



NEWS RELEASE

Great Bear Rainforest: Government, Industry Must Pick up the Pace

February 7, 2007 (Vancouver, B.C.) – One year after the BC government announced a groundbreaking conservation plan for the Great Bear Rainforest, environmental groups that spent over a decade working on the plan are cautiously optimistic about its implementation.

However, spokespeople with Greenpeace, ForestEthics, and Sierra Club of Canada's BC Chapter say the pace of change must pick up if government hopes to keep its promise of fully implementing the plan by March 2009.

“The public has invested a great deal of hope in the potential of this globally significant model,” said Valerie Langer of ForestEthics. “Making the plan a reality is now as much a responsibility as it is an opportunity.”

The plan announced in 2006 includes protecting an area of B.C.'s north and central coasts over 5,000 times the size of Stanley Park and committing to a new approach to logging called Ecosystem-Based Management. It also includes a \$120 million conservation management and economic development initiative, finalized with last month's \$30 million federal contribution.

“Progress has been made on a number of fronts, but change in the forest is what this agreement is really about,” said Lisa Matthaus, Campaigns Director with Sierra Club of Canada's BC Chapter. “We need to see more progress in this regard.”

With key agreements in place, the three environmental groups say milestones measuring progress leading up to the 2009 target date will be in place by March 31, 2007.

“We're working hard with industry, government, and First Nations to reach agreement on milestones to indicate real change in the way logging happens in the Great Bear Rainforest,” said Amanda Carr of Greenpeace. “The public deserves a way to measure progress and international customers of BC wood are asking for these new forest practices.”

The Great Bear Rainforest, encompassing B.C.'s north and central coasts and the archipelago of Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands), is the world's largest remaining tract of intact coastal temperate rainforest. It is home to wolves, cougars, bears and 20 percent of the world's wild salmon.

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