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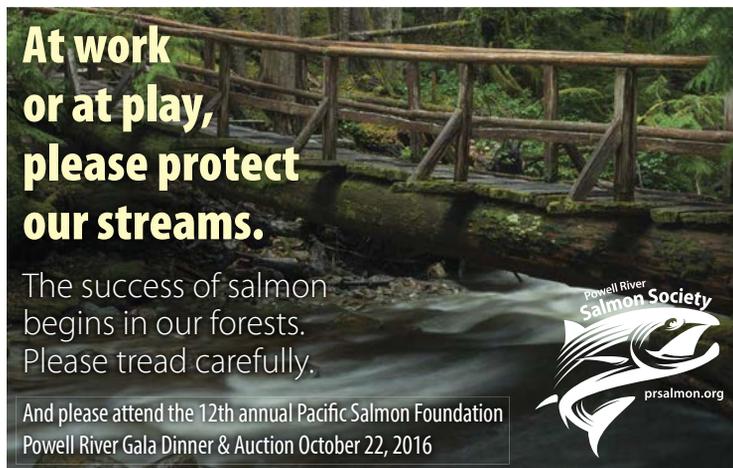
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Ferns & Fallers

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This issue is also available online at www.prliving.ca



ON THE COVER:

“Bear Season” by Brad Collins

Digital painting on canvas. Prints \$300+. Collins is a multi-media artist and writer, born and raised in Powell River. View more of his work and contact him at bradcollinsart.com.

Morality meets lumbersexuality

I was in Vancouver and Toronto earlier this month, where 'lumbersexual' continues to be a thing. Sure, there's the hipness, hotness, plaid and beards (plus some man buns) – yet these young men are no lightweight fashion icons. Instead, I believe they're busy revealing a gap between fantasy and reality in Canada's moral imagination (see Page 46).

Nostalgia for the 'pristine wilderness' of the BC coast runs deep among our urban counterparts*. Tourists from high-population Germany and China crave the wild, too.

But the coast's forests are not pristine, and they haven't been for 100 years. Whatever 'pristine' means, in these dynamic, growing-and-dying, frequent-fire, wind-storm blown, climate-changing, bug-infested woods.

Hike outside a park here, and you're likely in a forest that was cut and re-seeded itself before 1950. Plus, on your hike, you'll see new slash, the work of tree-planters, old-growth management areas, and more.

How you feel when you see forestry at work depends on your values.

Editing this issue of *F&F*, I found myself often distracted by the moral questions the stories raise.

Why did this community kill 30 black bears last year? What will it mean for both bears and humans, if this is the new normal (Page 35)?

Should young environmentalists lobby from outside of industry, or do they make a bigger impact within corporations and government (Page 16)?

And, the big question in this issue: are forestry jobs green jobs (Page 21)?

To some minds, on first glance, forestry is inherently dirty, while its "replacement" industry, tourism, is inherently clean. However, we don't see the environmental effects of tourism, though they exist (a single round-trip air ticket from the East Coast produces three tonnes of CO₂e, for example.) Here on the Sunshine Coast, we do see downed trees – for some, an immediate, gut-level moral wrong.

There are no easy answers to these forest questions. Though I believe we're all grappling with them, and many more.



Pieta Woolley, editor

Which is why some urbanites are dressing for 19th century lumber camps. And, why this magazine exists – to draw out the ideas our lumbersexual friends are asking implicitly, and address them explicitly with the help of some of those most intimate with the forest: the guys and gals in hi-viz vests.

* For much more about lumbersexuals' deeper motivations, Google Willa Brown's excellent 2014 article "Lumbersexuality and its Discontents," which appeared in *The Atlantic*.

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Our awe
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Ever since the arena was built at Powell River's Willingdon Beach in the 1950s, the site adjacent to it has been in transition. At first, dirt from the construction was used to create a horseshoe pitching course. Then, in the 1980s, it transformed into a terraced logger sports-watching area, with log seats. By 2015, though, the wood had long-since rotted; the climbing poles deemed unsafe and removed.

Finally, thanks to a bundle of cash and volunteer investment, the area has become a permanent, built-for-the-ages amphitheatre. Five tiers of concrete seating face the ocean. Two climbing logs stand 80-feet high. A stage-like area is growing a new blanket of turf.

The project was created as a legacy – a performance area with a view of the ocean. It belongs to the City of Powell River, is administered by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture, and can be used for music events, outdoor movies, and of course, logger sports.

“We built it well so it will be here for a long time,” said project instigator Bob Marquis. “Even when the sea levels rise in 50 years, you’ll be able

to swim off it.”

Marquis, who helped build the original log amphitheatre 30 years ago, coordinated this revitalization as well. The city secured a \$50,000 grant for construction, from the Powell River Community Forest. It paid for the concrete blocks and the cement pouring.

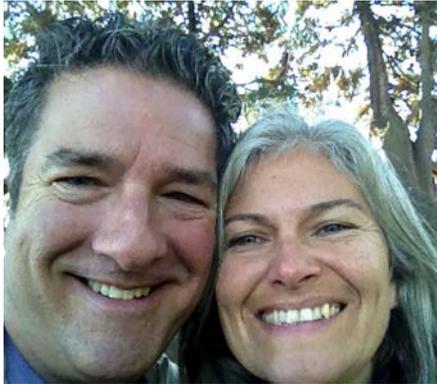
However, nearly 200 volunteers helped construct the project. Some peeled logs. Others operated machinery and poured concrete. Several people brought food and drinks for the workers. Marquis estimates that without the volunteer squad, the amphitheatre would have cost the city at least \$125,000.

Mid-June, the site was still fenced off, giving the baby grass a chance to grow before the throngs descend July 15 to 17. Powell River Logger Sports 2016 is the biggest logger sports show in Canada, with several Canadian and World Championship titles at stake.

The only question left: what will we call it? The City's Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture asked residents for their ideas in June. The official name will be announced on Logger Sports weekend. **F**

Amphitheatre





seashore style

With thousands of yachts passing each summer, Karen Henry Maurage and James Lazaruk were eager to facelift the shore of their waterfront home. Beyond beautification, the ex-Vancouver duo has a vision: Powell River as an outdoor art-viewing destination. In April, chainsaw artist Jesse Toso completed their first commission, a 10-foot cedar heron and a larger-than-life wolf spider.

Home is where the heron is

In 2015, Henry Maurage and Lazaruk moved to the north-of-Tla'amin property from Vancouver, and soon decided to buy it. With two cabins on the land, a sweeping garden with panoramic views, plus a waterfront home, it is now Blue Heron Vacation rentals – an Air B&B destination. Lazaruk still works for the Richmond-based Hampton Lumber Sales Canada, managing the industrial timber and lumber matting division. Henry Maurage is a retired massage therapist. They believe that the future economy of Powell River can be built on tourism.

Chain Gang (of one)

Working out of the ultra-cool East Vancouver studio building at 1000 Parker, Jesse Toso has already made waves in his hometown of Campbell River. There, he attached his award-winning 16-foot Douglas-fir wolf spider onto the side of a downtown building, attracting both roses (from art admirers) and raspberries (from arachnophobes). Henry Maurage and Lazaruk got to know him in Vancouver, and asked him to build art for their beach. Over four days here, using specially-made Stihl chainsaws, he transformed a 10' cedar pole, sourced south of town, into a blue heron. The spider, on the opposite end of the shore, is stunning, and truly terrifying.

A vision for visitors

The Castlegar Sculpture Walk and Australia's Cottesloe and Bondi Sculpture by the Sea festivals are inspirational. But the couple has a larger vision: to encompass all mediums of art, on both private and public property. They hope to encourage others to commission outdoor art by their example. Henry Maurage and Lazaruk are in contact with the Powell River Regional District to help take initiative. Already, Henry Maurage reports, their beach was buzzed by an out-of-formation Snowbird pilot. "We've noticed we're getting attention!" **F**

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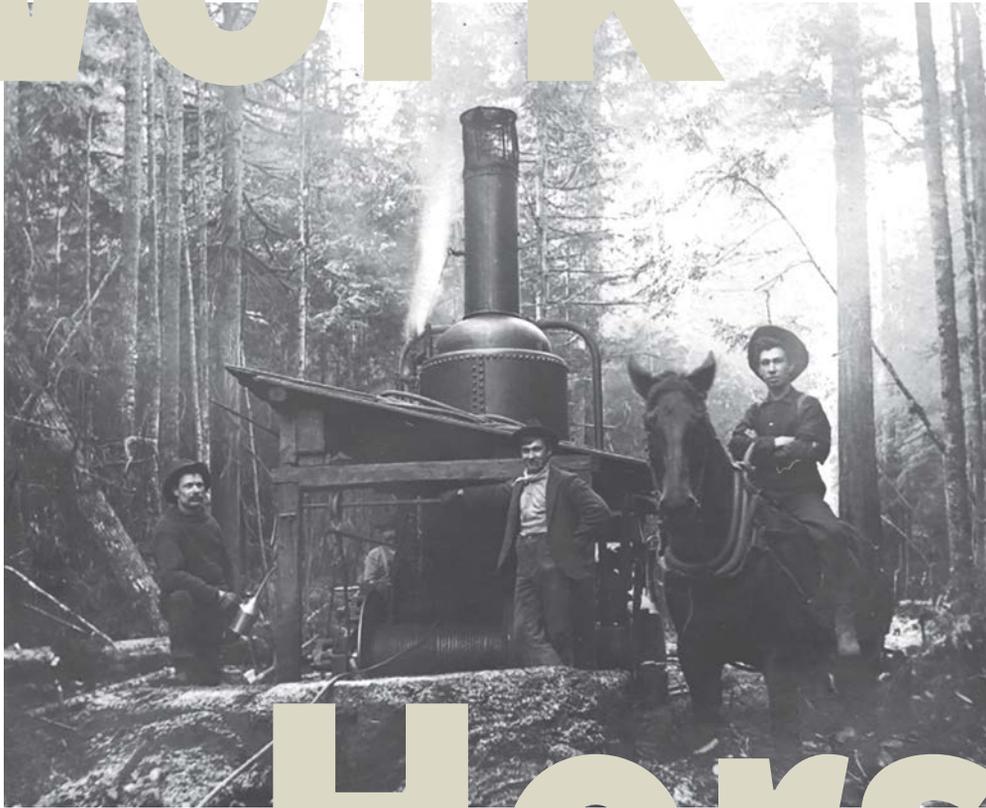
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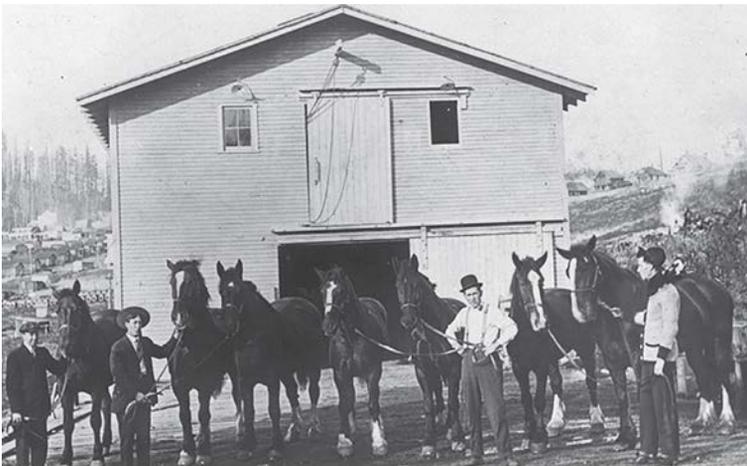
From 1911 until the 1930s, the Powell River Company kept a stable of 20 horses.

