

2021

# ACTIVITY REPORT & FINANCIALS

Canada's largest known Sitka spruce tree.  
San Joseph River, Quatsino territory.





PHOTO:  
Old-growth Sitka spruce forest.  
Keith River, Quatsino territory.

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Founded in 2010

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# MISSION STATEMENT

**The Ancient Forest Alliance (AFA)** is a registered non-profit society working to protect endangered old-growth forests and to ensure a sustainable, second-growth forest industry in BC.

We are BC's leading organization working to secure science-based, province-wide legislation to protect old-growth forests for the sake of wild species, freshwater, the climate, tourism, Indigenous cultures, and communities.

THANKS TO YOU!

# A Historic Year for Old-Growth

2021 was a historic year in the movement to protect old-growth forests in BC. The BC government is finally using the best available science to assess the status of old-growth forests and accepted – in principle – recommendations from an independent science panel to defer logging in 2.6 million hectares of BC’s most at-risk old-growth. For the first time ever, this puts both the government and environmental groups on the same page when it comes to acknowledging that old-growth forests are endangered in BC and that the biggest and oldest trees are in need of protection – a complete reversal from their previous position.

This progress comes at a critical time for the environment. It was an unprecedented year in BC with a record-breaking heat dome, out-of-control wildfires that burned not one but two communities, and weather events that led to deadly flooding and landslides, affecting multiple communities and rendering major highways connecting cities to the rest of the country impassible.

Through all of this tragedy, the fight to keep old-growth forests standing remained in the media spotlight, with countless local and international news headlines drawing attention to the logging of the last remaining ancient giants. This resulted in tens of thousands of people taking action to demand the BC government protect ancient forests.

Your continued support through donations, purchasing AFA gear, and attending our second online webinar have also made this one of AFA’s best fundraising years, allowing our team to grow and ramp up pressure on the province to act. Thanks to you, we have one of the greatest opportunities to ensure a positive future for ancient forests.

*Most gratefully,*  
TJ Watt, Ian Illuminato, Cheralyn Frizzell, Coral Forbes, Andrea Inness, Tiara Dhenin, Joan Varley, Rachel Ablack, and Dave Cuddy. Not pictured: Ian Thomas and Sean O’Rourke.



PHOTO:  
Ancient Sitka spruce tree  
west of Lake Cowichan  
in Ditidaht territory



# Year at a Glance

Here's what you helped make happen in 2021!



## PUBLIC PRESSURE

# 600

Over 600 BC residents called Premier Horgan and Forests Minister Katrine Conroy in the lead up to the old-growth panel's six-month deadline for immediate action to protect old-growth.

# 19,765

More than 19,765 direct messages were sent to elected officials.

# 17,920

Our online petition gained 17,920 more signatures.



## Keeping Old-Growth in the Spotlight

We joined our friends at Lead Now, Sierra Club BC, and Wilderness Committee to erect a [billboard](#) ad on the Patricia Bay Highway, demanding Premier Horgan protect old-growth forests.

We garnered news coverage in [Patagonia](#), [Outside Magazine](#), Redbull's [Red Bulletin](#), [CBC Radio](#), [The Narwhal](#), and [The Weather Network](#).



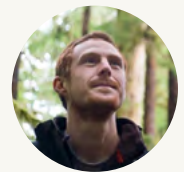
## OUT IN THE FIELD

We explored and documented old-growth forests and logging across Vancouver Island:

- Caycuse Valley in Ditidaht territory
- Klanawa Valley in Ditidaht & Huu-ay-aht territories
- Mahatta River in Quatsino territory
- Vernon Bay in Uchucklesaht and Tseshaht territories
- Eldred Valley in Tla'amin territory
- Braden, Bugaboo, Granite, and Fairy Creek near Port Renfrew in Pacheedaht territory

## International Awards & Recognition

AFA's TJ Watt gained recognition in three international photo competitions for his famed before-and-after images from the Caycuse River watershed on Vancouver Island in Ditidaht territory.



The first was the Earth Photo 2021 Exhibition. His submission was shortlisted in the Changing Forests category and was displayed at the Royal Geographical Society of London. Read his interview [here](#). The second was the LensCulture Art Photography Awards where he was one of the [2021 Critics Choice winners](#). The third was Px3's 'State of the World' photo contest in Paris [seen here](#).

