

2025

# Activity Report & Financials





Tahsish River

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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# Introduction

2025 was a milestone year for the Ancient Forest Alliance, marking our 15-year anniversary working to protect endangered old-growth forests in BC.

Thanks to the help of AFA supporters, a decade and a half of dedicated effort has led to landmark breakthroughs — including the BC government's commitment to protect 30% of BC's lands by 2030 and the announcement of the largest provincial funding package for nature conservation in Canadian history to help achieve it.

This year, we were honoured to celebrate these wins in-person with our supporters at our 15th anniversary celebration in Victoria — a chance to reflect on how far AFA has come and the collective effort it has taken to get here.

There is, however, still much work to be done to secure the permanent protection of irreplaceable old-growth forests in BC.

Throughout 2025, we continued to highlight the extraordinary beauty and, tragically, the continued destruction of old-growth forests in BC, while publicly holding the provincial government to account. We also deepened our work with First Nations to support Indigenous-led protected areas plans in areas with the grandest old-growth forests in BC, while expanding our broad base of support for old-growth protection.

Whether through giving donations, sending messages, signing resolutions, or other forms of engagement, we're deeply grateful for your continued support to help drive our efforts forward.

As we mark 15 years of AFA, we're reminded how much can be achieved when we work together, and look forward to the victories that still await us in 2026 and beyond.

# Campaign Update

**2025 prominently marked five years since the BC NDP promised a ‘paradigm shift’ in its approach to old-growth forests. Yet the anniversary was met with a stall in political momentum toward protection, as the BC government frustratingly backtracked on many of its old-growth commitments this year.**

While the challenges facing endangered ecosystems are well understood, efforts to scale up protection will continue to fall short unless the entrenched economic dependency that many communities and First Nations have on old-growth logging is addressed.

**The BC government must respond by advancing truly transformative, emergency-scale policies and legislation that meet the scale and urgency of the threat. At its core, any real paradigm shift must ensure two things:**

1. The systematic protection of the last endangered old-growth forests in BC.
2. Historic-scale incentives and restructuring to rapidly transition away from an economic dependence on old-growth logging toward a modernized, value-added, sustainable second-growth forestry industry.

In response to these challenges, AFA intensified our efforts to address the current landscape in 2025.

Through award-winning photography and impactful media campaigns, we continued to shine a global spotlight on the ongoing destruction of endangered ancient forests, while mobilizing thousands more supporters to push decision-makers toward lasting protections before it's too late.

Together with our partners at the Nature-Based Solutions Foundation, we expanded our partnerships with First Nations to support the creation of new Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) that safeguard some of the best remaining old-growth forests and foster local conservation-based economies.

Looking ahead, AFA remains dedicated to expanding partnerships with First Nations, capturing powerful new imagery, growing our hard-working team, and increasing pressure on governments to protect what remains.



# Holding the BC Government to Account

Alongside ongoing direct engagement with key political decision-makers, throughout 2025, AFA publicly held the BC government accountable on the need to protect old-growth forests and modernize the industry to one that is truly sustainable. Here are some of the key measures we pushed for this year:

- **Marking Five Years Since the Old-Growth Strategic Review**

To mark the fifth anniversary of the Old-Growth Strategic Review, we released five of the most shocking images of old-growth logging from the past five years — paired with an urgent call for immediate government action to protect the remaining endangered old-growth forests and to transition towards a sustainable, value-added, second-growth forest industry.

- **Calling on BC to use \$1.2B in Federal Funding to Modernize the Forest Industry**

When the federal government announced \$1.2 billion in support for the forestry sector, we called on the BC government to use its share of the funding to future-proof the industry by investing in value-added, second-growth forestry, rather than prolonging unsustainable old-growth dependence.

- **Earth Day: Refocus on Incomplete Measures**

On Earth Day, we published an urgent call for the BC government to refocus on incomplete measures to protect old-growth, such as the Biodiversity & Ecosystem Health Framework.

- **Challenging the BC Timber Sales Review**

We condemned the review of BC Timber Sales, the BC government's logging agency, for protecting the destructive status quo of old-growth logging. AFA provided targeted, solutions-focused recommendations during the review process, but the report failed to put forward any meaningful measures to protect endangered old-growth forests in BC.

- **Defending Protected Areas from Commercial Logging**

We pressed the BC government to confirm that provincial parks are off-limits to commercial logging. This is amid growing alarm that the province and logging companies are seeking to log for profit within protected areas under the guise of 'wildlife risk reduction'. Weaker designations, such as Old-Growth Management Areas, however, may still be at risk.