Three horses worked at the wharf and paper storage. A team delivered groceries around Townsite. And more teams hauled lumber. One horse pulled the dump cart and another worked in the lumberyard.

The horse with the longest employment history in the Company was purchased in August 1914 for \$1. Dollie (right) hauled lumber around the lumberyard until she retired. She died in the 1930s.

The arrival of the first motor vehicle to Powell River was the beginning of the end for horses. The horse barn was demolished in the late 1920s to make way for the golf course.

All images courtesy of the Powell River Historical Museum and Archives. Special thanks to Teedie Kagume.



Before there were feller bunchers and logging trucks, horses were king of the woods.

Without horses, there would have been no way to get the lumber out of the woods.

The logging industry depended heavily on the muscles of men and beasts, as manual logging techniques were used here until the early 1900s.

Teams of horses were used to haul logs out of the bush and move rolls of paper at the mill in the early 1900s. According to the *Powell River News*, (1960s) Farquhar McRae logged the McRae Cove area with oxen first, then horses and later a steam donkey. His crew hauled the logs down the hill to McRae Cove or Maude Bay, and then to Vancouver.

“Green gold” helped pay for the purchase of livestock, feed and farm equipment.

Today, there are still horses in the woods, but they’re usually ridden for pleasure. Members of local groups like the Powell River chapter of the Back Country Horseman and the Powell River Trail Riders enjoy the many trails in the area.

“There are tons and tons of trails here,” says Sarah Skogland, a director of the Outdoor Recreation User Group (ORUG) and member of the Powell River Trail Riders. “I’ve been blown away by how many beautiful trails there are to ride on.”

Hikers, bikers, runners, ATVers and horse-back riders all use the same trails. Skogland wants to let more people know that there is a protocol in place to keep horses and riders safe on the trails.

“If you come across a horse on a trail don’t rev your engine at the horse.” **FF**



Millennium Park Trails



POWELL RIVER LOVES

Forests

You may have noticed a new sign across Marine Avenue from Willingdon Beach Campsite. The sign displays a map of trails that wind through the 105 hectares of parkland that make up the green heart of our City. Trails lead from Willingdon Beach to the Recreation Complex.



MAYOR DAVE FORMOSA

This forest is a natural sanctuary for wildlife – and humans. The park features wooded trails, creeks, a swimming beach, a waterfront trail, a bike park, a skate park, a playground and a water park, two museums, the Complex, and many other attractions and natural amenities.

Recently, volunteers have improved the trails outlined on the map. That kind of involvement shows how much the community values this area.

The purchase of the lands that make up this park, and, last year, the trees, was an achievement of which we should all be proud.

The lands were purchased at a discount value from PRSC for \$1.43 million and funded by a successful municipal referendum. The trees were purchased for \$1.125 million from Island Timberlands and funded from the Powell River Community Forest dividend. In other words, trees harvested sustainably by our locally owned and managed community forest saved the trees in Millennium Park.

The revenue from our community forest has also built many community projects, including the Timberlane track, construction of the bike park and skate park, upgrading the trails in Millennium Park, returning the historic Anderson sawmill and logging equipment to the Powell River museum, renovations to the Powell River Academy of Music and other community buildings, the Brain Injury Society community garden, and PRISMA.

All of this happens because of a community forest that operates mostly in our watershed. Our watershed is a gem that we must protect, and yet we're able to operate a productive, viable forestry operation in that watershed, while guaranteeing protection for our drinking water.

The benefits of our local, sustainably and professionally managed Powell River Community Forest, and other locally-based managed forests and companies, are key to the long-term success of this community.

The vast majority of logging, forest management, tree-planting and silviculture that happens around Powell River is done to world-class sustainable standards on public lands, governed by the *Forest Act* and other provincial laws and regulations.

We are proud of our historic mill town roots and we are excited that our community has evolved into a community that encourages diversity, creativity and sustainable development.

The happy co-existence of forest industry and recreational use of the forest and backcountry is just one of the things that makes Powell River such a great place to work, live and play.

Fire safety

We hope you will join us in preparing for this era of climate change-caused forest fires. We don't need to tell you that preventing wild fires, and keeping your family safe in an emergency, are crucial. Your government depends on individuals to be active participants in preventing and preparing for emergencies.

We're pleased to be working with the Powell River Regional District and Tla'amin Nation to reduce wildfire risks around our community.

To learn more about what your local governments are doing to prevent fires and plan for emergencies, please read the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. (Look under emergency services at powellriverrd.bc.ca.)

To learn more about how to keep your own family safe, please see the FireSmart Canada web site at firesmartcanada.ca.

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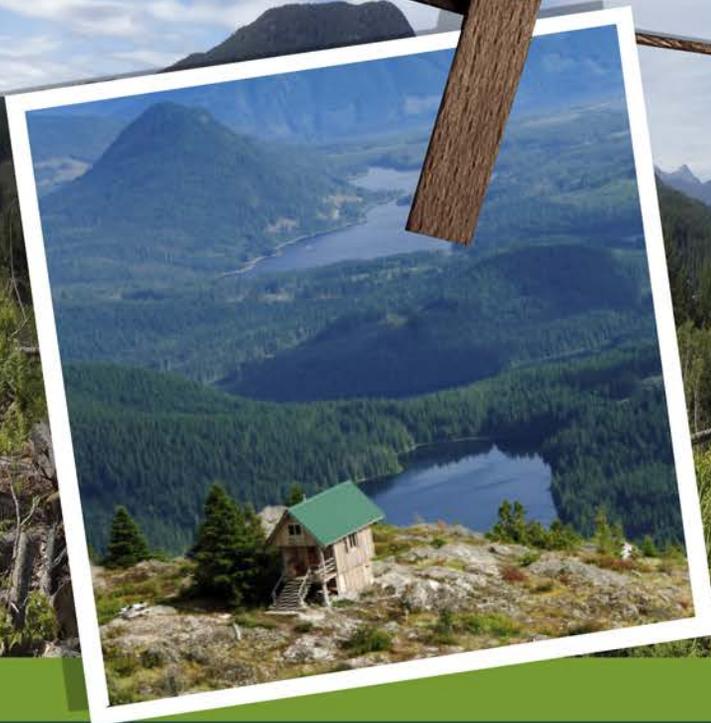
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Industry brain

Forestry education is attracting a new crowd.
(But few are from the Sunshine Coast.)

Back in Grade 12, super-achiever Emma Driedger thought she'd planned the perfect career: study physics, become a physics professor, then teach at a university. But seven years later, sipping coffee at Powell River's Base Camp Food + Art, she explained how her path diverged – into the woods.

► “I spent the summer after first year in a particle accelerator, at UBC's TRIUMF lab,” said the now-24-year-old forester-in-training. “The experiments ran 24 hours a day, and we worked in shifts, so I'd be in there watching dots on a screen, alone. I began wondering why I wanted to do this for a living.”

For the rest of her undergraduate degree – still unsure which field to conquer – she switched into biology. Then, in 2014, she came camping at Saltery Bay with her parents and sister. The family is from Cloverdale, and visits relatives at Tla'amin.

While she was here, two events changed the course of her future.

First, wondering how she could find a career that would let her earn a paycheck in beautiful, peaceful Powell River, she picked up *Ferns & Fallers* magazine.

“I looked through it and realized that I knew nothing about the forest industry. And I love trees. I love our coastal forests. I feel happiest and most at peace in the woods. I've always been passionate about the forest – but I didn't notice because I thought everyone felt that way.”

Second, at Blackberry Fest, she met a local woman with the same breed of dog as she has – a Nova Scotia Duck Toller. They got to chatting; the woman said she was a forest tech, and explained that she spent her working days in the woods, with her dog.

To Driedger, this sounded like a dream – the opposite of the loneliness and boredom she'd found in the lab. In high school and university, she said, no one had suggested forestry as a career. In fact, she didn't know anything about what it was.

“From the outside, it just looks like cutting down trees. I can totally get how that turns people off. It turned me off at first. But there's

so much more to it than that.”

After researching forestry jobs and school programs, she chose UBC's new Master of Sustainable Forest Management program. It's a nine-month course that leads to accreditation as a Registered Professional Forester. Since then, she has moved to Powell River with her family, and she's looking for work.

Here in forestry country, the number of high school students planning for a career in the woods isn't exactly overwhelming. In fact, one of the two Powell River Community Forest's 2016 scholarships – worth \$2,500 each – is still available – as just one local young person applied this year. The scholarship is available for locals enrolled or planning to enroll in a forest-related program. Over the past few years, Greg Hemphill, the president of the PRCF, says the board has been “surprised” by the lack of applicants.

Wages and demand are high. Overall, salaries for foresters and forestry techs average \$73,877 a year, according to Welcome BC. The median income in Powell River? Less than half, at just \$35,494, according to Vital Signs 2015.

Plus, it's a way for young environmentalists to make a significant impact in their career.

In fact, the UBC Masters in Sustainable Forest Management was created just to scoop this demographic, according to the coordinator of the program, Deb DeLong.

“Over the past 10 or 15 years, the environmental degrees [offered at Canadian universities] have just exploded in popularity,” she said. “People are interested in the natural world. But there's not a lot of employment with a degree like that.”

Much of DeLong's own career as a forester involved developing alternatives to clear-cutting and enhancing the value-added sector,

“From the outside, it just looks like cutting down trees. I can totally get how that turns people off. It turned me off at first. But there's so much more to it than that.”

- Emma Driedger



Grade 4 James Thomson students during their 2016 forestry tour (photo by David Woolley)

in the post-Clayoquot Sound and “war in the woods” era. Environmental science is a great background for managing forests, she said. Most students in DeLong’s program come from sciences, like Driedger. But some of the most successful students have also come from social sciences – philosophy students, she said, bring essential critical thinking skills which catapult them to the top of their classes.

Across the province, more and more programs encourage teens to consider forestry as a career. At Campbell River’s Carihi Secondary School, logger-turned-teacher Jason Kerluck developed a hands-on forestry program that funnels a new generation of forest workers into colleges and universities (see his Q&A, below). It’s one of six similar programs around

Teen dream: breaking out of

How to get kids interested in working in the woods? We asked logger-turned-teacher Jason Kerluck. He started the pioneering Carihi Secondary Forestry Program in January 2012, and is routing a whole generation of Campbell River teens into well-paid careers in the forest. It’s one of six programs like this in BC.

Why don’t more schools have forestry programs?

Kerluck • I think teachers create programs in areas that they have a background in. There are very few teachers who are educated in our forest sector. Not to mention all the extra time and effort it takes to develop a program from scratch. There also need to be other supports to sustain any program: funding, resources, and most importantly interest. As a result, there are very few forest education programs offered to high school students.

What myths do you bust?

Kerluck • I feel that many people are not interested in forestry because of all the negative publicity. Most people see forestry as a sunset industry with no future. People believe that we export all our logs, which takes away jobs from British Columbians. This is not true! It is not just cut the trees down and walk away, like some people think. Forestry education is about informing people about the facts, the history, and the future.

