVE THE GREATEST CARBON STORAGE AND FIRE RESISTANCE

In general, old primary forests (forests that have never been logged) store the highest amounts of carbon. BC's old-growth Coastal and Inland Temperate Rainforests are among the highest carbon stores in the world. They are also relatively resistant to wildfire. Moist old-growth forests in BC have canopies that shade and cool the forest floor and hold in moisture, while the trees block wind. Studies have shown that logging, or even thinning these moist forests, can increase their fire risk by exposing them to higher temperatures and desiccating wind.

CLEARCUTS AND TREE PLANTATIONS ARE KNOWN TO INCREASE AND ACCELERATE WILDFIRE

There is widespread scientific opinion that clearcuts and tree plantations are at high risk of fire and burn more intensely. A May 13, 2020 letter from 200 climate and forest scientists, stated:

"recent evidence shows intensive forest management characterized by young trees and homogenized fuels burn at higher intensity...Reduced forest protections and increased logging tends to make wildland fires burn more intensely. This can also occur with commercial thinning, where mature trees are removed."

Expert investigative forest journalist Ben Parfitt reported in *The Tyee* (April 14, 2026) that:

"The three largest wildfires of 2017 were the Plateau fire west of Quesnel, the Hanceville-Riske Creek fire west of Williams Lake and the Elephant Hill fire south of 100 Mile House. All of those massive fires tore across lands where extensive logging and tree-planting had previously occurred ... many of the burned trees were under 60 years of age."

Parfitt cited research in California that has shown a clear increase of high-severity fires in areas subjected to industrial logging or adjacent to it. This has led to concern in the scientific community that areas with

extensive logging may be promoting BC's increase in high-intensity, fast-moving fires.

SCIENTISTS URGE INCREASED FOREST PROTECTION

The May 13, 2020 letter from 200 climate and forest scientists to the US government stated:

"The growing consensus of scientific findings is that, to effectively mitigate the worst impacts of climate change, we must not only move beyond fossil fuel consumption but must also substantially increase protection of our native forests in order to absorb more CO2 from the atmosphere and store more, not less, carbon in our forests."

DISAPPEARING PROMISES OF FORESTRY REFORM

In 2020 BC's "Old Growth Strategic Review Panel" recommended temporary logging deferrals on old-growth at high risk of biodiversity loss. BC set up the Old-growth Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) to identify areas for deferrals. It recommended deferrals for 2.6 million hectares of big-tree old-growth, pending decisions on which should be protected. Five years later almost half the deferrals have been logged and only 5.2% of them (136,000 hectares) has been protected.

A 2025 report entitled "Closer to the Brink" by two members of the TAP Panel, Dave Daust and ecologist Dr. Karen Price, states that "Logging was four times more likely inside at-risk old growth forests that were recommended for deferral than in other old growth," indicating that recommended deferrals have been targeted for logging.

FOREST INDUSTRY FANS THE FLAMES OF PUBLIC FEAR TO PROMOTE OLD-GROWTH LOGGING

A film called "BC is Burning," sponsored by logging companies, was screened at the legislature to the Minister and a group of MLAs. The film claims that old-growth forest is "over-mature", causing

B.C. PROVINCIAL PARKS

A treasured public legacy built by generations of British Columbians

BC's Class A parks have the highest standard of protection for nature in British Columbia, with few rivals in North America. They represent the excellence that BC boasts about in the claim "Supernatural BC".

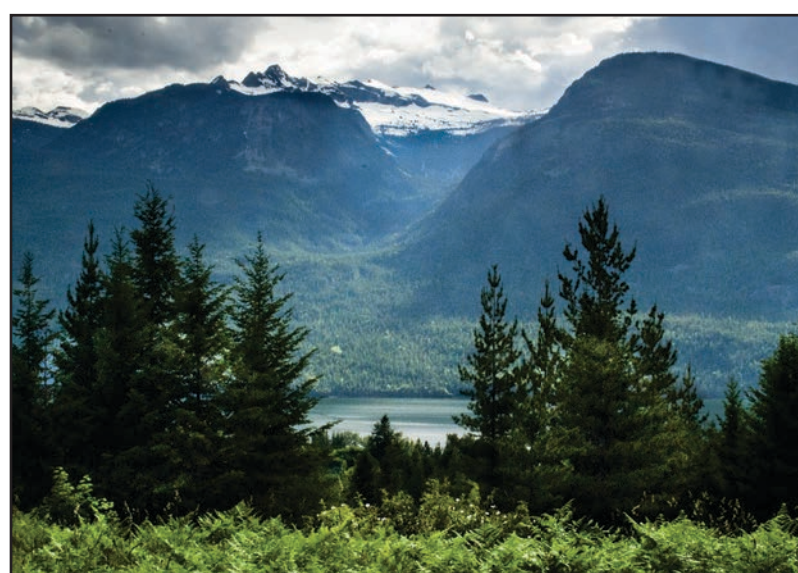
The *BC Park Act* was drafted many decades ago by BC Parks officials, after they studied how other park designations, such as Canada's *National Park Act*, had notoriously failed their goal of protecting parks "unimpaired for future generations". The BC law avoids this by saying that Class A parks:

"are dedicated to the preservation of their natural environments for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public...No natural resource except fish and wildlife ... shall be granted, sold, removed, destroyed, damaged, disturbed or exploited except as authorized by a valid and subsisting park use permit, which shall not be issued unless, in the opinion of the minister, issuance is necessary to the preservation or maintenance of the recreational values of the park involved."

The *Park Act* also protects Conservancies almost as strongly, except the guiding principle is conservation rather than preservation.

WHY IS FULL PROTECTION NEEDED?

Building a lodge, a road, a hydro dam, taking out a few trees may profit humans in some way, but they



"All that is like this valley, all that is unsurpassedly lovely, exists, not for one people, nor for any portion of that people, but for everyone, everywhere: this Valley of Light."

— Richard Caniell, "The Valhalla Experience" the show that helped win Valhalla Park

do not profit wildlife or biodiversity. Today in BC there has been massive environmental destruction from logging, mining and energy development. Wildlife needs core security habitat for seclusion from humans and their destructive activities. *BC Parks and a couple of National Park Reserves protect the only old-growth forest in BC that is firmly protected by law.* It is critical that it stay that way,

because these forests harbour many of BC's species at risk, and so far no forest outside of parks is safe in BC.

Camping in BC parks is wildly popular with the public. Even park wilderness areas where people have to backpack can receive heavy use. There is no lack of people looking for an experience as close to nature as possible. Their tourism brings in substantial revenue for the government.

BC'S PARK ACT IS IN PERIL

Our *Park Act* is, in every way, responsible for the integrity of the natural values of our parks. This law should be considered a provincial treasure. Unfortunately, through a mistake in legislation called *The Interpretation Act*, all BC laws have been thrown open for re-evaluation by courts as to whether they comply with the United Nations Declaration on Aboriginal Rights. Any person, whether native or non-native, can go to court and get a judge to evaluate the law for this purpose — without other stakeholders present or even knowing about it. The judges can then order any BC law reinterpreted or rewritten. With Minister Parmar and the timber industry lusting to log in BC protected areas, the legislature wouldn't even need a court to do that. Our parks are in serious trouble, Please write the government and say, not only "hands off our parks", but also "hands off our *Park Act*".

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