

The broad goals of the PMFLP allowed private “managed” forest land holders to quickly log as much as possible leaving the east coast of Vancouver Island in ruins and much of Vancouver Island and coastal and interior B.C. scarred beyond repair. Our forests were turned into plantations where “tree planting” happened and desert elsewhere. Driving around Port Renfrew, on the logging roads to Carmanah, and so many places on the Island makes evident the desert-like soil left after clearcutting, glyphosate spraying, and slash burning. Tree farms are fragile – vulnerable to infestation and wildfire – and cannot sustain diverse biology. There will never be the vast biomass and diverse populations that flourished until recently – it takes 10,000 years to grow 1000 year-old-trees, and the government has kindly offered to save a few dozen of those – criminal! The big trees were the first to go on private managed lands; the owners now log not only second growth before maturity but third growth (no doubt for toothpicks). The forests are not being allowed to grow back and perform their vital functions - sequester and store carbon, provide habitat and nourish plant and animal life, clean our water, inject moisture into the atmosphere – rather, they have lost their bio diversity and density, and land is turning into desert, thus the current and ongoing drought we are now in. Healthy forests are vital for healthy weather, but forests, our greatest asset in warding off negative climate change and the single biggest part of the solution, are ravaged. Global forests will sequester and store over 1/3 of the world’s carbon, if we let them:

“Natural climate solutions (NCS) can provide 37% of cost-effective CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation needed through 2030 for a >66% chance of holding warming to below 2 °C.... Most NCS actions—if effectively implemented—also offer water filtration, flood buffering, soil health, biodiversity habitat, and enhanced climate resilience” (<https://www.pnas.org/content/114/44/11645> downloaded July 20, 2019).

Productive ancient old-growth forests like those left in Carmanah, the Walbran, and Francis King Regional Park easily store 1000 tons of carbon per hectare – new forests are incapable of such productivity. The older and bigger the tree, the greater the sequestration and storage. The younger and smaller the tree, the less carbon stored. Bigger the trees, the greater the canopy for shade, more developed root and mycelial networks, more capability in filtering water and providing habitat. Habit – endangered, rare, or otherwise – is not accounted for in privately managed lands. PMFL appear to be completely lawless and any regulations toothless, thus the mess our lands are now in.

The biggest perpetrators of irresponsible logging on Vancouver Island’s private managed lands – i.e. TimberWest, Island Timberlands, WFP (Hancock) – have been virtually given the land through illegitimate deals and buyouts, including those arranged by Ministers Robert Summers, Mike de Jong, and Rich Coleman. Gordon Campbell and Christy Clarke’s corrupt governance (deregulation of forestry and dismantling of important services such as Forestry and Parks) along with the Government of Canada’s theft of indigenous lands to reward a coal baron (Dunsmuir) to do a job he didn’t even complete are a legacy that can and should be dealt with. Ultimately, future generations will have to (along with every other environmental and social issue we impose upon them). First Nations are the biggest losers – the basis of their entire culture and value-system has been destroyed, which obviously continues to haunt them. Like all endangered

creatures, First Nations need their land to survive. Stolen land needs to be returned and it needs to heal just like the people who depend on it but had it and their lives stolen. It is not hard to see the relationship, and it is time government and corporations stop denying it, make amends, and compensate properly - give it back!

Before Clarke's dismantling of the Forest Service and creation of "Professional Reliance" which is anything but professional, foresters left sizeable firebreaks of big old trees – even these have now been taken down, leaving everything fragile and open to rapid wildfire spread.

The forests are a public resource and should be managed as such, just like the ALR for agricultural land. Developer's can't go in and lay waste to farmland for development, yet logging companies do and sell the land for development – TimberWest (Couverdon) is Vancouver Island's largest private landholder and biggest realtor! That says everything about the state of B.C.'s PMFLP and the corporate private landowners in it (most of it virtually given to them!) – the B In B.C., forests were stolen from indigenous peoples, given to an unscrupulous developer who sold to the heavily subsidized CPR that in turn was allowed to divvy up sell-off. The legality of stealing unceded lands then allowing them to be continuously sold with governments turning a blind eye will haunt this government and each to come. Reconciliation will not happen without honest dealings – stolen land should be expropriated and returned to the rightful owners. This land has been used and abused, and corporations have made a mint on our trees. Expropriate our land from corporations who shouldn't have been given it in the first place.

