

OLD Growth by the Numbers

Recent news stories are declaring the last remaining percentage of old growth forests are in danger of being logged in the Province. As a Registered Professional Forester and someone who has worked in the industry for 30 years, even I get confused with the numbers that various parties toss out.

I think it is important to provide the community the information so that when we have conversations about logging and old growth trees we at least start from a place of common understanding. I am specifically going to discuss Tree Farm Licence (TFL) 56 which is owned and managed by the City of Revelstoke. Your forest corporation is commonly known as RCFC which is the (Revelstoke Community Forest Corporation). We have been operating since 1993 and have a proven track record of responsible and sustainable forest management.

So what are the numbers:

- For context 1hectare 1ha = 100metres x 100metres, the City of Revelstoke boundaries encompasses 4076ha.
- The total area of the TFL is 120,000ha but only 68,746ha productively grows trees, the rest is composed of rocks, ice and (other) nonproductive lands such as avalanche chutes.
- RCFC has licence to conduct forestry operations on 23,233ha (or approx. 34% of the forested area). I will call this operable area.
- Between Protected Areas and areas where it is too difficult to operate in that leaves **45,413ha** or **66%** of the Old Growth Forests that will not be harvested on the TFL.
- Forest harvesting has taken place on TFL56 since the 1960's. As a result, 8752 or 38% of the operable area is in immature and older future growing stands.
- RCFC harvests approximately 225ha / year.

2/3'rds of the forests in the remaining 14,480ha that we plan to harvest over the next 65 years are greater than 140 years old. After 6 more decades of logging all harvesting in the TFL will occur in our plantations. **The 45,413ha of old growth forests will still exist.**

Recently, RCFC did a commercial thin where we removed some dead and poor quality trees from a 45 year old plantation. The small trees that were removed also count towards the volume we can log each year. This type of harvesting is not widely used but we see a pretty bright future for this management option. We are always trying alternative harvest methods on our TFL to mimic natural disturbances found in the area.

Revelstoke is and will continue having the important discussion around harvesting in old growth, and the indisputable fact is your TFL has 66% of its old growth forests protected from development. These forests have protection designations such as Caribou Habitat, Old Growth Management Area, Wildlife Tree Retention, Riparian Reserves or simply inoperable.

I feel we can continue to have a vibrant forest industry while still protecting old growth and biodiversity and continue to have wonderful recreational opportunities. Please feel free to contact myself or Kevin Bollefer if you have concerns or wish to better understand how we are managing these forests.

Michael Copperthwaite, RPF General Manager Revelstoke Community Forest Corporation

