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Squamish Nation



Tla'amin Nation
ƛa7amen Nation

SUNSHINE COAST FOREST LANDSCAPE PLANNING PILOT PROJECT ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

June 2024

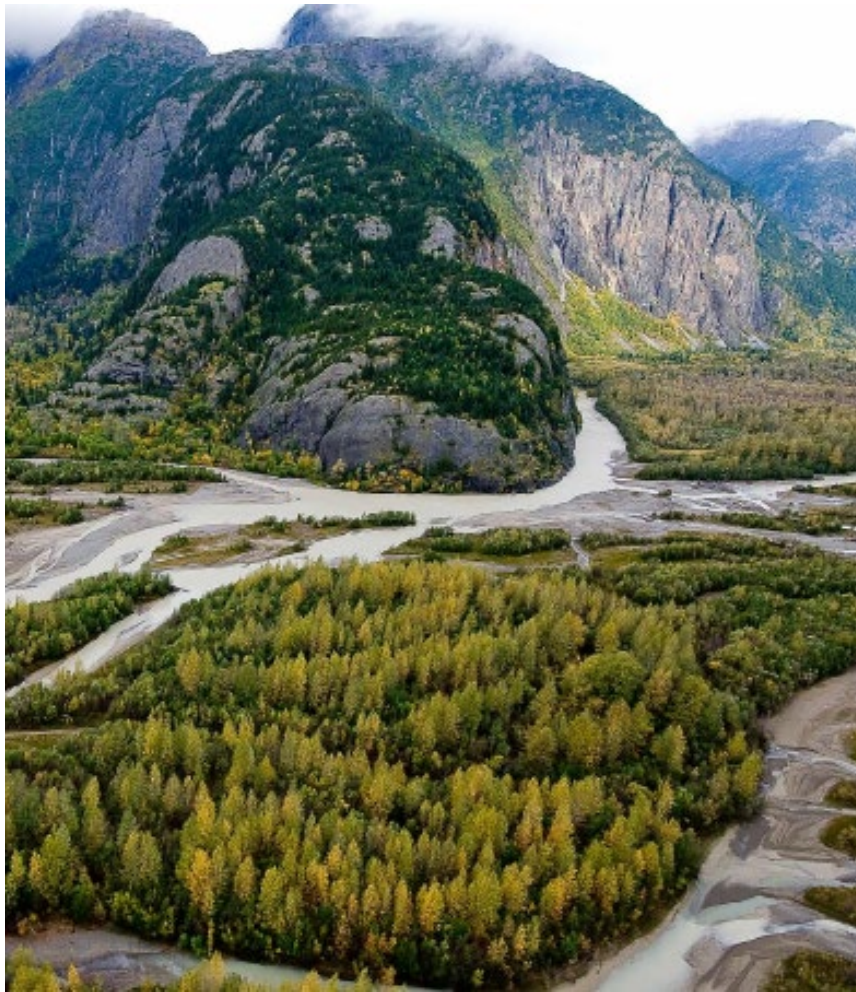


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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| DRIPA | <i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i> |
| FAQ | Frequently Asked Question |
| IAP2 | International Association of Public Participation |
| NTFP | Non-timber forest product |
| OGSR | Old Growth Strategic Review |
| P2 | Public Participation |
| SBOT | Stewardship Baseline Objectives Tool |
| TSA | Timber Supply Area |
| TSR | Timber Supply Review |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sunshine Coast Forest Landscape Planning Pilot Project (FLP) is a new process for improved forest management designed to foster greater collaboration between First Nations and the Province of British Columbia (the Province) to address high priority forest values such as ecosystem health. Representatives from Homalco, shíshálh, Squamish, and Tla’amin Nations (the Core Nations) and the Province engaged publicly with community members in Campbell River, Powell River, and Sechelt in November and December 2023 during three open house events. These events aimed to collect information relating to the values placed on forests within the Sunshine Coast Forest Landscape Plan pilot area. In advance of the open house events educational materials were developed to help provide information to the public about the Sunshine Coast FLP process. Information was disseminated through the [project website](#), a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document, storyboards, maps, and timelines. Interactive activities relating to forest values were also administered during open house events.

Input for the development of the draft Sunshine Coast FLP was collected through a public questionnaire that was made available at the open houses in hard copy and QR code and through emails sent to the FLP project email inbox. The online questionnaire was made available between November 23, 2023, and January 15, 2024. A total of 292 questionnaires were completed by local residents, workers, business owners, tenure holders, and visitors from the Sunshine Coast Regional District, Sechelt, Gibsons, Powell River, Campbell River, and other areas of the Vancouver Lower Mainland.

The engagement process revealed public perspectives on a range of issues and opportunities relating to the values placed on forest ecosystems within the Sunshine Coast.

This Engagement Summary Report summarizes the public engagement process and the feedback generated, including perspectives on forest values. Forest values include those previously identified by the Core Nations and the Province and two additional “emerging values”, which were identified during the analysis of the questionnaire data and the feedback received from the public open houses.

Table 1 presents a list of the forest values described in this report.

Table 1 Forest values.

| Identified Forest Values | Emerging Forest Values |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ecosystem health | Recreation |
| Collaborative governance ¹ | Science-based decision-making |
| Water quality | |
| Biodiversity | |
| Fish (population and habitat) | |
| Wildlife (population and habitat) | |

¹ Although not listed as an identified forest value in the public engagement materials, collaborative governance is a cornerstone of the FLP planning process and is therefore considered an identified value.

Cumulative impacts

Climate Change

Culture

Equitable sustainable economy

Insights gathered from the public engagement activities will be incorporated into the first draft of the Sunshine Coast FLP set to release in Fall 2024, ensuring that forest management practices in the Sunshine Coast and Pacific Timber Supply Areas (TSA) align with the values of the Core Nations, stakeholders, and the public.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report aims to summarize the outcomes of the public engagement process and feedback received on the Sunshine Coast FLP during the public engagement period. The feedback received will be carefully considered and incorporated where required and/or necessary in the upcoming draft *Sunshine Coast TSA and Pacific TSA (Blocks 21-23) Forest Landscape Plan* to be released in late 2024 or early 2025.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Sunshine Coast Forest Landscape Plan (FLP) is one of four pilot projects across British Columbia initiated to inform the development of related regulations and policies for future forest landscape plans. The Sunshine Coast FLP will contain objectives and outcomes for the shared values that Homalco, shíshálh, Squamish, and Tla’amin Nations (the Core Nations), stakeholders, and the public derive from the Sunshine Coast FLP area.

The Core Nations and the Province of British Columbia (the Province) are co-developing the Sunshine Coast FLP as part of the commitment to true, lasting reconciliation, cooperation, and partnership based on recognition and respect for the rights and titles of all First Nations. The Sunshine Coast Forest Landscape Planning Team consists of representatives of each Core Nation and provincial representatives. To advance reconciliation and meet British Columbia’s obligations under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA), the Province is working in full partnership with the First Nations in the co-management of the Sunshine Coast FLP pilot area.

The Sunshine Coast FLP will be developed over five phases (Figure 1). The **Pre-Planning Phase** and **Value Assessment/Identification Phases** are complete, and **Plan Development Phase** is proceeding. Making resource management decisions based on peoples’ values — that is, the things people care about² — makes for more robust, transparent, and acceptable decisions. A values-based approach helps identify and recognize fundamental values which can lead to the creation of better alternatives and improved decision opportunities.³ The Values and Assessment Identification phase is informing plan development, which is currently underway.

The *Value Assessment and Identification* phase included a public engagement period for the Sunshine Coast FLP pilot project that took place between November 2023 and January 2024. This engagement process involved a public questionnaire and three public open house events, which focused on identifying forest values.

Figure 1 Phases of the Sunshine Coast FLP.



² Keeney, R.L. 1992. Value-Focused Thinking. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

³ Ibid.

2.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The *Value Identification and Assessment* phase of the Sunshine Coast FLP is an integral part of the public engagement process. In this phase, the Core Nations and the Province collaboratively developed several educational materials to introduce the public to the Sunshine Coast FLP pilot project and produced engagement tools and events to seek public feedback and comments on forest values.