How did you first start working in the woods?

Kerluck • When I was 17, I got a call one evening from my wrestling coach, Bill Nelson. “I got good news and bad news,” he said. “I got you a job logging and you start tomorrow.” The bad news: “We are on early shift, so I will pick you up at 3 am.” I was pretty excited and curious about the job and slept very little that



night. My first job was setting chokers on a skyline yarding system. I had no idea what that was, or what to expect. I just knew that it paid more than my current job at the deli, and I got to work outside.

What jobs did you have as a logger? What training did you take?

Kerluck • I pulled rigging and chased on the long line. I worked on grapple yarders, chasing and occasionally hooking. I worked as a second loader and a first aider. I worked on different logging systems, including chasing on a helicopter logging system. I worked

the province.

In Powell River, all Grade 4 students spend a day in the woods learning about forestry, coordinated by the BC Ministry of Forests. The Ministry also usually coordinates a local program for a handful of senior high students thinking about natural resources management. The course gets their boots dirty surveying, brushing, tree planting, and other teen-worthy tasks. It's taking a break this year – though coordinator Martin Plewak says it has been very successful at channeling students into forestry programs, wildfire management, and other areas.

For Brooks Secondary student Zack Bolland, though, his interest in forestry came from a decade in Powell River's Junior Forest



Grade 4 Edgehill students during their 2016 forestry tour (photo by Sheila Reed)

the classroom and into the woods



as a rigging slinger doing corridor logging, using a shotgun skyline system on a grapple yarder with a bowman power carriage. I really enjoyed my time working on the skyline as it was very challenging mentally and physically, but you also got to work with a larger crew, which was a lot of fun. I always seemed to have a good group of guys on my crew who liked to work hard and have fun. All my training was done on the job. In 1998, I applied for a Forest Renewal BC grant, which was aimed at training forestry workers. I was successful in getting the grant and went to BCIT

to complete the Forest Technician Diploma Program. After completing my forestry diploma I worked as a forest engineer for two years.

Why did you then decide to become teacher?

Kerluck • I think I always wanted to be a teacher. After finishing high school with poor grades, I didn't think I would be successful going to school, and chose to work instead. After completing the forestry diploma program at BCIT, I realized that pursuing a teaching degree was not as unachievable as I once thought. So I completed one year of schooling in my hometown of Campbell River, and applied to UVic. I enrolled in a masters program and earned my Masters Degree in 2008.

How did the forestry program at Carihi start?

Kerluck • It started as a conversation between me and Bill (my former wrestling coach). He encouraged me to combine my forestry knowledge and experience with education in the school. I won't lie, it made my head spin just thinking about how to create something like that. What would I teach? How would I get it in the curriculum? How would I get kids to sign up? How would I deal with transportation? Where would I get funding and equipment? The list went on. But over time, and more conversations with Bill and others, I started to piece things together. Some of the keys that were necessary to the creation of the program were a very support-

ive administrative staff at my school, a huge forest community support group who are always eager to help, and the financial support of the Truck Loggers Association! The class officially started at Carihi in January of 2012, and there have been five different classes through the program so far.

What have been the successes of the program so far?

Kerluck • The students who have entered the forestry workforce. This year, three students have applied to the VIU forestry program, and one of last year's grads, Breagh Kobayashi, is currently at UBC studying forestry. Regardless of the direction students take following completion of the program, they always leave knowing more about the forest around them and have a better understanding of BC's forest sector.

When a student chooses to pursue forestry after high school, how does that make you feel?

Kerluck • I think it is great if that's what they want to do. My purpose is not to push students into the industry. Yes, there is a work shortage now and will be more of one in the future, but I feel my role as a forestry teacher is to offer the truth about forestry, past, present, and future, and then allow them to make their own choices. At the very least, after being in my class they should be able to name all the trees and shrubs when they go camping.

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Wardens. It's the last BC club of a once-thriving nature-education force started by the Canadian Forestry Association. In it, Boland learned about fires, building shelters, wildlife, and safety. Going in to Grade 12 in September, he plans to attend the British Columbia Institute of Technology's two-year Forest and Natural Areas Management diploma program in fall 2017 – and become a Registered Forest Technologist.

Junior Forest Wardens was just part of how deeply Boland has been steeped in Powell River's woods. His father often took him camping and hunting growing up. He also recalls an influential elementary school teacher, Andrew Shostak, who would take the class mountain biking. Several teachers at Brooks, he reports, have encouraged him to consider a career in the woods.

"I'm one of the only kids going in to forestry at Brooks. It's surprising, because Powell River is pretty bush-oriented."

Not to mention, Boland has a pretty swish plan for after college: move to the interior, fight forest fires during the summers, and teach snowboarding in the winters. Not a bad way to spend your 20s.

Similarly, when Allan Knapp was a student at Brooks, the school arranged for him to job-shadow a timber cruiser – a forest professional who gathers information about the forest to help plan harvesting and planting, and other activities.

That boots-on-the-ground experience was enough to convince him he wanted in. Knapp enrolled in Vancouver Island University's (VIU) forest resources technology program.

During the summers, Knapp worked with Braun Forestry Consulting and Western Forest Products. His WFP job led to an eight-month position with the company in Powell River, working in engineering, cutblocks and silviculture.

"Along the way, people I worked with suggested I continue my education and get my degree," Knapp said. "They kept talking about the glass ceiling that people with [only] diplomas run into."

Through night school at VIU Powell River, Knapp earned his Math 12, Chemistry 12 and Biology 12. At VIU in Nanaimo, he finished first year sciences before moving to UBC for two more years to graduate with a forest resource management degree.

Seven years after graduating from Brooks, Knapp wrote his final exam to become an RPF on April 28.

The promise of a forestry education now has just one detail to bring this story full circle. Both Knapp and Driedger are looking for jobs. But according to the Forest Products Sector Council, those jobs should not be hard to find. The Council estimates that the BC forest sector will see an employment shortage of between 10,000 to 32,000 workers by the end of the decade. **FF**

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*Are
forestry
jobs green
jobs?*

By Pieta Woolley

The wet, green smell of Douglas-fir wafts over this patch of forest like a Glade *Cashmere Woods*™ air freshener gone wild. Literally, into the wild.

▶ In the middle of the Powell River Community Forest, Clay Whiteway perches in the cab of a \$900,000 processor – a long-necked dinosaur of a machine with a too-heavy head – cutting down a swath of 65-year-old trees to make way for a new logging road. Most of the forest stands, silently. Some of it is now on the ground.

The processor's computer tells Whiteway where to move the head for the best cut. He swings it into position, grabs the trunk of the tree, makes the cut and holds on. Bzzzz.

Slowed by wind in the 65-year-old fir's elegant evergreen branches, the tree falls, bending and swaying for the last time. Up again. Whirrrr. The processor gobbles the trunk, stripping the branches off and spitting out sawdust. Poof. A new wave of woody smell washes over the clearing. Whiteway clunks this log on a pile of other nude logs, and swings around to cut the next tree.

It took less than a minute.

This is it: logging. What sustains BC's coastal cities and beyond. You can't argue with the numbers. The forest sector in BC maintains 145,800 full-time jobs, direct and indirect, according to a 2015 report by the Council of Forest Industries. It includes forest scientists, planners, loggers, road builders, pulp and paper workers, and tree planters. That represents 6.3 percent of all jobs in the province. The year before, the industry handed \$2.5 billion to governments. Most of BC's First Nations now manage their own forests. In a province with the worst child poverty rate in the country, claiming "jobs" as a value might be worth thinking about.





But stumps and slash are ugly compared to a living forest. Young forests don't draw many tourists, who prefer the old narrative of Canada as a pristine wilderness. Watching a processor guillotine young trees? It doesn't immediately scream "planet-friendly."

But this is complicated stuff, and we live in a collaborative, innovative era. So appearances are not always what they seem.

In fact, there's a lot to recommend the forest sector as green. Trees are undeniably renewable. Growing trees capture vast amounts of carbon (in Powell River's Stillwater division, for example, the forests capture about 55,000 tonnes of CO₂e in a year). Replacing fossil-fuel intense building materials such as steel and concrete with wood does double duty – wood is renewable, and the carbon captured stays in the wood as long as the building remains. And, 21st century forestry standards on BC's public land are among the tightest in the world, in terms of preserving habitat, clean water, and planning for sustainable forests 250 years out.

Of course, there's the not-so-green argument, too. Vast amounts of BC's old growth has been lost to the historical industry; on the coast, just 10 percent of forests are 250 years old or older (as opposed to about 30 percent pre-contact.) Animal habitat is lost when forests come down. Shipping lumber – especially internationally – is as dirty as shipping anything else. And aesthetically, seeing stumps where forests once stood can be disturbing. Science be damned; part of "green" is how it looks.

Philosophically, too, it's worth considering humans' role in nature. Forests are dynamic, not static. They have not stood still for 10,000 years, since the last ice age. About every 350 years, most are destroyed by bugs, wind or fire (see Page 40). Can humans, in a responsible, sustainable way, enter into this cycle with an industry and call ourselves "green"?

In the working forest, where Whiteway is cutting trees, the "green" question isn't philosophical. It smells like fuel and timber. Whiteway works for Bob Marquis Contracting Ltd., a local road building and logging company.



SERENE & GREEN ON A SATURDAY NIGHT: On June 4, two boom boats organized logs by the Hulks beach, as paddleboarders and kayakers cruised by. Meanwhile, sea lions yelped “orp-orp” from Catalyst’s wood chip barges - their own private sea spa.

Papermaker bets on green

Catalyst Powell River has earned a lot of green cred lately. It’s worth celebrating. But it also raises a philosophical question for the residents of the region.

First, a little background. Pulp and paper mills have historically been big polluters – dumping chlorine and heavy metals into sensitive marine environments, stinking up the communities they supported with Sulphur dioxide. Under pressure from activists such as Powell River locals Gordon Wilson and Terry Jacks (who wrote *Seasons in the Sun*), the province of BC introduced new regulations in 1992 that forced industry to clean up its act.

Since then, Catalyst Powell River has transformed itself into one of the greenest mills in North America – if not the world – in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Partly through regulation, but largely through its own independent commitments.

Even today, though, Catalyst doesn’t wear a halo. At the Powell River operation in 2015, the mill generated 43 million kilos of greenhouse gas emissions, released 79.6 kilos of particulate matter per day, and sent 26,000 tonnes of solid waste to the landfill, according to its magazine-like “sustainability report.” Based on its industrial activity, some locals have suggested that the mill should be shut down – and quit cluttering up the view of Harwood Island.

Which raises the question: is it more green to shut down the mill to halt local pollution? Or is it more green to encourage Catalyst Powell River’s continuing transformation, as it represents a way forward – a

reproducible, sustainable example – for dirtier mills globally to transform as well?

Frankly, 2015 and 2016 are bumper years for greening Catalyst.

The \$24 million G13 Turbine steam-to-energy generator started operating in November – capturing waste steam and generating 8 megawatts a day. On May 17, Catalyst energy manager Carlo Dal Monte was in Niagara Falls on behalf of the site receiving the federal Canadian Industry Program for Energy Conservation Leadership Award.

