

Opinion: Rent B.C. forests; don't clear-cut them

REESE HALTER, SPECIAL TO THE VANCOUVER SUN 08.17.2015 |



Reese Halter is a broadcaster and environmental activist with a PhD in eco-stress physiology from the School of Forestry, Melbourne University.

For every watershed oxygen is

California, the Netherlands and other countries are now searching to buy carbon dioxide offset. Is British Columbia selling?

About 900 activists represented by The Urgenda Foundation successfully argued recently that the Dutch government has a legal obligation to protect its people against looming dangers of rising sea levels because much of the low-lying country is below sea level and therefore highly vulnerable to rising sea levels caused by the climate crisis.

The court agreed that unless rapid action was taken, the next 40 years would experience extreme weather, shrinking ice caps and shortages of both food

and fresh water. As such, the government was ordered to cut the Netherlands' greenhouse gas emissions by 25 per cent by 2020.

British Columbia's ancient forests are the most perfect carbon dioxide warehouses to have evolved on Earth.

For every one tonne of ancient wood, one-and-a-half tonnes of carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and one tonne of oxygen is released into the atmosphere.

My colleagues at Oregon State University found ancient forests remove significantly more carbon dioxide than second growth 150-year-old forests. That's why corporations such as Marriott are renting ancient Amazon forests to offset their global carbon footprint.

My home state of California is the eighth-largest economy on the globe. We are looking to purchase more carbon offset because AB-32, a law passed by former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, requires all businesses to reduce to 25 per cent below the 1990 carbon dioxide levels. The Netherlands has recently entered into the carbon reduction arena and it, too, needs offset.

Since British Columbia's ancient forests are mostly owned by the Crown and managed by the B.C. Forest Service, it makes prudent fiscal sense for Premier Christy Clarke to quickly approach Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands and broker a deal to provide the carbon dioxide offset.

Renting British Columbia's ancient forests is a sound economic model because it provides a long-term revenue stream for the government, prevents the destruction of invaluable rainforests, and protects British Columbians and all earthlings from rising levels of heat-trapping carbon dioxide due to burning in excess of 96 million tonnes of fossil fuels daily on our planet.

All foresters are taught that forestry is the art and science of regrowing trees on denuded lands; it's time they practice this because each year millions of people visit British Columbia to experience its renowned pristine temperate rainforests and they spend millions of dollars.


Clear-cutting forests provides a one-off stumpage payment to the Crown. Renting ancient forests, on the other hand, provides a constant revenue stream and protects the magnificent carbon dioxide warehouses for British Columbian children.

It's time to consider the options now because within a decade the ancient forests will be gone forever, and that's an avoidable and shameful legacy for future generations.

Reese Halter is a broadcaster and environmental activist with a PhD in eco-stress physiology from the School of Forestry, Melbourne University.

Vancouver Flyers



Powered by 

Comments

We encourage all readers to share their views on our articles and blog posts. We are committed to maintaining a lively but civil forum for discussion, so we ask you to avoid personal attacks, and please keep your comments relevant and respectful. If you encounter a comment that is abusive, click the "X" in the upper right corner of the comment box to report spam or abuse. We are using Facebook commenting. [Visit our FAQ page for more information.](http://www.vancouver.sun.com/news/story.html?id=7195492) (<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/news/story.html?id=7195492>)