2.1 COMMUNICATION

2.1.1 Outgoing Communication

The Province developed various educational materials to provide detailed information about the Sunshine Coast FLP pilot project including:

- **Project website:** hosted by the Province to share general project information, including frequently asked questions (FAQs), storyboards, open house events, and contact information;
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):** short, to-the-point answers to a variety of questions anticipated from the public, including introduction to the FLP process, how it links to other planning processes, and forest management priorities to be considered in the FLP development;
- **Storyboards:** visual representations of FLP objectives and expected outcomes, visions, and adaptive implementation process (Figure 2); and
- **Email notifications:** a dedicated email address created to send updates and share important information to stakeholders and subscribers.

2.1.2 Incoming Communication

Through the contact information section on the project website, the Province received several comments and questions from those interested in becoming involved in the FLP process. A 'stakeholder database' was developed to track communications. Additional stakeholder groups were also added to the database and categorized based on guidance from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).⁴

Public participation goals, including determining the most appropriate level of engagement for different stakeholder groups and selection of the appropriate methods and tools for public engagement were also developed consistent with IAP2 guidance.

⁴[IAP2 Canada / AIP2 Canada - Pillars of P2](#)

Figure 2 FLP storyboard – Vision for the Future.



One of FLP storyboards shared during the open house events.

2.2 PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

On November 23, 2023, the Province published a public-facing questionnaire on the EngageBC online engagement platform entitled *Sunshine Coast Forest Landscape Plan – Public Engagement Questionnaire* which linked to the Sunshine Coast FLP pilot project website. Hard copies and a specifically developed QR code (for online completion) were also provided during three open house events (see Section 2.3 below). The questionnaire remained publicly available until January 15, 2024. A total of 292 completed questionnaires were received.

The questionnaire included:

- A notice indicating the approximate amount of time to complete the questionnaire (~20 minutes) and the closing date for responses (January 15, 2024);
- A brief background on the pilot project;
- A map of the plan area;
- 22 questions divided into seven (7) sections that focused on: i) Introduction and Demographics, ii) Values and Use, iii) Old Grown Forest, iv) Water Quality, v) Ecological Resilience, vi) First Nations Natural Resource Use, and vii) Engagement.

- Brief explanations were provided for particular sections of the questionnaire to provide context for the subsequent questions;
- 17 questions were closed-ended (i.e., tick-box, with some options for “select all that apply”).
- 4 of the 17 closed-ended questions included an ‘other’ option for respondents to specify an alternative response including space for additional commentary or description.
- 5 questions were open-ended and designed to elicit short, narrative answers on specific topics.

Those who completed the questionnaire were encouraged to visit the Sunshine Coast Forest Landscape Planning pilot project website to review background documents.

2.3 OPEN HOUSES

The Core Nations and the Province hosted three open house events to gather and document public feedback on forest values. The open house events were distributed across the Sunshine Coast FLP project area and surrounding communities and took place in:

- Campbell River: November 30, 2023;
- Powell River: December 5, 2023; and
- Sechelt: December 6, 2023.

Collectively, the open houses received approximately 200 people in attendance including local community members, residents from nearby towns, and members from a variety of organizations and associations. During each open house, participants had the opportunity to review the FLP process including the goals, joint vision statement, and defined forest values. Participants were invited to share their priorities, comments, and ideas on forest values within the Sunshine Coast FLP area using sticky posts and coloured stickers which they were encouraged to place on wall-maps to highlight specific areas of interest, values or concerns. Several provincial and Core Nation representatives were on hand to answer questions and support one-on-one or small group discussions.

The following educational materials were provided at each open house with copies available to take away:

- Vision for Forest Landscape Planning on the Sunshine Coast (3-page document);
- Managing Forestry Activities on Provincial Public Land in British Columbia (1-page document with visual graphics);
- Sunshine Coast Forest Landscape Planning Pilot Frequently Asked Questions (16-page front and back FAQ);
- Joint BC and Core Nation Vision for Forest Landscape Planning on the Sunshine Coast;
- Forest Landscape Plan Pilot Projects: An Information Bulletin;
- Managing Forest Activities on Provincial Public Lands in BC; and

- Forest Landscape Plan Phases Diagram.

Figure 3 provides photos from the open house events.

Figure 3 Photos from the Open Houses.



Photo 1 Open house participants discussing areas of interest in FLP pilot area with a provincial representative in Powell River.

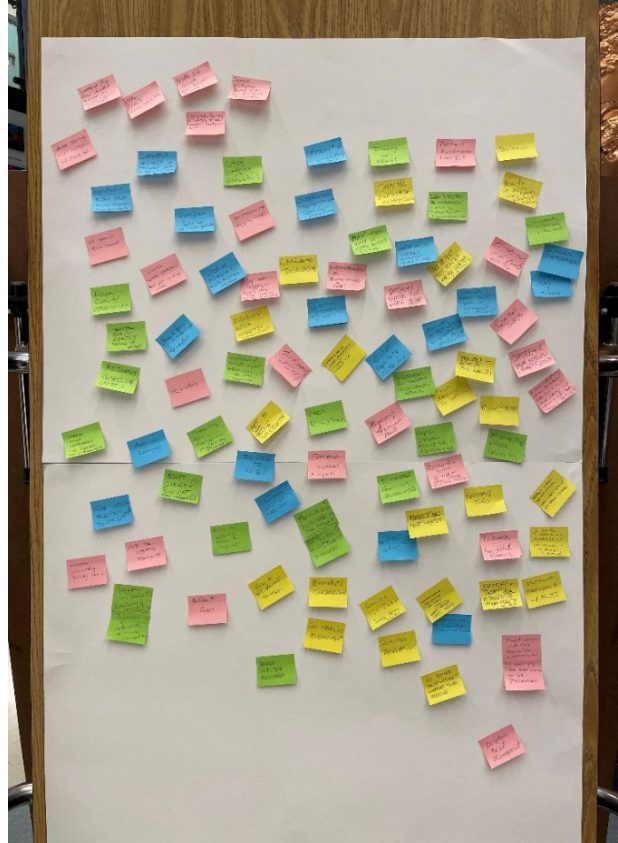


Photo 2 Forest values shared by open house participants in Sechtelt.



Photo 3 Core Nation and provincial representatives giving a brief welcome and overview of the open house in Sechtelt.



Photo 4 Core Nation and provincial representatives giving a brief welcome and overview of the open house in Powell River.

3.0 FOREST VALUES

Comments from the open houses, responses to the public questionnaire, and feedback received by the FLP Planning team identified ten (10) forest values within the Sunshine Coast FLP area that were previously initiated by the Sunshine Coast FLP Planning team and two (2) additional emerging (not previously identified) forest values. These 11 forest values will help guide the FLP planning process.

Forest values identified by the Sunshine Coast FLP Planning team and the public include:

1. **Ecosystem health:** the capacity of a forest ecosystem to maintain its ecological functions and services, including the ability to tolerate and recover from disturbance and return to its normal processes after being damaged.
2. **Collaborative governance**⁵: involvement of First Nations and local communities in forest management.
3. **Water quality:** the presence of water that meets certain standards and conditions necessary to support healthy forest ecosystems and livelihoods.
4. **Biodiversity:** sustainable management and protection of the variety of plant and animal species, ecosystems, and genetic diversity within the forests.
5. **Fish:** sustainable management of healthy aquatic ecosystems within and around the forests that sustain and improve fish populations.
6. **Wildlife:** implementation practices that support the health and sustainability of diverse animal species and their habitats within the forests.
7. **Cumulative impacts:** the assessment of long-term consequences of multiple concurrent activities on forest ecosystems and landscapes.
8. **Climate change:** adaptation and mitigation strategies to address climate change impacts on the forests and leverage forests as a tool to mitigate climate change.
9. **Culture:** opportunities to practice beliefs and norms important to individuals or social groups that enable sustainable and inclusive approaches to forest management.
10. **Equitable sustainable economy:** fair and just approach to utilizing forest resources that ensures social, economic, and environmental benefits for present and future generations.

