

2024

# Activity Report & Financials







*Jurassic Grove—Port Renfrew, Pacheedaht territory*

Founded in 2010

# MISSION STATEMENT

The Ancient Forest Alliance (AFA) is a registered charitable organization working to protect endangered old-growth forests in British Columbia and ensure a sustainable, second-growth forest industry. We are BC's leading organization working to secure science-based, province-wide legislation to protect ancient forests for the sake of wild species, fresh water, the climate, tourism, Indigenous cultures, and communities.



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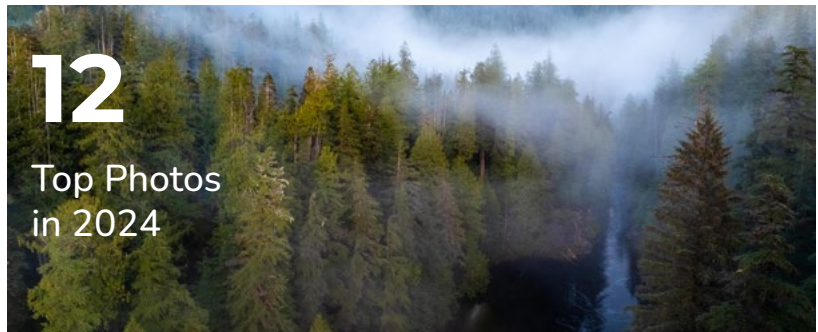
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# Introduction

2024 had a hard act to follow after our efforts helped bring about monumental progress toward protecting old-growth forests in BC the year prior. This included BC Premier David Eby's commitment to protect 30% of lands in the province by 2030, the announcement of a \$300-million conservation financing mechanism as well as the \$1.1-billion BC Nature Agreement, which included a \$100 million+ BC Old-Growth Fund, and the release of the BC government's draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health (BEH) Framework.

Fortunately, successes continued in 2024. The year welcomed the largest old-growth protected area expansion in decades, thanks to the leadership of First Nations with support from the BC government, and ended on a high note with a rare political opportunity to strengthen old-growth forest protection policies through the BC NDP-Green Cooperation Agreement.

As an organization, we were also able to share our mission with more people than ever before, including on international stages like TEDx, and AFA photographer TJ Watt's striking imagery earned global recognition with a prestigious award in the Earth Photo 2024 contest in London. We also continued to expose the ongoing destruction of old-growth forests in important places like the Nahmint Valley while publicly holding the BC government to account.

We're proud of the progress made in 2024. However, there is still much work to be done to secure the permanent protection of old-growth forests in BC, and we're deeply grateful for your continued support to help drive our efforts forward.

*Whether through giving donations, sending messages, signing resolutions, or other forms of engagement, your commitment has truly been instrumental to the unprecedented progress we've seen over recent years.*

We look forward to all we can accomplish together in 2025!