He was also one of the first recipients of the [Trebek Initiative](#) grant and was designated a National Geographic Explorer and Royal Canadian Geographical Society Explorer.

# Forestry Investigations:

## Nahmint Forest Practices Board Results & Canadian Standards Association Complaint

**Nahmint:** In May, the Forest Practices Board finally released the results of their investigation into AFA's 2018 complaint about the destructive logging in the Nahmint Valley in Hupačasath and Tseshaht territories near Port Alberni. The board confirmed that **BC Timber Sales, the province's own logging agency, failed to adequately protect old-growth forests and biodiversity in the Nahmint**, revealing a shocking lack of accountability within the Ministry of Forests, and giving us even further proof of the urgent need for sweeping, systemic changes to forest policy. Read our [press release](#) for more details.



**Canadian Standards Association:** In July, AFA joined Stand.Earth, Ecojustice, and six British Columbians, including Grand Chief Stewart Phillip and conservationist Vicky Husband, to **launch a complaint against the Canadian Standards Association's grossly misleading sustainable forestry certification standard.** The Sustainable Forest Management standard certifies and promotes wood products from logging operations – including in old-growth forests in BC – as sustainable, which [the complaint](#) called patently false and misleading.

In September, the federal Competition Bureau launched a formal investigation under their Deceptive Marketing Practices Branch in response. Our hope is their investigation is transparent, thorough, and doesn't drag on for years. The longer it takes, the more irreplaceable ancient forests will continue to be logged and sold under this bogus certification scheme. Read more in our [press release](#) or this Global News [article](#).





# Old Growth Strategic Review Panel: Updates

In 2020, the BC government promised to implement the Old Growth Strategic Review Panel's full suite of recommendations, which called for a paradigm shift in the way old-growth forests are managed in BC: one that prioritizes biodiversity and ecosystem integrity over timber values. Here's a look at how it's going and how we've worked to hold the province accountable to their promise.

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## **Old Growth Strategic Review Panel Updates:**

In response to mounting public pressure, **two more logging deferrals were added to the initial nine announced in September 2020** with the Pacheedaht, Ditidaht, and Huu-ay-aht First Nations agreeing in June to defer old-growth logging in the Fairy Creek and Central Walbran valleys for two years while they prepare resource management plans.

That same month, the government appointed an Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) consisting of ecologists Rachel Holt, Karen Price, and Dave Daust, co-authors of the 2020 Last Stand for Biodiversity [report](#), and Garry Merkel, co-author of the Old Growth Strategic Review (OGSR) [report](#). **The TAP was tasked with identifying and mapping at-risk old-growth ecosystems using the best science and data available, as recommended by the OGSR Panel.**

**In November, the BC government announced they would work to defer 2.6 million hectares (ha) of the most at-risk old-growth forests (big-tree, ancient, & rare) mapped by the TAP.** Approximately 570,000 ha of at-risk forests within BC Timber Sales cutblocks were immediately halted – a huge step forward in preventing old-growth logging in areas such as the Nahmint Valley near Port Alberni. The province then sent deferral proposals to all BC First Nations, giving them 30 days to decide whether or not they supported them or if they required more time for discussion. However, by asking First Nations to decide the fate of at-risk old-growth without providing funding to offset immediate lost revenues from not logging them and to support a transition to a diversified economy, the BC government is leaving them with an unfair choice.



PHOTO:  
Old-growth logging.  
Caycuse Valley, Ditidaht territory

**Holding Government to Account:**

OGSR Report Cards: March 11, 2021, marked six months since the BC government published the independent Old Growth Strategic Review Panel report, shortly after which Premier John Horgan promised to implement the panel's recommendations in their entirety. To mark the occasion, the AFA, Sierra Club BC, and Wilderness Committee issued the province a [report card](#) assessing their progress on those promises.

The province received failing grades in [almost all five subjects](#). We also issued a one-year report card on September 11th. The province's grades improved slightly, but were still [abysmal](#), with failing grades on immediate action for at-risk forests, progress on prioritizing ecosystem integrity and biodiversity, and transparency and communication. Over that year, thousands of hectares of old-growth forests had been logged, perpetuating a 'talk and log' approach to old-growth management.