Additional or emerging forest values identified by the public include:

11. **Recreation:** use and enjoyment of the forests for recreational purposes.
12. **Science-based decision-making:** use of empirical evidence and rigorous analysis to inform and guide decision-making processes related to forest management.

⁵ Although not listed as an identified forest value in the public engagement materials, collaborative governance is a cornerstone of the FLP planning process and is therefore considered an identified value.

The public questionnaire generated 292 responses through online and hard copy submissions. The following sections describe the results from the questionnaire.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

Data from the online and hard copy questionnaire submissions, along with comments received from attendees at the open house events, were compiled and collated around each of the identified forest values. Analysis focused on identifying key messages and trends in public perspectives, opinions, and concerns in relation to forest values and the FLP process. An important goal of the analysis was to gauge receptiveness to the identified forest values and how effectively they capture people's attitudes about potential trade-offs and subsequent development of the FLP.

Responses to closed-ended questions illustrate which forest values are most widely held and how strongly people feel about certain values versus others. Although data from the closed-ended questions is quantifiable, it is important to keep in mind that the results reflect the values and opinions of those who came to the open houses and/or who took the questionnaire. The results are not necessarily a statistically valid representation of the attitudes and perspectives of the population across the Sunshine Coast FLP area.

Responses to open-ended questions in the questionnaire and notes collected at the open house events were coded according to the forest value that was most consistent or relevant to the idea being expressed. These more qualitative responses provide additional context and help enrich the data obtained from closed-ended responses to give a slightly better and more nuanced understanding of public perspectives.

There were a sufficient number of responses that did not seamlessly align or relate to the forest values initiated by the Planning team. Nonetheless there was a recurrence of these "unique" responses to the questionnaire and at the open house events sufficient to justify categorizing them as new or *emerging* forest values.

Old growth forests are a common concern for respondents to the survey and open house participants. Responses to closed- and open-ended questions related to old growth forests were analysed and discussed as a cross-cutting "theme" to better capture perspectives on the interconnectedness between old growth forests and other forest values.

Perspectives or opinions raised in open-ended questions and at the open house events that demonstrate potential tangible actions that would help achieve value-oriented goals were categorized as 'opportunities' for the planning and implementation of the FLP (Section 5.4).

Limitations in the data analysis in addition to the small sample size include:

- Some questions were left blank in some of the questionnaires;
- Some respondents may have submitted multiple copies of the questionnaires (i.e., online and hard copy submission) without identifying that they had done so; and
- Responses from organizations or associations were not weighted based on the size of the organization or association.

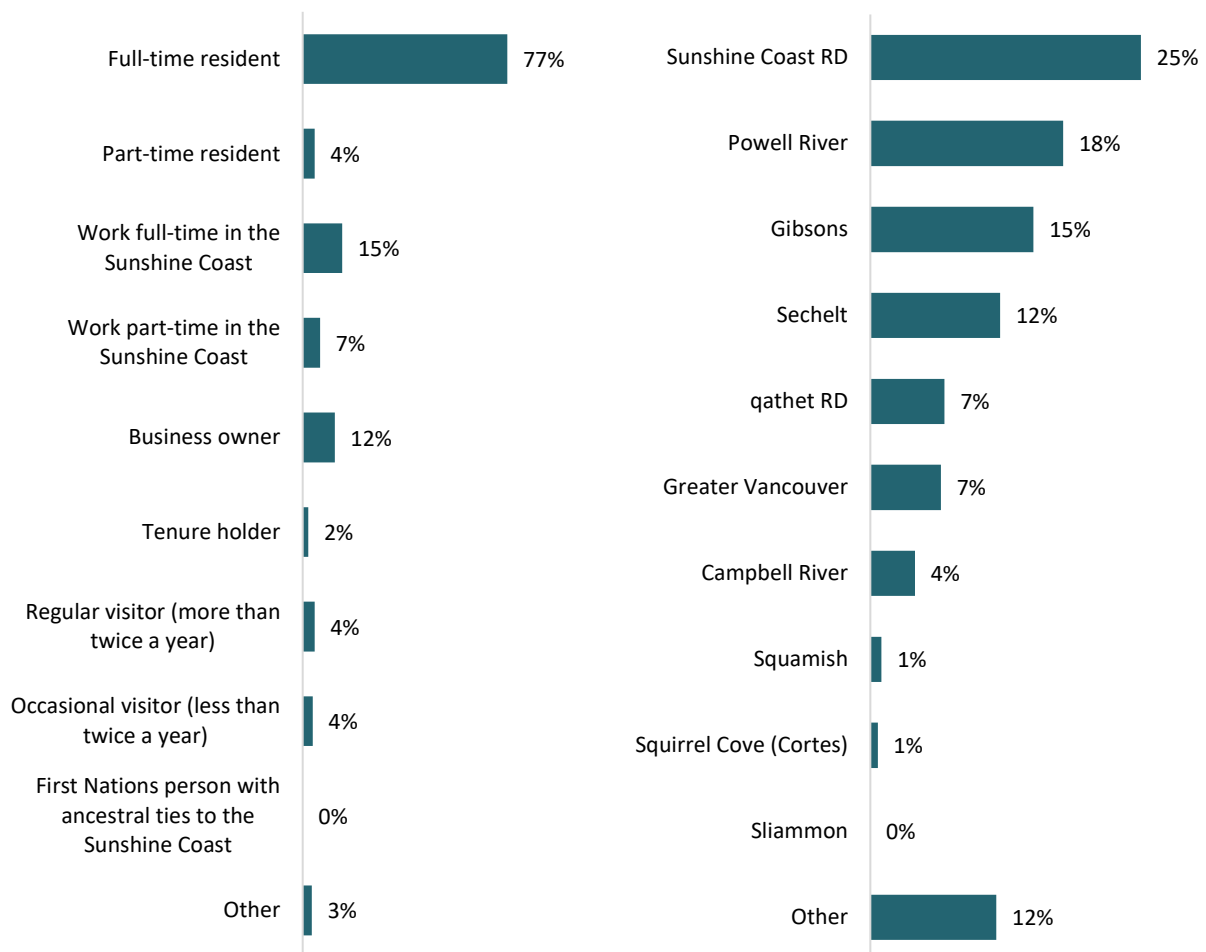
5.0 KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from the public engagement process are presented below and organized by forest value (i.e., rather than by the sequential order of the questions as they appeared in the questionnaire).

Introduction and Demographics

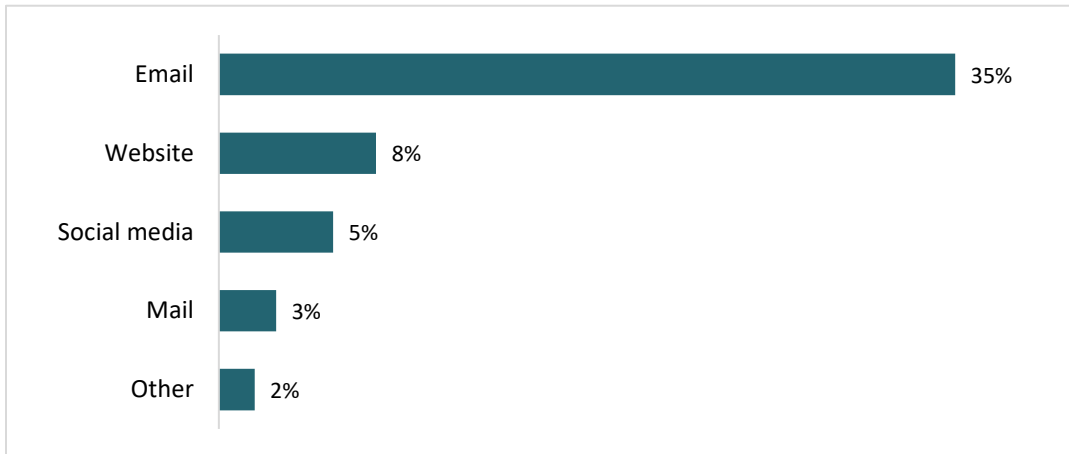
Q1 and **Q2** describe how respondents relate to the Sunshine Coast and asked about primary residence in British Columbia. To ensure that the public can stay updated as the planning process moves forward respondents were also asked to share their preferred engagement method in **Q21**.

