



British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest Review

PROTECTION PACKAGE ANNOUNCED

Five million acres (2 million hectares) of British Columbia's North and Central coasts will be permanently protected from logging - an area larger than Switzerland - as part of a protection package announced February 7, 2006 by the government of British Columbia.

The protection results in 33 per cent of the 15.5 million acre (6.4 million hectares) Great Bear Rainforest being off limits to logging. This is a major global achievement on par with other ecological wonders, such as the Great Barrier Reef with 33 percent protection and Costa Rica with 25 per cent.

As part of the overall protection package, the B.C. government has also committed to placing the remainder of the Great Bear Rainforest under a new forest management system intended to protect the ecological integrity in the Central and North Coasts. – Ecosystem-Based Management

Collaboration Pays Off

The globally significant Great Bear Rainforest Agreement is cause for much celebration. Our 'made in' B.C. solution – ten years in the making – would not have been possible without local communities, customers of B.C. wood and paper products, environmental groups, industry, B.C. government and coastal First Nations.

A stakeholder engagement process led to a unique collaboration of diverse interests; a collaboration that has showed the world innovative solutions can result from conflict, that people working together under the right conditions can achieve a tremendous amount for nature.

“Protecting such a large and important part of Canada's western coast from industrial logging will go down as one of our greatest environmental successes. It shows the power of cooperation among so many diverse groups - that together we were able to save the Great Bear Rainforest.”

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Natural Resources Defense Council

Monitoring Progress

From now on, the components of the package must be implemented to make success real and measurable on the ground. In this regard, we will be participating in the collaborative work to implement EBM and ensure economic transition happens. We will ensure independent, on the ground audits will take place on an annual basis. We will report whether or not forest practices and all industrial practices are consistent with what has been agreed to.

The World Was Watching

Canada to shield 5 million forest acres – **New York Times**
B.C.'s giant park could become a world blueprint – **Washington Post**
Canada to protect wildlife, logging in huge B.C. Park – **Seattle Post Intelligencer**
B.C. rainforest pact heralds new era – **Toronto Star**
Canada's Coastline Tagged for Preserve – **Moscow Times**





“Living in British Columbia, I’ve experienced and painted the wonder of Great Bear Rainforest. It is a marvel to behold. This agreement will lead to a protected and well managed coastal rainforest – a real gift to the world.”

Robert Bateman, renowned Canadian artist and naturalist

THE ROAD SO FAR

For the past decade, the world has watched British Columbians struggle over the fate of its coastal temperate rainforest. As industrial logging moved northward, this globally rare forest was under enormous threat. Conflict led to confrontation, blockades temporarily halted development and pressure from B.C.’s international forest products customers in the marketplace led to increased demands for a solution that recognized the global significance of the region.

Then, in 2000, parties began talking and a moratorium on logging in certain pristine valleys was put in place. Workers, community representatives, coastal logging corporations, environmental groups, and others engaged in a government-sponsored multi-stakeholder land and resource management planning process for the Central Coast. By 2002, a similar process was underway for the North Coast. Simultaneously, individual First Nations engaged in their own planning processes to develop land use visions for their territories, which would later inform their negotiations with the province of B.C. to confirm final land use plans.



and magazine publishing associations support logging deferrals in B.C.’s coastal rainforest and urge companies, the Province and environmentalists to find a shared solution. Lowes and other companies quickly followed suit. Hundreds of millions of dollars of B.C. wood sales were at stake. This led to negotiations and to the demand by environmental groups of more than 100 large pristine valleys being put in moratorium while planning was underway.

2001 – Collective Shift in Thinking

Everyone, from environmental groups to First Nations to industry to the B.C. government, comes together with a new way of looking at land use planning. These diverse groups agree to do things differently. This includes using EBM and working toward a significant conservation package, both informed by a newly created independent science team. All agree communities will not bear the brunt of change. ForestEthics, Greenpeace, Sierra Club and others signed a protocol with some First Nations to work together in a pilot project to define what the new approach to land use and a new economy could look like.