At the time, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Natural resources, Kim Rudd, said, “Their commitment to improving environmental sustainability and energy efficiency is impressive and a great example to other manufacturers.”

In 2015, A&W Canada – itself a leader in greening the fast food industry – chose to switch to Catalyst paper products in its restaurants, for enhanced sustainability.

Catalyst was part of negotiating the Great Bear Rainforest land use agreement, which took effect on January 28. Industry Canada publicized Catalyst’s efforts to ecologically source wood fibre – in the hopes that other companies would see the company as a leader.

“When Catalyst introduced their boreal-free forest paper in response to concerns over unsustainable logging of one of the largest remaining intact forest systems in the world, they began receiving orders immediately, clearly filling a market need for products that



reenification

meet high environmental standards,” reads the report, written before the 2010 Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement. “This market demand further reinforced their commitment to their Chain of Custody program.”

Catalyst is again one of Canada’s top 50 Corporate Knights, is certified by FSC, PEFC and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. It maintains collaborative partnerships with the World Wildlife Foundation, the Council for Clean Capitalism, the Coast Forest Conservation Initiative, and others.

This approach doesn’t make the company money directly yet, said Chinn. Many customers will still choose price over green cred. But in terms of the company’s long-term sustainability, Chinn believes greening Catalyst is the right move.

“Our license to operate comes from the public,” he said in an interview in his office on site. “If we demonstrate a high level of environmental sustainability, and exceed all [mandated] requirements, then the public will look at us as a responsible environmental partner.”

Not to mention, in 2015 alone, the mill provided 383 local jobs at an average salary of \$75,000 (twice the local average wage), paid \$3.4 million in property taxes, and spent \$10.1 million on services from local vendors.

If a “green job” is any job that has become greener – as the Columbia Institute’s Charley Beresford argues – arguably, Catalyst’s jobs are the greenest jobs in town. Why? Per job, thanks to innovation, investment and regulation, they likely represent the greatest reduction in both GHG emissions and pollution in the whole region.

▶ The owner is long-time Logger Sports organizer Bob Marquis. On the way to visit the job site, Marquis brakes and shuts off his engine. The windows are open. Warm air floats in to the truck, and purple flowers wave outside the windows.

“I like what I do,” he exhales. Born and raised in Powell River, Marquis’ family has lived off the woods for four generations. “To me, this is green. We maintain leak-free machines, we get to work in the forest all day managing a really renewable resource, we plant them and we grow them. Apparently, we need carbon eaters on this planet. We shouldn’t forget that the forest sector is the backbone of the economy on the coast.”

Over the past three decades, Marquis has responded to changes in forest policy, including protecting riparian zones, leaving setbacks and Old Growth Management Areas, and much more. He gets it. Management means the industry has a future. His staffers earn an average of \$70,000 a year – without postsecondary. That’s worth keeping, too, he says.

In fact, most of BC’s big-name environmental organizations agree with Marquis: forestry can be sustainable, and it’s here to stay as part of BC’s emerging green economy.

Beyond that general statement, though, we’re lost.

What does a sustainable sector look like, in terms of today’s hot topic – old growth – and also how much timber should leave the forest (Annual Allowable Cut, or AAC)?

And, what the heck does “green job” even mean?

What is a green job?

To weigh how confused the “green economy” conversation is, look no further than Vancouver. Policy wonks and public relations folk, in particular, seem to salivate over the nature-inspired hue. It’s frequently used as a brand, alongside “world-class” and “most-livable city,” to enhance the city’s reputation. But nailing down exactly what it means, even in think-tank-rich Vancouver, is elusive.

On the Vancouver Economic Commission’s Web site, for example, the writer claims: “Today, the world is looking to Vancouver as a true pioneer in all things green. For those interested in harnessing the power of business to advance green thinking and effect environmental change, there’s no better place to be these days.”

The City drafted the “Greenest City 2020 Action Plan” and called for doubling of the number of local food jobs in the region.

Yet neither the VEC nor the City mention one of the region’s biggest employers, the Port of Vancouver, which unloaded 3,182 container and cruise ships in the heart of the city last year – and shipped 35 million metric tonnes of coal.

To these thinkers, “green” means farmers markets and new LEED-certified buildings. The VEC reported that farmers market spending in Vancouver grew from \$40,000 in 1994, to \$15 million. Meanwhile, Vancouverites spent roughly \$7.23 billion on groceries in 2015 – rendering that \$15 million a mere bubble in the great grocery Kombucha.

What exactly is a green job, in an urban environment? Certainly, the mining head offices in Downtown Vancouver have

▶ small footprints – a little take-out here, a little printer paper there. But the industry the offices support can be toxic. The head office for Imperial Metals, for example, is on Hornby Street. It owns the Mount Polley mine, which sent its entire tailings pond into the rivers of the Cariboo in 2014. Are the city jobs toxic, by association?

“There’s also the live/work/play downtown effect,” the VEC site continues. “Having all three lifestyle elements in Vancouver’s vibrant downtown core lends itself to a happier, more creative and more productive workforce.”

Curiously, the daily gridlock on the Lion’s Gate Bridge or near the George Massey Tun-

nel didn’t get a mention.

To be fair, this kind of commentary happens in a vacuum. What is a green job? What is a green economy? While there’s plenty of buzz about sustainability, there’s far too little discussion about the specifics.

It’s coming, though. Beyond branding, Vancouver is also home to the more-serious green economy thinkers, too. This November, Green Jobs BC will host its first “green jobs” conference, aimed at nailing it all down. Green Jobs BC is a coalition of labour and environmental groups, ranging from UNIFOR to the David Suzuki Foundation.

“You can green any job,” said Charley



Q&A with **Shannon Janzen**
Western Forest Products
Vice President and Chief Forester

WFP has a long history of planning, harvesting and planting forests on the Sunshine Coast. One of the women at the helm? A 40-year-old forester and environmentalist with a global consciousness, of course.

BC’s green model can help

When you were a teen, what made you decide you wanted to go in to environmental science at university?

Janzen • I recall a turning point in 1991, at age 15, when my high school geography class discussed the North American Free Trade Agreement. Living in a small interior town, information wasn’t terribly accessible in the era before the internet. And like many teenage girls, I had a rather narrow suite of interests.

But for some reason NAFTA caught my attention. Would the US really drain Canada of its water like people suggested? I had spent my happiest moments outdoors and loved nature so I began paying attention to environmental issues. By the time the ‘war in the woods’ over Clayoquot Sound peaked two years later, I had chosen my educational path.

In University, why did you decide to pursue forestry instead of environmental sciences?

Janzen • I started my studies at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) in 1994 with every intention of declaring Wildlife Management as my major. But looking back, my journey towards forestry actually started the summer prior when I had the good fortune to be introduced to Allan Banner.

Allan was a respected research ecologist with the BC Ministry of Forests in Victoria. Through a connection with a neighbor we had arranged to meet and discuss his work and his career. To my knowledge he was the first forester I had ever met. I was impressed by his passion, his scientific approach and his care for people and the environment. And he had

one piece of advice: “Become a Forester. You won’t regret it.”

It took me until my second year (1995) to realize Allan was right. To maximize my influence on forest management in British Columbia, I should become a forester. Twenty-one years later, I have no regrets.

What have you been able to achieve ‘for the planet’ as a forester?

Janzen • To ensure I have a positive impact over the course of my career, I have developed a common personal purpose that grounds how I make decisions. My self-defined purpose is simply to make business sense out of doing the right thing for the planet.

Sustainability has three pillars: society, economy and environment. Always asking questions and finding solutions using ‘and’ not ‘or’ takes discipline. There is a constant tension between local and global needs and interests. And that is what makes forestry so exciting. There is never one right answer.

So if there is one thing I feel I have achieved ‘for the planet’ it is in helping people find their way to integrated solutions that provide multiple benefits. I’m not a big fan of trade-offs.

What are the biggest misconceptions those in the forestry community hold about those who identify as environmentalists and vice versa?

Janzen • I think it is the belief that there are two opposing sides and that it is possible for one to win over the other. That has not been my experience.

I have had the privilege of spending five years

*“If there is something I am not particularly proud of, it is how **silent the forest industry in BC has become** over the years. We are world leaders in reforestation and we are leaders in sustainable forest management... While there is always room for improvement, it is time to start sharing our experiences with the rest of the world. There is a **desperate need for a success story** and there are so many learnings we can offer.”*

- Shannon Janzen

end global deforestation

living and working in a logging camp on the north end of Vancouver Island. I have also had the unique opportunity to spend an equal amount of time working collaboratively with environmental groups in implementing the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement.

What makes these two experiences interesting is not their contrast, but rather their similarity.

I've come to believe that we all want many of the same things and that there is no such thing as one side winning – only finding the right balance between local, regional and

global needs and interests.

What impacts have BC's sustainable practices had on forestry practices elsewhere in the world?

Janzen • Over the past two decades, I have spent much of my leisure time travelling. My husband is also a forester and we have ventured across Central America and Southeast Asia. Our most recent adventure was to Cambodia this past December. The contrast to BC is striking.

What I have learned is that not all wood products are equal. Forests are harvested around the world everyday (legally or illegally) to fill global demands. But what is astonishing is that in much of the globe, forests are not replanted with native species. They are either left fallow or converted to alternative uses such as agriculture and palm oil.

At age 40, instead of losing sleep over NAFTA, it is deforestation that keeps me awake at night. And if there is something I am not particularly proud of, it is how silent the forest industry in BC has become over the years. We are world leaders in reforestation and we are leaders in sustainable forest management. We manage natural forests for multiple resource values over a 250-year planning horizon. While there is always room for improvement, it is time to start sharing our experiences with the rest of the world. There is a desperate need for a success story and there are so many learnings we can offer.

When you think about BC's forest sector in 20 years, what do you hope for it?

Are forestry jobs green jobs?

Shannon Janzen, chief forester, WFP

There is a long list of reasons for why forestry is green. I will choose two.

First, forests are the world's primary source of renewable building materials. BC has a long history in growing trees and the province is investing in research that will help ensure our future forests are adapted to the changing climate.

Second, sustainable forest management is an important part of Canada's strategy to mitigate climate change. Forests capture and store carbon dioxide through photosynthesis. When harvesting occurs, a significant portion of that harvested carbon is stored in the products that are produced. This storage can last for many decades, in wood used in our homes, or even for centuries (when protected from the elements) in interior beams or architectural features.

As global demand grows, the goal is to displace traditional non-renewable, fossil fuel intensive materials such as concrete, plastics and steel with climate friendly renewable materials. This makes wood products from sustainably-managed forests an integral part of the global climate solution.

So yes, forestry jobs in BC are most certainly green jobs.

Janzen • I believe BC is an international bright spot and my hope is that we will not lose sight of our global responsibility. Our choices today are critical to the generations to come – not just locally, provincially or nationally but around the world.

I am proud of my profession, my career choice and my work as the Vice President and Chief Forester at Western Forest Products. I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to work for a company that shares my values and recognizes the importance of aligning interests and building partnerships with local communities, First Nations and abroad.

The world needs forest products companies in BC to tell our story and to be recognized as global leaders in delivering a sustainable supply of the most renewable and carbon friendly building material on the planet. That is my hope for the BC forest sector and not just for the next 20 years but for generations to come.



aac

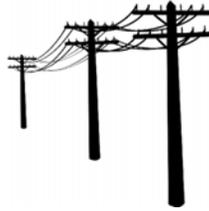
- Stands for “Annual Allowable Cut,” and is calculated in cubic metres.

