



Land & Forests

Trends in Timber Harvest in B.C.

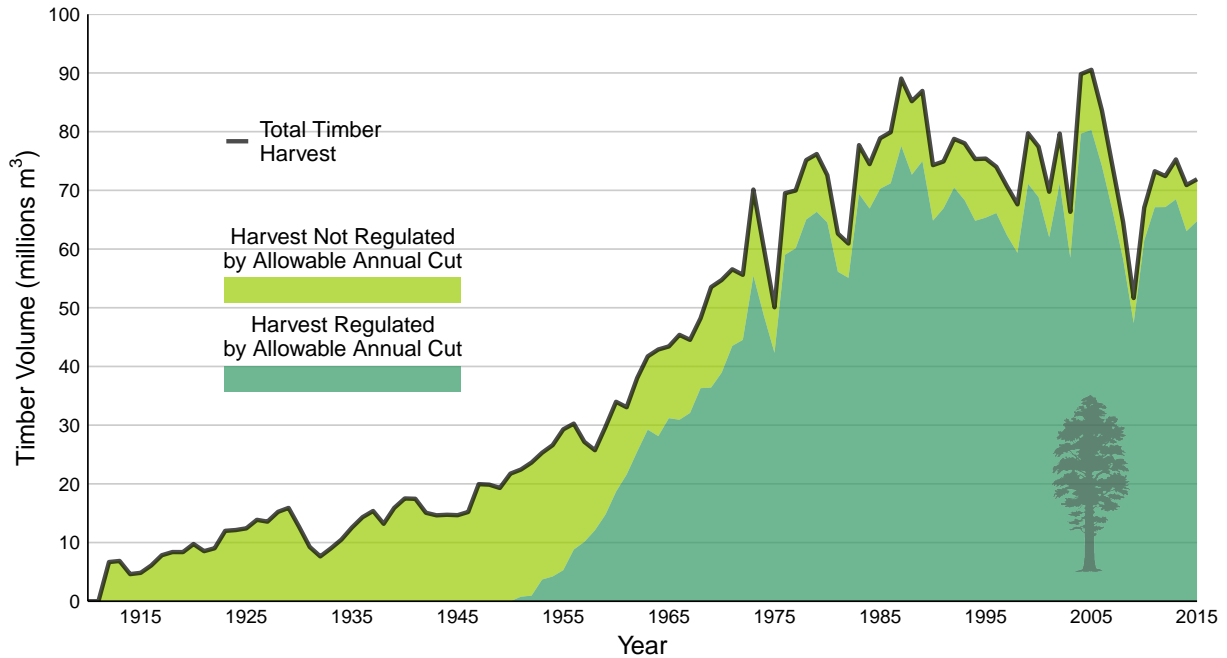
Timber harvesting has direct implications for British Columbia's environmental integrity and sustainable economic activity. Timber harvesting has contributed substantially to B.C.'s economic development and continues to provide the economic base for many rural communities. Environmental integrity and sustainable economic activity depend on maintaining a long-term balance between forest growth and timber harvest.

- **How much timber is harvested annually?** The annual volume of timber harvested in the province generally increased from 1900—peaking at almost 90 million cubic metres in 1987. Since then, the annual harvest has fluctuated around an average of 77 million cubic metres, of which 90% is regulated under the government-set Allowable Annual Cut.
- **How does the actual harvest compare with the Allowable Annual Cut?** Generally the amount of timber harvested each year has been below the Allowable Annual Cut on public lands in British Columbia.
- **What is the provincial timber supply forecast?** Predictable timber supplies are important to the provincial economy and to customers who rely on B.C.'s forest products. Timber supply is forecasted in response to changes in the forest and new information, forecasting methods, and assumptions. Allowable Annual Cuts are required by law to be determined at least every ten years, using the latest information to reduce the risks related to uncertainty. Uncertainties in timber supply forecasting include merchantability of tree species, operability, future management practices, the future timber production land base, wildfires and insect epidemics.

What is the Allowable Annual Cut?