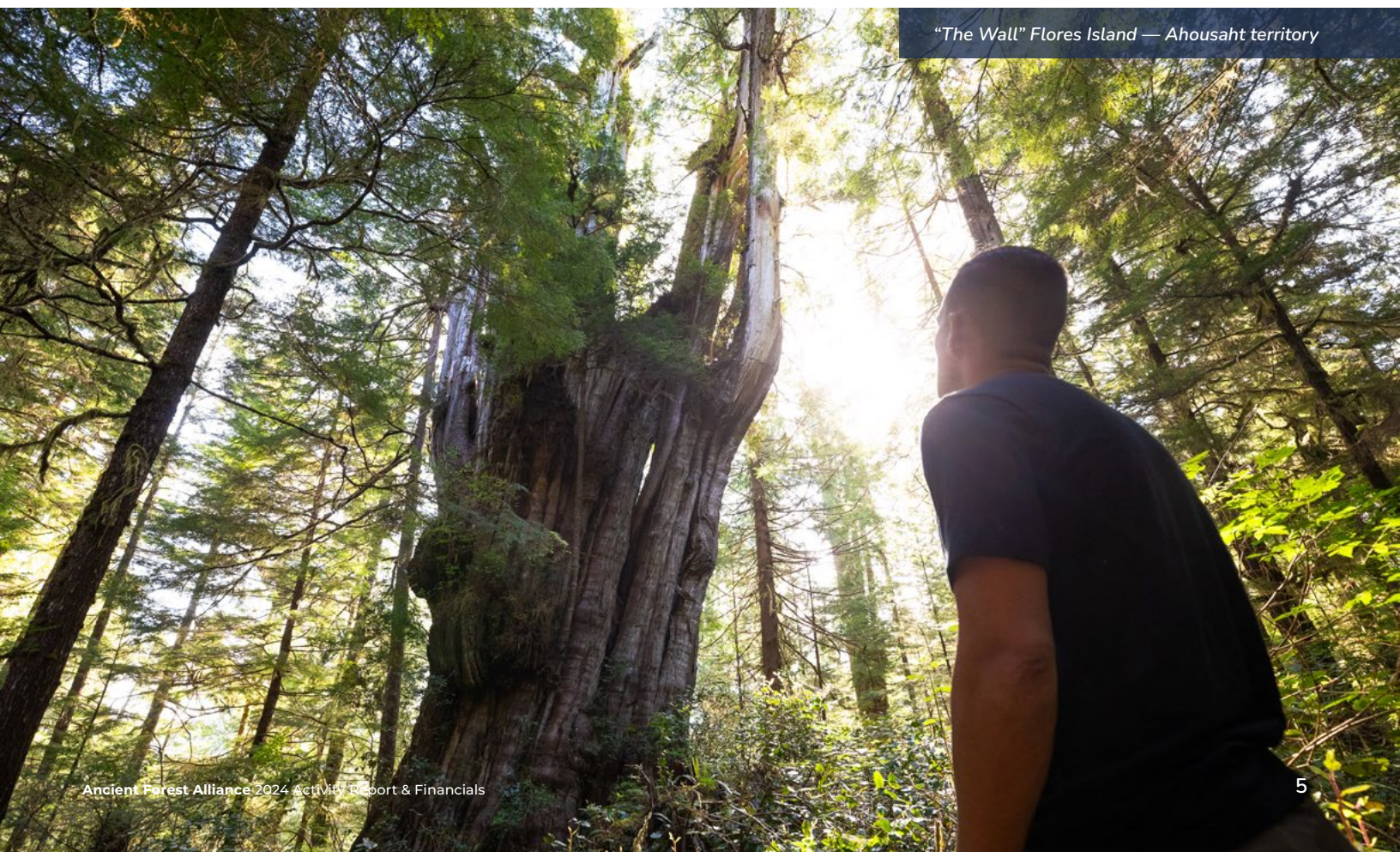


# Conservation Highlights

*Flores Island — Clayoquot Sound, Ahousaht territory*

## Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation and BC NDP Government Declare Protection of 76,000 hectares in Conservancies in Clayoquot Sound

In the spring, we celebrated the largest old-growth forest protected areas victory in BC since the Great Bear Rainforest conservancies were announced in 2006! The Ahousaht and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, together with the BC government, declared 760 square kilometres of land protected in a series of new conservancies in Clayoquot Sound near Tofino, BC.