- One cubic metre is about as big as a telephone pole. One logging truck represents about 42 cubic metres.



- Since 1975, the coastal AAC has declined by almost half, from 30 million AAC to 17 million AAC, due to parks and other protections.

- BC’s Chief Forester Diane Nicholls sets the AAC for most of the province. She considers both forestry science and the forest values expressed by BC citizens.



- The AAC in the Powell River Community Forest is 25,000 cubic metres, and will soon increase to 35,000 cubic metres.

old growth

- Is considered to be 250 years on the coast, and 80 years in the interior.

- It’s been 10,000 years since the last ice age. No trees in BC are that old. Fires, pests and wind storms usually flatten coastal forests every 250 to 350 years.

- On June 1, the BC Chamber of Commerce asked the provincial government to protect more old growth areas, especially those near tourism-rich communities. As policy, the Chamber supports BC’s resource sector, including forestry.

- Of BC’s 55 million hectares of public forest land, about 25 million hectares are old growth and 4 million hectares are protected – either in parks and protected areas.

- On the Coast of B.C., 1.783 million hectares of the 3.18 million hectares of old growth forests on Crown land are protected, according to the BC Ministry of Forests. The Ancient Forest Alliance challenges those figures, arguing that only eight percent (rather than half) is actually protected.



► Beresford, the executive director of the Columbia Institute and spokesperson for Green Jobs BC. “Any industry, any workplace can be greened. This is big-tent thinking.”

According to the coalition, green jobs must be socially equitable – meaning they must pay well – and environmentally responsible and result in a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Green Jobs BC is just starting out. The first three industries the board chose to focus on are building retrofits, clean energy and public transit. Forestry was a close fourth, and will get attention soon, Beresford said.

In the meantime, she pointed to the gravity of the movement.

Already, she said, the world has warmed by one degree, melting ice, causing storms and surges, and disappearing islands into the sea. Canada committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions so global warming will plateau at 1.5 degrees – by getting to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

That’s where green jobs come in. Keep the prosperity, lose the pollution.

“How do we get from here to there?” Beresford said. “The timelines are tight, but not impossible. We need to make a pretty quick change.”

Is forestry green? “Any job can be greener,” she says.

“Good jobs, social justice and environmental justice – BC can pursue all of these by implementing a green jobs strategy,” reads Green Jobs BC’s peppy, positive Web site.

Step out of the city, though, and all that urban pep faces Whiteway’s enormous sawdust-spewing processor.

Forestry? It could be green. But it’s not - yet. Or maybe it totally is already.

Honeymooning in BC in 1995, Peter Jungwirth wanted to see the Carmanah Valley on Vancouver Island. He’d heard about Carmanah on the news at home, in Austria – the anti-logging protests, the arrests. Big trees drew the forester.

But driving down the highway towards the valley, he couldn’t believe what he was seeing.

“We drove through a moonscape,” Jungwirth said in an interview with *F&F*, describing a massive clearcut that extended along both sides of the Vancouver Island highway – a practice the *Forest Act* has since axed. “I just couldn’t believe why there was a conflict about this grove, when it was already known to have the biggest trees in the world. Any-



one from Europe [where there is no more old growth] would just shake their head. I shook my head.”

Jungwirth was getting a crash-course in BC’s two most enduring industry images: a fresh clear-cut, and a grove of ancient old growth – untouched by chainsaws, wind or fire – for millennia.

Since then, in spite of the moonscape introduction, Jungwirth immigrated to BC. He soon discovered BC’s much more common (but under-photographed) coastal forest: a second-growth stand – trees that have grown for 30 or 60 or 120 years since they were logged or burned, and will be logged again. As the chair of Ladysmith’s Ecoforestry Institute Society, he has pledged to help the province’s industry transition to more sustainable practices – such as those pioneered in Vancouver Island’s Wildwood Forest.

Forestry can be green, he says. But it needs to change. Drop the amount of wood companies are allowed to take out of the forest – which is set by the province’s Chief Forester. Allow one third of BC trees to age enough to be considered old growth (usually 250 years on the coast). Support the value-added industry. And raise the standards for forestry on private land.



Imagine a machine that uses solar energy to remove carbon from the air and turns it into a beautiful, strong and sustainable building material.

Oh wait...that's what trees are.

NO BLUFFING: Above, the Friends of Stillwater Bluffs are out with Ken Wu (quoted on the next page) and TJ Watt (who shot this photo) from the pro-old growth Ancient Forest Alliance. While harvesting old growth is contentious in BC, supporting a vital, second-growth industry is less so. Even the David Suzuki Foundation supports growing trees – the image at left was posted on the foundation’s Facebook page in May. In 2010, it noted that the conservation and harvesting-friendly Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement represents “a new era for forestry in Canada” – preserving all 30 million hectares of caribou habitat. It was signed by the Suzuki Foundation and ForestEthics, alongside Howe Sound Pulp and Paper, Weyerhaeuser, Canfor and many more.

“We want this agreement to position Canada as a world leader in conservation and create a truly sustainable and globally competitive Canadian forest industry,” reads a Suzuki statement, at the time the agreement was announced.

“We gravitate to the spirit bear, not the rough-and-tumble logger. But it is one of the greenest jobs out there.”
- David Elstone

It is possible to have a truly sustainable industry, he argues. But we’re not there yet – and it’s costing BC in tourism – not to mention what it’s costing the bears, mushrooms and beetles.

These are all common criticisms of BC’s current forestry environment – 25 years after vast changes were made to forest policy to reflect the concerns raised during the War in the Woods era. Because BC is 95 percent public land, citizen values determine how most forestry is conducted there. Do we value jobs? Do we value old growth? Do we want parks? Do we want revenue to support provincial programs, such as education and health care?

Getting to “green” is a matter of opinion, says Larry Pederson, who was BC’s Chief Forester from 1994 to 2004. Many science-oriented professional foresters would say that BC’s laws mean the forests are now being managed sustainably. Forty percent of the coast has been set aside for parks and other protections. The coastal AAC has been slashed since he graduated from UBC in 1975 – from 30 million cubic metres per year to 17 million. And what is taken is replanted. The province doesn’t deforest itself. The coast is a thriving mix of growing forests and protected old growth.

But he also knows that science isn’t the last word on BC’s forest policy. During his tenure with the province, he helped write the *Forest Act* which forever changed the industry. That legislation was informed, he said, by citizen values that were often shouted through megaphones by urban activists standing on stumps, in mass protests in the woods.

“No one is debating whether there’s been effort at greening BC’s forest sector,” he said. “They’re debating whether there’s been enough effort.”

Another turning point

Ken Wu was one of those activists shouting into microphones in the early 1990s.

(Pederson said, “I watched Ken from the very beginning showing up on the scene – everything was an outrage. There was a lot of chest-thumping. To Ken’s credit, he made a difference. Not everybody can say that.”)

Since then, Wu has matured into a coalition-builder – a powerful model for the future of the forest sector. As executive director of the Ancient Forest Alliance, his goal is to find agreement between industry, First Nations and environmental groups to get to green, and save old growth. He was inspired by the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement, completed in January. That agreement preserves 85 percent of old growth on the north coast, while maintaining

a significant second growth industry.

Finding solutions, he said, is the new activism.

“Having a divisive mindset is a sure way to make sure the forest is destroyed,” said Wu.

The AFA is lobbying to save old growth stands on Vancouver Island. To that end, he’s visited the coast on invitation from Powell River Voices, speaking about sustainable forestry.

He’s hoping a similar model to the Great Bear Rainforest can be applied to Vancouver Island, to keep a green forest industry, while also protecting old growth.

His message is getting across. On June 1, the usually resource-friendly BC Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution to ask government to restrict old-growth logging. Similarly, at the convention in May, the 51 municipalities in the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities resolved to ask the province to end old growth logging on Vancouver Island. Since then, the idea has echoed around BC’s media, from the *Vancouver Sun* to City News.

Second growth is not the same as old growth, argues Wu. Old growth has multi-layered canopies, woody debris, well-developed layers of mosses, ferns, lichens, and shrubs necessary for a sustainable ecosystem. Trees grow back, he said. Entire ecosystems take centuries to build.

From industry, the Coast Forest Products Association also celebrated the GBR agreement. However, executive director Rick Jeffery notes that with protections come job losses. About one quarter less wood will be harvested from the GBR, he said, which will mean fewer jobs there. This agreement may represent the future of the industry across BC: much more protected old growth, a smaller forest sector, but stable.

Jeffery sits on the board of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Vancouver, and deeply understands the breadth and impact of family poverty in BC. Well-paying, middle-class jobs are important, but will remain only if the citizens of BC offer the forest sector the social license to do its work, Jeffery realizes.

“Our industry is sustainable – and we’re always striving to find ways to do it better,” he said.

“We think it’s important that the jobs are economically sustainable, too. So yes there’s been a loss of 40 percent of AAC on the coast over the last 20 years due to land use decisions such as the Great Bear Rainforest. But we’re really striving as an industry to offer green jobs that are stable, pay good, living wages and support our communities for years to come. So sometimes, you have to make some hard decisions to achieve that sustainability. At the end of the



Planning for forests in the year 2266

Take a shower in Powell River, and the water that's falling on you is from Haslam Lake. Just a 15-minute drive east into the woods, the deep blue body is the source of the city's domestic water supply. Haslam Lake also happens to be in the middle of the Powell River Community Forest (PRCF) – 7,100 hectares of land set aside for the benefit of the community. In fact, 86 percent of the community forest sits in the Haslam / Lang community watershed.

On June 8, PRCF manager Chris Laing was in the woods, inspecting a road-building operation that crosses several streams and the Sweetwater Creek Trail. "PRCF is a for-profit company run by a volunteer nine-member board of directors. While remaining profitable is one of our goals, we are very focused on protecting other values including water quality and recreation." Community Forest Tenures are unique in that they are owned and managed by the local community with all profits remaining in that community. To date PRCF has put more than \$6.5 million into local projects.

That PRCF's forestry activities are currently netting the region \$1.3 million a year, and effectively protecting the city's water supply speaks to how much forestry has changed over the last 25 years.

"Managing our forests sustainably for future generations is essential," said Laing. Recently, new inventories of the existing forest and improved knowledge of the growth of our future forests were used to model the

next 250 years. Other values such as water quality, recreation, old growth and wildlife tree areas were included in the analysis. "We found that the PRCF could sustain an increase to over 40,000m³ per year [of harvesting] from the current 25,000m³. We used the precautionary principle, and proposed an increase to 35,000m³ per year. This decision will result in growing trees to at least 100 years before harvesting them."

Certainly, heavy machine operator Dave Bruckshaw appreciates that future vision – and what the forest provides, now. On June 8, he was sitting in the cab of an excavator (which looks like a backhoe's big brother) making ditches on the side of what will be a road, by digging out loose dirt and sticks. He's built logging roads around Powell River for 20 years, and considers his job to be a green job. He and his family depend on both a strong industry and on clean tap water. The community forest model helps his family too. "My youngest son is in Junior Forest Wardens," said the 6'6" former shake blocker, standing on the new road. "We received money from the PRCF to repair the cabins."