Q1 Which best describes your relationship to the Sunshine Coast?⁶ Q2 Where do you live most of the time?⁶



⁶ The total percentage of responses may exceed 100% due to the option for respondents to select more than more response.

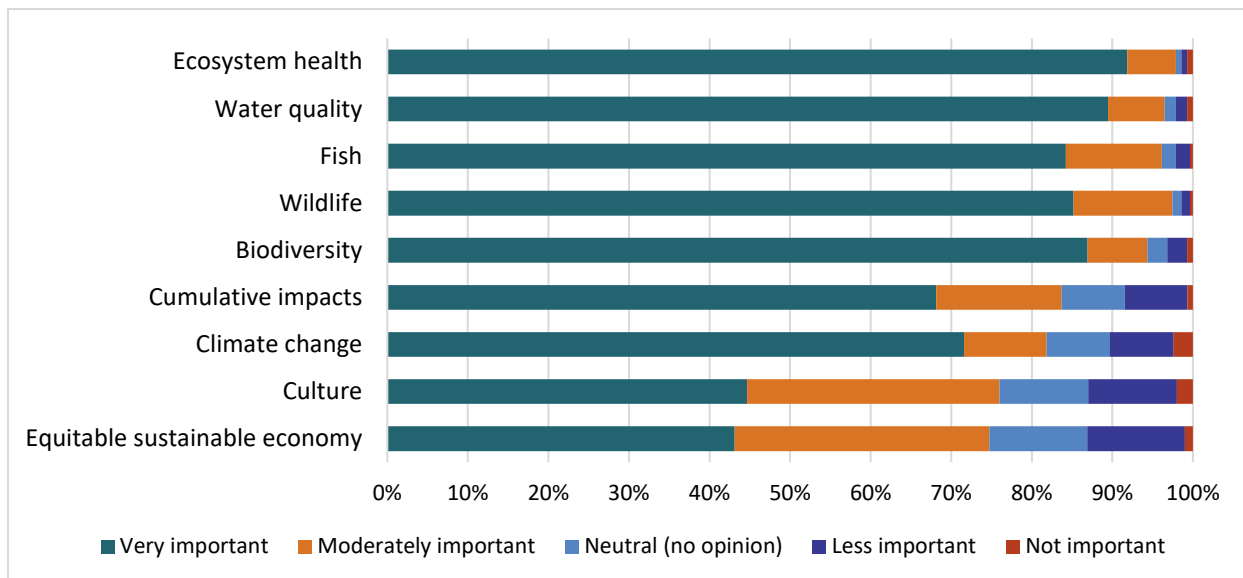
Q21 Preferred engagement method.⁷



5.1 IDENTIFIED FOREST VALUES

Identified forest values are those put forth by the Planning team based on previous planning and consultation processes. Most of Q3 respondents perceived all identified values as very important and moderately important. Forest values associated with ecological functions, including ecosystem health, water quality, biodiversity, fish, and wildlife, were rated as very important and moderately important by more than 90% of responses. Human-centric values such as culture and equitable sustainable economy were regarded as very important and moderately important by more than 70% of the respondents.

Q3 What importance do you place on the following forest values?

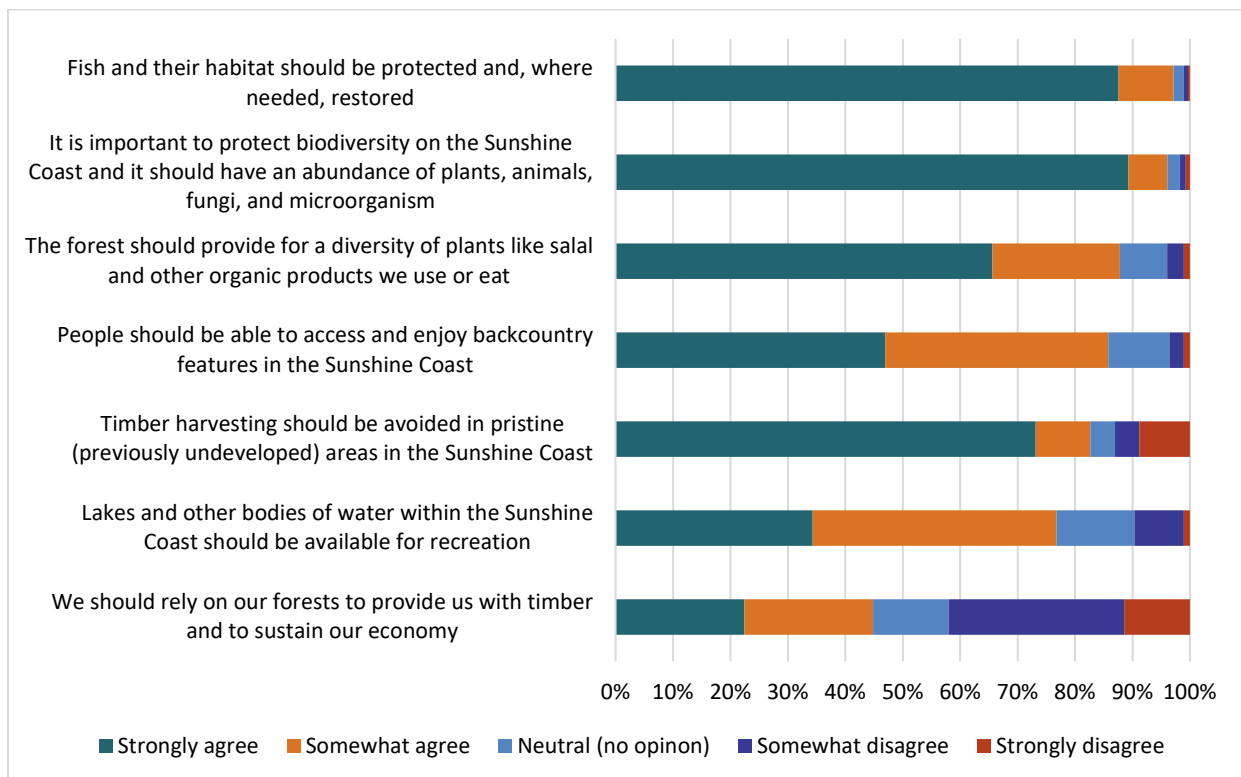


⁷ The total percentage of responses may exceed 100% due to the option for respondents to select more than more response.

Q5 asked respondents to indicate to what extent value statements related to ecological functions and consumptive and non-consumptive forest uses aligned with their priorities. Almost all respondents strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that biodiversity and fish and fish habitat should be protected. The majority also agreed that forests should provide organic food products and allow for non-extractive land uses such as access to backcountry features and aquatic recreation.

Value statements associated with timber harvesting generally invited more divided responses. More than 70% of respondents agreed that timber harvesting should be avoided in pristine areas. However, almost 10% strongly disagreed to imposing strong restrictions on timber harvesting. The value statement affirming the importance of forests to provide timber and sustain the economy generated the lowest number of positive responses and drew the highest percentage of “strongly disagree” responses compared to other value statements in Q5.

Q5 Tell us how each of the following value statements align with your priorities in relation to the Sunshine Coast?