*"The Wall" Flores Island — Ahousaht territory*

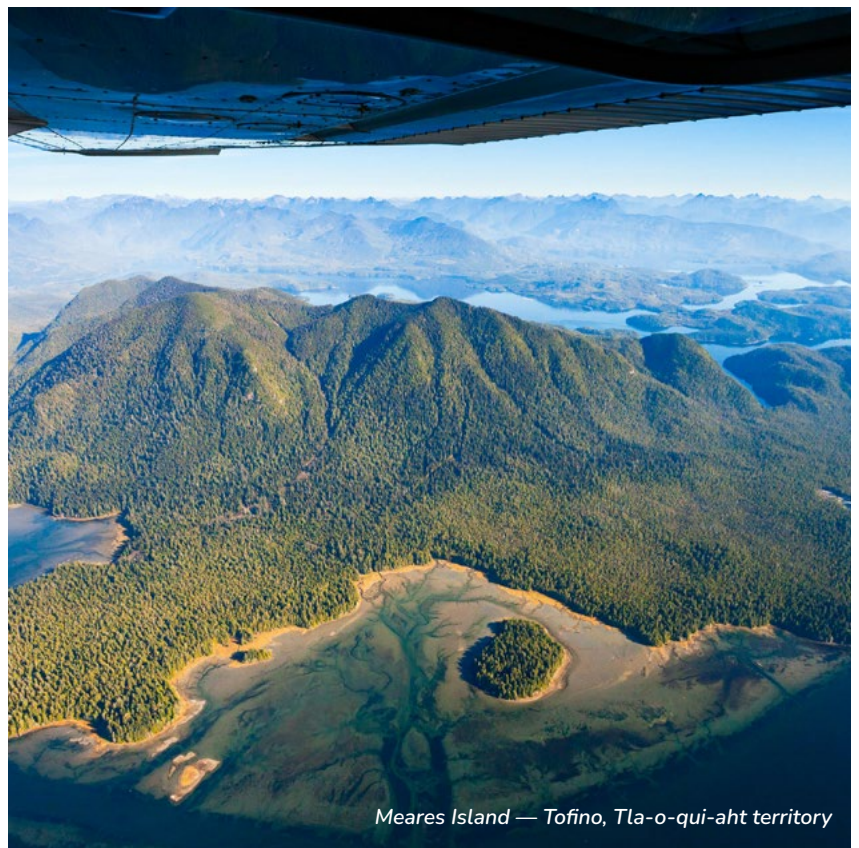




Meares Island — Tofino, Tla-o-qui-aht territory

This newly protected area, larger than Greater Victoria, nearly doubles the old-growth forests under protection in Clayoquot Sound, bringing the total to 1,639 square kilometres — an impressive 62% of the region. Clayoquot Sound is internationally renowned as the battleground of the decades-long “War in the Woods,” and the newly protected areas are home to some of the grandest and most intact coastal old-growth temperate rainforests on Earth, such as those found on Flores Island.

Congratulations to the Ahousaht and the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation for their amazing leadership and for seeing their visions reach this amazing milestone — some 40 years in the making!



Meares Island — Tofino, Tla-o-qui-aht territory





## First Nations, BC, and federal governments protect 200,000 hectares of significant caribou habitat through the expansion of Klinse-Za / Twin Sisters Park

In June, a significant stretch of caribou habitat in northeastern BC was permanently protected to give endangered caribou a safe home to live and roam. This came about through the nearly 200,000-hectare expansion of the Klinse-Za/Twin Sisters Park – roughly 75 times its original size! This is an example of noteworthy progress in the BC NDP's promise to protect 30% of BC lands by 2030.

The announcement follows years of collaboration between the West Moberly First Nations, Saúlteau First Nations and the provincial and federal governments, who agreed to work together to recover caribou herds on the brink of extinction. We applaud the incredible leadership of the two nations in achieving this landmark habitat protection, paving the way for the recovery of caribou and other sensitive wildlife species in the area.

## BC NDP-Green Agreement Creates New Opportunity to Strengthen Old-Growth Forest Protection Policies

Following the provincial election, the year concluded with a rare political opportunity to strengthen old-growth forest protection policies. The BC NDP and Green parties signed the 2024 Cooperation and Responsible Government Accord, signalling a new chapter for protection efforts in the province.

The cooperation agreement calls for the BC government to work toward achieving protection of the Fairy Creek Watershed in partnership with the Pacheedaht First Nation, whose unceded territory it is, and the Ditidaht First Nation, who has various legal arrangements that overlap in the area. More importantly, the cooperation agreement outlines the parties' intention to undertake a review of BC forests with First Nations and diverse sectors of society to address jobs, environmental protection, and sustainability. Stay tuned for developments in 2025!



# Raising Awareness Through Education

Educating the public about the value of old-growth forests is central to our mission.

From important policy-related matters to educational content to public presentations, the more people know about endangered ancient forests, the more motivated they are to join the fight to protect them.

## TEDx Talk

### TJ presents at TEDxVictoria

In May, Ancient Forest Alliance co-founder and photographer TJ Watt was invited to present at TEDxVictoria for its return to the stage after a multi-year hiatus. In his presentation, “One Last Shot to Protect Old-Growth Forests In British Columbia,” TJ took the audience on a visual journey of his work as a conservation photographer, big tree hunter, and National Geographic



Explorer. With moving imagery and passionate storytelling, he shares his life's mission: helping to secure permanent protection for endangered ancient forests in BC. His talk also touches on his adventures tracking down giant trees, recent campaign successes, and what solutions are still needed.



