
FACTSHEET

July 2016

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Chilliwack Natural Resource District

Wildlife and Old Growth Management in the Echo Lake Area

British Columbia has over 55 million hectares of forests on Crown land, of which about 25 million hectares are considered old growth. The biodiversity of old growth forests are protected in parks and protected areas, old growth management areas (OGMAs), wildlife habitat areas and other conservation designations.

- In the Chilliwack Natural Resource District, specific targets for protecting old growth in each landscape unit have been identified. The district covers 1.4 million hectares, but only 250,405 hectares is considered suitable for timber harvesting – with over 500,000 hectares set aside to manage for wildlife, biodiversity, and other values.
- The Chilliwack Natural Resource District has 24 landscape units, of which, 21 have spatial old growth areas established, covering 80,296 hectares. The remaining three landscape units contain parks or other conservancies which protect old growth forests.
- Echo Lake is within the Hatzic Landscape Unit which protects 5,282 hectares of old growth forests, including 963 hectares in the forests near Echo Lake. In February 2013, old growth management areas were adjusted, following a public review and comment period. The old growth management area near the Echo Lake woodlot was expanded in recognition of its role as a connectivity corridor for eagles and wildlife.
- The expanded old growth management area did not extend into the existing 400-hectare woodlot. Forest and resource values, including for eagle habitat, are being adequately addressed by balancing established OGMAs, a proposed wildlife management area, and other reserve areas, with areas that remain available for timber harvesting.
- The woodlot holder is aware of the eagle roosting habitat potential and has committed to further identify and manage the values within the woodlot area. The woodlot licence holder's preliminary plan is for small harvest entries over an extended period and retention of the large Douglas-fir veteran trees.
- The forest in the woodlot is not considered old growth or old seral stage (trees greater than 250 years old) and is generally a mature seral forest with some veteran trees. There are some old forest structural traits, including large diameter trees and lateral branches – especially with the Douglas-fir trees. However, the history in the woodlot includes past disturbances from fire, forest disease, and forest harvesting.



Photos: Forest types within Woodlot 0043, west of Echo Lake, showing existing mature forest, legacy of past harvesting, and old forest structure.

- Specific to this woodlot, the area west of Echo Lake is planned for new road development in 2016 with harvesting planned for 2017. As a part of the planning process, the woodlot holder will consider a variety of measures to manage the resource values within the woodlot. This planned strategy in concert with the established OGMA's will maintain wildlife habitat in a variety of patch sizes, seral stages (tree growth age ranges), and forest stand attributes and structures across this sub drainage.
- Along with the OGMA's established in the Hatzic Landscape Unit, the Province is also proposed that a Wildlife Management Area be established under the Wildlife Act in the Harrison-Chehalis area. If established, it will recognize and conserve the high fish, wildlife, and biodiversity values in the Harrison-Chehalis lowland area. For further details on this planned wildlife management area, please refer to <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/habitat/conservation-lands/wma/harrison-chehalis/>
- The Protected Areas Strategy and the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy address the habitat requirements of specific species considered to be at risk.
- Combined, landscape unit planning, designation of wildlife habitat areas, wildlife management areas, and the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy are significant initiatives undertaken by the Province to achieve wildlife conservation goals and those of biological diversity.

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