



Incentives for Forest Landowners



**Action for
Adaptation**

Report Written by: Lyndsey Smith CDFCP

Reviewed by: David Haley RPF CDFCP

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Executive Summary

Context Setting

The Action for Adaptation Project is being delivered by UBC Botanical Garden, the Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership (CDFCP) and UBC Okanagan. The focus of this project is to support local governments and First Nations in southwest BC that are looking to accelerate how they mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change by protecting, restoring, and creating nature-based solutions.

This report is focused on identifying gaps and opportunities to establish incentives for forest landowners. This project included:

- A Carbon Feasibility Assessment for private forest owners.
- A Carbon Feasibility Assessment for local government.
- Detailed conversations with forest landholders to understand their perspective on carbon offsetting and direct payments for ecosystem services.
- A survey of small private forest landowners to understand their perspective on carbon offsetting and direct payments for ecosystem services.

Carbon Feasibility Assessments

The Assessments identified that a grouped carbon project for small landowners and local governments would be possible with the following parameters:

- Follow Verra VCS group methodologies.
- Minimum of 300 ha, but preferably ≥ 400 ha of forested land eligible for carbon credits to provide a return while covering costs.
- Pursue avoided conversion methodologies rather than Improved Forest Management as landowners do not typically have evidence of a historic harvesting regime and implementation costs could be returned in 3 years rather than 7 years.
- Have an anchor project that can pull in smaller landholdings.
- The grouped projects should include similar forest types and past approaches to management.
- Landholdings joining a group project after the initial verification will have a shorter project duration to match the initial group project, which will impact on return.
- Develop tools to reduce start up costs as these remain a significant barrier to any project e.g. collective modelling.
- Seek funding to cover implementation costs and modelling.
- Clarify best practice in response to hazard trees, windblown trees, wildfire etc.

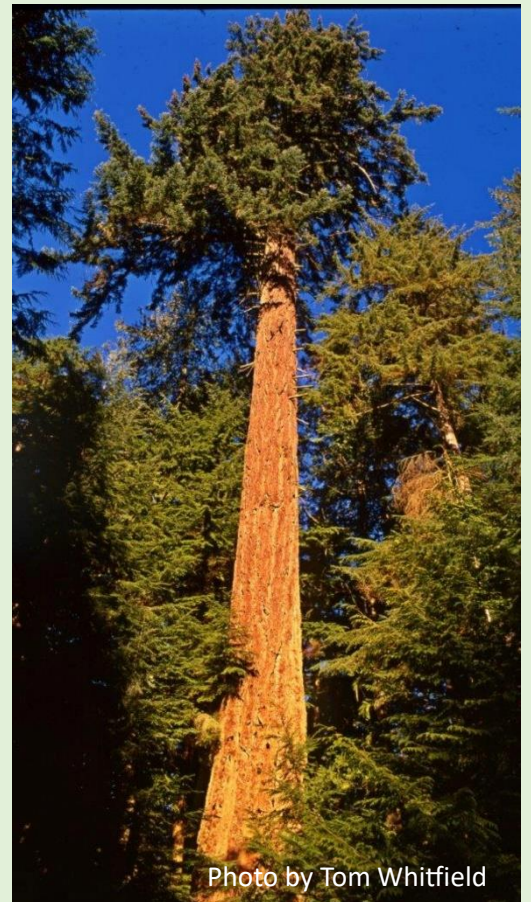


Photo by Tom Whitfield

Incentives for Forest Landowners

In-depth conversations and surveys were completed with forest landowners to understand what their concerns and drivers are in relation to the management of forests and subsequently what might incentivise them to retain their forested lands through to 2050 to help meet the Canadian target of zero net emissions.

- **Key drivers** for accepting incentives payments – biodiversity. Secondary drivers – next generation, carbon, water, urban cooling, cultural plants, income.
- **Key concerns** for forest landowners - tree dieback and wildfire resilience. Other concerns included windthrow and disease and pests.
- Incentives schemes should be 30 years or less. Shorter schemes could increase uptake.
- Landowners will contribute to start up costs if it makes sense financially.
- Small landowners do not typically have comprehensive forest management plans and inventories.
- Payments should be linked to work completed, e.g. wildfire resilience or the ecosystem services provided.
- Seventy eight percent of landowners indicated they might support a local government tax increase, e.g. property tax, for an incentive to protect forests, depending on the level of the tax.
- Incentives should be simple, be easy to communicate and have a demonstration site.
- Guidance is needed on what to do following a natural event e.g. windthrow that impacts on carbon stores.

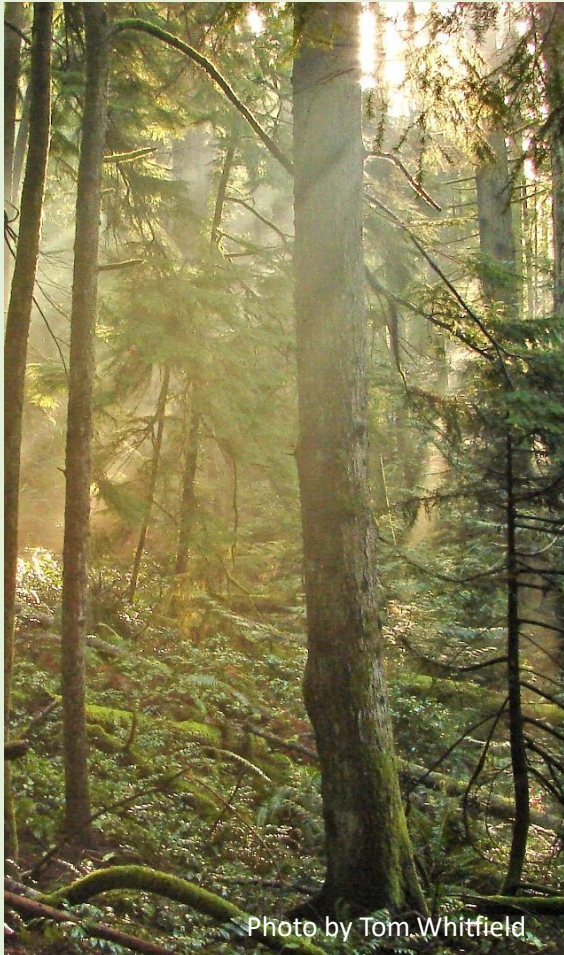


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Potential Approaches to Incentives for Forest Landowners

The following recommendations were provided by forest landowners.

- Inclusion of private landowners in the BC Government Community Wildfire Protection Planning (subject to privacy concerns).
- Public acknowledgement that a landowner is contributing towards forest protection.
- Education relating to forest management in a changing climate.
- Reduction in land tax for forests not in the Private Managed Forest Lands program.
- Payments for actions that lead to healthy forests, e.g. wildfire management.
- A financially and logistically possible route of disposal of thinned timber, especially from the islands.
- Cooperative scheme for sharing equipment to undertake tree thinning.
- Cooperative scheme to help cover any start up costs for an incentive, e.g. forest management plans, inventories, modelling.