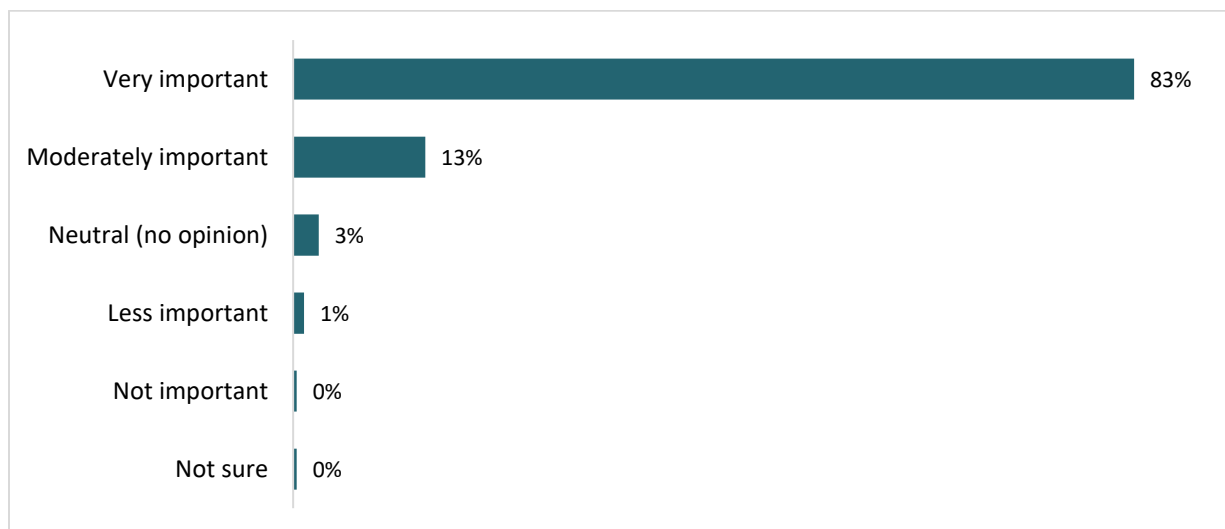
5.1.1 Ecosystem health

Ecological health and resilience describe the ability of an ecosystem to tolerate and recover from a disturbance and return to its normal processes after being damaged.

Maintaining healthy and resilient ecosystems were regarded by almost all **Q14** respondents as very important (83%) and moderately important (13%). In **Q16** most respondents believed that protecting natural ecosystems should be a priority, even at the risk of slowing down economic activity, while 29% of the

respondents favoured forest management practices that balance economic activity and healthy ecosystems by making carefully considered trade-offs to both.

Q14 How important is the concept of ecological resilience in your view?



Q16 Which one of these statements most aligns with your priorities?

| Priority Statement | Response Rate |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Protecting the health of the Sunshine Coast lands, water, and natural ecosystems should be a priority, even at the risk of slowing down economic activity | 69% |
| Economic activity should be a priority on the Sunshine Coast, even if there is a risk to the health of land, water, and natural ecosystems | 2% |
| The Sunshine Coast should be managed in a way that balances economic activity and healthy ecosystems by making carefully considered trade-offs to both | 29% |
| Not sure | 0% |

5.1.2 Collaborative governance

Questionnaire respondents and open house participants highlighted that collaborative governance between First Nations, local communities, and the government is an integral part of forest management on the Sunshine Coast. Collaborative governance reflected incorporation of both Indigenous and Western knowledge to guide the planning process with more extensive involvement with First Nations in conservation, restoration, and management processes. Respondents suggested that First Nations involvement should be enabled with capacity support from all levels of government. It was suggested that collaborative governance should also entail data sharing and collection involving First Nations and local communities to allow bottom-up approaches to forest management – “local forests, local decisions.”⁸

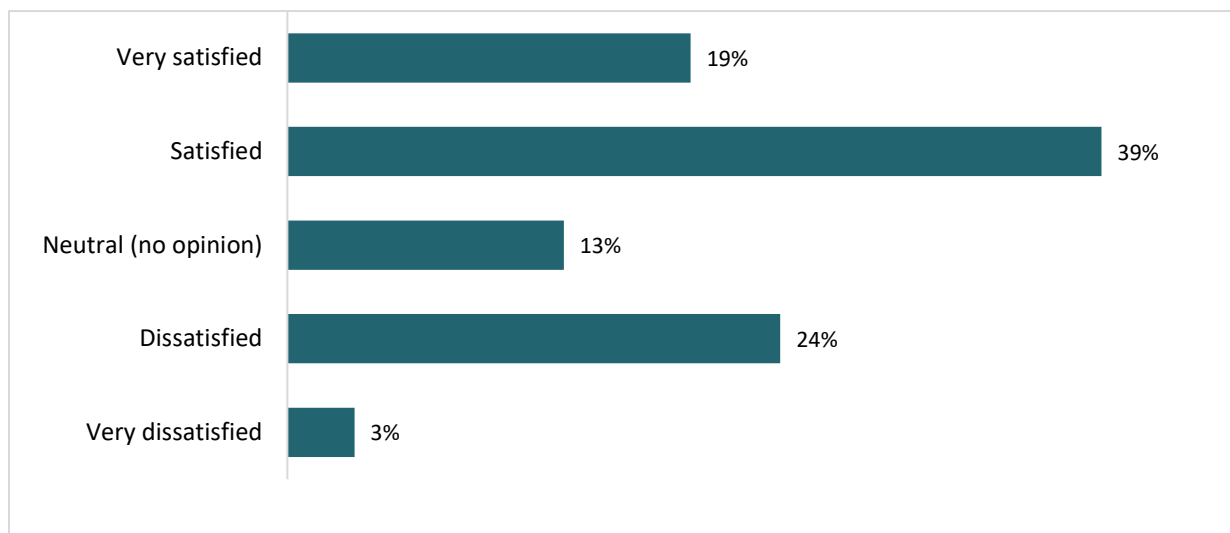
⁸ Notes submitted by a participant at the open house event in Sechelt.

5.1.3 Water quality

Water quality refers to the presence of water that meets certain quality standards and procedures to support healthy forest ecosystems and livelihoods.

Q9 – 58% of respondents were either very satisfied (19%) or satisfied (39%) with water quality on the Sunshine Coast. **Q11** – Almost all respondents also strongly agreed or agreed that lakes, rivers, ponds, and other bodies of water within the Sunshine Coast should be clean, protected, and restored where needed to support healthy fish populations and fish habitat, while collectively 74% of the respondents strongly agreed (22%) and somewhat agreed (52%) that they should be available for recreation.

Q9 How satisfied are you with the water quality of streams, lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water in your area?



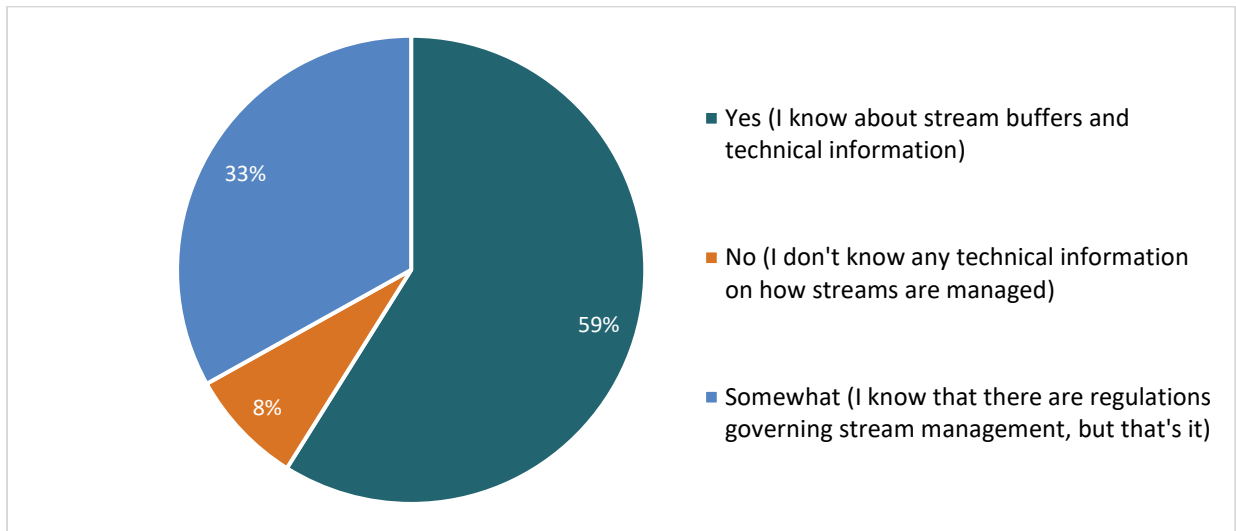
Q11 Tell us how each of the following statements align with your priorities in relation to water quality on the Sunshine Coast.