**B.C. Government Old-Growth Report Card** Date: March 2022  
Premier: John Horgan

In the fall of 2020, Premier John Horgan made a big promise. He pledged his government would implement the Old-Growth Strategic Review (OGSR) panel recommendations 'in their totality'. The 14 recommendations, published and committed to 18 months ago, follow a three-year timeframe (including short-term actions) and call on the B.C. government to work with Indigenous Nations for a paradigm shift that makes ecological integrity and biodiversity the top priority. This report card grades how the government is doing, looking at the half-time milestone based on the panel's three-year framework.

SUBJECT	PROGRESS	GRADE
Immediate action for at-risk forest		<b>D</b> <small>Up from 'F' in Sept. 21</small>
Funding for implementation, First Nations and forestry transition		<b>C</b> <small>Up from 'F' in Sept. 21</small>
Change course and prioritize ecosystem integrity and biodiversity		<b>D</b> <small>No grade change</small>
Three-year workplan with milestone dates		<b>D</b> <small>No grade change</small>
Transparency and communication		<b>C</b> <small>Up from 'F' in Sept. 21</small>

**THE B.C. GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO TRY HARDER.**



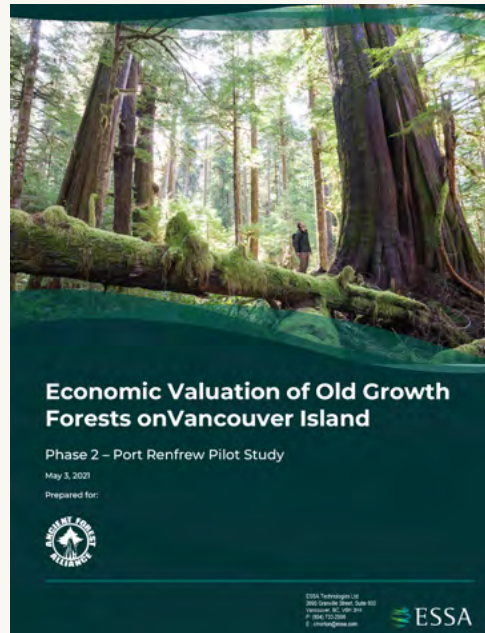
## REPORT:

# Old-Growth Forests Are Worth More Standing

Most of us intrinsically know that old-growth forests are worth more standing than logged. But do the economics bear this out? When government and industry make decisions about whether to log old-growth, their economic studies only consider the forests' timber values while ignoring other ecosystem services like carbon storage, recreation, tourism, salmon habitat, water filtration, etc. But these vital services also create jobs, contribute to the province's gross domestic product, and provide immense economic benefit to society.

With your generous support, **we were able to commission an independent study to assess the economic value of old-growth forests when they are left standing.** Using old-growth forests near Port Renfrew in Pacheedaht and Ditidaht territory as a case study area, the research, which we published in June, showed that old-growth forests really are worth more standing.

*Note: The study doesn't include all old-growth around Port Renfrew and excludes Fairy Creek. It also does not include all ecosystem services that old-growth provides, like cultural values or human health benefits, so the results are an underestimate of old-growth forests' true value.*



[Read the report & summary here](#)

### Why is this Important:

The report reveals that protecting old-growth forests does not hinder the economy and instead can provide sustainable economic opportunities for communities while combating climate change. These findings provide even more reason for the BC government to take immediate steps to protect ancient forests for the benefit of all British Columbians.

### Key Takeaways from the Report:

- The report assesses the economic value of ecosystem services like carbon storage/sequestration, non-timber forest products, recreation, tourism, commercial salmon habitat, and research and education opportunities.
- The results showed that if all the old-growth forests included in the study area were protected, society would be better off by \$40 million.
- In this scenario, tourism alone would make up for any lost timber harvesting jobs and cover 66% of the losses to provincial GDP from forgone harvesting.
- Forest carbon emissions would also be reduced by 570,000 tonnes of carbon.