- **International Day of Forests: Call for Modernization of BC Forestry**

Amid escalating U.S. tariff threats, we advocated for protecting old-growth forests and for regulations and incentives to support a value-added, second-growth forest industry, helping build a diversified, resilient economy in BC.

[Click the titles to read more](#) 



# Raising Awareness Through Education

**Educating people about the value of old-growth forests is a core part of AFA's work.**

We've long held that an informed citizenry is the most powerful force for change. From "Old-Growth 101"

explainers to in-depth policy content, such as supporting information about the five-year anniversary of the Old-Growth Strategic Review report, to our year-end webinar where we shared campaign updates for AFA supporters from further afield, here are some of our key educational pieces from 2025.

## Old-Growth 101: What is an old-growth forest?

This year, we launched [Old-Growth 101](#), a comprehensive yet accessible online resource to help answer your most common questions about old-growth forests in BC.

In this [Instagram carousel](#), we break down the first section: "What is an old-growth forest, anyway?"

In British Columbia, forests are considered "old growth" once they reach 250 years on the coast or 140 years inland, but age alone doesn't tell the full story. We describe the intricacies and factors that make up an old-growth forest, and how life and death play an equally important role in a thriving ecosystem. It's the incredible structure and diversity that make these forests truly irreplaceable. Keep an eye out for more from our [Old-Growth 101 series](#) in 2026!

## Protecting the Right Places: Why BC Needs Ecosystem-Based Targets

What are Ecosystem-Based Protection Targets, and why does BC need them?

To truly safeguard biodiversity, BC needs protection targets for every ecosystem type — rainforests, grasslands, dry forests, wetlands, etc. — on a scale large enough to ensure their long-term health and stability.

In this [Instagram carousel](#), we break down why Ecosystem-Based Targets are a key policy that AFA has been advocating for to help safeguard endangered old-growth forests across BC.



## Forest Flora & Fauna Features

One of our favourite content series from 2025 highlights the incredible diversity of plants and animals that call these forests home. Educating people about the life — both big and small — found in old-growth forests can inspire awe and wonder and encourage more people to join the fight to protect these ecosystems.

In 2025, we featured some of the remarkable flowers found in the forest:

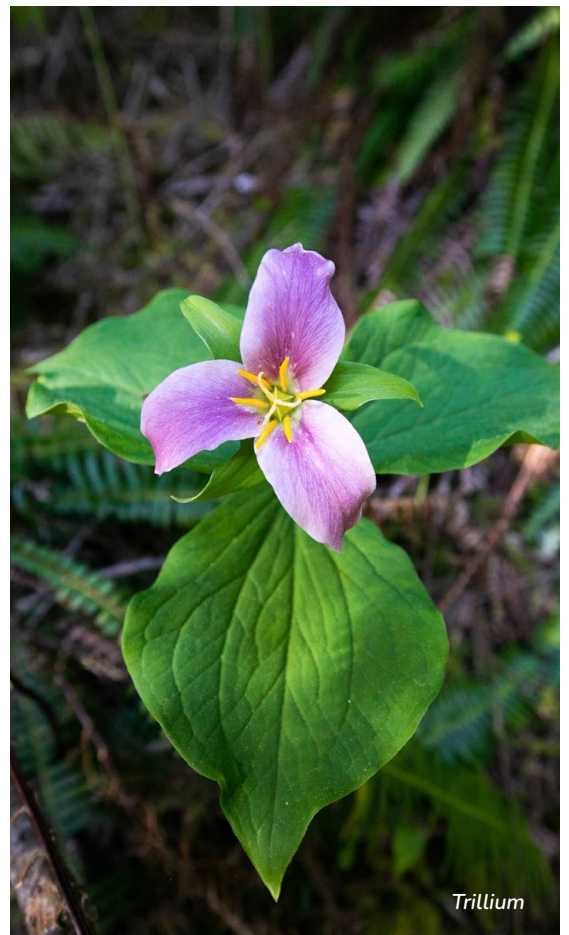
- [Bigleaf Maple Flowers](#)
- [Shooting Star Flowers](#)
- [Western Trillium](#)



*Bigleaf Maple Flowers*



*Shooting Stars*



*Trillium*

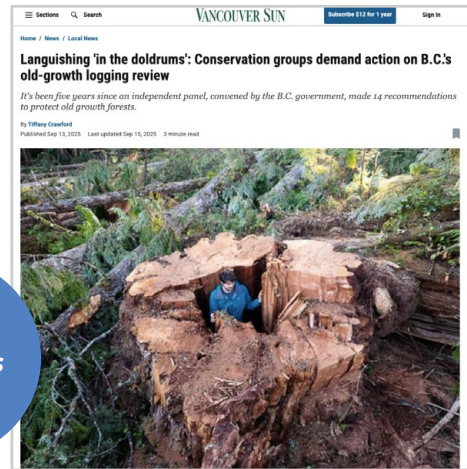
# Top News Stories in 2025

Ancient Forest Alliance photos, videos, and media releases continue to garner major news coverage, helping to raise widespread public awareness of the need to protect endangered old-growth forests. Here are a few of the year's top news stories on AFA and old growth!