## Events

### TJ and Andy MacKinnon present at the Kennedy Center for the REACH to Forest event in Washington, DC

In February, TJ travelled to the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, where he gave a presentation on “The Search for the World’s Biggest Trees.” This was part of REACH to FOREST, a two-week event blending art, science, and culture in the nation’s capital. Famed forest ecologist Andy MacKinnon (co-author of many books, including *Plants of Coastal British Columbia*) also spoke as part of the Big Tree Hunters Party. It was a fabulous event, helping raise international awareness of the importance of protecting old-growth forests!



## Old-Growth Hiking Guides

The profound and humbling experience of walking through an old-growth forest is second to none. And few places on Earth offer as excellent an opportunity to visit ancient trees than right here in our backyard. That's why we created hiking guides to some of the grandest trees and forests in the Victoria and Port Renfrew areas on southern Vancouver Island, BC. There are idyllic parks with towering Douglas-fir trees mere minutes from the capital city of Victoria in Lekwungen territory, to rugged wilderness areas and iconic trees like the Red Creek Fir and Big Lonely Doug further up the coast near Port Renfrew in Pacheedaht territory, inviting you to embark on a journey back in time.

Comb through our [Old-Growth Hiking Guides](#) to find which hike piques your interest and suits your ability. Then pack some snacks, water, and sturdy walking shoes, and hit the trails!



Jurassic Grove — Port Renfrew, Pacheedaht territory

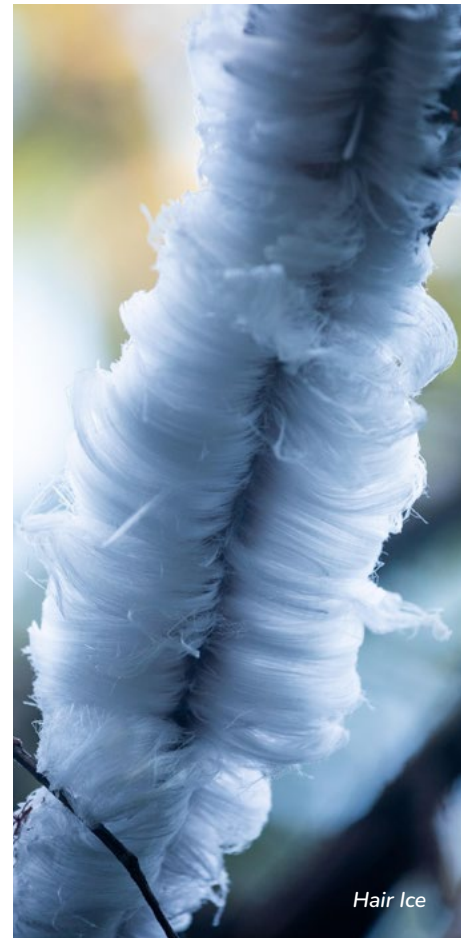


Francis/King Regional Park — Victoria, Lekwungen territory





Gnome Plant



Hair Ice

## Educational Content

In 2024, we shared a number of educational posts, from helpful infographics explaining some of our more nuanced campaigns or topics, such as “BC’s draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework” and “forest productivity distinctions,” to the diverse plants and animals that call these incredible forests home, such as the camas lily, fawn lily, gnome plant, hair ice, and bald eagles, to supporting information about the provincial election and where major parties stood on environmental matters.

- BC’s Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework
- Forest Productivity Distinctions
- Camas lily
- Fawn lily
- Gnome plant
- Hair ice
- Bald eagles
- Provincial election



Fawn Lily



# Top Stories of 2024

**A hallmark of AFA's work is our ability to garner major media attention on the need to protect old-growth forests in BC.**

Our professional photos and videos from field expeditions help draw instant attention to the issue from people and news outlets around the world. Here are a few of the year's top new stories on AFA and old growth!

## 1. The Narwhal

Over half of Clayoquot Sound's iconic forests are now protected — here's how First Nations and BC did it

## 2. Times Colonist

Photo of old-growth cedar tree on Flores Island wins international award. Also featured in The Guardian & CNN!

