



## DRIVING DIRECTIONS TO THE AVATAR GROVE, RED CREEK FIR, SAN JUAN SPRUCE, & BIG LONELY DOUG!

Port Renfrew, on the west coast of Vancouver Island in Pacheedaht territory, is known as “Canada’s Tall Tree Capital.” Close to this charming little seaside town grows the world’s largest Douglas-fir tree, the Red Creek Fir, as well as Big Lonely Doug, Canada’s second-largest Douglas-fir. They are wonders to behold. En route to the Red Creek Fir is one of Canada’s largest Sitka spruce trees, the San Juan Spruce, its massive limbs draped with mosses and ferns. Also close by is the Harris Creek Spruce. The amazing Avatar Grove (temporarily closed) is known as the “Cathedral Grove of Port Renfrew” and is home to Canada’s Gnarliest Tree. All of these magnificent ancient trees are in the traditional territory of the Pacheedaht First Nation. Farther north are the incredible ancient rainforests of Carmanah Valley Provincial Park, the partially protected Walbran Valley, and Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, home to Canada’s largest tree, the Cheewhat Giant.

### Notes regarding travel to the Red Creek Fir:

Odometer readings may vary, so it’s best to rely on your own judgment when referencing the distances below. **This route is not recommended for vehicles with low clearance.** Trucks, SUVs, and 4WD vehicles are the most suitable. Remember, when travelling on logging roads, it’s essential to have a full gas tank and a working spare tire and drive defensively with your headlights on. There is limited cellphone reception in Port Renfrew and often none in the surrounding areas, so always be prepared in case of an emergency. Let a friend know where you’re going and when you intend to be back.

**These are remote wilderness areas - travel and hike at your own risk!!**

### Directions to Red Creek Fir (approx. 1 hour from Port Renfrew)

1. km 0.0 - start at the Port Renfrew Community Center/Fire Station and drive down Deering Rd.
2. km 0.2 - continue over single lane bridge over the San Juan River.
3. km 1.4 - keep right at fork.
4. km 2.7 - cross Deering Bridge and turn right towards Lake Cowichan **(\*To reach Avatar Grove instead, turn left after crossing and follow directions on the opposite page.)**
5. km 15.8 - turn right at 9 Mile Junction onto Len’s Creek Main (start of gravel road).
6. km 18.2 - keep right at fork (Len’s Triangle) onto Bear Main.
7. km 20.2 - cross the large bridge over the San Juan River. The San Juan Spruce tree & Recreation Site are accessed via a left hand turn just after the bridge.
8. km 20.4 - continue straight uphill past the San Juan Spruce.
9. km 22.3 - turn right onto Mosquito Creek Main and begin heading uphill.
10. km 23.4 - keep left up steep hill through clearcut.
11. km 24.7 - keep straight.
12. km 26.1 - keep right at fork.
13. km 26.8 - keep right at fork onto Red Creek Main. This road appears less used and descends downhill for quite some time, so don’t feel you’ve gone the wrong way!
14. km 30.0 - turn right at “T” junction at the bottom of the hill.
15. km 31.2 - park where the road noticeably widens on both sides. The trailhead is found just a few meters beyond on the right-hand side. It is a 10-15 minute walk to the Red Creek Fir, the largest known Douglas-fir tree in the world! Watch for three giant old-growth redcedar trees along the left hand side of the trail about halfway up as well.

**\*GPS coordinates for Red Creek Fir parking area: 48.57990, -124.22639**

### Directions to Avatar Grove **(\*TEMPORARILY CLOSED\*)**

(approx. 25 minutes from town) (continued from Red Creek Fir Direction #4 - on left)

5. Once you’ve turned LEFT after Deering Bridge, stay on the Gordon River Main road. After about 5 km, you will hit a “Y”. Go LEFT and cross a high bridge over the beautiful Gordon River.
6. After crossing the bridge, keep on the Gordon River Main for about 1.5 km, staying to the RIGHT at the next “Y”.
7. Shortly after you will cross a small bridge over a creek (Baird Creek). Park on the right immediately after the bridge and look for the trail entrance signs that lead to the Upper and Lower Groves.
8. The trail on the left side of the road leads into the Upper Grove where you can reach “Canada’s Gnarliest Tree”! This path has a steady incline throughout and passes by numerous giant redcedar trees.
9. The trail on the right side of the road takes you down to the Lower Grove’s “Loop Trail”. This features more gentle terrain with huge, burly redcedars & large Douglas-fir trees.

### Directions to Big Lonely Doug (approx. 40 minutes from P.R.)

(continued from Avatar Grove Direction #7 - above) **48.64622, -124.45051**

8. Continue past the Avatar Grove on the Gordon River Main for approximately 5 km and make a RIGHT turn onto Edinburgh Main (the first road you can turn right onto).
9. Soon after you will cross a bridge spanning a deep canyon along the Gordon River. **(\*Note: Vehicles with 4WD and good clearance are necessary from here on. It is possible to park near the bridge though and walk the next ~1.5 km if you’re willing.)**
10. Follow the rough road as it goes uphill and around to the right. Continue on this main road for approximately 3-5 minutes.
11. A clearcut from 2012 (now growing in) will eventually appear on your right side with a view downhill to the tree. Park off the side of the road, allowing room for large trucks to pass potentially pass by, and follow the rough footpath to the tree. The hike in should only be attempted by those with good balance. Try to limit time spent around the roots of the tree, but be sure to give Doug a hug ;)

### San Juan Spruce tree (approx. 40 minutes from Port Renfrew)

To reach the San Juan Spruce, follow the Red Creek Fir driving directions #1-7.

The giant tree growing by the river in the San Juan Bridge Recreation Site (deactivated) is one of Canada’s largest Sitka spruce trees, based on volume of wood. It has a diameter of 3.7 m (12 ft) and a height of 62.5 m (205 ft). Active logging road - watch out for trucks!

### Harris Creek Spruce (approx. 40 minutes from Port Renfrew)

This huge Sitka spruce grows just off the Pacific Marine Circle Route between Port Renfrew and Lake Cowichan (refer to map). A short, easy trail leads to the tree, which is about 4 m (13 ft) wide. Watch for a ‘Point of Interest’ sign a few hundred meters before the pullout.

**Last updated Summer 2024.** For current info see [www.AncientForestAlliance.org](http://www.AncientForestAlliance.org)