Click the headlines to read

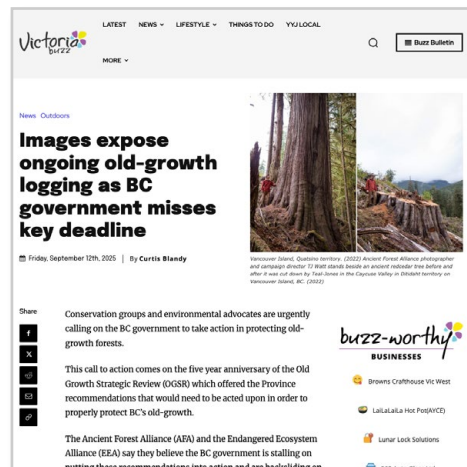
## 1. Vancouver Sun

Languishing 'in the doldrums': Conservation groups demand action on B.C.'s old-growth logging review



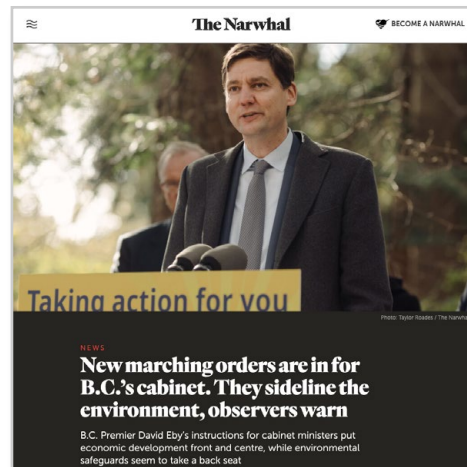
## 2. Victoria Buzz

Images expose ongoing old-growth logging as BC government misses key deadline



## 3. The Narwhal

New marching orders are in for BC's cabinet. They sideline the environment, observers warn



## 4. My Cowichan Valley Now


Conservationists call for BC forestry industry to be modernized

## 5. Toronto Star

The best place to go forest bathing? The ancient groves of Vancouver Island offer a meditative journey back in time