## 3. The Black Press

Advocate makes passionate plea for Island's old growth at Victoria TEDx talk

## 4. The Narwhal

BC Conservative Leader says his party would kill 'nonsense' plans for new protected areas

## 5. Global News

BC advocates raising alarm due to recent clear-cut on Vancouver Island

*Click the headlines to read*





# Top Photos in 2024



## Camas Meadow

*Uplands Park — Victoria, Lekwungen territory*





## Fortress Giant

Jurassic Grove — Port Renfrew, Pacheedaht territory



## Big Lonely Doug

Port Renfrew, Pacheedaht territory







# Expeditions

## Nahmint Valley Old-Growth Destruction

In May and June of 2024, AFA campaigners travelled to the famed Nahmint Valley and captured photos revealing “old-growth carnage” as ancient trees upwards of 9 ft (3 m) wide and more than five hundred years old were logged near Port Alberni in Hupačasath, Tseshaht, and Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ territories on Vancouver Island, BC. The logging, which spanned roughly 17 hectares, or 31 football fields, was planned and approved by the BC government’s logging agency, BC Timber Sales.

[See our media release here.](#)

This ancient forest was home to enormous old-growth western redcedars and rare old-growth Douglas-fir trees.

Within the cutblock, we also documented what is likely the first-known observation of old-growth specklebelly lichen, a species at risk, in the Nahmint Valley.

Despite significant strides in the past year toward the greater conservation of old-growth forests in BC, the destruction in the Nahmint is fresh evidence that significant policy and funding gaps remain that the BC NDP government must swiftly address. Most critical is the need for Ecosystem-Based Protection Targets (protection targets for all ecosystem types). This would help ensure new protected areas are aimed at conserving the most at-risk ecosystems, such as the big-tree old-growth forests.





# Castle Giant & Big Lonely Doug

## The Tree Projects Documentary Shoot

In the fall of 2024, Ancient Forest Alliance Photographer TJ Watt worked with photographer Steve Pearce and canopy ecologist Jen Sanger of Tasmania's [The Tree Projects](#) while the duo was on Vancouver Island capturing portraits of giant trees, including the Castle Giant in the Walbran Valley and Big Lonely Doug near Port Renfrew in Pacheedaht territory, as part of a new documentary film.

Steve has perfected a unique method of photographing giant trees around the world. It starts with establishing a suspended rope system that runs parallel to the tree trunk from the ground to near the top. From there, he raises and lowers his camera, capturing a series of high-resolution images later stitched together to create one final Tree Portrait. Often, people are placed at varying heights of the tree to provide a sense of scale. The result is stunning images that highlight the immense size, beauty, and grandeur of some of the world's largest and oldest living trees, helping to raise awareness of the need to protect them and the forests they're found within. [See examples of Steve's Tree Portraits.](#)

The project was a major success! We'll be sure to share a link to the documentary film and the final Tree Portraits once they're released.





# Climbing Carmanah's Largest Spruce

## Video Highlight



Videos provide an immersive glimpse into the complex world of old-growth forests and can transport viewers into places rarely seen or visited by most humans. The most compelling example of this in 2024 is the remarkable video documenting our climb of the largest Sitka spruce in the Carmanah Valley!

The record-sized tree, whose mammoth trunk forks into multiple stems reminiscent of the multi-headed hydra of Greek mythology, grows protected within the famed Carmanah-Walbran Provincial Park in Ditidaht territory on Vancouver Island, BC.

It was first identified by AFA photographer TJ Watt and researcher Ian Thomas while exploring the valley in the spring of 2022. With help from our friends at Bartlett

Tree Experts, we were able to ascend the towering tree to measure its height and highlight its grandeur.

Climbing into the canopy was like entering a lost world. Its limbs were adorned with moss and ferns, and its massive trunk kept dividing into what looked like a grove of trees amongst itself.

Eventually, we were rewarded with a stunning view over the Carmanah Valley, more than 21 stories in the air!

Thanks to the Trebek Initiative and the great team at Bartlett Tree Experts for helping make this project come to life. All climbing and filming was done with permission from local governments. Low-impact techniques ensured the tree was protected.



# Hellos & Goodbyes

This year, we said farewell to a beloved staff member, Ian Thomas, and hello to a talented new member of the team, Issy Turnill!



Ian Thomas

Ian spent four years as a Research & Engagement Officer with AFA. He brought an infectious joy to the old-growth campaign daily and played an indispensable role as a biologist, mapper, and bushwhacker extraordinaire while captivating audiences with his poetic prose.