PHOTO:  
Avatar Grove, Pacheedaht territory

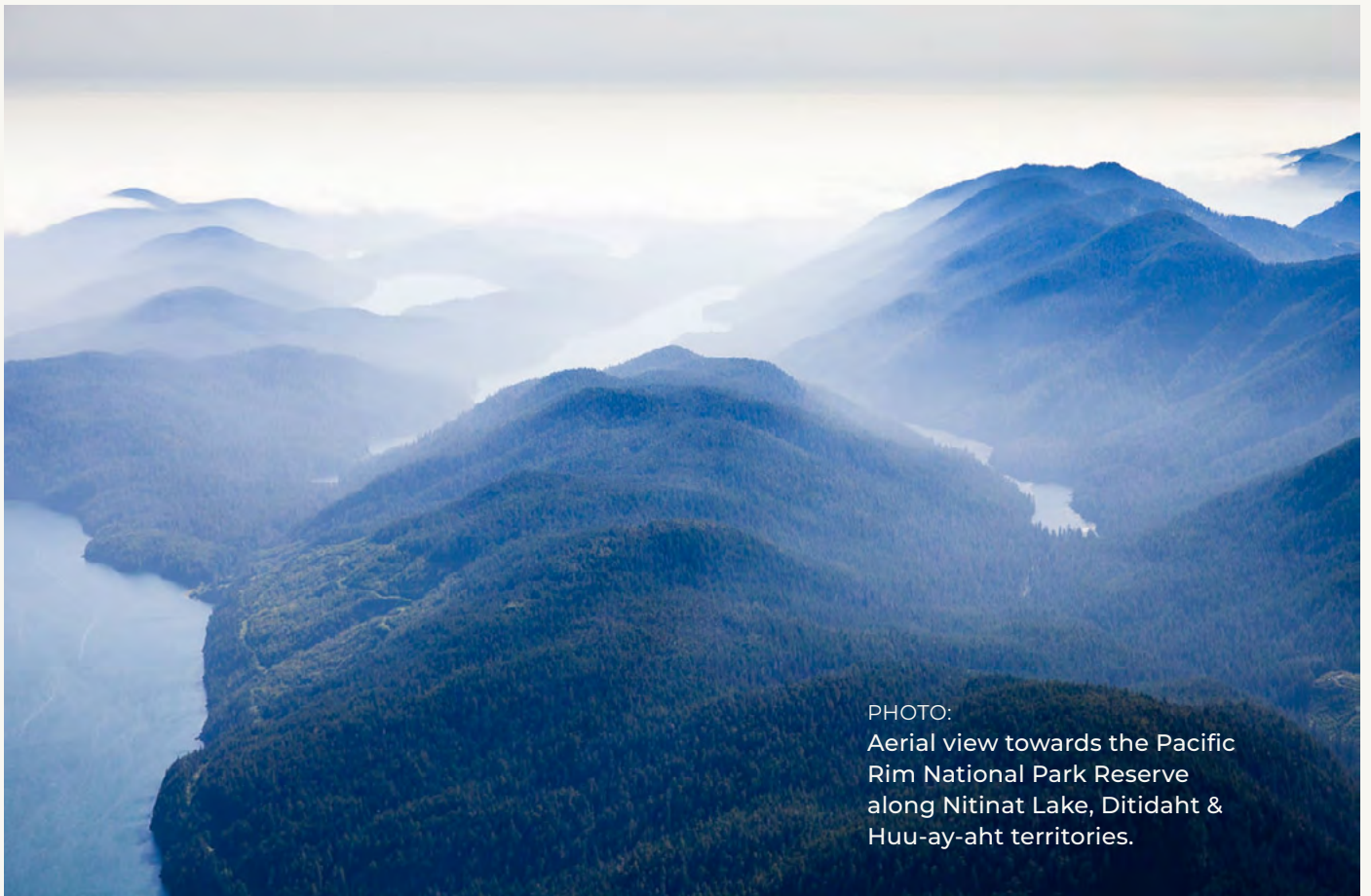


PHOTO:  
Aerial view towards the Pacific  
Rim National Park Reserve  
along Nitinat Lake, Ditidaht &  
Huu-ay-aht territories.

# Funding: The Key to Unlocking Old-Growth Protection

The BC government has committed – in principle – to halting logging in the most at-risk ancient forests in BC while it works to enact a paradigm shift in BC’s forestry sector that prioritizes biodiversity over timber supply. **Making this promise a reality requires significant funding** to support First Nations-led old-growth conservation while helping workers and communities to transition away from old-growth logging.

**We’re calling on the province to commit at least \$300 million in conservation financing** to support Indigenous-led old-growth logging deferrals, land-use plans, and protected areas. This would include funding for Indigenous Guardians programs, offsetting the lost revenues for logging deferrals, and supporting the sustainable economic diversification of First Nations communities in lieu of old-growth logging linked to the establishment of Indigenous Protected Areas.



