



Best Management Practices for Legacy and Special Tree Protection

A. Introduction

The Pacific temperate rainforests ecoregion of North America is one of the richest and most diverse temperate forest ecoregions on earth¹. These coastal rainforests contain enormous trees, referred to as “legacy trees”, which are a result of the area’s favourable growing conditions, including mild year-round temperatures and heavy rainfall. Legacy trees are exceptionally large and old, and a unique feature of British Columbia’s coastal forests.

Sunshine Coast Community Forests (SCCF) recognizes that legacy trees are often attributed with having important cultural, aesthetic and ecological value. These trees, when retained, can play an important role in habitat conservation by bridging old-growth characteristics into second growth stands. In addition, large trees are increasingly supporting the growing ecotourism economy as valuable destinations in and of themselves. In that context, SCCF’s aim is to retain legacy trees throughout the program’s coastal operating areas in accordance with the protocols below. This is a companion document to the Special Tree Protection Regulation.

B. Scope

The following best management practices for the retention of legacy trees apply to all SCCF tenure – K3F. This guide is consistent with the “Special Tree Protection Regulation, B.C. Reg. 229/2020”

C. Best Management Practices

1. Guidance for Selection of Legacy Trees for Retention²

A legacy tree is defined as a tree that is of the species and the minimum diameter specified in Table 1.

It is difficult to confirm the exact measurements of standing trees; therefore, the table’s measurements are a guide. It is up to the judgment of the assessor to use both estimated measurements and quality indicators to determine if a tree qualifies as a legacy tree suitable for retention.

¹ See: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/ecoregions/na0520>

² Largest Diameter Tree (m DBH) specified in Table 1 is consistent with the Special Tree Protection Regulation

Table 1: Diameter Guidance for Legacy Tree Retention³

A tree is specified under this Schedule if the tree

- (a) is standing,
- (b) is described in Column 1 of the Table,
- (c) is located in an area described in Column 2 opposite that description, and
- (d) has a diameter at breast height equal to or greater than the diameter at breast height specified in Column 3 opposite that description.

Table

Item	Column 1 Tree	Column 2 Location	Column 3 Diameter at breast height (cm)
1	Arbutus	Anywhere	164
2	Cedar, yellow	Anywhere	265
3	Cottonwood, black	In the coastal biogeoclimatic zones	268
4	Cottonwood, black	Outside the coastal biogeoclimatic zones	176
5	Douglas-fir — coastal	Anywhere	270
6	Douglas-fir — interior	Anywhere	160
7	Fir, grand	Anywhere	146
8	Maple, bigleaf	Anywhere	198
9	Oak, garry	Anywhere	136
10	Pine, ponderosa	Anywhere	119
11	Redcedar, western	In the coastal biogeoclimatic zones	385
12	Redcedar, western	Outside the coastal biogeoclimatic zones	290
13	Spruce, Sitka	Anywhere	283
14	Yew, pacific	Anywhere	63

1. Planning Considerations

Legacy trees meeting the minimum requirements on Table 1 require a 56m radius circle of retention of supporting trees. Ideally, the legacy tree and its supporting trees should be incorporated in retention patches. Also, it is preferred to have legacy trees retained within areas that will normally be set aside from harvesting (e.g., wildlife tree retention areas, ungulate winter ranges, wildlife habitat areas, old growth management areas, riparian reserve zones and any other areas reserved for non-timber values).

³ The University of British Columbia (UBC) [BC Big Tree Registry](#) is used in this BMP as the reference source to identify the largest trees by diameter and species for those species that are capable of growing to very large diameters in BC. As guidance, this BMP recommends that trees that are at least 50% (diameter threshold higher for Yellow cedar due to safety issues such as dead tops, hollow cores, etc.) of the largest diameter of those registered in the UBC Big Tree Registry can be considered as unique and can be considered by SCCF for retention.

Despite best efforts, it is also recognized that due to operational factors it is not possible to identify or retain all legacy trees or include them within retention patches. An exemption approval from the District Manager is required prior to any legacy tree or its supporting trees can be removed.

2. Operational Factors

Legacy trees may need to be felled during or after primary harvesting operations if they constitute a safety hazard (or are affected by other operational factors) that cannot be addressed through other means.

Operational factors to consider in making a decision of whether to retain a legacy tree will be based on, but not limited to, the following considerations:

1. Worker safety.
2. Operational constraints associated with the location of a tree, potential isolation of timber and impacts to cutblock design, in particular in cutblocks that rely on overhead cable harvest systems.
3. Windfirmness of the tree.
4. Known First Nations' interests based on recent consultation.
5. Local abundance of legacy trees.

Prior to any removal of legacy trees or its supporting trees, an exemption request may be given if the District Manager is satisfied of the following circumstances:

- (a) the exemption is necessary or advisable for
 - (i) forest management,
 - (ii) protection of humans or property, or
 - (iii) promotion of traditional or cultural activities;
- (b) a primary forest activity cannot reasonably be carried out without cutting, damaging or destroying the tree;
- (c) in the case of a supporting tree, the tree is not necessary to protect a specified tree.

A report must be filed to the District within 30 days of the Legacy Tree exemption removal.

3. Field Marking, Mapping and Documentation

All legacy trees and its supporting trees selected for retention will be marked in the field, mapped, visually inspected, and their key characteristics (e.g., species, estimated height, diameter at breast height, crown spread) and location recorded per the SCCF Coastal Legacy Tree Spatial Tracking Procedure. In addition, all exceptionally large legacy trees that meet the criteria for the BC Big Tree Registry "Top Ten List" will be nominated for inclusion on the list⁵.

4. Legacy Tree Report

SCCF must submit a report about the tree to the District Manager within 30 days of discovery of a Legacy Tree, or of the tree becoming a specified (Legacy) tree.

The report must

- (a) be in writing,
- (b) be submitted in the form and manner specified by the minister, and
- (c) set out the following information:
 - (i) the authorization for the responsible person to carry out the primary forest activity and, if applicable, the number of that authorization;
 - (ii) the date the tree was identified;
 - (iii) the location of the tree, expressed as a latitude and longitude in decimal degrees;
 - (iv) the species and, if applicable, variety of the tree;
 - (v) the height and diameter at breast height of the tree.

5. Relationship Between Legacy Trees and Monumental Cedars

Where SCCF Forest Stewardship Plans (FSPs) or other commitments warrant a different management approach such as retention of monumental cedars, large cultural cedars or culturally modified trees that also fit the definition of legacy trees, those commitments supersede SCCF' Best Management Practices for Coastal Legacy Trees.