

FROM THE GROUND UP

A Progress Report on British Columbia's
Great Bear Rainforest

June 2013

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OUR CHANCE TO SAFEGUARD THE FUTURE OF A GLOBAL TREASURE

Canada is home to the 6.4 million hectare (15 million acres) Great Bear Rainforest, which together with Haida Gwaii represents the largest tracts of intact temperate rainforest remaining on the planet. The Great Bear Rainforest stretches along British Columbia's coast up to Alaska and makes up the traditional territories of over 25 First Nations who have lived in this rainforest for thousands of years. The conservation and human well-being initiative in the region, known as the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements, is widely acknowledged as a global model for collaborative solutions to environmental conflict.

Covering less than one percent of the planet's land mass, temperate rainforests are globally rare and today few areas remain unlogged. The Great Bear Rainforest is a spectacular example of this forest type, hosting a dense web of natural life including towering ancient trees, orcas, salmon, wolves, grizzlies, and the unique white-furred black bear, known as the Spirit Bear.

An independent science team conducted the most comprehensive analysis of these globally significant forests ever undertaken. The team developed the Ecosystem-Based Management Handbook, which guides implementation of the Agreements to achieve low ecological risk to the forests and high levels of human well-being. This work is a global first.

There has been significant progress by environmental organizations and the forest industry as stakeholders to the decision-making mechanism set up by the BC Government and First Nations, but there remains an outstanding step to reach the conservation goals and meaningful improvements to community well-being in the region to be achieved by no later than March 2014. Specifically, forest companies and environmental groups need to agree on a set of recommendations that achieve 70% conservation for natural levels of old-growth forests, and governments must legally enact the changes to logging regulations.



An example of collaboration is the Joint Solutions Project consisting of ForestEthics, Greenpeace, Sierra Club BC, Catalyst Paper, Howe Sound Pulp and Paper, Interfor, Western Forest Products and BC Timber Sales.

18 YEARS: A TIMELINE

1995: The Great Bear Rainforest Campaign is launched to protect one of the largest intact coastal temperate rainforests left on Earth.

1995 - 1999:

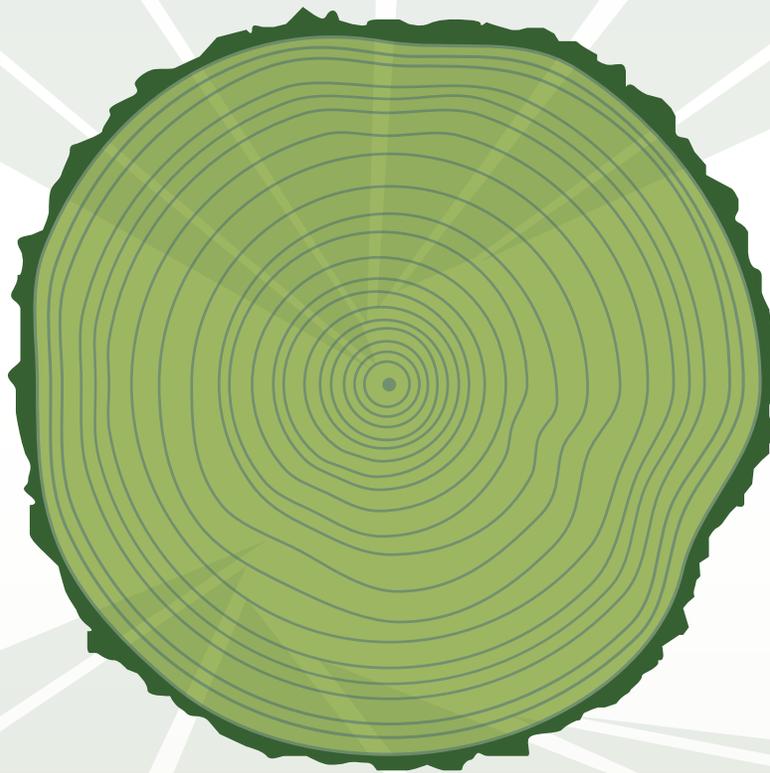
First Nations and environmentalists' logging blockades in full swing. Wood and paper customers in Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, U.K., Germany and the U.S. cancel contracts with coastal logging companies. Numerous companies enact policies to phase out products from ancient and endangered forests.