## 6. Outside Magazine

See a 'Living Skyscraper' in the Tall Tree Capital of Port Renfrew



# Top 5 Photos in 2025

**Superlative Sitka  
spruce grove.**

*Yakoun Lake, Haida Gwaii.*



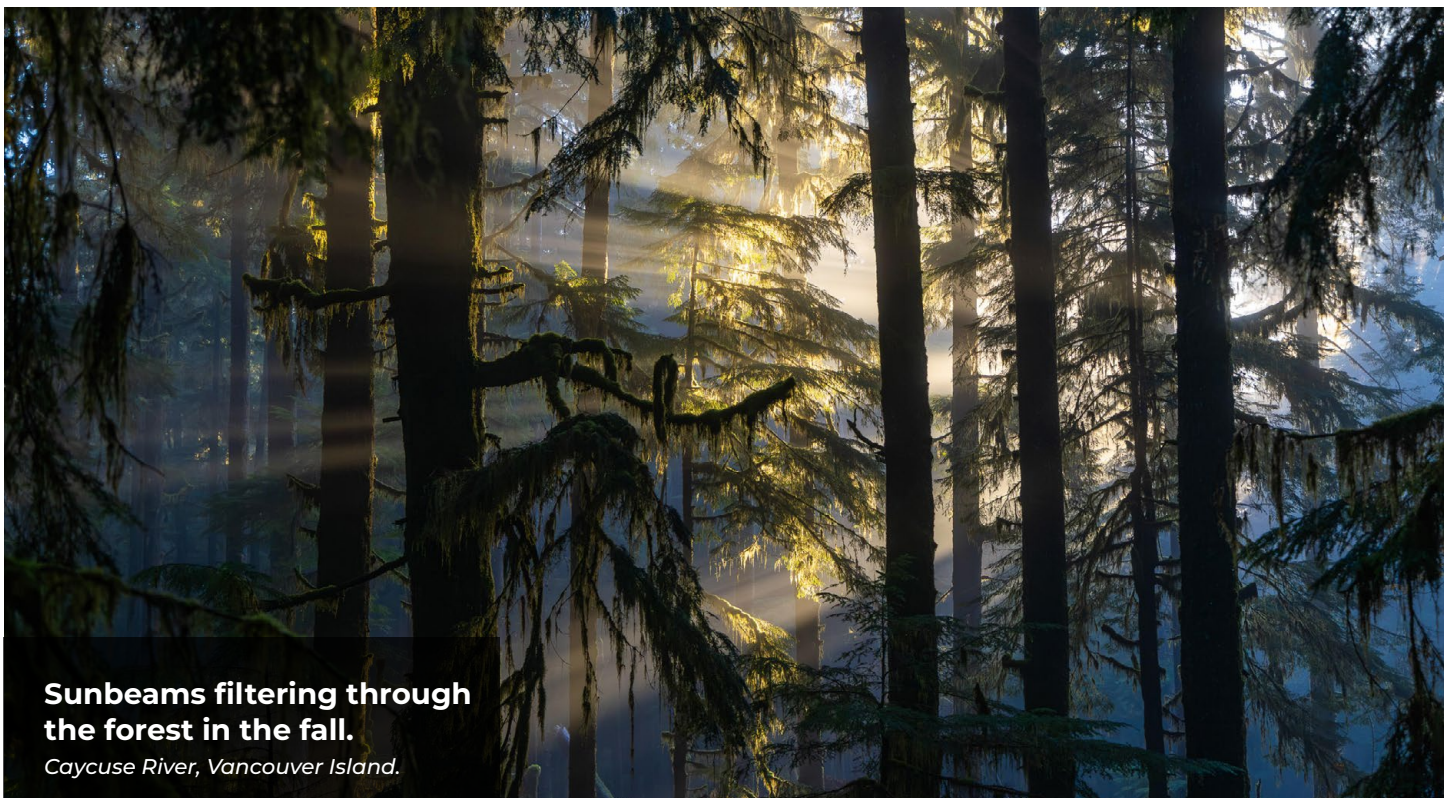
**Black bear cub climbing a tree.**

*Vancouver Island, BC.*

## **Conservation photography plays a vital role in bringing remote locations to life.**

Whether it's a photo of an adorable bear cub, sunbeams shining through the forest, or the scars of a clearcut, each year, AFA photographer TJ Watt captures thousands of photos to help tell the story of endangered ancient forests in BC.

His work has earned numerous awards and brought the threats facing old-growth forests in BC into the international spotlight through news stories and presentations on stage at TEDx and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Here are five of his stand-out shots from 2025!



**Sunbeams filtering through the forest in the fall.**

*Caycuse River, Vancouver Island.*



**Here and gone.**  
*Sayward, BC.*



**Winter magic in  
Mossome Grove.**  
*Port Renfrew, BC.*



# Expedition Highlights in 2025

Tahsish Inlet

## Artlish + Tahsish River Valleys

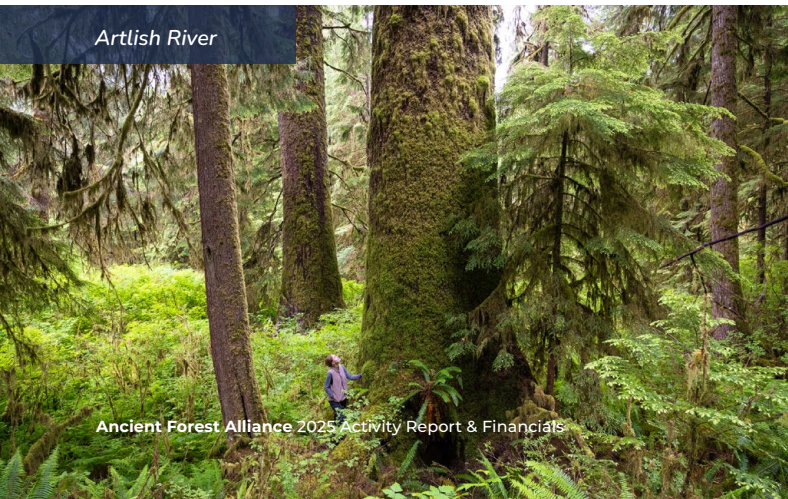
In June, AFA members TJ Watt, Issy Turnill, Kristen Bounds, and Ian Thomas travelled to northern Vancouver Island to the remote Artlish and Tahsish river valleys in Kyuquot/Checlesht territory to explore and document some of the area's remaining ancient forests.