2002 – Changing Markets

Staples, one of the largest office supply stores in the world, announces it will achieve an average of 30 per cent post-consumer recycled content across all paper products it sells and phase out purchases of paper products from endangered forests, including B.C.’s coastal rainforest. Shifts within the Canadian book industry start to pick up steam after 21 Canadian book publishers commit to eliminate their use of papers containing endangered forest fibre. This movement sparks an international trend in book publishing as well as later parallel initiatives with the Canadian magazine and newspaper sectors.

2004 – First Nations and Government Negotiations

Government-to-government discussions begin between First Nations governments and the B.C. government. These talks are informed by the stakeholder consensus package and First Nations land use plans and will result in final decisions about the fate of the region.

Feb 7, 2006 – Protection Package Announced

The B.C. government and First Nations announce they will protect close to 5 million acres of coastal rainforest and apply a new forest management system called Ecosystem Based Management in the remainder of the Great Bear Rainforest.

1995 – Getting Organized

The Great Bear Rainforest Campaign is launched. The goal is to protect the rainforests on the North and Central Coast of mainland B.C., Canada – the largest remaining unprotected tract of intact coastal temperate rainforest in the world.

1999 – BC Customers Show Support

Home Depot and Ikea announce they will phase out products made from ancient and endangered forests. At the same time, German pulp producers

TIMELINE

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“We must work together to finalize and implement our land use agreements so that we can ensure the maximum sustainable benefit from land use activities in our Traditional Territories and coast.”

Art Sterritt, Executive Director, Coastal First Nations

COMPONENTS OF THE AGREEMENT

The agreement is a multi-part solution package that recognizes the inherent and inextricable tie of three major components: ecology, economy and community.

Protection

The agreement includes the permanent protection of an additional 3.3 million acres in the North Coast and Central Coast, not including Haida Gwaii. These areas form part of a larger network, including existing parks, which would result in one third of the region being managed primarily for ecological integrity.

Protection Breakdown:

5 million acres (2 million hectares) are protected from logging. This includes:

- Previously protected parks covering 1 million acres (443,000 hectares)
- Newly negotiated parks that stretch over 3.3 million acres (1.3 million hectares)
- No logging zones that equal 736,000 acres (297,000 hectares)

Improved logging practices

Outside of the protected areas, participants agreed on significant changes and more conservation oriented approaches to land management practices using a more sustainable form of logging, called Ecosystem Based Management. This new type of logging, to be implemented by March 2009, should result in fewer roads, less impact to streams and cultural plants, and less wood and cedar being removed. The environmental groups would like to have seen even higher levels of protection, as recommended by scientists. With a negotiated package that included 33 per cent protection from logging, the environmental groups required a full commitment to this new ecosystem management approach to offset any potential risks to the rainforest.

As a first step, an initial suite of EBM elements is scheduled for legal implementation, while a working group is being formed to guide this process. These are considered crucial, immediate steps necessary for the protection of ecological integrity. Legal requirements for improving management practices and their on-the-ground implementation also have the potential to give British Columbia's coastal forest products a leading edge in the marketplace.

The government of British Columbia has committed to implementing the first suite of EBM legal objectives and creating the associated working group by September 2006.

First Nations Involvement

The agreement signals a new way forward for B.C.'s Coastal First Nations, as it grants them a greater level of stewardship over their traditional territories and more direct decision making power over resource development and activities. The provincial government and each First Nation have agreed to this new framework.

Economic Diversification

The fourth component of the agreement is a \$120 million conservation financing package to fund conservation management projects and ecologically sustainable business ventures in First Nation territories. To date, several private U.S. and Canadian foundations have raised almost \$60 million in philanthropic funds and the B.C. government has committed \$30 million. However, without a \$30 million commitment from the Canadian federal government, the package as a whole is in jeopardy. Conservationists, the provincial government and First Nations are working to secure this federal commitment.