1999: On a trip to the region, German paper manufacturing and magazine publishing executives push for a change to the status quo in a meeting with environmentalists, B.C. government and logging companies – CAD\$600 million in sales are on the line.

2000: The logging companies and environmental organizations reach a milestone agreement to 'stand down': the companies defer logging in over 100 intact areas in the Great Bear Rainforest, and environmental organizations commit to ending "do not buy" market campaigns.

2001 - 2004: Major paper purchasers develop environmental paper procurement policies. Land use planning at government convened multi-stakeholder tables is under way. Forest companies and environmentalists form Joint Solutions Project (JSP) to bring joint recommendations into these forums.

2004: British Columbia and 24 First Nations begin government-to-government deliberations based on consensus recommendations of the land use planning tables and First Nations' individual land use plans.



2006: Great Bear Rainforest Agreements announced, legally designating 2.1 million hectares (almost 5 million acres) of permanently protected areas and other conservation measures, as well as increased First Nations decision-making and revenue sharing. Parties agree to full implementation of the Agreements by March 31 2009.

2007: A CAD\$120 million fund is raised to support conservation management and economic diversification for First Nation communities in the Great Bear Rainforest.

2008: A Customer and Investor Roundtable with international customers and socially responsible investors is held in Vancouver. German magazine and newspaper publishers visit the Great Bear Rainforest to assess progress and meet with the Premier's Office.

March 31, 2009: New interim logging rules established that conserve 50% of old-growth forests, along with a 5-year plan to reach full implementation of EBM (low risk, meaning 70% conservation, and high levels of human well-being in communities).

June 2013: Customers and investors gather for another Roundtable prior to completion of the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements.

March 2014: Expectation: low ecological risk management logging rules legally established, and initiatives for increasing levels of human well-being are in place.

CONFLICT TO COLLABORATION TO SOLUTIONS: PROGRESS ON A LANDMARK AGREEMENT

In 2006 a landmark agreement was launched between the provincial government of British Columbia, First Nations, a coalition of environmental groups, and an alliance of logging companies. Over the previous decade, conflict between environmental organizations and the forest industry, protests leading to blockades and international market campaigns, eventually resulted in major wood and paper buyers cancelling their contracts or steering clear of products from the region. In 2000, calls from the marketplace for resolution led a coalition of environmental groups (Rainforest Solutions Project – RSP) and an alliance of forestry companies (Coast Forest Conservation Initiative – CFCI) to form the Joint Solutions Project (JSP) as a means to collaboratively work towards solutions. In 2000-2001 the forest companies deferred logging in 100 key intact valleys and environmental groups suspended “do not buy” markets campaigns in order to allow space for the development of independent science and multi-lateral land use planning.

On February 7 2006 the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements were announced by all parties to the world – over two million hectares of protection (one-third of the region) set aside from industrial logging with the remaining two-thirds subject to improved logging practices as set out through Ecosystem-Based Management, to be in place by 2009. New logging rules were established in March 2009 that set almost half the rainforest off limits to logging – a significant step towards the goal of maintaining 70% of the natural levels of old forest.

In addition, \$120 million was raised for First Nations communities to enable sustainable economic diversification and conservation management programs. The majority of First Nations communities in the region are part of two key coalitions: Nanwakolas Council and Coastal First Nations – Great Bear Initiative. Through the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements the region’s First Nations have also achieved a significant role in decision-making and increased revenue-sharing.

Customers of products from this region demanded change, which created the willingness among stakeholders to collaboratively work together with decision-makers over the past 12 years. Continued attention is required to ensure our goals are met on time.



Ecosystem-Based Management Goals:
Low Ecological Risk (maintain 70% of natural levels of old-growth ecosystems) and High Levels of Human Well-being.