Here are a few parting words from Ian:

*"It is impossible to leave such an organization unchanged. I am moving on from AFA with a deep sense of hope, both for these old-growth forests that we have been at the forefront of protecting but also because I've seen firsthand the extraordinary power we can mobilize to safeguard native ecosystems while supporting sustainable, thriving communities."*

Issy Turnill joined AFA in the fall of 2024 as a Forest Campaigner, leaving the hustle of London for the mountains of Vancouver to be closer to the nature she's passionate about protecting.

Her love for the outdoors started early, as she explored the woodlands of Suffolk, England, and the cedar forests of southern France while growing up. This early connection led her to study Anthropology to better understand the complex relationship between people and the natural world. Her bachelor's degree in Anthropology included a semester abroad in Sydney, Australia, where she gained an appreciation for Indigenous environmental knowledge, and her master's degree in Environmental Anthropology focused on community-led conservation approaches.

For the past three years, Issy worked in London as an environmental communications consultant, raising awareness about climate and nature-based solutions. While she loved this work, she couldn't shake the feeling of being far from the critical ecosystems she was advocating for, which sparked the move to Vancouver. Now, she is thrilled to be helping protect irreplaceable old-growth forests in BC and spending her free time exploring the beauty of these ancient ecosystems firsthand.

In the few months she's been here, Issy has seamlessly fit in at AFA, sharing her wealth and breadth of experience, and we can't wait to see what we can accomplish together in 2025!



Issy Turnill



# Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31, 2024

## REVENUE

Donations	697,343	
Grants	-	
Sales	56,928	
Interest and Other Income	19,324	
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>773,595</b>

## EXPENDITURES

Cost of Goods	40,618	
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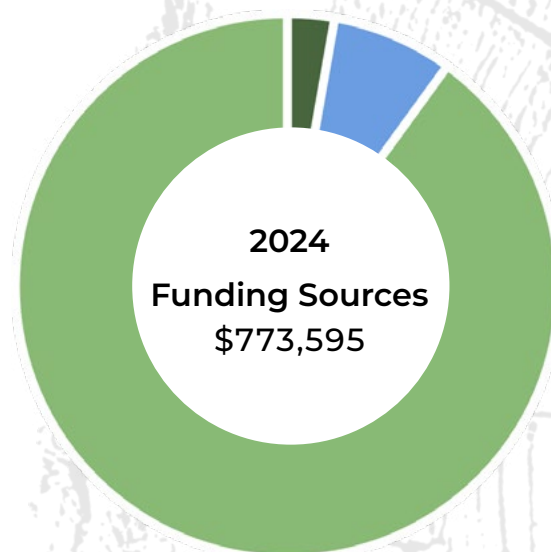
## CAMPAIGNS

Campaigners	204,481	
Research and Campaign Development	65,254	
Public Education and Engagement	171,337	

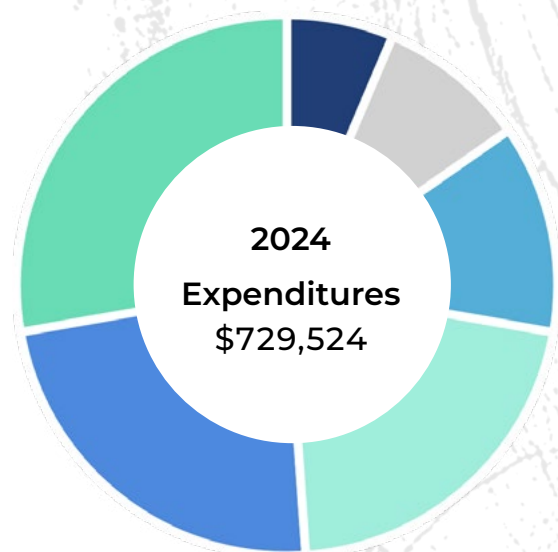
## OPERATIONS

Public Outreach	91,968	
Operating Expense	155,866	

<b>Total Expenditures</b>		<b>729,524</b>
<b>Net Income</b>		<b>44,071</b>



- Donations
- Sales
- Interest and Other Income



- Cost of Goods
- Campaigners
- Research and Campaign Development
- Public Education and Engagement
- Public Outreach
- Operating Expense





# What's Next in 2025

With the BC NDP re-elected and their cooperation agreement with the BC Green Party signed, we're entering the new year in a more promising position to help secure the permanent protection of endangered old-growth forests in BC.

