TERMS OF REFERENCE

Old Growth Strategic Review

OLD GROWTH STRATEGIC REVIEW PANEL

On July 17, 2019, the Government of British Columbia announced that Garry Merkel and Al Gorley had been appointed to lead an Old Growth Strategic Review and provide a report to the Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

OVERVIEW

Old growth forests are important to British Columbians. They drive a significant portion of the forest industry, supply high quality products, and support forestry employment. They are attractive sites for tourism and recreation, and provide important habitats for wildlife. They are important for climate change mitigation. Old growth forests and trees are culturally and socially significant to Indigenous Peoples.

Merkel and Gorley will gather input by developing an online questionnaire, receiving written submissions, leading community engagement and meeting with key governments and organizations, including:

- Indigenous governments and communities
- Local governments and communities
- The forest industry
- The tourism and recreation industries
- Environmental non-government organizations
- Professional associations
- Professionals, academics and other experts
- Forest and resource stewardship organizations
- Stakeholder groups
- Members of the public

Merkel and Gorley will consider how other jurisdictions manage old growth forests.

Based on what they gather through engagement, Merkel and Gorley will develop a report to the Government to inform the development of broad public policy regarding old growth forests. The report will include a summary of what they heard.

Upon receiving the report, the Government will consider the recommendations and, through consultation, develop new policies and strategies for the management of old growth forests.

ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Balance

Examine old growth management from a variety of perspectives including employment, economic, social, cultural, environmental and climate change values. Considering all input, including potential tradeoffs and impacts amongst the various interests and values, will be a key element of deliberations and work.

Transparency

Make all information relating to the review available to the public, except for information that must be withheld to comply with privacy legislation.

Independence

Independently set direction on the processes, topics and approach for engaging with the public and drafting recommendations. To facilitate an effective process, the Government will provide assistance as requested.

First Nations Consultation

The B.C. Government will engage in Government-to-Government consultation with First Nations before setting policy direction in response to the report.

Open-mindedness

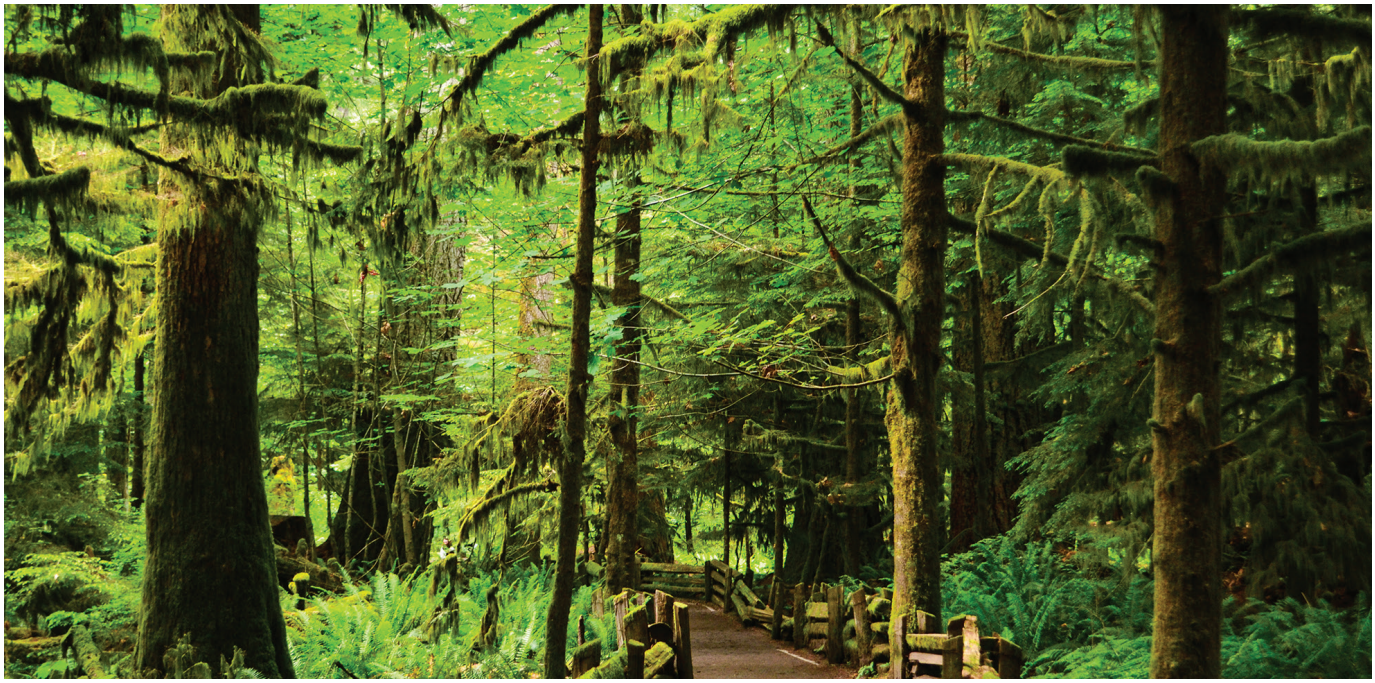
Maintain open minds with respect to who will provide input and how input is provided. Maintain a discipline of not pre-determining outcomes.

Inclusiveness

Provide every British Columbian with an opportunity to express their views, as almost all old growth forests are on public land.

TIMING

Merkel and Gorley will provide a final report to the Minister by April 30, 2020. The report will be released to the public within six months of its submission.



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

LEARN MORE ONLINE AT:
engage.gov.bc.ca/oldgrowth