CURRENT STATUS OF GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST CONSERVATION

Protection: 2.1 million hectares (5 million acres)¹ – one third of the region – are now protected from logging in conservancies,² parks, and Biodiversity, Mining and Tourism Areas.³

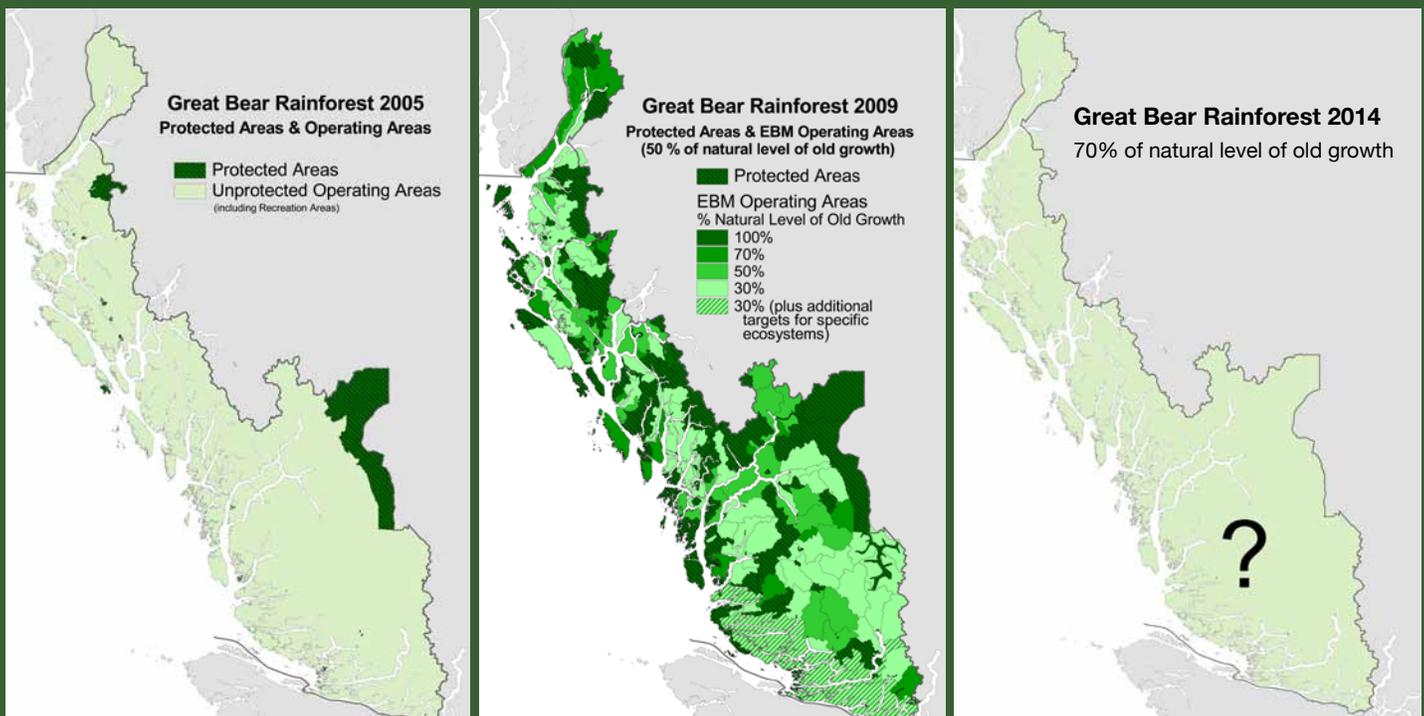
Improved Logging Practices:⁴ Over the entire region 50 percent of the natural level of old growth forest of each ecosystem type will be maintained in the interim - or restored where forests have been heavily logged. This interim, 'moderate risk' management, translates into an additional 700,000 hectares (1.7 million acres) of forest set aside from logging. This is approximately 450,000 hectares (1.1 million acres) short of the full conservation needed for low risk management as set out by independent science. Negotiations are under way to close the gap that exists between moderate and low risk to the region's ecology.

Economic Diversification:⁵ The Coast Opportunity Fund (COF) was established with CAD\$120 million in conservation financing (\$60 million from private philanthropic funds and \$60 million from BC and Canadian governments). COF funds conservation management projects and ecologically sustainable business ventures for First Nations. Various projects have been rolling out in the communities over the past number of years. The provincial government and First Nations have also negotiated revenue and decision making agreements.