With your continued support in 2025, we will:

- 1. Expand our critical work with key First Nations communities to support Indigenous-led protected areas initiatives** in areas with the best old-growth forests in BC while fostering sustainable economic alternatives to old-growth logging.
- 2. Continue to explore and document endangered old-growth forests in BC**, bringing back professional images, videos, and stories to help educate citizens across BC and around the world, inspiring them to act.
- 3. Push for at least \$120 million in deferral or "solutions-space" funding for First Nations to forgo logging in the most at-risk old-growth priority areas as defined by the province's appointed Technical Advisory Panel (TAP).** This is a critical stepping stone to deferring the remaining 1.3 million hectares of TAP's priority areas. First Nations with logging interests in these areas need compensation for their lost revenues for two years while deferrals are enacted. During this time, they can potentially undertake protected areas and land-use planning.
- 4. Push for the government to establish a Protected Areas Strategy**, like that of the BC NDP government in the 1990s, to pursue ecosystem-based protection targets based on science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge and develop a list of priority candidate protected areas to meet those targets. This would require the BC government to proactively approach First Nations to negotiate new protected areas.
- 5. Push to close logging loopholes in conservation reserves.** Currently, Old Growth Management Areas can be moved and swapped for lower-value timber, while many Wildlife Habitat Areas still allow commercial logging within their boundaries.
- 6. Push for a comprehensive BC Conservation Economy Strategy and incentives and regulations that support a transition to value-added, second-growth forestry.** Such a strategy can make BC a powerhouse to fuel a sustainable economic resurgence in BC, combined with the protection of old growth and endangered ecosystems.
- 7. Hold policymakers accountable for old-growth logging threats.** We will hold all decision-makers accountable for policies threatening old-growth forests and environmental protections. This includes raising public awareness about the serious risks of recent proposals from the BC Conservative Opposition that support increased old-growth logging.

*[Click here to learn more about our policy recommendations!](#)*





# Thank You

As we approach our 15th year working to protect endangered ancient forests in BC, we're proud to reflect on the progress we've made both in the past year and since our inception in 2010. With your continued support, we'll ensure this next year is one of our strongest yet. Building on our decade and a half of experience, we'll continue pressuring the BC government to take a science-based approach to protect old-growth forests through hard-hitting press releases, effective take-action campaigns, and powerful photos and videos, while also building a broad and diverse coalition of support that includes businesses, unions, scientists, recreation and faith groups, and more.

## Thank you to the supporters who have been here since our humble beginnings, as well as those just joining us now.

Whether you showed up at rallies, hikes, or presentations, contacted decision-makers, met with your elected representatives, signed a resolution, shared our photos and news articles, donated to our organization, or simply cheered us on, your support throughout has been instrumental in the fight to protect endangered old-growth forests in BC. We're incredibly grateful for all that you've helped us accomplish. Together, we've proven that even against what seems like insurmountable odds, creating large-scale change for the betterment of our planet is possible.

With the myriad of crises facing our world today and the barrage of troubling news stories, our approach to advocacy that acknowledges and celebrates progress where it's being made is more important than ever. That doesn't mean ignoring the negatives, but it does mean giving credit where credit is due, highlighting achievements big and small, and inspiring people to keep pushing forward until we secure our collective goals.

In the era of misinformation, it's also critical for AFA to continue being a voice of clarity, reason, and truth. We work tirelessly to ensure the highest accuracy of our messaging and that we're making clear-minded, real-time assessments of the political and social world we operate in, so we can develop the most effective campaigns that deliver results.

The old-growth forests of British Columbia are some of the most awe-inspiring landscapes on Earth, and each one of us has our own unique connection and reasons for wanting to see them saved. It's an uphill battle, but we've proven we can achieve great things when we work together. Thank you for standing with us, and we look forward to creating a brighter future for our forests and all the creatures that call them home in the days and years to come.

For the forests,

TJ Watt, Joan Varley, Issy Turnill, Kristen Bounds,  
Coral Forbes, and Nadia Sheptycki

The Ancient Forest Alliance





**Thank you for your  
continued support and  
for helping protect  
ancient forests in BC!**

## **Get in touch!**

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