**“Encourage** private landowners to manage their lands for long-term forest production; and **encourage** sustainable forest management practices, including protecting key public environmental values” are pathetically weak goals that need replacing. “Encourage” is akin to promising with fingers crossed. Legislation needs teeth and it needs to protect public resources of land, air, and water. B.C. governments continue to provide cover for and extenuate the clear-cut conflict of interest that forestry companies are guilty of – clearing the forests to profit not only from trees but real estate development as well. The culpability government has had in all this is beyond negligence, it is criminal. These companies did not have to level our forests, they chose to simply because they could.

Where is the legislation to protect the public good, watersheds, wildlife habitat, biodiversity for wildlife and human survival, clean water, fresh air, and such an important regulator of the air we breathe and moisture everything relies on to survive? Where is the legislation to allow biodiversity to thrive and watersheds to be protected? Forests provide shade to cool the heating environment and moisture to fend off drought. “Encourage” does absolutely nothing; strong science-based legislation with strong enforcement must replace all this airy-fairy personal choice stuff. I am not allowed to cut a tree in my suburban back yard if it has an eagle's nest, yet such actions happen all the time on privately managed lands simply because they are not managed – there isn't legislation to protect them, and where legislation exists, the oversight doesn't.

The number one priority is to protect any remaining intact forest (or close facsimile) and regenerate our lost forests. Life – all life – depends on this! Wildlife and future generations will not survive if we do not act NOW! Our current Minister of Forests has no understanding of

ecological necessity or true value of our forests. People visit from all over the world to experience our forests: they hike, forest bath, therapeutically immerse themselves in the life-giving and awe-inspiring spiritual presence of timeless ancients. Locals forage for food, hike, camp, bike, adventure, and otherwise revive and restore their minds and bodies in the forests, but all this profitable and psychologically necessary activity has been removed from Vancouver Island's privately managed forest lands. I am sick of being barred from a good hike, view, or other outdoor experience because an owner has been allowed to lay claim to our forests, our public good.

I am sick of breathing the polluted air up and down the east coast of Vancouver Island (and in much of the interior and some of the west coast) every fall because of the biggest pollution elephant in the room B.C. still covers up – slash burning. What a tragic waste, what dangerous pollution – all allowed. There should be zero waste – utilize the wood and compost the debris. Some burning is healthy and promotes growth but not the insane annual allowable burns – B.C.'s number one source of pollution deliberately hidden. This is collusion. And stop spraying glyphosate – toxic to animals and in water, and ultimately, us.

Expropriate lands given or provided to forestry companies – they made countless billions and have not lived up to any expectation of managing for the future. Our forests have been their cash cows – do not compensate, expropriate OR sue them for damage they have done to force them to return the lands illegitimately provided.

Reduce the required amount of privately managed land owned in the program to one or two acres of ownership to get lots of owners in the fold. Educate them about the vital roles their forests play, offer incentives and help, have a decently sized well educated bureaucracy that understands ecology (biologists, eco-foresters, hydrologists, geomorphologists, etc.) -**INCENSIFY TO PROTECT forest!** Use Scandinavian models like in Sweden and Finland – lots of private ownership there.

In the last few months, Nanaimo's north and south ends have been visibly ravaged. Even Nanaimo citizens including loggers are waking up their ruined environs: the backdrop to Woodgrove Mall is ugly clear-cut, and the lovely regrown greenery on the mountains adjacent to Cedar, south of Nanaimo, has huge dead brown patches. How on earth can this insanity and depredation be allowed? The PMFLP is akin to putting the fox in charge of the hen house, but unlike the fairy-tale, corporate forestry foxes don't bother letting the chicks survive for future meals. They are moving out and will take down everything they can for a measle buck. The future cannot be health without healthy forests. Take back ownership and control of our forests – they belong to the public, not just whoever is lucky enough to have it on paper.

Young people are now beyond stressed-out: they may not be able to articulate, but they certainly sense the depravity of what has gone on and feel the degrading environment they need for their lives. They need governance that places the environment and ecological values where it belongs – at the top of all priorities.