

# British Columbia's Inland Rain Forest: Ecology, Conservation and Management.



Stevenson, S.K., H.A.Armleder, A.Arsenault, D.Coxson, S.C.DeLong & M. Jull.  
UBC Press, 2011  
456pp, illustr.  
ISBN 978-0-7748-1849-0 (hardcover)  
978-0-7748-1850-6 (paperback)

This is a comprehensive, wide-ranging and profusely illustrated account of our inland rainforest—the very wet cool (vk) and wet cool (wk) sub-zones of the Interior Cedar-Hemlock (ICH) biogeoclimatic zone. The introduction states, “The purpose of the book is to synthesise the best available information about the ecology and management of the ICH for the benefit of those interested.”

The authors set out to achieve this in nine chapters: an introductory overview; followed by a description of the geology and soils; an account of ecology and productivity; a history of changing views and values then, more specifically, of logging and silviculture; a discussion of changing climate and the carbon cycle; a review of applied ecological management; finally, a hopeful vision of ideal management of this unique and threatened ecosystem. All but one chapter is headed by a relevant quotation and there is a glossary, a list of abbreviations and an extensive bibliography. It all adds up to a very full and comprehensive description.

How well have the authors achieved their purpose? They have pulled together a wealth of detailed information about the attributes and characteristics of our inland rain forest. There may be just a bit too much information. It sometimes reads like an ecological primer and at other times like a listing of species occurrence. This probably reflects the interests and enthusiasm of the authors which could have been curbed by rigorous editing. Handicapped at times by “a general paucity of empirical data” and conceding that “cumulative ecological effects...are unknown,” the authors have cautiously extrapolated from the adjacent BWBS (Boreal Black and White Spruce) and ESSF (Englemann Spruce - Subalpine Fir) zones to attempt predictions of changes resulting from management or climate impacts. They have cast a wide net of comparisons reaching not just to our comparable Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH) zone but as far afield as Finland and New Zealand.

The result is an informative account and a valuable repository of currently available information—a very useful contribution to BC's forest literature. It does not always make for easy reading and, given the calibre of the contributors, it is surprising that the ICH is said to lie at “high latitudes” when it is in fact well south of the Arctic Circle and that old forests are reputedly “irreplaceable.”

Reviewed by Roy Strang, RPF (Ret)

