

18 October 2021

Katrine Conroy  
Minister of Forests, Natural Lands and Resources  
Room 248 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4  
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Dear Minister Conroy,

I am writing in regards to the unprotected old growth forests in the Fairy Creek watershed. The entire Fairy Creek watershed needs to be protected immediately to save several endangered species, preserve indigenous culture and most importantly combat climate change. As a secondary student in B.C. this issue is extremely important to me because the logging of these ancient forests will negatively impact the quality of life for my generation and future generations.

There are several endangered species that call the Fairy Creek watershed home. These include: Old Growth Specklebelly Lichen, Western Rattlesnakeroot, Northern Red-Legged frogs, Marbled Murrelets, Western Screech owls, and many more. Some of these species such as Marbled Murrelets and Western Screech owls, rely on old growth forests for survival. The "Fairy Creek Research" iNaturalist project has 928 observations of 320 species and counting! According to scientists in a United Nations report we are in the middle of a biodiversity crisis. We need to do everything we can to protect endangered species now to preserve the natural functions of our ecosystems.

Old Growth forests are an important part of Indigenous culture. As stated by Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs:

What governments and corporations need to do is to take a step back and view old growth forests not as commercialized products to be harvested and sold, but as the bedrock foundations of a healthy, biodiverse environment that First Nations have been stewards over since time immemorial. Old growth forests help sustain our livelihoods and possess incalculable cultural and spiritual value that is far from pecuniary.

We have a responsibility to give Indigenous people the right to protect ecosystems and biodiversity on their territories, as part of the B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples passed in 2019. Although some Indigenous people in the Pacheedaht community want to log the old growth, if they had other economic alternatives I think they would be less likely to want to log. As Grand Chief Philip noted how many indigenous people are forced to log because of "the socioeconomic conditions in our community are beyond dismal." Phillips emphasizes the importance of supporting Indigenous people so they can continue their role as stewards of the land.

Protecting the entire Fairy Creek Watershed is essential to help stop the irreversible effects of climate change. According to "BC's Old Growth Forest: A Last Stand For Biodiversity," a report published by three scientists in April 2020, productive Old Growth forests cover only 3% of British Columbia. We have to save these ancient forests because they play a vital role in stopping the soon to be irreparable effects of climate change. As stated in the same report, some of the many benefits of productive old growth forests are: large carbon storage and sequestration capacity, high fire resistance and air temperature regulation.

We need to immediately protect the old growth Fairy Creek Watershed to save endangered species, preserve indigenous culture and stop the effects of climate change that will negatively impact all people worldwide and future generations to come. There are two actions that must be taken to preserve these old growth forest. The first action that must be taken is to transition and fund logging second growth instead of old growth. The second action would be, as stated in the “New study reveals old-growth forests are worth more to BC economy standing than logged” by the Ancient Forest Alliance, it’s time to provide conservation funding and support to transition the logging industry to a more sustainable economic diversification for the long-term benefit of people and the environment. I look forward hearing what steps you will take to protect old growth forests and the economy for my generation and those to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fraser Wagner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "F".

Fraser Wagner