
STATEMENT

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Ministry of Forests

Minister's statement on National Forest Week

VICTORIA – Bruce Ralston, Minister of Forests, has released the following statement to mark National Forest Week, Sept. 17-23, 2023:

“Our forests have been front of mind for many British Columbians this year as wildfires and drought have left their mark on people and communities, as well as waters and lands in all corners of the province. Forests are at the foundation of our communities, our local economies and our lives. Forests are places of beauty, home to wildlife and of immense importance to First Nations, but this year they faced exceptional challenges.

“This year, we grieve and reflect on all those who have put their lives at risk to protect our homes, communities and environment. On behalf of all British Columbians, I want to pay special thanks to all the hard-working firefighters who bravely faced the worst fire season on record in B.C., and to the courage and dedication shown by First Nations, local government partners, the First Nations Emergency Services Society, B.C. forest industry contractors and the BC Cattlemen's Association. Thank you.

“We will feel the impact of this year well into the future. The loss of wood will challenge our forestry industry and the loss of homes and lives is etched on our hearts. It is what we do now to respond to this year that will determine the legacy we hand down to our children and grandchildren.

“As we face the challenges of climate change together, we have the opportunity to protect the lands, waters, communities and people that are important to us. By speeding up the transition to a sustainable modernized forestry sector, protecting the most at-risk old-growth forests, protecting more communities by doubling wildfire prevention and mitigation and strengthening forest management based on ecosystem health, we must take bold action to ensure resilient, sustainable and healthy forests. By focusing on forest health, we are more able to withstand the strain of climate change and threat of wildfires in years to come, while providing sustainable jobs to our vital forest sector. Our forests have a role to play in fighting climate change, and we have a role to play in making this happen.

“B.C.'s forests are vibrant, brimming with life and provide so much to everyone who call this province home. Let's care for our forests as they care for us. As we think about this past year, about our forests and what they mean to us, I'd like to invite British Columbians to get involved in the many events around the province to learn about everything forests mean to British Columbia.”

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