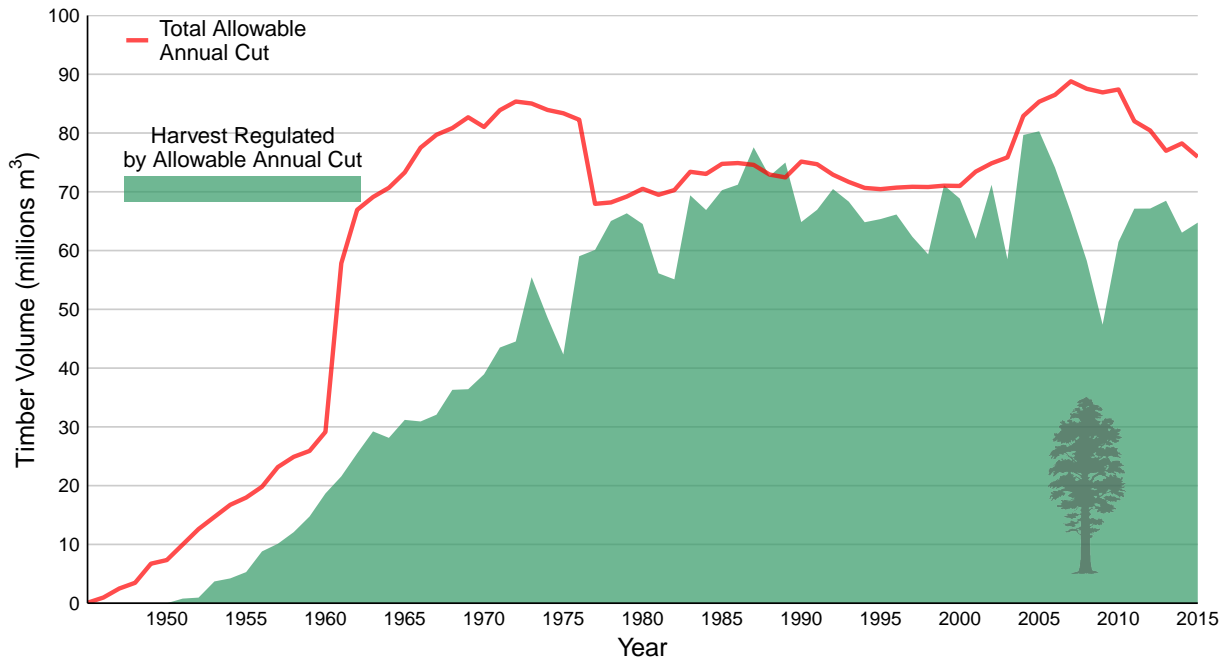
The Allowable Annual Cut is the maximum average level of timber harvest permitted for forest management areas—it represents a harvest level that balances environmental, economic and social considerations.

How Much Timber Is Harvested Annually?



