
The Forests Act – What Should Be Included

AWA proposed the following additions to the binding provisions of the *Forests Act*. However, the bill has moved forward without amendments. As an alternative, these changes should be incorporated into upcoming regulations to be written for 20-year-long Forest Management Agreements:

In section 1 ‘Definitions’, add:

Environmentally sustainable: Forest management that maintains forest biodiversity, ecosystem processes and resilience, while natural resources within forests are used by humans in ways and at rates where they are

able to replenish themselves.

Add: Environmentally sustainable forest management section

The Minister shall manage for environmentally sustainable timber harvest levels and methods, based upon scientific evidence, recognizing the need to maintain and restore forest soil, water, carbon, and biodiversity values.

Rationale: Confirms in an enforceable section the commitment to environmentally sustainable forest management.

Add: Consultation section

The Minister shall provide for meaningful Indigenous consultation and meaningful public participation in forest management, including adequate notice, information and

opportunity to comment upon the development and review of:

- forest laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines
- forest management agreements
- forest management plans and
- annual operating plans

Rationale: Provincial requirements for accessible information and meaningful public participation opportunities in these important processes either do not exist or are very limited.

Add: Transparency section

The Minister shall provide for widely accessible public reports of:

- Proposed and approved forest management plans, including assessments of vegetation inventory, timber growth and

yield, and of harvest scenario impacts upon Indigenous rights, soil, water, carbon, biodiversity and timber values

- Annual operating plans and annual reports of operations

Rationale: Management of public forests requires transparency and accountability. Online posting of approved ten-year forest management plans occurs now, the others are generally never made accessible. Some are only available for paper copy review by those at annual open houses or government offices.

- Carolyn Campbell