| Priority statement | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral (no opinion) | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| The lakes, rivers, ponds, and other bodies of water within the Sunshine Coast should be clean | 92% | 7% | 1% | 0% | 0% |
| The lakes, rivers, ponds, and other bodies of water within the Sunshine Coast should be available for recreation | 22% | 52% | 12% | 13% | 1% |
| The fish and their habitat should be protected and, where needed, restored | 86% | 12% | 2% | 1% | 0% |

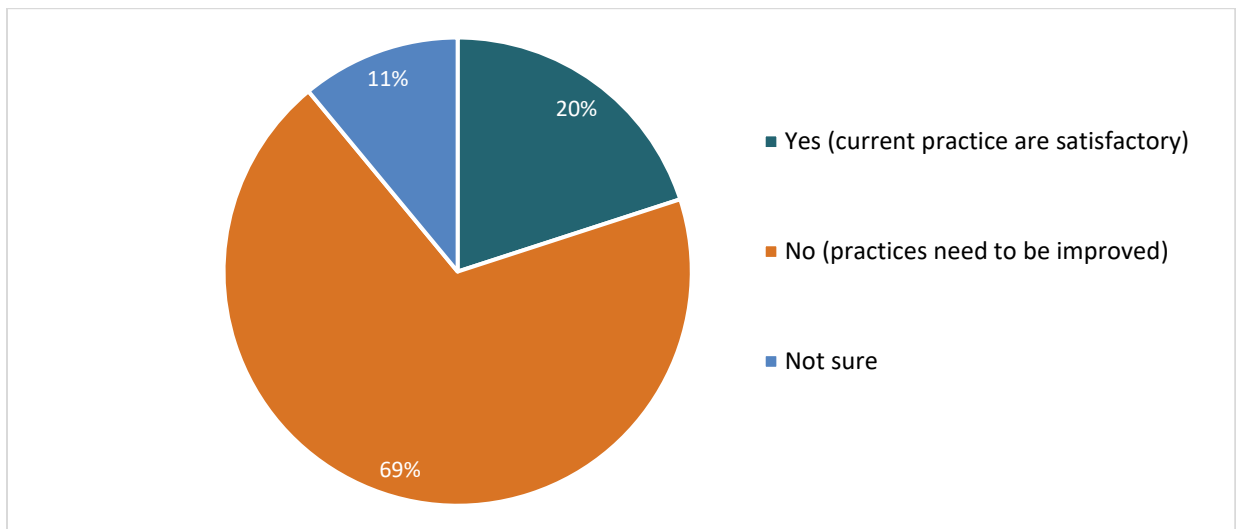
More than half of **Q12** respondents were familiar with forest management practices around streams and the role forest management plays in preserving water quality while almost 70% of the respondents believed that the current forest practices need to be improved to protect waterways (**Q13**).

Respondents highlighted several issues regarding the observed water quality in recent years, including water shortages, increased sudden water runoff, soil erosion, and sedimentation. Climate change induced events such as dry summers and lack of precipitation, as well as human-induced impacts such as decreasing capacity of logged forests to absorb stormwater or heavy rainfalls were cited as the main reasons behind the perceived decline in water quality and quantity in recent years. Some respondents also stated that pollutants from increased cruise ship traffic and land-based recreational activities are to blame for perceived changes in the quality of the water supply.

Q12 Are you familiar with forestry management practices around streams and their role in preserving water quality and ecosystems?



Q13 Do you believe current forestry practices are sufficient to protect waterways?



5.1.4 Biodiversity

Biodiversity or biodiversity conservation involves sustainable management and protection of the variety of plant and animal species, ecosystems, and genetic diversity within forests.

Biodiversity is valued by respondents for its services for the survival and health of living beings and climate change adaptation. Respondents commented that maintaining biodiversity creates positive benefit flows within the ecosystem that will eventually help improve ecological resilience. Respondents recommended the Planning team adopt the current federal and provincial governments' goal of 30% protection. Some comments also suggested applying forest management practices that allow partial cutting, ecosystem connectivity, and hardwood growth in areas where harvesting is allowed to provide habitats for different flora and fauna.

5.1.5 Fish

The value placed on fish reflects sustainable management of healthy aquatic ecosystems within and around the forests to sustain and improve fish populations.

Collectively, 98% of **Q11** respondents strongly agreed (86%) and somewhat agreed (12%) that fish and their habitat on the Sunshine Coast should be protected, and where needed, restored. Many of the comments received stated that decreasing water quality and water quantity in many bodies of water in the Sunshine Coast, particularly in fish-bearing streams, have put pressure on important fish species and their habitat. Respondents identified salmonids, particularly Coho (*Onchorhynchus kisutch*), sockeye (*Onchorhynchus nerka*), pink (*Onchorhynchus gorbuscha*), and chum (*Onchorhynchus keta*), as well as sticklebacks (*Gasterosteidae*) and forage fish as threatened and in need of protection to maintain their population.

5.1.6 Wildlife

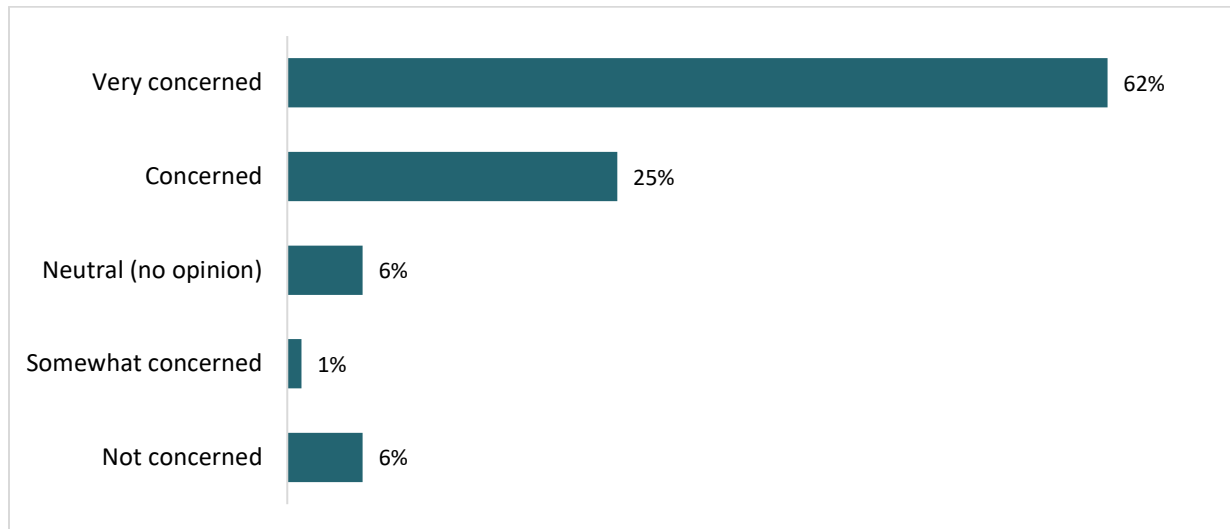
Wildlife or wildlife habitat protection involves implementing practices that support the health and sustainability of diverse animal species and their habitats within forests.

Around 62% and 25% of **Q17** respondents were very concerned and concerned, respectively, about the wildlife habitat preservation. When asked about which wildlife species are most in need of protection, most respondents mentioned:

- Birds, including northern goshawk (*Accipiter atricapillus*), marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), barred owl (*Strix varia*), great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*), and other species of birds of prey, migratory birds, and songbirds;
- Bears, including grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) and black bears (*Ursus americanus*);
- Elk (*Cervus canadensis*);
- Deer, including black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*);
- Cougars (*Puma concolor*);
- Wolverines (*Gulo gulo luscus*); and

- Amphibians, including tailed frog (*Ascaphus truei*), northern red-legged frog (*Rana aurora*), and other species.

Q17 How concerned are you about the preservation of wildlife habitat in your area?