Percentages of forest area in the Great Bear Rainforest:

- 31% in protected areas
- 20% off limits to logging from 2009 Land Use Objectives
- 37% available for forestry operations under EBM
- 12% Remaining gap to meet low ecological risk



FINALIZING THE COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVOR

Almost 20 years ago, global attention on controversial forest practices in the Great Bear Rainforest brought seemingly divergent, yet creative minds together to craft conservation agreements to bring certainty to the region and to the forest industry.

The long collaborative effort can ultimately bring security of wood supply to forest companies through a planning process to determine where they can operate sustainably. This in turn can provide customers with confidence that their products are sourced from a well-managed, controversy-free forest region.

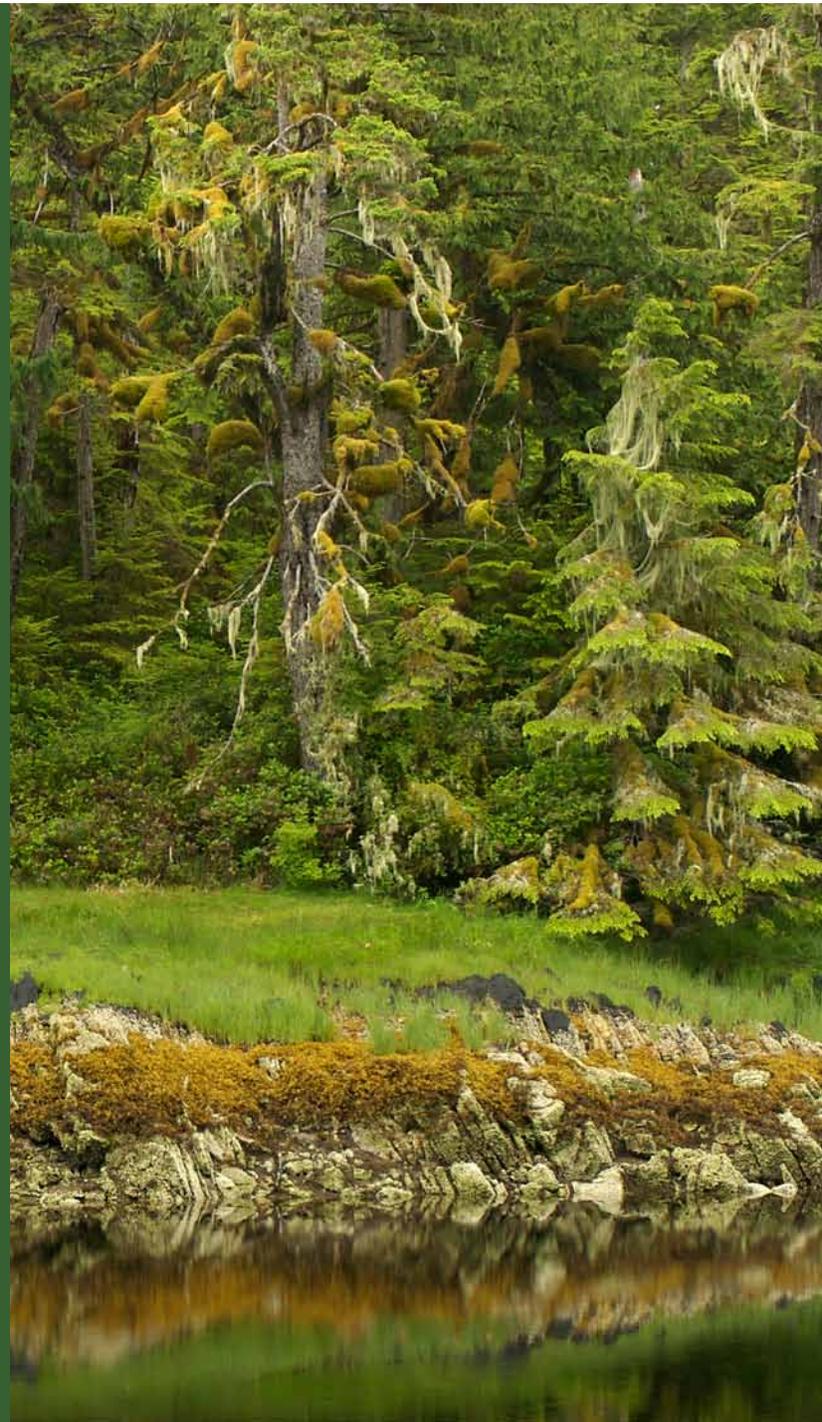
This certainty of wood supply and sourcing hinges upon the process of delivering low ecological risk forest management and high levels of human well-being in the Great Bear Rainforest.