If markets stay strong, increasing the cut to 35,000 cubic metres will mean even more money for community projects, Laing notes. Plus, well-paying jobs for local Powell Riverites, with approximately \$2 million a year in contracts and supply purchases. Most importantly, a sustainable future for generations to come.

day, it's important that we have that stability."

Defending old-growth harvesting is challenging, admits David Elstone, the executive director of the Truck Loggers Association – which represents 38,000 coastal contractors.

"Show what harvesting really looks like, and people go, 'Oh!' We gravitate to the spirit bear, not the rough-and-tumble logger. But it is one of the greenest jobs out there," he said.

As old-growth represents about 45 percent of the coastal harvest, just saying "no" to cutting it will mean closed sawmills, closed pulp mills, and other repercussions.

Elstone hopes that citizens will push past their knee-jerk reactions. Trees grow. The forest is dynamic. It's not a static museum piece. We can responsibly cut and regrow, and maintain biodiversity, soils, water, and a massive carbon sink. Forestry is green, Elstone said. It isn't greenwashing. It's the real thing.

Owning our own green

In the big city, you can get away with branding yourself as "green" without grappling with the environmental burdens of your economic foundations: container shipping, condo building, transportation, mining, and technology.

In rural areas, we don't have that luxury.

Every weekday morning in Powell River, you can stand by the Hulks beach, and watch truck after truck dumping logs into the Salish Sea. In Port Mellon, a drive down the highway will reveal one of the biggest log sorts in North America. Those logs came from our forests, and support a substantial percentage of the Sunshine Coast's working middle class.

Is it green? Maybe. That's a question of science and values – an opinion, rather than an absolute. Are they jobs? Absolutely.

They're fallers, professional foresters, mill workers, shake blockers, truck drivers, tree planters, road builders, heavy machine opera-

tors and mechanics – and all the caterers, accountants, lawyers, apparel-sellers, fuel sellers, and more that support the industry.

Back in the community forest, Marquis is looking ahead another 40 years. By then, his son, who is now a 26-year-old logger, will reach the end of his career.

In 2056, Marquis says, the region's third rotation of trees will be ready to harvest, and his son will still make his living from these woods – sustainably.

As we drive away from the job site, White-way continues to process trees.

The sawdust flies, the forest opens up for more logging roads. A couple of years from now, this patch of the Community Forest will be selectively logged – an operation aimed at helping the remaining 65-year-old trees grow bigger, more efficiently.

If we still need both green and jobs, those trees too will be harvested, and the land replanted. And we still may be deciding then exactly what "green jobs" means. **F**



By black

Germany & Austria tell a

When friends and relatives come from Europe to visit Vancouver Island forester Peter Jungwirth, they all want to see one thing: a bear.

“It’s an absolute highlight for people from Europe. In Austria, there are about 30 bears left in the whole country. There’s no chance you’ll ever see one there,” said Jungwirth, who moved to Canada in 1998. He takes visitors up Mount Washington to deliver the experience. They usually cooperate.

Similarly, Sierra Club forestry campaigner Jens Wieting – who emigrated to BC from Germany in 2006, is here largely for the wildlife.

“We’re blown away just walking though the landscapes,” he said. “You can see species like eagles, whales and bears if you’re lucky. We don’t have these species anymore in Germany. Or they’re so rare, most people will never see them.”

I interviewed both Jungwirth and Wieting for the story, “Are forestry jobs ‘green’ jobs?” During our conversations, both of them independently and spontaneously mentioned the disappeared bears (and large trees) from central Europe.

This caught my attention, naturally. The same week as we chatted, black bears were

The bears are gone, the gummies remain

Bruins appear in Germany’s folk art dating back centuries - yet the country’s last wild Eurasian brown bear died in 1838. Still, Germany has held on to bears in its cultural imagery – maybe even tighter since the real thing has slipped away.

At the Berlin International Film Festival, winners take home a Goldener Bär. It’s just like an Oscar, but a golden bear. Wooden bear carvings – children’s toys, piano stools, cuckoo clocks and cookie molds – dominate the German faux-antiques trade on eBay. Not to mention Gummi Bears – a treat invented by a German confectioner nearly a century after the country’s last live bear met its end. Bears still appear on ceramic beer steins, as well.

The bears have gone, but the fascination remains.

e-Bye, ck bears

Grimm tale of a post-bear existence. Can BC learn in time?

roaming Townsite, where I live. One ripped apart a new neighbour's garbage. Another left a dinner plate-sized, twiggy pile of "evidence" parked in the middle of the sidewalk two doors down. My kids and I stepped over it to get to the school bus.

At first, the difference struck me. BC seems in no danger of running out of bears. The black bear population alone is about 150,000.

Whereas the last wild bear in Germany was killed in 1838.

Reintroduction efforts there have failed. Most famously, "JJ1," or Bruno the Eurasian brown bear, wandered into Bavaria in early 2006 and ravaged dozens of sheep and chickens – without eating them. On June 26 – 10 years ago – against a media firestorm, Bruno was shot. He now lives, in taxidermied form, in Munich's Museum of Man and Nature.

As inconvenient as bears can be on the Sunshine Coast – lurking around and looking scary – bears are so much a part of BC's identity, it's nearly impossible to imagine the province without them. Still, we kill them by the thousands. The number of black bear hunting licenses rose to 21,838 in 2013-2014 – up by 52 percent over eight years, (according to a Freedom of Information Request filed by the *Georgia Straight*). Granted, that doesn't

reflect the number of bears actually killed by hunters, as many hunters carry a bear tag, and never use it.

But even non-hunters are killing bears, indirectly. On the Sunshine Coast, 33 bears were euthanized last year – up from the usual 10.

"Powell River experienced the highest number of black bear complaints on record (239 in September alone)," wrote Powell River's WildSafe BC coordinator, Francine Ulmer, in her end-of-year-report. "One resident suffered the first bear attack ever recorded, and a record number of bears were destroyed.... Attractants in the community are everywhere and we will continue to experience human-wildlife conflict if we do not work together as a community to find proactive solutions."

Both fierce and fluffy, a nuisance and an attraction, bears continue to make their mark on the coast.

At Powell River Outdoors, owner Sam Sansalone figured out how deeply this is true when he acquired Bruno, the life-size stuffed black bear on wheels that guards his shop on Marine Avenue. In Whistler several years ago, he saw the bear outside a souvenir shop. It wasn't for sale, but he convinced the owners to





part with it. Because he didn't have a car with him, he towed the bear on a rope leash across the resort municipality – attracting crowds of picture-snappers. Eventually he loaded it into the back of his pick-up, where it continued to enthrall throngs of tourists.

“Bruno is just about the only black bear in Whistler Village,” said Sansalone, noting that there, like in Germany, bears are usually a picturesque idea - rather than an in-town reality. “We take bears for granted here, but it just goes to show you that we shouldn't. If bears are scarce in Whistler Village, they can disappear from Powell River.”

At PRO, where you can sign up for a hunting class, buy a gun, buy a license to hunt, and up to two black bear tags per year, taxidermied animals dominate the décor. Sansalone has owned the store for 14 years. He spends his days chatting with hunters and hikers about their own bear experiences.

And he's worried. Too many bears are being needlessly destroyed because many locals have failed to understand how to live around bears.

Like in Europe, he said, bears get killed when people perceive them as dangerous. Learn about bears, Sansa-

lone encourages locals. Pick your fruit. Manage your garbage.

And most of all, if the West Coast wants to remain rich in bears, and form so much of our cultural identity around bears – everyone should get outdoors and learn to be around the coast's biggest mammals.

As Sansalone points out, an international outcry followed the shooting of a Cincinnati Zoo gorilla in May. Similarly, Facebook lit up with condemnation when a Minnesota dentist shot Cecil the Lion in Zimbabwe.

But local bears? Meh.

Reaction was limited.

None of the 33 killed last year were as famous as Germany's Bruno. **FF**





Smells like bear spirit

Here on the Northwest Coast, where bears remain underfoot, our imagery reveals the complex - and sometimes weird - relationships we're collectively building with nature.

Two out of four 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic mascots were bears — sort of. Miga was a “sea bear,” half spirit bear and half orca (who likes to snowboard and surf). Sumi was part thunderbird and part black bear (and is a “passionate environmentalist.”)

Not coincidentally, it was the Portland office of the global ad agency Wieden+Kennedy that dreamed up the Old Spice Nature campaign, which brought us both the Bear Glove line of body wash, deodorant and body spray, plus the “Roar” TV ad. In Roar, a ruggedly-hip Millennial drinks from a stream in the woods, when a grizzly bear approaches, roars, extends an extra-long tongue with Old Spice “Timber”-scented products on it. The tag line? “Nature smells great!”

Alongside these strange images, bears continue to appear in contemporary First Nations art, as one did in the “past” pole unveiled at the new Tla'amin Governance House, in celebration of treaty April 9. And, the white “spirit bear” became the inspiration and mascot for the Great Bear Rainforest old growth conservation agreement on BC's north coast.



Bearing with the bears

BY BRAD COLLINS

Guys.

There's bears everywhere.

As I write this, a black bear is ascending the stairs in someone's front yard across the street from the cafe I'm sitting in. Broad daylight, bold as you like.

I'm a pedestrian who lives in bear country, and I encounter bears on an almost daily basis in peak season. I'm still alive, have all my limbs, and I've never had cause to do anything above yelling at one to get it to go merrily on its way.

Be warned, though: this is just my opinion drawn from my experience with black bears in my part of the world. Don't blame me if you get eaten by a polar bear or sexually harassed by a panda. Not my intention, and also not my problem.

1. Make noise. All sorts of noise.

In my experience, bears are only potentially dangerous when you surprise them, or if you find yourself standing between a mother and its cubs. The trouble is, if you're just rambling around on your own in the dark listening to headphones,

you might just find yourself unwittingly walking right into one of those situations. I certainly have.

The solution is simple: don't be quiet. Be noisy.

Also, don't listen to headphones.

Making noise gives the bear a chance to hear you coming so it can clear off and get the kids to safety before you get anywhere near it. No surprises, no cubs, no danger.

I didn't want to wear big jingle bells wherever I went, so I started taking around portable instruments. Ukulele, accordion, or whatever else fit in my bag. That way, I could make noise, practice an instrument, have fun, and look only slightly less ridiculous than a person wearing jingle bells.

If you don't feel like doing that, carry an air horn. Or french horn even (I'm still looking for a trumpet).

2. Bears don't actually want to eat you. You're too much effort.

Some people new to living in bear country make the ridiculous assumption that they are being hunted by bears everywhere they go. They imagine that making noise is just making the whole predator/

prey exchange a little easier for the bear, or that it's best to slip by unnoticed as though they were lost out in Jurassic Park.

Not so.

Bears aren't out to hunt you. They're out to find the most caloric bang for their effort buck, and humans are just way too much of a workout. Berries, mushrooms, apples, dying fish, and garbage are more their speed.

I mean, look at them. They're chubby for a reason. They don't like to break sweat, and even though they're well equipped for battle, they, like us, would rather food didn't fight back.

Their priority is to fatten up, not expose themselves to combat.

When I'm out foraging for side dishes, I don't see a bear and say "Whoah! Hey! Jackpot! Who needs mushrooms or apples or crawfish when I can eat this bear?" and just go straight to work trying to kill it with my pocket knife.

