

Ancient Forest

Socio-economic Benefits of Non-timber Uses of BC's Inland Rainforest
Research Bulletin, December, 2016

Ancient Forest Now Protected as Provincial Park

The ancient cedars in British Columbia's upper Fraser River watershed are now protected better. The Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park was enacted as a Class A park on May 19, 2016. In the Lheidli T'enneh language, *chun t'oh whudujut* means "oldest trees."

The area of the park is 11,190 ha, with an additional 685 ha of protected areas for a total of 11,875 hectares. See map on page 5.

In British Columbia, a Class A park is dedicated to the preservation of natural environments for the inspiration, use, and enjoyment of the public. The adjoining protected areas conserve ecological values while accommodating additional specific activities that would not be allowed in a park. The management plan for the park is under development.

As documented through this series of research bulletins since 2008, this new park is an important step of a long journey to help protect these stands of ancient cedars. As a next step, work has begun for the ancient cedars of the upper Fraser River watershed to be designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. See story on page 3.



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The purpose of this research bulletin is to communicate the results of on-going research on the socio-economic benefits of non-timber uses of the inland rainforest of the upper Fraser River valley in British Columbia. The information contained in this bulletin may be distributed freely with proper citation, as follows:

Connell, David J. 2016. *Socio-economic Benefits of Non-timber Uses of BC's Inland Rainforest: Research Bulletin, December 2016*. Prince George, BC: Ecosystem Science and Management, University of Northern British Columbia.

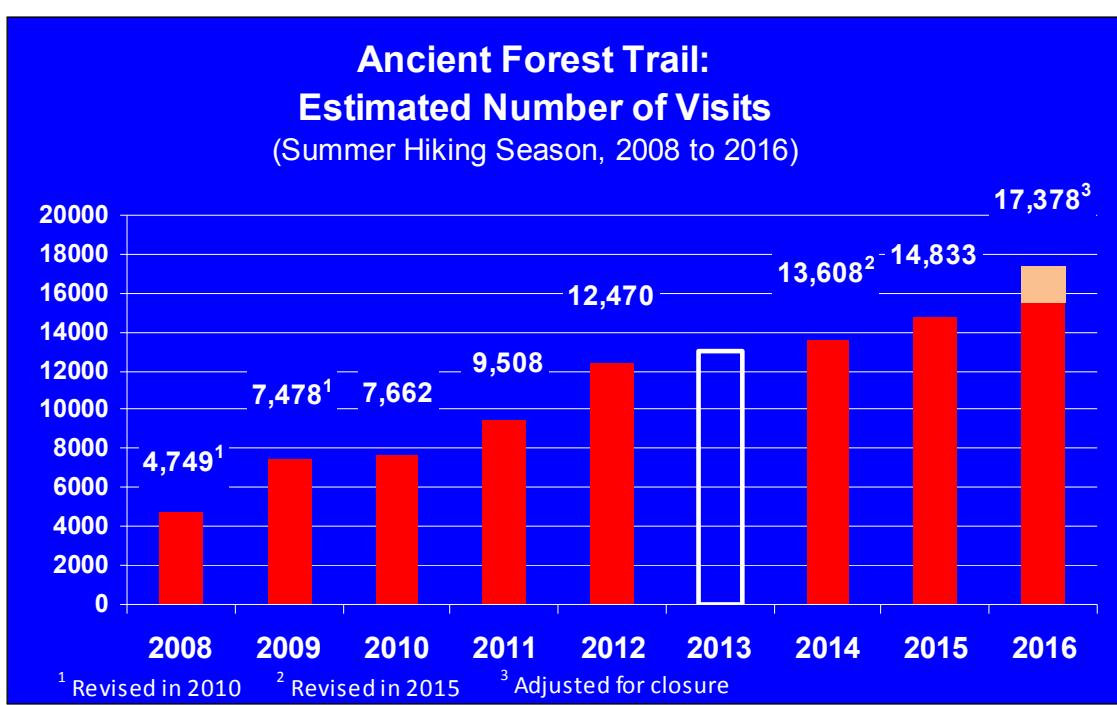
For more information about this study please contact Dr. David J. Connell (email: david.connell@unbc.ca; tel.: 250-960-5835).

Visits to Trail in 2016 Hiking Season

The number of visits to the Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park during the 2016 hiking season was up slightly from last year, from 14,833 to 15,490, an increase of 4.4%.

