

Stefan Wenzel
Member of Parliament
State of Lower Saxony
German Green Party

Fraktion Buendnis 90/Die Gruenen
im Niedersaechsischen Landtag
Hinrich-Wilhelm-Kopf-Platz 1
30159 Hannover
Tel 0511 30303301
Fax 0511 30303807
<http://www.wenzel-goe.de>
<http://www.gruene-niedersachsen.de>

Part of Our Soul

Really old trees are seldom seen in Germany. Really old forests that have survived the radical impact of human beings for hundreds, if not thousands of years, no longer exist. The same is true for all of Middle Europe.

Old trees awaken a special, mystical fascination in human beings. Forests with old trees provide biological habitats for many different species of wildlife which have no alternative spaces in which to live. Old trees and ancient forests are not only a priceless natural treasure for the human inhabitants of a country, they also provide an enduring livelihood for them, especially in a country that depends to a great extent on nature tourism.

The last ancient forests in British Columbia are presently being clearcut in large part to supply pulp for the production of newspapers, magazines and toilet paper. What has taken thousands of years to grow, is now used only briefly, and then simply discarded. What is left? Many jobs? Many sustainable jobs? An enduring sustainable economic growth for the Province? Hardly.

British Columbia is a wonderful part of our earth, but it is selling part of its soul, the part which belongs to all human beings. The deeply held longing for an undisturbed and wild Nature brings people to British Columbia from all other parts of the world. Here they hope to enjoy a vacation, to hike or to take part in other forms of outdoor recreation which in turn contribute to the economic strength of the Province.

There is no way around the sustainable use of our forests and our biological habitats, not in British Columbia, not in Germany, and not in any other parts of the world. It is time to choose a new path, to search for a compromise in order to save our most irreplaceable ecosystems. I therefore hope that the last remnants of the ancient wild forests of British Columbia, the incomparable heritage of humankind, will be preserved.