

# Not one tree saved yet BC's talk and log continues

By Keith Wiley

On The EcoCentric, November 9, 2021



**LOGGING ABOVE MOUNTAIN STATION, JUST SOUTH OF NELSON.**

You may have heard on the news in the past week that the BC government has DEFERRED logging on a lot of old growth trees in the province. The truth is that in the near future, maybe even for years, they haven't stopped the logging of one single tree.

The talk and log scheme the BC government has announced on forestry and old growth is added proof they are ready to preside over the annihilation of the last of BC's primary and ancient forests.

The government has responded to the crisis of the war in the woods with new forestry legislation and another old growth forests negotiation announcement. But no immediate stop in logging.

It's a great public relations play to quiet down the crisis and suggest the forests are being taken care of.

It even got the headlines the government was aiming for, the Globe and Mail for example put in big type: "B.C. makes big commitment to save old-growth trees from further logging"

But the truth is the big commitment really was to more talking, to Talk And Log.

Back in 2020, a year and a half ago, the original Old Growth Strategic Review Panel called for the opposite of that: Stop Logging and then talk. They recommended an IMMEDIATE deferral of all old growth logging.

Instead, here is the very first line of the government's November 2 announcement:

"The Province has announced its intention to work in partnership with First Nations to defer harvest of ancient, rare and priority large stands of old growth within 2.6 million hectares of B.C.'s most at-risk old-growth forests."

In other words it's a plan to talk, and later defer old growth logging WITHIN 2.6 million hectares, not stop logging of 2.6 million hectares. The weasel words are important, it's not even a promise to protect the entire 2.6 million hectares, although that's what reports say it is.

And in the meantime, there's lots of talking. Forest Minister Katrine Conroy said:

"We have to make sure we do this right not only for the forests.. but we have to do this for the indigenous nations to make sure they are partners in this... for the communities that could be losing jobs... The last thing I want to do is do this quickly and not have it done properly."

In the meantime, logging continues.

In an interesting twist, while the government says it is going to take time to 'do things right' it is giving First Nations just 30 days to decide if they support the plan or how they want to engage in consultations on it.

The First Nations Leadership Council was highly critical of being tossed what they call "the hot potato" of forest planning.

In their release, Robert Phillips, of the First Nations Summit Political Executive said: “The 30-day window identified by the Province for Nations to come forward with their response on deferrals is inadequate, and places extreme pressure on Nations already struggling with capacity issues and competing priorities.” He added: ‘Although the Province announced it is addressing old growth ‘in partnership with Indigenous Nations’ it does not feel that way right now.

Minister Katrine Conroy has promised to immediately stop new BC Timber Sales in ‘the affected areas’ which biologist Rachel Holt points out is a good thing.

In a recent CBC interview she said: “The BC Timber Sales piece is important and insufficient... it would be better if they were not moving ahead [with logging] in areas that are already sold.... We need to move the whole package forward in order to have any substantive impact.”

In other words logging of old growth continues. And as Rachel Holt points out: “You can only log a tree once, the idea is to stop important areas from being harvested in the short term... you can always harvest a tree, but you can’t put it back up when it’s been harvested.”

The announcement on old-growth logging was the second shoe to drop in the BC government’s logging ‘issues management’. The first came back in October with the introduction of amendments to the Forest and Range Practices Act. The government is planning an eight to ten-year period of talk and consultations before those changes come into effect.

In the meantime logging continues.

The government received its crucial Old Growth logging report in early 2020, didn’t release it until just before the election in the fall of 2020. Now, over a year and half later they are announcing not the immediate action the report called for but more consultations.

This past June the government put Rachel Holt on a new technical panel on old growth. Rachel Holt and colleagues had earlier given the government detailed maps and data on vulnerable old growth. This new technical group, now with Rachel Holt’s work in the mix, showed another 2.6 million hectares needing protection.

Stand.Earth’s Tegan Hansen said in a statement: “We applaud the work of the technical panel that has provided the public and government with a clear roadmap for old growth protection. But, the expected and needed response from the government is not another plan to implement deferrals in the future – it’s action right now.”

Rachel Holt welcomed the new announcement, but was also critical of the time lines. In the CBC interview she said:

“It would certainly would have been nice today if there had actually been areas that were in fact deferred from harvest. The whole point of deferrals is to prevent talk and log from happening and we’re still in that mode as of today.”

In Fairy Creek, and many other forests around the province, the ancient trees continue to be mowed down. Our forests and forest industry are in a circling-the-drain crisis of rapidly diminishing resources and habitat. The real problems of sustainability and healthy ecosystems have been pushed on to the future for too long, and people in BC recognize it cannot continue.

But the BC NDP government is playing a balancing act of protecting forestry profits, and jobs, and compromise and keeping everyone as happy as possible. It is continuing the old pattern of business-as-usual, tinkering around the edges, and let the future, now the very near future, suffer the consequences.

I will put links to much more information on the forestry crisis, including a link to the full CBC interview with Rachel Holt, on our website: [TheEcoCentricRadioShow.ca](http://TheEcoCentricRadioShow.ca).