However, these full-season numbers do not tell the full story. Most importantly, access to the park was closed on weekdays from September 6 to October 7 due to highway access improvements and re-construction of the parking area. Visits on weekends during this period were also down compared to last year.

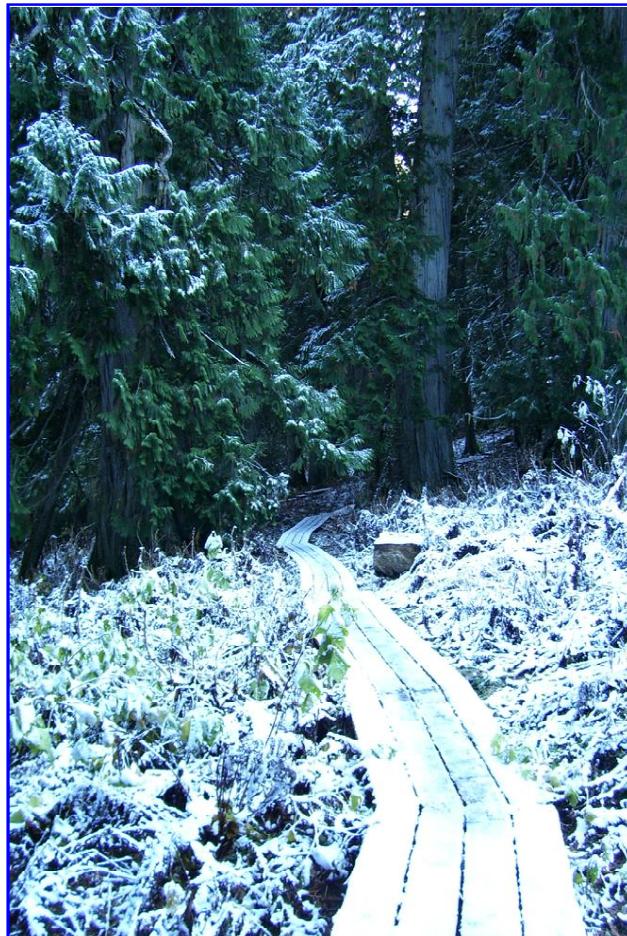
To account for the negative impact of the park closure on visits to the trail we calculated two estimates. First, we compared the number of visits in 2016 prior to the park closure to the same time in 2015, which was the day after the September long weekend (Labour Day). On this basis, the estimated number of visits was up 17.2% year-over-year. We then used this number to estimate what the total number of visits might have been for the hiking season. The adjusted total estimated number of visits for the full hiking season in 2016 is 17,378, as shown in the chart.



Recent Publications

Connell, D. J., J. Hall, and J. Shultis (2016). "Ecotourism and forestry: A study of tension in a peripheral region of British Columbia, Canada. *Journal of Ecotourism*. 1-21. DOI: 10.1080/14724049.2016.1255221

Connell, David J., Jessica Shapiro, and Loraine Lavallee (2015). Held Forest Values of the Ancient Cedars of British Columbia. *Society and Natural Resources* 28(12): 1,323-1,339. DOI: 10.1080/08941920.2015.1041660



Next Goal: UNESCO World Heritage Site

Now that a new provincial park protects a critical component of the ancient cedar landscape, work has begun for the ancient cedars of the upper Fraser River watershed to be designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The proposed area is comprised of three provincial parks. In addition to the Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Park and Protected Area, the proposed area includes Slim Creek Park and Sugarbowl-Grizzly Den Park and Protected Area for a total of 37,146 hectares.

The full process for a site to be inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site involves many steps and takes many years. The following information is from Parks Canada's "Updating Canada's Tentative List for World Heritage Sites Information Document."

The multi-step process begins within Canada. Each year, Canada can nominate only two sites, which are drawn from Canada's Tentative List for World Heritage Sites. This Tentative List is updated only about every ten years and represents an inventory of natural and cultural heritage sites with strong potential to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. Fortunately for the ancient cedars, Canada's Tentative List is in the process of being updated, with applications due January 27, 2017.