With the federal government committing \$50 million to a BC Old Growth Nature Fund, and with hundreds of millions more in federal funding already available for expanding protected areas in BC, including old-growth forests, **the BC government must match or exceed this funding to successfully implement the Old Growth Strategic Review Panel’s recommendations.** Otherwise, little will change, and status quo old-growth logging will continue unchecked.



## Building Up Pressure

In 2021, we significantly ramped up pressure on the province to allocate critical funding for conservation financing. **This included launching a new send-a-message tool in the fall, where over 6,000 messages have been sent to decision-makers,** calling for dedicated funding to protect endangered old-growth forests. We also joined Green Party MLA Adam Olsen and forest ecologist and Metchosin Councillor Andy MacKinnon in December for a holiday-themed press conference on the steps of the legislature. With big, gift-wrapped boxes and signs reading *All we want for Christmas is funding to protect old-growth forests!*, we demanded Premier Horgan allocate funding in the 2022-2023 provincial budget to support First Nations to defer and permanently protect old-growth forests. Our small demonstration was covered in the Vancouver Sun, CTV News, Victoria News, Times Colonist, CHEK News, and more!

# Exploring and Documenting Ancient Forests From the Ground & the Air

In 2021, we took to the ground and the air to explore and document the beauty and destruction of endangered old-growth forests in BC. These expeditions help raise awareness and garner media attention by demonstrating what's at risk and what's being lost with every moment of inaction by the BC government. Some of the places we visited include the Caycuse Valley in Ditidaht territory, the Klanawa Valley in Ditidaht & Huu-ay-aht territories, the Mahatta River in Quatsino territory, Vernon Bay in Uchucklesaht and Tseshaht territories, the Eldred Valley in Tla'amin territory, and the Braden, Bugaboo, Granite, and Fairy Creek valleys near Port Renfrew in Pacheedaht territory.



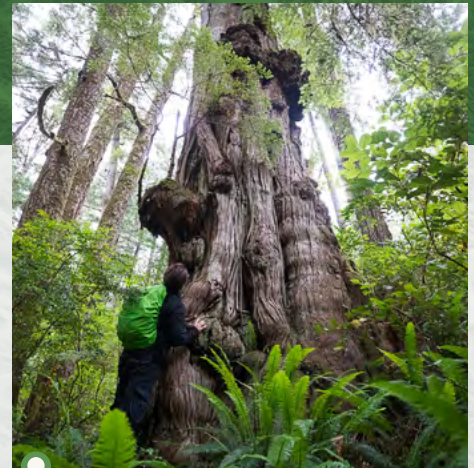
## Lower Caycuse Watershed

This spectacular ancient redcedar was located in a cutblock in the Lower Caycuse River in Ditidaht territory. In the summer of 2021, Teal Jones was given approval to log 31 hectares of mature and old forest here. In December of 2021, the forest was cut. A portion of the forest was recommended for deferral but now it's too late. **The BC government must come to the table with funding to support First Nations that wish to protect old-growth forests in their territories while growing and diversifying their economies.** This funding will help to quickly enact the 2.6 million hectares of deferrals recommended by the independent old-growth technical panel.



## Mahatta River

On an expedition to the upper Mahatta River on northwestern Vancouver Island in Quatsino territory, **we documented clearcuts by BC Timber Sales (BCTS), the government's own logging agency, totalling 50 hectares on one mountainside.** The giant cedar stumps pictured above are a testament to the majesty of the forest that once stood here and provide a stark reminder of the need for quick action to safeguard the last old-growth giants. In November 2021, the province temporarily deferred all future BCTS cutblocks that overlap with identified at-risk forests, but it was too little too late for this majestic mountainside.



## Vernon Bay

This giant western redcedar is located in a stunning ancient forest along the shores of Vernon Bay in Barkley Sound in Uchucklesaht and Tseshaht First Nations territories. The forests here are filled with lush ferns, giant trees - some measuring up to 12 feet in diameter - and many culturally modified trees. **Interfor has government-approved plans to log 33 cutblocks, totalling 55 hectares, of this rare, largely intact ancient forest.** While some stands have been identified for immediate deferral, political will and funding are needed to keep the ancient forests of Vernon Bay standing.

# Community Spotlight Video

The **qathet Regional District** covers 5000 square kilometers of British Columbia's coastline in the traditional territory of the Tla'amin, shíshálh, Klahoose and K'ómoks First Nations, and is home to the City of Powell River.