In the Artlish Valley, the team came across awe-inspiring valley-bottom old-growth forests, with massive Sitka spruce and Douglas-fir trees. Growing unprotected in BC Timber Sales tenure, there's an urgent need to secure their lasting protection.

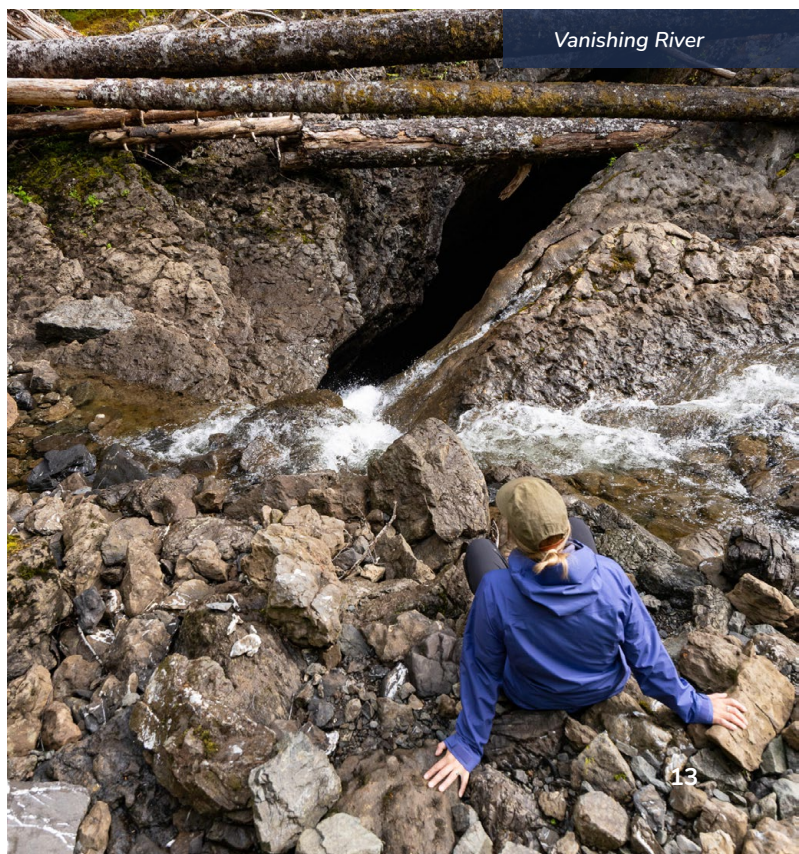
They also explored some remarkable limestone karst areas in the Tahsish, including a vanishing river, several sinkholes and caves, and one of the largest remaining contiguous tracts of unprotected old-growth forest growing on karst on Vancouver Island.

Unfortunately, the team also came across devastating clearcuts. Many of these logged areas had later burned in a wildfire, which further eroded the soil, leaving behind a barren landscape largely devoid of life today.

The trip highlighted the urgent need for a Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) to proactively identify and protect the most endangered ecosystems in the province, including old-growth karst forests. This strategy must be guided by ecosystem-based protection targets, grounded in independent science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and implemented through shared decision-making with First Nations.