Waaaaay too much effort. Way too much danger.

It's the same for the bear. They're just not that ambitious.

3. Don't carry around backpacks full of refuse. Don't keep salmon in your pockets.

Ask your friends and family: "Do I smell like rotting horse meat sitting in a hot waste receptacle?"

If the answer is yes, you may be at greater risk of bear encounters. You might also be a zombie, at which point, you may need more

help than I can give you here.

One encounter I had involved a bear trying to get into my kitchen because a house-guest of mine left a big tray of bacon fat sitting in my sink to congeal. I heard the beast climb into my backyard over the fence, and I got upstairs just in time to close my sliding glass door before it wandered in. True story. Had I been listening to music that night and missed the sound of it breaking fenceboards as it climbed in, there's a good chance I'd have found Blackie poking around my studio looking for secret deposits of breakfast meats (of which there are many).

4. Respect

Bears, like people, don't respond well to being pushed around, kicked, spit on, or suplexed. If you insist on being a dick to a bear, things may suddenly go sideways for you.

Under no circumstances should you attempt to punch, flick, lasso, french kiss, circumcise, tickle or ride a bear. Do not hit on a bear's significant other. Do not invite bears to play Candy Crush on Facebook. Do not go to their lairs and attempt to recruit them into your religion whilst they're still hibernating.

Do not snap wet towels at them.

Basically, just think of all the things that would upset you, and then don't do those things to others. Including bears. If you've made it this far in life without grasping that concept, then by all means, go forth and wet-willy some bears with my blessing.

5. Don't feel safe? don't go!

There are plenty of occasions around this time of the year that I feel like going out somewhere at night, but have to consider that I might discover a bear in my path. Or a cougar.

If I don't feel safe, I don't go. I trust my gut.

Remember, we're animals too. We're equipped with all sorts of great instincts and senses that tell us when we're in danger, and I've always paid attention to them.

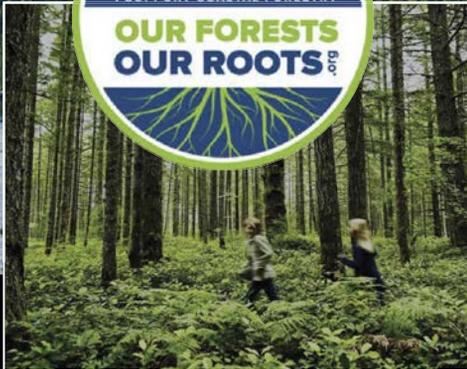
When I feel like I'm being watched, I realize that I probably am being watched. No big deal. I just acknowledge it and behave appropriately. **FF**



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towards a deeper ecology

By
Ioni Wais

Since moving to Powell River, I've become increasingly fascinated with the world of mushrooms. From spring oyster mushrooms, to lobsters, to winter chanterelles, I enjoy fungal delights thoroughly and frequently. Back in April, I started the Powell River Mushrooms & Mycology Facebook page as a way to encourage the proper identification, harvesting, and cultivation of mushrooms. Within two weeks of engaging the local community, the page received its very first criticism, that encouraging people to learn about fungi would lead to the demise of local mushroom populations.

As an educator and forager, I have encountered this criticism in different shapes and forms over the years, namely that connecting people to their environment will lead to the demise of nature. On the one hand, it points to a very real concern: our ongoing mismanagement of ecological resources is evident in everything from breached tailing ponds to suburban sprawl. On the other hand, it undermines a story that is lesser-known: our ability to meaningfully and productively engage with the environment while fostering diverse and resilient ecology.

When we read European accounts of the New World, along with the countless educational textbooks they've inspired, it's easy to see why we've become so skeptical of our ability to interact with nature. We're presented with the discovery of a pristine continent of wilderness, barely inhabited and virtuous by way of its lack of human influence. But the idea of a hemisphere untouched by human hands is what geographer William Denevan of the University of Wisconsin calls the pristine myth. We know that by the time Columbus set foot in the Americas, its landscapes had seen everything from agricultural clearing and burn-

ing of land to large settlements that rival modern metropolitan cities. Population estimates range for the continent, with Denevan proposing 60 million as a realistic estimate; Charles Mann's book *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* (2005) gives a great overview of populations by area, even in places we tend to think about as ecologically intact.

Indeed, many of our wild places are not very wild at all. Kat Anderson's book *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources* (2013) shows that the untouched wildernesses John Muir so admired were in fact curated landscapes.

Likewise, the North American Prairies have been subject to burns and crop management practices for centuries, if not millennia. Even in the Powell River region, evidence of land management is clear as day on a low tide. Local author Judith Williams illustrates the vast number of marine structures through the coastal region in her book *Clam Gardens: Aboriginal Mariculture on Canada's West Coast* (2006); in Powell River, these structures helped support regional populations of as many as 30,000 people... talk about food security!

Looking further south, BBC documentary *Unnatural Histories* highlights recent and ongoing archaeological work and its fascinating findings—that the dark, rich soils of the Amazon are not naturally-occurring, as was previously thought; they are a product of its people, who built up stable, carbon-rich soil using bio-char over countless generations. This means that, to some extent, the largest and most fertile tract of forested land we have in our collective conscious is a large-scale garden, rather than an untouched sanctuary.



“The notion that our wildernesses may be better conceived as a series of long-standing gardens has raised some concerns: many researchers and environmentalists worry that industry will take this concept as license to treat the environment as disposable, given that it’s been touched by humans already. But all of these enduring cases of traditional land management practices have something very crucial in common—an intimate familiarity with the environment, rather than a detachment from nature.”

- Ioni Wais

It’s not always easy to adapt to new concepts, and the notion that our wildernesses may be better conceived as a series of long-standing gardens has raised some concerns: many researchers and environmentalists worry that industry will take this concept as license to treat the environment as disposable, given that it’s been touched by humans already. But all of these enduring cases of traditional land management practices have something very crucial in common—an intimate familiarity with the environment, rather than a detachment from nature. This is indeed how they’ve managed to become long-lasting, and is thus crucial to our own ecological longevity.

As far as picking mushrooms is concerned, there is little evidence that picking on a non-commercial scale affects populations of annual mushrooms such as oysters, lobsters, pines and chanterelles; many European cities encourage mushroom-picking at certain times of the year, with no indication of declining stocks. As it turns out, there are factors that affect mushroom ecology far more extremely than picking: deforestation, soil compaction, invasive plant species, changing climates—these can all have devastating effects on mushroom populations, and are a very real part of our ecological and social environment.

When it comes to picking perennial mushrooms, like reishi or turkey tails, sustainable picking is far more nuanced. In Coastal BC, there is a perennial mushroom known as the Agarikon; it is anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antiviral and has shown strong action against tuberculosis in laboratory settings. While most of its habitat has been wiped out, it is still found in our region, growing on standing (and sometimes on downed) mature Douglas-firs.

At a time when multidrug-resistant tuberculosis is on the rise, keeping an inventory of these organisms can be literally life-saving. The use of Agarikon among the Coast Salish is a little-studied, fascinating topic being brought to light by famous mycologist Paul Stamets. Stamets does not recommend the harvesting of these wild mushrooms, though he cultivates them in a lab setting—his intimate familiarity with their ecology has allowed him to grow them without compromising wild populations.

Indeed, many folks from the PR Mushrooms & Mycology group are pursuing the cultivation of various wild and domesticated mushrooms as a way to safeguard the ecological resources of Powell River, and encouraging others to do the same. But even learning the difference between annual and perennial when it comes to mushroom fruiting is part of building the ecological literacy and intimate familiarity which is so crucial to our own ecology.

By engaging with our environment, we shape the world around us—we *inevitably* shape the world around us, as does every being that lives, and breathes, and eats. We’re already well-versed in what happens when we engage from a standpoint of detachment from nature: the destruction and depletion of lush ecosystems. We’re only starting to rediscover what is possible when we engage with from a place of intimate familiarity, recognizing the tremendous work which has been done before us.

So, if the great wildernesses are indeed great gardens which were started long before our time, how can we best tend to them in our day and age? Surely, we’ll have to learn to garden together, working towards a deeper ecology with every member of our ecosystem. **FF**



A young Agarikon specimen (*Laricifomes officinalis*)

Unfriendly





ly fire

It's a sweaty day for spring, the sun beats down and the air is still. But under the shaggy Douglas-firs and Western Red Cedars at Penticton Trails in Westview, it's considerably cooler. Ryan Thoms is showing off a project that will – hopefully – stop forest fires from ruining your beach day.

Where the Powell River Regional District's manager of emergency services is standing in the forest, the ground looks as smooth as carpet. Thoms could pose with a vacuum cleaner. This is a "shaded fuel break" – a new-ish strategy to keep forest fires from starting in places where people might spark them by accident, such as along trails. Take away the dry kindling-like debris on the ground, keep the ground-cooling canopy, and fires are unlikely to spread.

It took the local wildfire crew 400 hours with chainsaws and a wood chipper to reduce forest fuels on this patch alone.

The good news is, it's a pretty effective way to reduce the risk of fires starting and spreading. The bad news

is, it costs about \$10,000 a hectare. (To treat all 685,000 ha considered to be "high risk" by the province, the tab would come to \$6.85 billion - more than BC's entire education budget.)

You can visit the pilot by entering the trail off Teak-erne Street. The project is one of 32 recommendations contained in the City-Regional District-Sliammon *Community Wildfire Protection Plan*.

It's interesting in its own right. But start asking questions about what this little patch of cleared forest means in a broader context, and watch out.

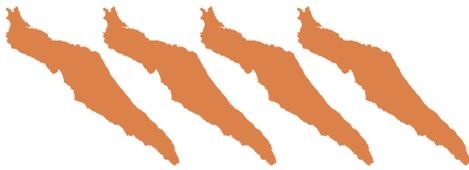
It reveals five fire facts that are definitely not as breezy as a stroll in the woods.

Annually, how much of BC burns? (in numbers of Texada Islands):

On average, modern era:



On average, last decade:



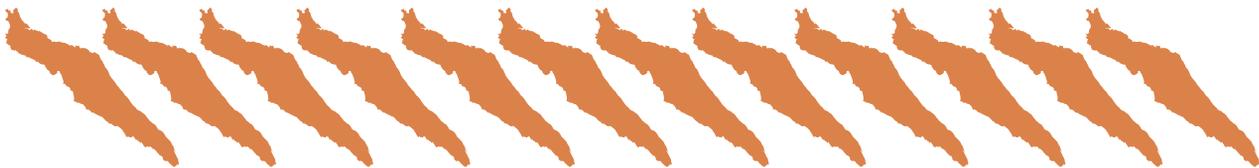
2005



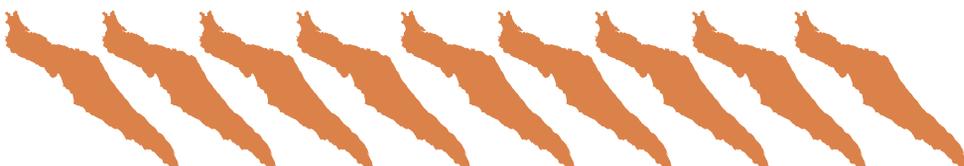
2008



2014



2015



Pre-fire season, 2016



1

More and bigger forest fires are coming

On average over the last decade, BC loses an area the size of four Texada Islands each year (130,329 hectares) to wildfires. Last year, BC lost nine Texadas (280,605 ha). In 2014, it lost a whopping 12 Texadas (369,168 ha).