BUILDING A GLOBAL MODEL

Given the provincial government has announced its ongoing commitment to protect the coastal rainforest, the focus now shifts to implementation. Ecosystem Based Management must become a reality in the Great Bear Rainforest by March 31, 2009. Between now and then, we will be closely monitoring progress to ensure all parties are working in the spirit of the agreement, so that it does in fact become a global model of sustainability. Read on to see how we will be measuring success.

“This vision, which has taken many years to achieve, we believe is an example of the New Relationship at work for BC First Nations communities.

The decisions were made collaboratively, and in light of priority First Nations interests, oral traditions and sites of cultural significance.”

First Nations Summit

MEASURING PROGRESS

Effort and dedication will be required by those involved to ensure all components of the agreement become a measurable reality. We are developing key indicators to measure progress and we will be applying these as part of our ongoing monitoring of the implementation process. Below are several initial benchmarks we will be using to measure progress in the upcoming months.

Protection

A critical component of lasting success of the agreement includes the legal designation of the new protected areas to ensure the ecological integrity of the region is legally protected. Part of this new designation must include First Nations' co-management and land use rights.

Ecological Management and Planning

In order for EBM to be successfully implemented by 2009, an all-inclusive plan for achieving full implementation must be developed. Logging companies must also fulfill their commitments as they relate to this plan. Meanwhile, as EBM is being phased in, to ensure all parties can focus on solutions to implementation, mechanisms must be in place to protect the most sensitive ecological values of the Great Bear Rainforest.

Use of Credible Science

Independent science, a critical component of the success to date, must be used to inform and guide the implementation process. It must also be used to audit ecological values and drive adaptive management to avoid conflict.

Collaboration

One unique element of the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement was the ongoing collaboration of all parties to develop a strong solution. On-the-ground change will require the same level of collaboration for decision making, science, monitoring, data sharing and funding, among other tasks.

First Nations' Interests

Now that the B.C. government and First Nation governments have reached agreement on land use plans, further work will be required to ensure that the ecosystem-based management framework will be fully implemented by March 31, 2009. In ongoing work, provincial government-to-First Nations' government forums must function effectively. In addition, resources must be made available to facilitate sustainable economic change over time.

WORKING TOWARD A GLOBAL MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY

Implementing the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement is no small feat. Hard work, trial and error and some sizeable issues no doubt lie ahead. But these can be overcome with the same collaboration and maintenance of options that characterized the work of the last ten years. What is clear – this work cannot be achieved by one party alone. To reach success, all parties, including government and industry, must carve out time for creative discussions and meaningful action.

Together, we can make the proposed protection package a reality on the ground, so that the ecosystems of the Great Bear Rainforest will be maintained in perpetuity and human well-being for communities is secured. Only then will the agreement become a global model of sustainability for the rest of the world.

The B.C. government and industry agreed to implement Ecosystem Based Management throughout the Great Bear Rainforest by March 31, 2009. We will be holding government and industry to their promises.

"Government, First Nations, environmentalists, resource industries and communities have found common ground, and this continued collaboration will play an important role in our work ahead to fully implement these LRMPs."

Pat Bell, Minister of Agriculture and Lands

"We need to ensure that as we implement Ecosystem Based Management we continue to balance the needs of all the stakeholders for the long-term environmental, community and economic interests."

Reynold Hert, President & CEO Western Forest Products

"As we think about what is happening today, I think it's important for us to think of the history of what's taken place. You know, we use the term "historic" sometimes a little bit too loosely. Today is truly an important event, and the future will decide how historic it is or is not."

B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell, speaking at the press conference for the Great Bear Rainforest announcement



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GREENPEACE

FORESTETHICS

Sierra Club of Canada
BC CHAPTER

RAINFOREST ACTION NETWORK

The Rainforest Solutions Project is a joint initiative of ForestEthics, Greenpeace, the Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter and the Rainforest Action Network. We promote conservation options and economic alternatives to industrial logging on B.C.'s central coast, north coast, and Haida Gwaii.

www.savethegreatbear.org