In September, we travelled to Powell River to film our [second Community Spotlight video](#). We explored at-risk ancient forests in the qathet Regional District, home to some of Canada's oldest trees. Located in the territories of the Tla'amin, shíshálh, Klahoose, and K'ómoks First Nations, the region has been heavily impacted by logging since the 19th century and today, little old-growth forest remains.

Over three days, **we explored, filmed, and photographed the remaining ancient forests of Mt. Freda and the stunning Eldred Valley**. We interviewed Erik Blaney, an elected council member of the Tla'amin First Nation and an outspoken advocate for Tribal Parks as a means of protecting old-growth in Tla'amin territory. We also interviewed Dr. Andrew Bryant, an ecologist with decades of experience researching wildlife on the coast, and Jill Marie Bronson, one of the founders of qathet Old-Growth, a group of local recreationists working to protect the region's remaining ancient forests. The film also features an interview with Christie Dionne, a climber who's helping to put the Eldred Valley on the map as a world-class climbing destination.

**Shortly after the final video was released in November, some of the remnant ancient forests of Mt. Freda and the Eldred Valley were recommended for immediate deferral.** The solution now lies with the province to help communities like Powell River to transition away from old-growth logging while supporting the Tla'min and other First Nations to permanently protect old-growth forests.



Erik Blaney



Dr. Andrew Bryant

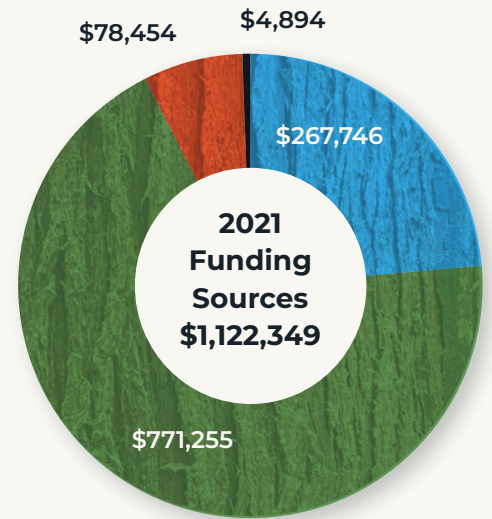


Jill Marie Bronson

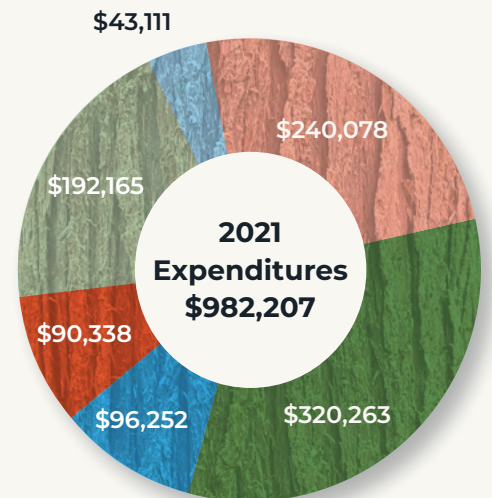
# Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31, 2021

<b>Receipts</b>		
Donations	771,255	
Grants	267,746	
Sales	78,454	
Other Income	4,894	
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>1,122,349</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Cost of Goods	43,111	
<b>CAMPAIGNS</b>		
Campaigners	240,078	
Research & Campaign Development	320,263	
Public Education & Engagement	96,252	
<b>OPERATIONS</b>		
Public Outreach	90,338	
Operations	192,165	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		<b>982,207</b>
<i>Net Surplus: designated for special campaign projects</i>		<b>140,142</b>



- Donations
- Grants
- Sales
- Other Income



- Operations
- Cost of Goods
- Campaigners
- Research & Campaign Development
- Public Education & Engagement
- Public Outreach

# Looking to 2022

With the BC government finally appearing to take a more scientific approach to protecting old-growth and with old-growth protection once again a household issue in BC, we have reason to be more optimistic about the fate of endangered old-growth forests. But there is still much work to be done to ensure ancient forest ecosystems get the protection they deserve. With your support we'll be working hard to:

1. Pressure the BC government to commit funding toward Indigenous-led conservation, sustainable economic alternatives to old-growth logging, and the transition to a sustainable, second-growth forest sector.
2. Support First Nations partners in developing Indigenous Protected Area proposals that conserve old-growth.
3. Build and strengthen relationships with non-traditional allies such as businesses, unions, outdoor recreation groups, chambers of commerce, tourism associations, and faith groups to exert the ultimate pressure on the BC government to enact bold legislative changes to protect ancient forests.
4. Produce videos to elevate the voices of local activists, First Nations, and communities working to protect old-growth in their regions.
5. Continue to explore and document the beauty and destruction of at-risk old-growth forests across BC.