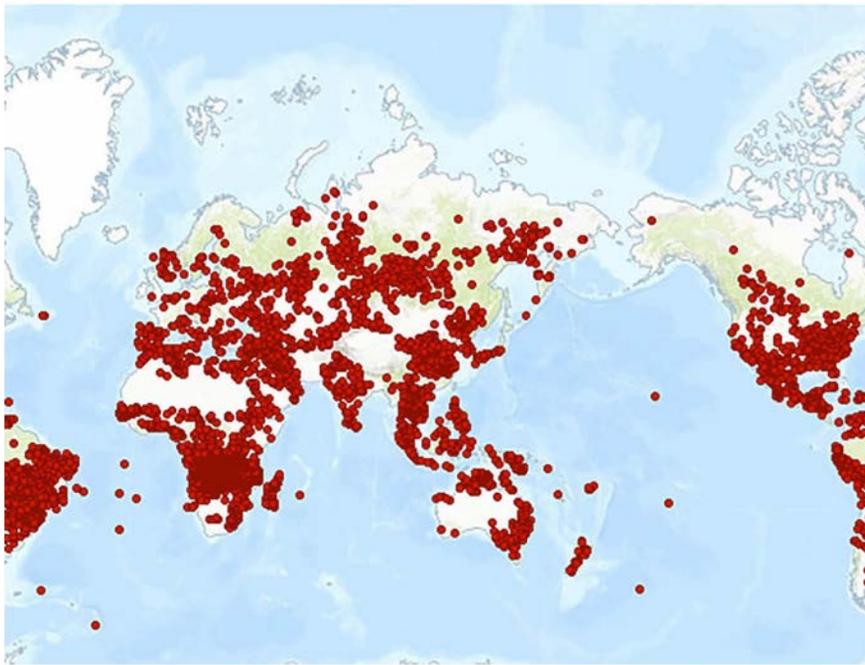
Historically, this isn't an outrageous amount of burning. The province estimates BC lost about 18 Texadas (500,000 ha) to wildfire each year, but modern firefighting and prevention has reduced annual average wildfire loss to a lick of what it once was – less than a single Texada (20,000 ha). What's new is that more of BC is burning in spite of ever-better controls.

And this year, in April and May alone – far before fire season usually starts – we've already lost three Texadas (92,148 ha). Or, three-quarters of what burns, on average, in a year in BC. That's more than the province lost in the entire year of 2005 (34,588ha), 2007 (29,440ha), 2008 (13,240 ha), 2011 (12,604 ha) and 2013 (18,298ha).

Why? Climate change, according to BC's premier. On May 18, *The Globe and Mail* quoted Christy Clark reflecting after the very early 2016 started: "One of the reasons we have so many terrible fires annually now – and almost every year is worse than the last – is because our climate is drying, and our climate is drying because of climate change. It's urgent that we fight climate change and do everything we can to beat it, because it's not going to get better."

Fighting climate change? Yes please, as the only long-term solution. But in the short term, when we've already seen fires in 2016 at Eagle River and on Wilde Road, more immediate solutions are also welcome.

In fact, within decades, we can expect a forest fire season that's 30 percent longer, with the severity of fires doubling in summer, according to a 2014 climate change action paper by the BC government.



2

We are not alone

This March break in Thailand, Powell River forester Russell Brewer watched a native forest on the side of a hill burn. The forest, he knew, will likely be replaced by non-native commercial trees: Palm, for palm oil, and rubber, for gloves and condoms.

He thought he was there for a simple holiday. But now he's hoping to return there with his "forestry hat on," to learn more.

If you look at the map, above, Southeast Asia is bright red with fires, captured on June 14 by a NASA satellite and plotted by a partnership which includes the United Nations. Other solid red areas include southern Asia, the Middle East, central Africa, and Latin America.

Across Canada, too, fires are burning. Surprisingly, BC's fire activity looks positively benign when compared with much of the rest of the world.

What we are seeing represents the beginning of the era of mega-fires, according to Jerry Williams, the former National Director of Fire & Aviation Management with the United States Forest Service. In 2011, he was commissioned by the United Nations to write about the increasing global threat of large fires, and reported that "Biodiversity losses

and greenhouse gas emissions were nearly incalculable on a global scale." He was referring to fires in the 1980s and 1990s in China, Brazil, Indonesia, Botswana, Greece, and elsewhere. Since 1998, the United States, he pointed out, "has suffered their worst wildfires on record." Williams, of course, wrote this before 2015 became America's worst fire year on record. By October, wildfires had burned a combined area the size of Denmark across the country.

Most fires, Williams found, were started by people – though drought, hot weather, available fuel left behind by logging companies and others, and poor government policy and planning are the culprits.

"Even in developed countries, where, despite enormous investments in larger, more able firefighting capacity, better predictive systems, increased technology, improved cooperation, and larger aviation fleets, mega-fires still occur," Williams wrote. He concludes: "In this, the United Nations' "Year of the Forest," the onset of mega-fires should challenge governments around the world to adapt wildfire protection programs to confront causes and contributory factors; not chase symptoms."

3

Lots of mitigation is already underway.

A hazy yellow fog covered Powell River for three days in the summer of 2015, as a fire in the Elaho Valley sent smoke and ash westwards. The fire started in the slash, Thoms notes – the dry, woody debris loggers leave behind after cutting. Then, it moved on to the forest.

People chucking cigarette butts out of car windows, leaving campfires burning in the bush, or setting off sparks with their mufflers and chainsaws are responsible for nearly all fires that start in what's known as the "interface area," where the wild and people come together.

For prevention, this means two things: first, educating people; second, reducing forest fuels.

It's happening. In May, for example, Thoms held a workshop for the local trailbuilding BOMB Squad and Chain Gang, among others, on how to significantly reduce their woody debris so fires won't easily start around trails. The pilot project in the Penticton Trails is another good example. The CWPP, released in 2015, is the road-map for working towards prevention and mitigation here in Powell River, and governments are working through it.

Much of the Sunshine Coast forest in the interface is managed by BC Timber Sales, where Brewer is a practicing forester. Now, instead of burning slash or leaving it to decompose after logging, they are encouraging their loggers to chip the debris in interface areas – just as Western Forest Products and others do. It's expensive, but it's becoming necessary, says Brewer.

A long list of long-titled initiatives have been started by the province, as well. They include the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative, as well as the FireSmart communities program, aimed at preparing local populations to focus on emergency planning, deal with slash and forest debris, and educate individuals. Provincially, about 10 percent of potentially-dangerous fuels have been cleared off the forest floor.

Will this all translate into fewer mega-fires? That's about as clear as last year's smoky yellow sky. But here's hoping.



Here on the Sunshine Coast, campfires are a cozy symbol of warmth and well-being, as this delightful painting by local artist Janelle Huber demonstrates. However, campfire bans will likely be in effect this summer. Check what's allowed by going to your municipal or regional district website.



4

Governments are woefully unprepared for what may be coming.

Currently, we're hooped. That was the message contained in a special 2015 report by BC's Forest Practices Board, about fires in the bush.

"Although programs to prevent and reduce the intensity of interface fires have been developed... this investigation found that most communities in BC remain vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire," reads the report.

"FireSmart principals," including simply minimizing fire risks around their own homes, "have typically been ignored by residents in at-risk communities. Wildfire Management Branch has

warned that, in the event of a mega-fire, residents cannot rely on BC's suppression resources to protect communities."

Just in case you're still able to sleep at night, Thoms noted that Powell River has the smallest wildfire base in the province – just a three-person attack crew and two officers.

Furthermore, Thoms, a long-time wildfire response officer, said a bigger, tax-dollar spending crew isn't nearly as effective as just not starting fires in the first place.

"All wildfires require a response that invariably puts our firefighters at risk," he said.

5

Prevention and emergency preparedness are mostly in your hands, not governments'.

During the height of the Fort McMurray fire in May, plenty of locals took to social media to blast local governments for being under-prepared for a major forest fire. Some suggested buying a boat – or arranging pick-ups by BC ferries. Such as this Facebook post:

"Fort McMurray has two highways out but Powell River has none. ...One way to save one's self is to get to Texada by private boat if the fire remains on the mainland."

Thoms doesn't necessarily recommend planning to leave by boat – but he does recommend paying attention to fire regulations before starting a campfire anywhere this summer, and making a home evacuation plan.

"No community ever has enough resources to deal with the big emergencies," said Thoms, noting that in an emergency, existing services may be overwhelmed by the fire crisis and be unable to

immediately address the human crisis. It's possible to be separated from children and aging parents, to have failed water systems and electricity, and for digital communications to be shut down. "And we just don't see a public that's prepared to evacuate here."

Even small fires and small evacuations are traumatic, he said. It's something the media fails to capture, even with the continuing coverage of Fort McMurray. Mega-fires are largely preventable here, and if they happen, it's possible to be prepared.

Even Brewer – who knows he should know better – admits he is personally behind on his family's disaster planning.

"Climate is changing, we're going to see bigger fires," said Brewer. "There is the basics of a plan [the Community Wildfire Protection Plan], but people have to do personal planning. I fall down on that. I don't have a backpack ready to go." **FF**



HI VIZ IS THE NEW PLAID

If you're a logger, you are the epitome of urban cool right now. Forget about your sad sandwich in the woods. Instead, head to downtown Toronto where you can eat spruce-cured steelhead trout at Woodlot (if you can get a reservation) - a restaurant that ostentatiously piles firewood outside on the sidewalk, for use in its real wood oven. Or, try out Timber, a new spot on Vancouver's Robson Street. Here, the ultra-Canadian imagery comes thick and fast: antlers on the wall, a taxidermied goose. Is it ironic? Is it authentic? Who cares! Spritz yourself with eau de chainsaw and valet your F350. You're the men and women of the hour.

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Each year, Powell River Community Forest Ltd. offers scholarships to Powell River residents who will study in a post-secondary forestry-related program.

Rosalea Pagani, 2016 Powell River Community Forest scholarship holder, will study at Vancouver Island University, and is working as a summer student at BC Timber Sales, Powell River.

Two scholarships of \$2,500 each are offered for people entering either a forestry-related trades training program or a graduate program. For more information, visit prcommunityforest.ca



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registers and regulates BC's forest professionals. Forest professionals sustainably manage aspects of the forest including forest health (insect infestations, diseases and fire), fish and wildlife habitat, preparing areas for harvesting and much more.

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Bella Bella:	1	Gold River:	2	Parksville:	4
Black Creek:	4	Ladysmith:	5	Port Alberni:	26
Campbell River:	87	Lake Cowichan:	5	Port Hardy:	8
Chemainus:	3	Lantzville:	4	Port McNeill:	12
Coal Harbour:	3	Madeira Park:	6	Powell River:	21
Cobble Hill:	3	Nanaimo:	39	Sechelt:	5
Courtenay:	18	Nanoose Bay:	4	Roberts Creek:	2
Duncan:	11	North Van:	8	Squamish:	7

*This is not a comprehensive list. It's just a sampling of the communities where TLA member companies are based.