Many respondents believed that wildlife species were losing their habitat due to clear-cut logging and urban encroachment on the forests. Others stated that wildlife has been adequately protected under current provincial regulations. One respondent recommended using a more coordinated and optimized approach to integrating the FLP and existing protection measures such as Old Growth Management Areas, parks, Wildlife Habitat Areas, and other management strategies to provide habitat for a wide range of species without constraining the timber harvesting land base.

5.1.7 Cumulative impacts

“Cumulative impacts” refers to the compounded impacts of multiple human activities, management practices, and/or natural disturbances on the forests over time. Understanding cumulative impacts as a value involves the assessment of long-term consequences of multiple concurrent activities on forest ecosystems and landscapes.

“Cumulative impacts” was mentioned by some respondents and open house participants in relation to logging and the associated compounded impacts on residential areas, watersheds, and climate change adaptation. Those who stated their concerns suggested that the Province should conduct an impact assessment prior to forest allocation using a transparent process while focusing on mitigating human-induced impacts (e.g., clear cut logging), forest health, and climate change-related disturbances.

5.1.8 Climate change

As a forest value, and in the context of the development of the FLP, “climate change” refers to adaptation and mitigation strategies and/or actions to address climate change impacts on the forests and leverage forests as a tool to mitigate climate change.

Many of the comments received suggested that climate change is an overarching issue that has strong interconnections with forest values on the Sunshine Coast, particularly water, fish, ecosystem health, and biodiversity. Respondents indicated they are concerned that climate change is impacting water levels and temperatures in watersheds posing risks to salmon spawning among other things. Respondents also believed that measures to improve ecological resilience to climate change cover different aspects of forestry ranging from creating environments for sustainable harvesting to old growth protection and recruitment.

5.1.9 Culture

Culture reflects opportunities to practice beliefs and norms important to individuals or social groups to promote sustainable and inclusive approaches to forest management. Cultural values in relation to forestry encompass Indigenous knowledge, forest-based livelihoods, spiritual values, and cultural conservation practices.

Some respondents commented that forests, particularly old growth forests, hold cultural values used for educational purposes that are passed down from one generation to another, including to educate the younger generations about the historical abundance of forest resources and cultural resources in the region. Respondents of **Q19** were also aware that forests are an important and valuable resource for First Nations' economy, diet, and health and play a critical role in maintaining Indigenous cultural practices. Activities that respondents were most aware of include hunting, trapping, and fishing, cedar bark stripping, weaving, and root collection, and plant gathering for food and medicine.

Q19 Which of the following are you aware of being used traditionally, and/or which ones are you aware of still being practiced by First Nation members?

| First Nation Natural Resource Use | Aware of Traditional Use | Aware of Current Use | Not Aware of Use |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Hunting, trapping, and fishing | 45% | 47% | 8% |
| Plant gathering for food and medicine | 47% | 44% | 8% |
| Culturally modified trees (e.g., cedar) | 52% | 39% | 9% |
| Travel and trading routes | 59% | 10% | 30% |
| Rock/mineral quarry: ochre, pitch collection | 40% | 11% | 50% |
| Burial sites | 63% | 17% | 20% |
| Preservation: drying, burning, smoking, jarring, freezing, submersion, fermentation, salting | 43% | 45% | 12% |
| Bathing: ocean, river, waterfall, wetland swamps, lakes | 35% | 34% | 30% |
| Training: spiritual, ceremonial, warfare, games, storytelling | 42% | 40% | 18% |
| Shell deposit sites, shellfish harvest | 55% | 24% | 21% |
| Storage: caching, boxes, racks, trees, caves | 52% | 12% | 36% |
| Monumental cedar and carving trees | 48% | 34% | 17% |
| Plant garden | 33% | 32% | 34% |
| Pictographs, petroglyphs, arbor-glyphs, monoliths | 74% | 12% | 14% |
| Cedar bark stripping, weaving, root collection | 45% | 48% | 7% |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Regalia: animal parts – skins/wool/hoof/claw/bone/antler/feathers, plant fibres and bark, paint | 50% | 33% | 18% |
| Settlements: longhouses, pit-houses, rock shelters/caves, matt houses | 69% | 17% | 14% |
| Tools and technology: stone, bone, cordage, wood | 65% | 16% | 19% |

5.1.10 Equitable sustainable economy

Equitable sustainable economy refers to a fair and just approach to utilizing forest resources that ensures social, economic, and environmental benefits for present and future generations.

Respondents acknowledged that the forest industry creates jobs for locals and should not be overlooked in the planning process and included that a paradigm shift is required to transform the current timber harvesting practices and management into a more equitable and sustainable forest economy. Respondents mentioned replacing clear-cut logging with selective harvesting and applying clear land use zoning in the FLP to avoid conflicts in the operational stage and minimize negative impacts of logging on other land use types. Respondents also recommended shifting to an extended rotation in forest management to achieve a higher ratio of heartwood and sapwood and to generate more local jobs in the secondary wood processing sector, which is more likely to produce higher-value products from lower volume of timber. Open house participants and individuals who contacted the Planning team via the project email address highlighted the importance of the forest industry to local economies on the Sunshine Coast. It was also noted that the questionnaire did not adequately reflect this nor did it emphasize timber as a priority forest value.

5.2 EMERGING FOREST VALUES

Analysis of questionnaire responses and open house participant comments revealed multiple recurrent ideas, concerns or issues that did not “fit” under any of the forest values highlighted in the Sunshine Coast FLP questionnaire or communication materials. These recurrent ideas are defined here as “emerging forest values” because of the frequency with which they were raised.

5.2.1 Recreation

The prominent role of the recreation/tourism sector in the local economy was repeatedly identified as an important consideration for the development of the Sunshine Coast FLP. More than 90% of Q4 respondents participated in day use activities, such as hiking, on the Sunshine Coast at least once per year. Water sports and recreation, camping, harvesting non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and winter sports (e.g., skiing) were also common activities. Respondents and open house participants who had concerns about recreation identified maintaining viewsapes and preserving trails from logging activities as key issues facing the recreation/tourism sector in recent years.

Q4 How often do you do the following activities?

| Recreational use type | Never | Fewer than once a year | 1-6 times per year | 7-12 times per year | Greater than 12 times per year |
|-----------------------------|-------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Fishing | 54% | 15% | 20% | 6% | 6% |
| Hunting | 88% | 5% | 5% | 1% | 1% |
| Water sports and recreation | 17% | 11% | 23% | 14% | 34% |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Caving | 88% | 8% | 3% | 0% | 0% |
| Winter sports | 39% | 15% | 30% | 11% | 4% |
| Horseback riding | 84% | 10% | 5% | 0% | 1% |
| Harvesting non-timber forest products | 25% | 11% | 31% | 14% | 18% |
| Camping | 23% | 19% | 36% | 12% | 9% |
| Day use | 3% | 4% | 20% | 14% | 59% |
| Motorized recreation | 82% | 7% | 4% | 3% | 3% |

5.2.2 Science-based decision-making

There was strong support for the use of empirical data, rigorous analysis, and scientific approaches to guide forest planning to better understand the causes and impacts of forest disturbances or other forest-related issues on forest ecosystems. The public suggested using best practices and methods available for carbon modelling, updating forest inventory, and quantifying values for tradeoffs, including applying the existing Stewardship Baseline Objectives Tool (SBOT) to assess ecosystem structure and ability to adapt to cumulative impacts and climate change.

5.3 OLD GROWTH FORESTS: A CROSS-CUTTING THEME

Old growth forests have been an ongoing issue in British Columbia for decades. This section discusses old growth forests as a common reoccurring theme that cuts across multiple forest values for which questionnaire respondents and open house participants expressed concern. Old growth forests are treated as a theme rather than a value to acknowledge the interconnectedness it shares with almost all the identified and emerging forest values.