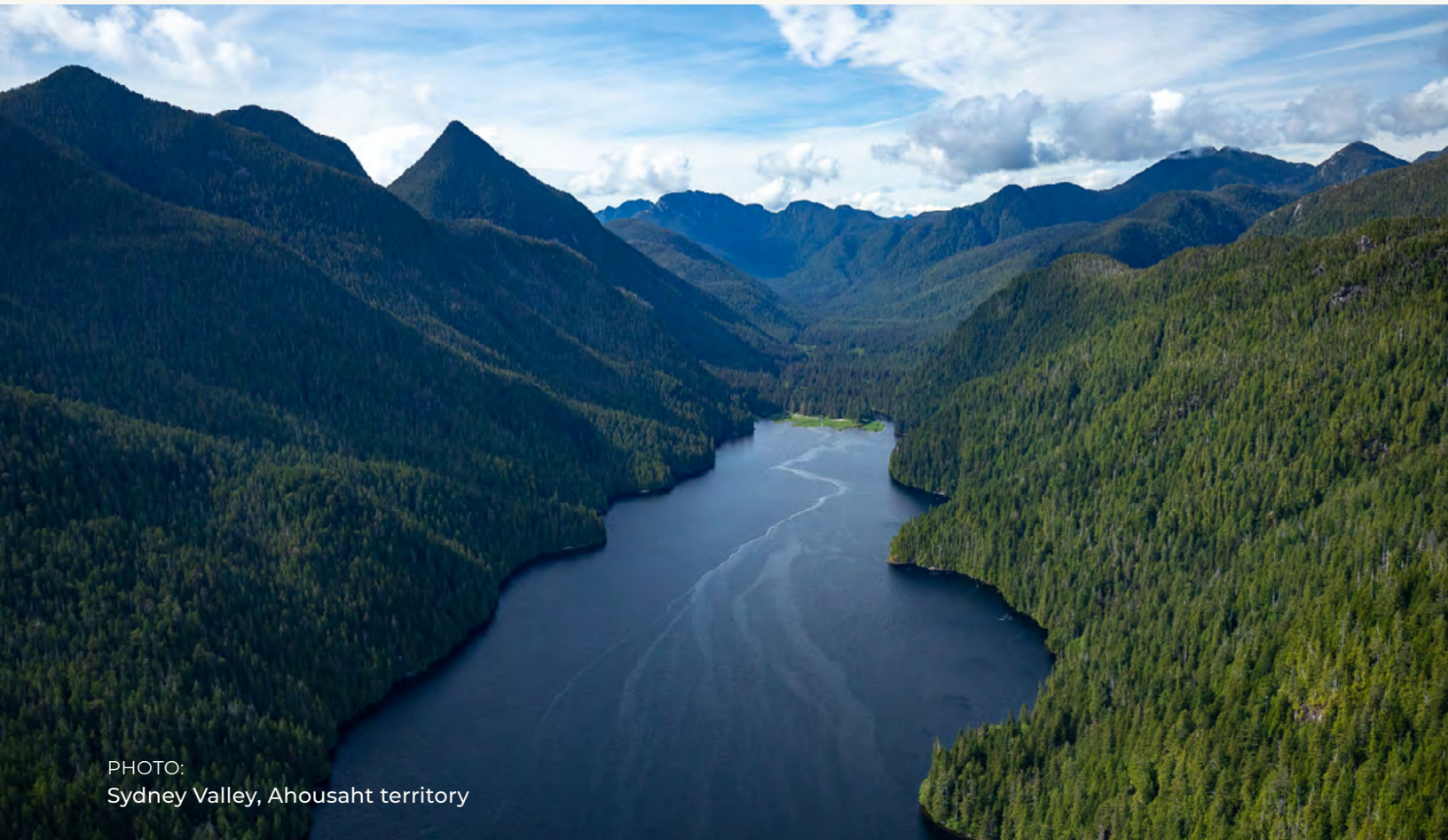


PHOTO:  
Sydney Valley, Ahousaht territory



**Thank you for your  
continued support  
and for caring about  
ancient forests in BC!**

## **Get in touch!**

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