Artlish River



Vanishing River

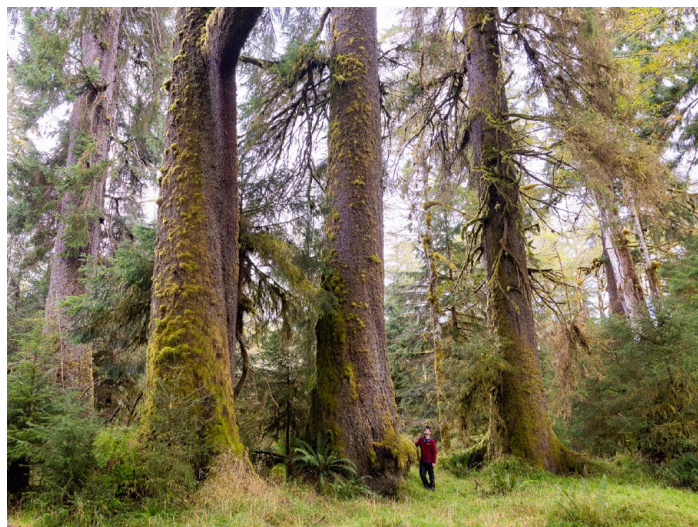
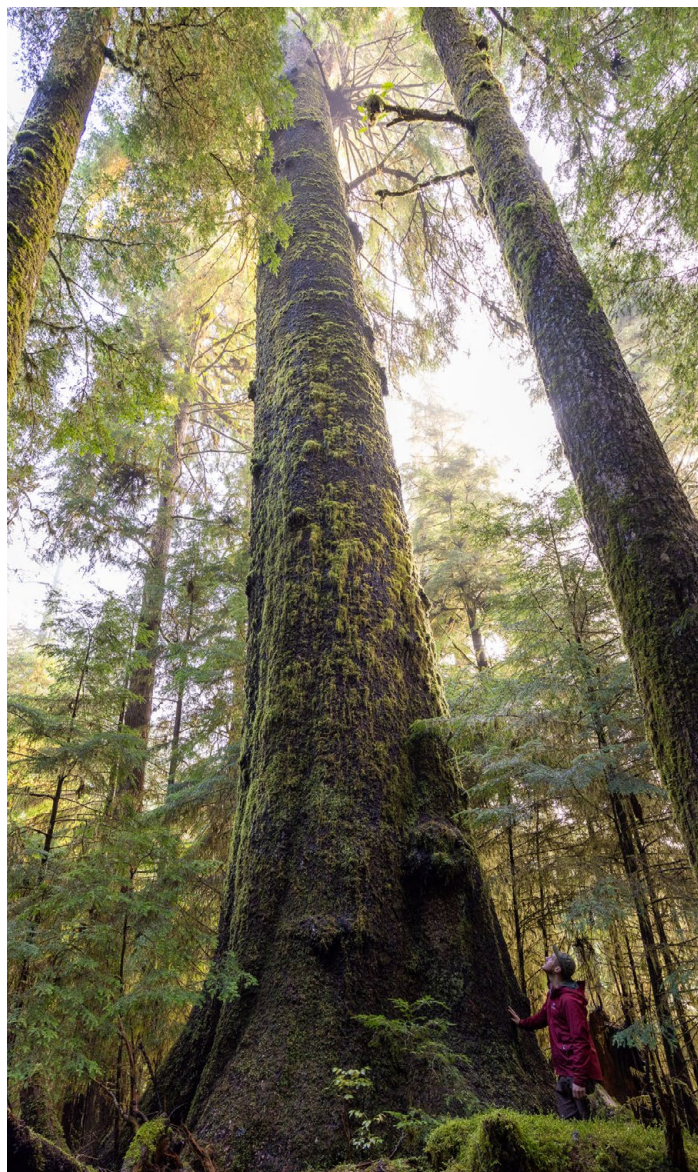
# Haida Gwaii

In October, AFA photographer TJ Watt visited Haida Gwaii as part of his work as a National Geographic Explorer and Trebek Initiative grantee. While there, he explored several incredible ancient forests along the Yakoun River, visited Haida cultural sites, and gave a presentation on his conservation photography to the Trebek Council.

In one unique area, TJ came across an old-growth Sitka spruce meadow that felt like entering a vast golden hall, where giant trees rose like ancient pillars above grassy glades. Hundreds of massive, moss-cloaked trunks glowed in every direction. It was one of the most beautiful sights he'd ever seen!

He also had a chance to document soaring stands of Sitka spruce along the shore of Yakoun Lake. Thanks to the leadership of the Haida Nation, these ancient giants are protected within the Yaaguun Suu Conservancy and Heritage Site. The conservancy safeguards old-growth spruce and cedar forests, salmon habitat, and culturally important areas connected to the Yakoun River watershed. It's a must-see if you're visiting the remote archipelago.

See the incredible photo galleries from [Yakoun River](#) and [Yakoun Lake](#).



## Northern Vancouver Island

In September, TJ returned to a remote area along Quatsino Sound on northern Vancouver Island — a place he had previously explored and photographed when it still stood as an ancient forest.

The area had been home to scores of giant western redcedars. Despite its ecological significance, it was misclassified by the BC government as not old-growth and never recommended as a priority “big-tree” deferral area.

When he arrived this time, the forest was gone.

Where a rich, vibrant ecosystem once stood, there was now a sprawling clearcut. Flying his drone overhead, TJ documented the stark transformation in a series of before-and-after photographs. In the centre of the devastation, a single spruce remains, isolated and exposed in a sea of massive stumps.

Much of today’s old-growth logging is happening in remote corners like this, after the vast majority of accessible forests have already been cut. Through field expeditions, professional photography, and strategic media outreach, Ancient Forest Alliance works to document these losses, inform the public, and hold decision-makers accountable.