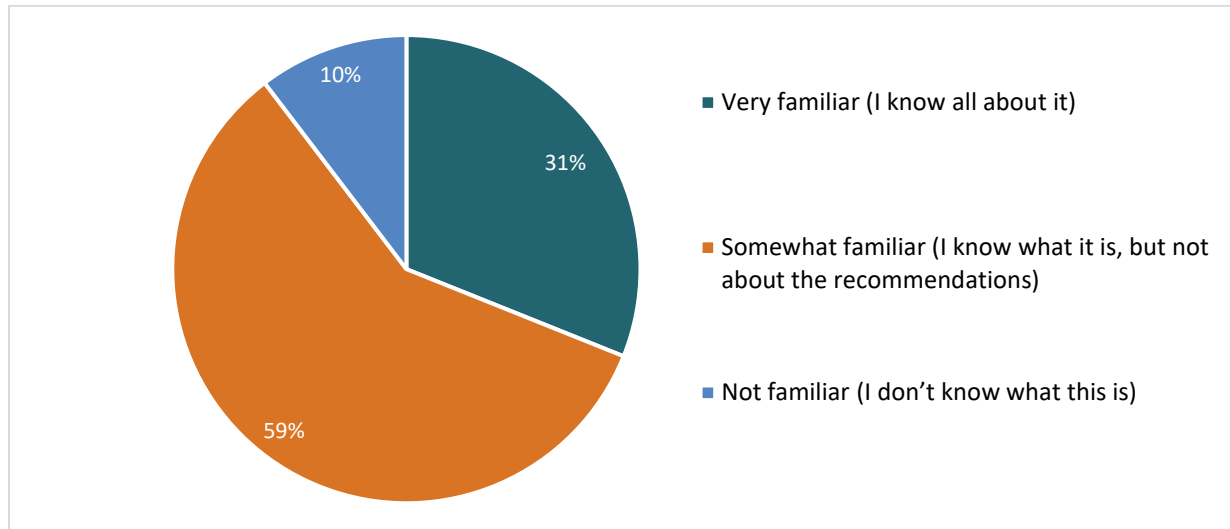
The technical definition for what is an “old growth forest” in BC is a forest with trees older than 250 years of age on the coast and 140 years of age in the interior.⁹

Respondents of **Q6** were very familiar (37%) and somewhat familiar (51%) with the Old Growth Strategic Review (OGSR). Those who were somewhat familiar with the OGSR were aware of the review, but not about the recommendations summarized in the Old Growth Review Panel’s report, *A New Future for Old Forests*.¹⁰

⁹ Gorley A, Merkel G. 2020. A New Future for Old Forests: What We Heard. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/stewardship/old-growth-forests/what-w-e-heard-20200429_final-edit_online.pdf.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Q6 How familiar are you with the Old Growth Strategic Review?



67% of **Q7** respondents believed that all (90-100%) old growth forests in the Sunshine Coast should be protected from harvesting to enhance ecosystem integrity. Almost all **Q8** respondents also believed that old growth forests are very important and moderately important to help conserve biodiversity, capture and store carbon, enhance recreation and tourism, and allow for cultural and spiritual values.

Q7 To what extent do you think old growth forests should be protected from harvesting?

| | Response Rate |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| All of it needs to be protected (90-100%) | 67% |
| Most of it needs to be protected (60-90%) | 15% |
| Protection should be balanced with forest harvesting (40-60%) | 9% |
| Some of it needs to be protected (10-40%) | 7% |
| None of it needs to be protected (0-10%) | 2% |
| Not sure | 0% |

Q8 What benefits do you associate with old growth forests?

| Benefit | Very important | Moderately important | Neutral (no opinion) | Less important | Not important |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Biodiversity conservation | 86% | 9% | 2% | 2% | 1% |
| Capture and store carbon | 73% | 14% | 7% | 3% | 4% |
| Recreation and tourism | 31% | 42% | 12% | 11% | 3% |
| Cultural and spiritual values | 52% | 28% | 13% | 5% | 3% |

Table 2 summarizes comments collected from the questionnaire and at the open house events that focused on the values attached to the old growth forests and the contribution of old growth forests make to those values.

Table 2 Benefits of old growth forests associated with forest values.

| Value | Benefits of Old Growth Forests |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ecosystem health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stabilize soil ▪ Prevent forest fires |
| Water quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Act as a “sponge” for water vapor and moisture return ▪ Prevent water runoff |
| Biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Genetic bank for native plants and species representing natural climax forest condition for each biogeoclimatic zone |
| Wildlife | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect wildlife species-at-risk |
| Fish | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regulate water levels and temperatures for salmonid migration |
| Climate change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain temperature ▪ Capture and store carbon |
| Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide space for physical, spiritual, and science education |
| Equitable sustainable economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide high value timber and NTFPs |
| Recreation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scenic value |

5.4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUNSHINE COAST FLP

The open-ended responses received from the questionnaire and at the open house events demonstrated public interests in making contributions to the Sunshine Coast FLP. The Planning team considers feedback and/or suggestions made by the public to advance values placed on forests as opportunities for the planning and implementation of the Sunshine Coast FLP. Many of the opportunities presented in Table 3 are associated with one or more of the pre-identified and emerging forest values.

Table 3 provides a summary of the opportunities raised throughout the public engagement activities.

Table 3 Opportunities associated with the values.

| Value | Opportunities |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ecosystem health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plant a diversity of tree species, such as hardwoods ▪ Introduce sustainable silviculture treatments (i.e., spacing, pruning, burning) ▪ Apply ecosystem-based management ▪ Plan ecological corridors to enhance resilience ▪ Old growth recruitment and protection from logging ▪ Ban glyphosate |
| Collaborative governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involve First Nations in conservation and restoration ▪ Uphold reconciliation with First Nations ▪ Develop partnerships between community forests and First Nations ▪ Data collection and sharing with local communities and First Nations |
| Water quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage rates of harvest and/or disturbance within non-community and non-fish sensitive watersheds to mitigate the cumulative impacts of increasing natural disturbances due to climate change ▪ Provide proper buffers on water courses and headwaters |
| Biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retain non-market species to ensure biodiversity succession ▪ Follow federal and provincial governments' goals of protecting 30% of the terrestrial land base to support conservation |
| Wildlife | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Map and maintain wildlife migration routes ▪ Keep wetlands available for migrating birds |
| Fish | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and restore fish habitat ▪ Address human-made passages and habitat challenges (e.g., culverts) |
| Cumulative impacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess cumulative impacts through inventory and monitoring initiatives ▪ Evaluate cumulative impacts beyond tenure areas, downstream, and residential areas ▪ More transparent impact assessments prior to forest allocation |
| Climate change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore carbon as a tool to finance changes in management practices ▪ Old growth recruitment and protection for carbon sequestration |
| Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect Indigenous medicinal plants ▪ Prescribe cultural burning |
| Equitable sustainable economy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Predetermine areas to log and conserve in advance to avoid conflicts in the operational phase ▪ Shift towards longer rotations to create more local jobs in high-end secondary wood processing sector ▪ Reduce large, non-local ownership or tenure to prioritize local small tenure and businesses (e.g., woodlots) ▪ Ensure a viable forest resource sector on the Sunshine Coast while seeking balance with other values ▪ Shift toward selective logging or other sustainable logging practices |
| Recreation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritize viewsapes of the proposed harvest areas seen from recreation areas ▪ Support non-destructive recreational use (e.g., no cars or motorized boats) ▪ Maintain backcountry roads to a standard that allows public use |
| Science-based decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update forest inventory ▪ Apply existing tools to quantify values for trade-offs (i.e., SBOT) |

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- Use best available carbon modelling to reveal the best carbon strategies and balance forest management strategies
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6.0 NEXT STEPS

Insights presented throughout this report reflect the forest values, concerns, and suggestions of the stakeholders and members of the public that completed the questionnaire and/or attended one of the three public open houses held in November and December 2023. The findings presented herein will be useful to inform the direction for the development of the first draft of the Sunshine Coast FLP.

The public input has highlighted key areas of focus, such as ecosystem-based management, sustainable harvesting and silviculture practices, recreation, science-based decision-making, continued collaboration, and many others. These elements will be incorporated into the planning process to help ensure that the forest management practices being embodied in the Sunshine Coast FLP align with the values of the Core Nations and local communities.