ACHIEVING ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC CERTAINTY

The over-arching goals of the 2006 Agreements were not fully met by 2009. There was a commitment by all parties involved to extend implementation work to achieve the goals by no later than March 31, 2014.

The Joint Solutions Project undertook to develop recommendations to propose to First Nations and the BC Government on how and where to increase conservation and revise the logging rules. The objective of the project was to optimize conservation (preserve 70% of natural levels of old-growth ecosystems) while minimizing the impact to timber supply.

Today, there is emerging agreement between forest companies and environmental organizations, but a joint proposal of recommendations to First Nations and the Province has been elusive. The provincial government will manage the process of revising the Land Use Objectives (logging rules) by March 2014. Failure to achieve sufficient conservation is a risk. Achieving agreement that is supported by all parties is the goal.



21ST CENTURY CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

- There are 4 major timber companies operating in the Great Bear Rainforest.
- The 3 timber companies (Interfor, Western Forest Products, BC Timber Sales), along with the 2 paper companies (Catalyst Paper, Howe Sound Pulp and Paper) that form Coast Forest Conservation Initiative (CFCI) have actively engaged in developing solutions.
- The fourth logging company, TimberWest, is not a CFCI member and has not invested in solutions for the Great Bear Rainforest. TimberWest has consistently undermined Ecosystem-Based Management with logging in areas that should be contributing to full implementation of the 70% target, thereby creating more pressure for conservation in other forest companies' tenures. TimberWest came under new ownership in June 2011. To date this has not shifted the company's poor record or lack of collaborative leadership. This makes final government action that applies to all forest companies critically important.
- Ecosystem-Based Management is a shift from the status quo. To achieve conservation thresholds the forest companies have to adapt their businesses to a reduced timber supply. Challenges to this are the increase in raw log exports and mills designed for processing old-growth commodity products. With provincial support and dedicated business leadership and acumen, sustainability from the ground up will emerge.

TRACKING PROGRESS AND MOVING AHEAD

A joint proposal between the forest companies and the environmental groups with recommendations for managing the Great Bear Rainforest to low ecological risk while maintaining a viable timber supply was to be agreed to by no later than the first quarter of 2013. The intention was to provide First Nations and the Provincial Government time to consider the proposal and make final decisions. A joint proposal, however, remains elusive. As a next step please contact your supplier(s) to track progress on reaching agreement with environmental organizations by end of June 2013.

We can also provide support for you and your company to follow up with the Provincial Government to encourage them to keep their commitments on full implementation of the Agreements by March 2014: low risk management and high levels of human well-being for First Nations communities.

END NOTES

1. A map that shows all parks, conservancies and biodiversity areas of the region can be found at <http://www.savethegreatbear.org/resources/category/maps>
2. Conservancy legislation: http://www.leg.bc.ca/38th2nd/3rd_read/gov28-3.htm
3. http://www.ilmb.gov.bc.ca/slrp/lrmp/nanaimo/central_north_coast/biodiversity.html
4. EBM is an approach to management that results in low risk to ecological integrity, while at the same time promoting human well-being. The EBM Handbook can be found on the website of the Coast Information Team: <http://www.citbc.org/index.html>
5. The EBM Handbook defines EBM as "an adaptive approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities. The intent is to maintain those spatial and temporal characteristics of ecosystems such that component species and ecological processes can be sustained, and human well-being supported and improved."

PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover: Koeys Watershed, Heiltsuk First Nation - Markus Mauthe; **Page 1:** Spirit Bear - Marni Grossman; **Page 3:** Announcement of Great Bear Rainforest Agreements 2006 - Jeremiah Armstrong - Moresby Consulting; **Page 5:** Koeys Watershed, Heiltsuk First Nation - Markus Mauthe; **Back cover:** Gizzly Bear - Andy S. Wright



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