

Tree Removal Policy for Parks and Protected Areas

Policy - Tree Removal

Tree removal is an acceptable management option in parks and protected areas when required for human health and safety, to facilitate approved development, to protect infrastructure, or for ecological restoration or forest health management projects. In all cases, tree removals will be conducted with minimal environmental impacts.

While tree removal may be an acceptable management activity in parks and protected areas, commercial logging is prohibited.

Definitions

Tree removal – activity of cutting trees in a park or protected area to achieve human health and safety, infrastructure development or ecological objectives.

Tree disposal – the process of selling the tree(s) to third party interests.

Commercial logging – timber harvesting (including salvage logging) for economic return.

Ecological restoration - the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed by human activity.

Forest health management – actions undertaken when required to minimize the impact of forest pathogens on identified values (inside and outside of protected areas).

Associated Policy - General

- All tree removal projects are subject to the BC Parks Impact Assessment Process.
- All tree removal projects (outside single tree removal) must be identified in, and subject to, an ecosystem restoration, ecosystem management or vegetation management plan.
- Tree removal will be undertaken using the most environmentally sensitive approaches and sites disturbed by tree removal will be rehabilitated.
- Tree removal will not be considered to finance infrastructure development or for use in facility construction, maintenance, or repair.

Associated Policy – Human Health and Safety

Single Tree Removal – Wildlife/Danger Tree

- Trees in developed areas may be removed if they present an identified risk to human health and safety or to facilities. Determination of danger trees will be consistent with the BC Parks Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessment Process.

Multiple Tree Removal

- Multiple, or larger scale tree removals may be considered if there is an identified risk to human health and safety or to park or adjacent values. All multiple or larger scale tree removal projects must be determined through assessments from independent accredited professionals.
- Multiple or large scale tree removals for human health and safety should be part of an overall restoration strategy whenever possible.
- Where re-introduction of natural processes for ecological restoration is constrained due to human health and safety or facility protection reasons, the sole use of multiple or large scale tree removal may be acceptable.

Associated Policy – Ecological Restoration and Forest Health

Ecological Restoration

- Returning natural processes to areas with impaired ecological function will be a priority for restoration.
- Where appropriate, fallen trees should be left within the area of the removal.
- In some cases, tree removals may be necessary to ensure environmental conditions are suitable to reintroducing natural processes.
- Tree removal alone can not be used to mimic natural processes; tree removal can be used to enable the reintroduction of natural processes such as fire.

Forest Health

- Returning natural variability to areas with forest health issues will be a restoration objective.
- Treatments emulating natural processes will be used whenever possible.
- If treatments emulating natural processes can not be used and the park forest health situation presents a high risk to adjacent values, affected tree removal may be considered as a treatment option.

Associated Policy - Tree Disposal

- Funds resulting from tree disposal may be retained by the Ministry and applied to project costs including: planning, inventory, tree removal, site restoration, and monitoring.
- Funds not expended on project costs may be managed through the British Columbia Parks Fund and applied to high priority provincial parks and protected areas conservation projects.
- Generation of funds will not be considered as a reason for tree removal and/or disposal.