Applications to be considered for Canada's Tentative List are reviewed first by Parks Canada and then by a Ministerial Advisory Committee of Canadian experts in the fields of natural and cultural heritage. The Ministerial Advisory Committee recommends properties it considers to have the strongest potential and the Federal Minister responsible for parks selects sites to be added to Canada's Tentative List for World Heritage Sites. The sites that countries nominate are reviewed by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee.

Presently, the World Heritage List includes 1,052 sites of "Outstanding Universal Value" (OUV). These values are either natural or cultural or a combination of the two. Examples of sites are East Africa's Serengeti, the Pyramids of Egypt, and the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. There are currently 18 properties in Canada that are inscribed on the World Heritage List, including the Rocky Mountain Parks and the Landscape of Grand Pré in Nova Scotia.

Designation as a World Heritage Site does not confer additional legal protection. However, as noted by Parks Canada, the designation contributes to increased international recognition, enhanced pride, and greater influence in land use planning and resource management. At the same time, being designated as a World Heritage Site carries responsibilities for the protection, preservation, and transmission to future generations of the site's Outstanding Universal Value. These responsibilities are supported by voluntary reporting on the state of conservation of the property.

In December, 2016, BC Parks formally submitted an application to Parks Canada for the Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut proposal area (the three parks that cover an area of

37,146 ha) to be added to Canada's Tentative List for World Heritage Sites. BC Parks is the lead applicant with Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, the Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club Society, and the University of Northern British Columbia as co-applicants.

The proposal area is being nominated for its natural OUV that satisfy two criteria for inscription as a World Heritage site. These criteria are:

- Be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals ;
- Contain the most important and significant habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The proposal area also contributes to the following cultural criteria: Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

Canada's updated Tentative List for World Heritage Sites will be announced in December, 2017.

More information is available from Parks Canada at <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/progs/spm-whs/sec06/a.aspx>.

Rare Species Found in New Park

From University of Northern British Columbia

Field research for a biodiversity assessment was completed in the Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park in 2016. Early results by UNBC researchers highlighted more than 900 species, some red- and blue-listed species (endangered or near extinction in BC or even globally), including a rare orchid not seen in BC's Interior since 1932. Analysis of the field data continues.

The biodiversity assessment work is being conducted in partnership with the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation and BC Parks, with funding from the Northern Development Initiative Trust, and the B.C. Real Estate Foundation.

For the full story, please <http://www.unbc.ca/newsroom/unbc-stories/unbc-researchers-uncover-rare-species-new-ancient-forest/chun-toh-whudujut-provincial-park>

Update: Trail Development and Maintenance

Contributed by Nowell Senior, Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club

Ancient Forest Trail Tread Protection Project

Work began to improve the trail during the first week of May and concluded the first week of October. Thanks to donated helicopter time, 17 of the 20 tons of material required to complete the work was flown to two high spots, thereby saving about 2,000 hours of volunteer labour carrying these materials by hand. Eighteen volunteers helped to load and unload the materials for the helicopter.

A fourth board was added to make the entire plank pathway around the trail three feet wide. The plank pathway was also extended to include the route up to the waterfall, and a plank spur route was built at Treebeard that will have railings attached next year. Non-slip material was attached to about 75% of the plank pathway in 2016 and will be completed next year.

The Tread Protection Project was a three year project to complete a plank pathway of 1,755 metres. With the 456-metre Nowell Senior Universal Boardwalk, the planked length of the trail system is 2,210 metres.

Cement pad for picnic shelter

A cement pad for a picnic shelter was prepared and poured by a dedicated team of volunteers. The shelter will be installed in 2017.

Hazard Tree Assessment

Distant Winds Falling completed a hazard tree assessment in March taking out dead non-cedar hazard trees that were close to the trail.

Planned activities for 2017

Two footbridges to replace the existing ones crossing Treebeard Creek will be built. Other planned activities include improvements to convert an earthen staircase to a wooden type and other smaller projects to provide protection of tree roots and lichens at cedars that are especially popular with visitors for photo opportunities.



Parking and Highway Access Improved

The Province of British Columbia invested \$1 million for highway intersection improvements and parking lot upgrades to increase the safety and accessibility of the new Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park. An expanded parking area will accommodate about 100 passenger vehicles and 14 recreation vehicles.

Images (clockwise from top left):

Parking lot (c2010)
 Parking area under construction
 Parking area almost finished
 Conceptual design (BC Govt)



Map of Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Park (BC Parks)

