



NEWS RELEASE

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Provincial forest plan needed to ensure forests for future generations

VICTORIA – Auditor General John Doyle has released his latest report, *An Audit of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations' Management of Timber*.

Nearly two-thirds of British Columbia's 95 million hectares is forested. These forests contribute to employment, tourism and recreational opportunities, as well as generate significant revenue for government to finance public services. However, trends indicate that the future availability of timber will be smaller and less diverse, putting future revenue opportunities at risk. Stewardship responsibility for these forest resources lies with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

"Industry is legally obligated to reforest the areas it harvests, and it does so," says Doyle. "But government, which is responsible for over 90 per cent of British Columbia's forests, and whose reforestation decisions have a significant impact on our future forests, is not clear about its own commitments."

The audit found that the ministry has not clearly defined its timber objectives and, as a result, cannot ensure that its management practices are effective. Furthermore, existing management practices are insufficient to offset a trend toward future forests having a lower timber supply and less species diversity in some areas. Finally, the audit found that the ministry does not appropriately monitor and report its timber results against its timber objectives.

"In light of the devastation resulting from such events as mountain pine beetle, the ministry has a window of opportunity to shape our future forests and mitigate the impact with a timely, strategic reforestation plan and cost-effective silviculture," says Doyle. "To do this, government needs to establish a provincial plan that states its long-term timber objectives and focuses its resources in order to foster economic stability and quality of life for British Columbians now and in the future."

The Auditor General will follow up on the six recommendations made in the report in 2013.

About the Office of the Auditor General of B.C.

The Auditor General is a non-partisan, independent Officer of the Legislature who reports directly to the Legislative Assembly. The *Auditor General Act* empowers the Auditor General and staff (known as the Office of the Auditor General or OAG) to conduct audits, report findings and make recommendations.



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Auditor General
of British Columbia

2011/12 Report 11 – *An Audit of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations' Management of Timber*

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