Forests like this urgently require “solutions space” funding — support that enables First Nations to defer logging in areas where high ecological values overlap with high timber values. Without that bridge funding, irreplaceable ecosystems continue to fall.



**Before**



**After**

# Recognition & Milestones

## TJ visits Ottawa for the National Geographic Explorer Event!

In the spring, AFA photographer & co-founder TJ Watt visited Ottawa with a cohort of National Geographic Explorers for a leadership and speaking event.

Alongside fellow Explorers, TJ presented a Spotlight talk on his work exploring and documenting endangered old-growth forests in British Columbia.

TJ was named a National Geographic and Royal Canadian Geographical Society Explorer in 2021 after [receiving support](#) from the Trebek Initiative.



His project work led to some incredible finds and news features, including coverage in the [Washington Post](#) after he located what is perhaps Canada's most impressive tree in Clayoquot Sound, and a top story in [The Guardian](#) for exposing brutal old-growth logging on northern Vancouver Island.



## AFA Celebrates 15 Years of Working to Protect Old-Growth Forests!

We celebrated our 15th anniversary in 2025!

What started as a tiny team with a big vision has since grown into an organizational force for change, with tens of thousands of supporters like you helping drive forward our collective efforts to protect old-growth forests in British Columbia. It's been an incredible journey so far, and we're excited to see what we can achieve next together! Thank you as well to everyone who attended our special in-person celebration in May — it was great to see so many new and familiar faces, some of whom have been supporters since day one.



## Ten-Year Look Back: AFA 2015 Documentary

Take a look back at the AFA documentary, which covers the organization's inception with Ken Wu and TJ Watt and our work over the first five years!



## New Staff Welcome

In 2025, we welcomed Zeinab Salehiankia to the team to help redevelop AFA's Vancouver Canvass program.

She brings a wealth of education and global experience to the role. Born and raised in Tehran, Iran, Zeinab's love for nature began during childhood weekends spent outdoors in nearby villages — climbing fruit trees, exploring, and forming a deep connection with the land. That early curiosity led her to study biology and pursue a lifelong path in environmental protection.

Zeinab later lived in Naples, Italy, before earning a Master's degree in Environmental Science in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, where her work focused on GIS mapping and nature-based solutions to climate change. Living on the eastern edge of North America deepened her appreciation for rugged ecosystems,



community-led environmental action, and learning from Indigenous cultures, including the Mi'kmaq people. During this time, she contributed to leading Canadian environmental non-profits, strengthening community engagement and supporting just transitions to clean energy.

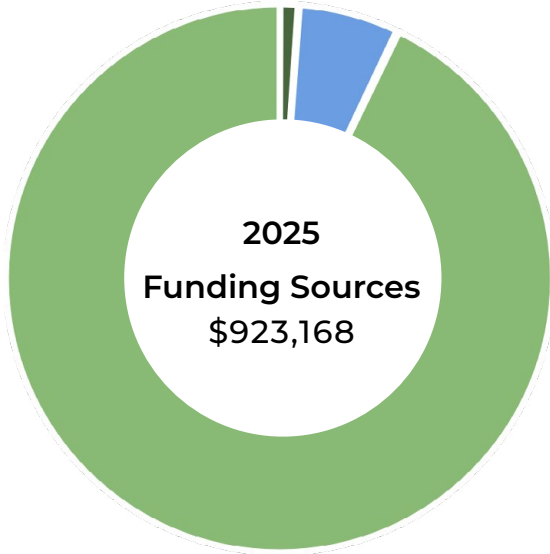
Now based in Vancouver, Zeinab is AFA's Vancouver Canvass Director. A people-person at heart, she believes strong grassroots movements are essential to protecting old-growth forests and our shared natural heritage. In her free time, she enjoys exploring forests, hiking local trails, and listening to people's stories. We're thrilled to have Zeinab on the team and excited to see the impact she'll make with AFA!

# Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31, 2025

## REVENUE

Donations	856,743
Grants	-
Sales	55,698
Interest and Other Income	10,727
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>923,168</b>



- Donations
- Sales
- Interest and Other Income

## EXPENDITURES

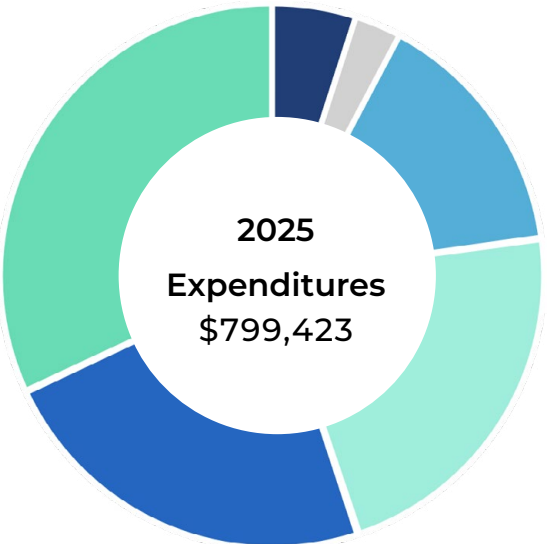
Cost of Goods	40,830
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## CAMPAIGNS

Campaigners	253,252
Research and Campaign Development	28,220
Public Education and Engagement	180,661

## OPERATIONS

Public Outreach	118,083
Operating Expense	178,377
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>799,423</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>123,745</b>



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



# What's Next in 2026

With your continued support in 2026, we will:

**1. Strengthen our team with a new Science-Based Campaigner**

Build essential capacity to identify and assess at-risk old-growth forests, support First Nations with science-backed research and planning, and respond quickly to emerging threats across BC. This added staff will expand the scope and speed of our conservation work at this critical time.

**2. Increase support for Indigenous-led protected areas**

Work alongside First Nations to identify conservation priorities, provide mapping and capacity support, and help advance new Indigenous-led protected areas across the most ecologically significant old-growth forests in BC.

**3. Document and reveal the beauty—and destruction—of old-growth forests**

Fund field expeditions to remote valleys to capture powerful photos, videos, and stories that motivate the public, influence policymakers, and shine a light on logging threats. AFA's visual storytelling continues to shape the provincial conversation on old-growth like no other organization.

**4. Expand our mapping, LiDAR, and GIS capabilities**

Scale up our ability to analyze old-growth forests using cutting-edge mapping tools. Identify the most spectacular groves of ancient trees, support First Nations' land-use planning, and strengthen the case for permanent protection.

**5. Increase public pressure and grow the movement for old-growth protection**

Expand our reach through strategic media campaigns, grassroots mobilization, creative storytelling, and coalition-building with businesses, unions, faith groups, and other allies who inspire people across BC and beyond.

**6. Hold governments accountable and respond rapidly to new threats**

Monitor government actions, track BC Timber Sales and industry plans, and mobilize supporters when destructive logging proposals emerge. Your support enables AFA to stay nimble, highlight threats and opportunities, and ensure follow-through on BC's commitments to protect old-growth forests.

**7. Advance a BC Protected Areas Strategy guided by ecosystem-based targets**

Push BC to adopt a Protected Areas Strategy that prioritizes the protection of the most endangered ecosystems through shared decision-making with First Nations. Ensure the province's 30x30 conservation goals safeguard the areas that need protection the most.

**8. Advance a long-term conservation economy for BC**

Promote solutions that support sustainable, value-added second-growth forestry, secure "solutions space" funding for deferrals, and create new opportunities for Indigenous stewardship — helping communities transition away from old-growth logging for good.

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



# Thank You

The work above has only been made possible by your support. For 15 years, our team has been on the ground, in the forest, and in front of decision-makers — documenting the beauty of old-growth forests, exposing their destruction, and building alliances to help ensure their protection for generations to come.

**We're extremely proud of what we've accomplished together, including victories like protecting Avatar Grove and helping secure over \$1 billion in federal-provincial funding for nature protection in BC. These wins matter, especially in moments when progress feels fragile.**

At the same time, 2025 was a reminder that protecting old-growth forests is not a linear journey and that you must always be ready to adapt your approach based on the current socio-political circumstances. As the BC government backslides on its commitments to old-growth forests and concerns about the economy dominate over those about the environment, it's

your continued engagement — contacting decision-makers, donating, and sharing our work — that helps keep old-growth forests in the public eye and on the political agenda where they belong.

In an era defined by misinformation, ecological crisis, and political uncertainty, AFA remains committed to being a voice of clarity, accuracy, and accountability. We take seriously our responsibility to ground our campaigns in independent science, boots-on-the-ground experience, and real-time political analysis, ensuring that our campaigns have the greatest impact.

2026 will bring new challenges and new opportunities to secure lasting protection for ancient forests in BC. It won't be easy, but with you standing alongside us, we're ready for what comes next. Thank you for being part of the effort to protect one of the most beautiful and irreplaceable ecosystems on Earth.

For the forests,

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

Ancient Forest Alliance



## Get in touch!

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

[ancientforestalliance.org](http://ancientforestalliance.org)