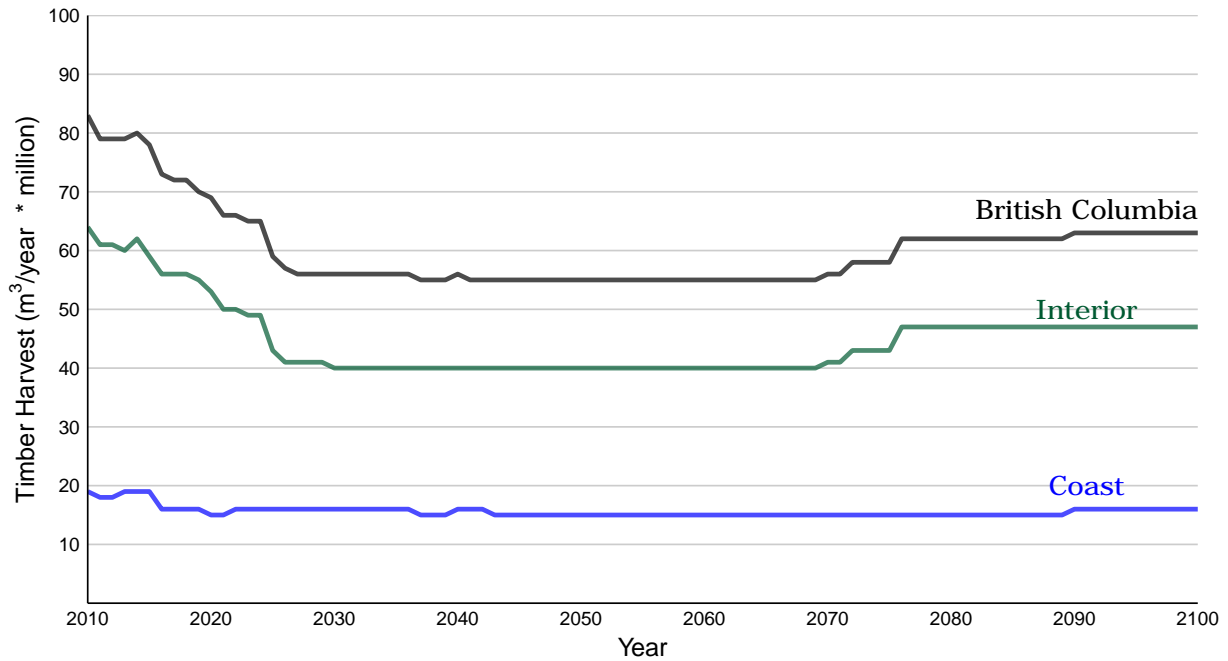
- The annual timber harvest from all public and private land increased 10-fold since the 1900s, and generally levelled off in the 1990s. Over the last 10 years, the average total timber harvest was 74 million cubic metres per year, of which 67 million cubic metres per year (90%) was from forests where harvest levels were regulated by Allowable Annual Cuts. The remaining 7 million cubic metres of timber harvested per year (10% of the total harvest) was from lands with no government-set Allowable Annual Cuts.
- Since 1949, the Chief Forester or their delegate has set Allowable Annual Cuts to regulate harvest levels on public land and some private land. Harvest without regulation by an Allowable Annual Cut occurs on private lands under the *Private Managed Forest Land Act*.

How Does the Actual Timber Harvest Compare with the Allowable Annual Cut?



- Areas regulated by government-set Allowable Annual Cuts account for 90% of the total harvest volume.
- Actual timber harvest can be compared to the average Allowable Annual Cut. Over the last 10 years, the amount of timber harvested annually on public land has been below the Allowable Annual Cut. The average Allowable Annual Cut was 83 million cubic metres per year and the average harvest on these areas was 67 million cubic metres per year.
- In the last 10 years, the Allowable Annual Cut was increased in mountain pine beetle impacted areas of the province. Beginning in 2006, a downturn in market conditions resulted in decreasing actual harvest despite the increases in Allowable Annual Cut.

What Is the Provincial Timber Supply Forecast?



- Until relatively recently, B.C. was forecast to have a stable mid and long-term timber supply of about 70 million cubic metres per year. Recent analysis projects decreases in timber supply to about 58 million cubic metres per year by 2025—due to mortality caused by the mountain pine beetle epidemic. The forecasted timber supply returns to approximately 65–70 million cubic metres per year by 2075.
- Detailed timber supply forecasts and their related assumptions are [publicly available for forest management areas](#).

Methods

Timber harvest data reported here is from public and private land that is regulated by the [government-set Allowable Annual Cuts](#). Allowable Annual Cuts are as of December 31st of the year listed—the starting year of fiscal years. Harvest data are by calendar year for 1945–1979 and fiscal year (April 1st to March 31st) for 1980 onward. This indicator is a composite from the [Timber Supply Review](#) process and the [Harvest Billing System](#). The provincial Timber Supply Forecast is a summary of the management unit harvest forecast data. The [R code](#) for creating the graphs presented on this page is available on [GitHub](#).

For more information on this indicator or on Timber Harvest in British Columbia contact the Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch at Forests.ForestAnalysisBranchOffice@gov.bc.ca.

References and Other Useful Links

- [Learn more about Forest Stewardship in B.C.](#)
- [Timber Supply Review & Allowable Annual Cut](#)
- [Harvest Billing System](#)

Data

*By accessing these datasets, you agree to the licence associated with each file, as indicated in parentheses below.

- [Indicator Summary Data: Change in Timber Harvest in B.C. \(1910-2015\)](#) (Licence: [Open Government Licence - British Columbia](#))
- [Indicator Summary Data: B.C. Timber Supply Forecast \(2010-2100\)](#) (Licence: [Open Government Licence - British Columbia](#))

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