



## Coast Forest Conservation Initiative

*New thinking about forest conservation*

December 15, 2003

### **Customer Advisory**

Consensus recommendations on new protection for B.C. Central Coast forests forwarded to government

### **Forest Industry-ENGO input provides basis for new approach**

The members of the Coast Forest Conservation Initiative (CFCI) are pleased to announce that a very significant package of consensus recommendations, regarding the conservation and management of forests in B.C.'s Central Coast region, has been reached. This is a tremendous achievement and a very important milestone in a process that has now extended over nearly seven years.

The recommendations – which will inform government-to-government negotiations between the province and First Nations – call for expanded protection within these globally important forests. This includes confirmation of all candidate protection areas designated in 2001, totaling more than 400,000 hectares, and 16 new protection areas totaling more than 500,000 hectares. The recommendations also include a framework for ecosystem-based management (EBM) within areas where timber harvesting will take place.

These recommendations have been endorsed by a multi-party land-use planning table which includes representatives of communities, environmental organizations, businesses, workers and other interests.

Intense efforts by the CFCI and its environmental group partners in the Joint Solutions Project (JSP) generated a workable package of solutions, which served as the basis for the recommendations. This package was the successful culmination of longstanding efforts to identify mutually acceptable ways of moving forward on the Central Coast.

The new designations included within the recommendations will, if adopted, bring the total protection areas network to about 1.5 million hectares on the Central Coast, or about one third of the landbase. This is a significant further expansion of the protection areas network established in an interim agreement reached in April 2001. The EBM framework will link the extent of development, in areas where forests companies operate, with ecosystem rarity. The recommendations adopted by the table include direction for further refining and implementing EBM in 2004.

CFCI members believe the recommendations will effectively balance conservation and socio-economic interests. They commend the other participants in the JSP process for their determination to arrive at an acceptable consensus position, and are gratified that the outcome of that process has been endorsed by the land-use planning table.

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The recommendations will be forwarded to the provincial government by December 31, 2003. Pending approval by the provincial cabinet, the government will work with First Nations in the region to finalize protection areas and the application of EBM. These government-to-government negotiations are expected to be completed by mid-2004.

CFCI members respect this democratic process and look forward to its outcome. They believe the recommendations they have helped craft will provide invaluable input as the provincial and First Nations governments complete the final stages in this complex process.

The attached backgrounder includes information on the North Coast and Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands land-use planning initiatives that remain ongoing.

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## **Backgrounder**

### The Evolution of a Joint Solution

The Coast Forest Conservation Initiative (CFCI) is a collaboration between five British Columbia-based companies dedicated to the conservation and sustainable development of coastal forests. The five companies are Canadian Forest Products, International Forest Products, NorskeCanada, Western Forest Products and Weyerhaeuser.

CFCI members have been in dialogue with environmental groups in a forum known as the Joint Solutions Project. The environmental participants in this process are ForestEthics, Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network, and the Sierra Club of B.C.

In April 2001, the CFCI, environmental groups, First Nations, government and stakeholders agreed to significantly expand the protection areas network – and to defer development in many other areas – in British Columbia's Central Coast region. They also agreed to pursue development of an ecosystem-based management approach to resource conservation and development on the Central Coast, and on the North Coast and Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands.

Ecosystem-based management (EBM) seeks to ensure the health of ecosystems and the wellbeing of the people, communities and businesses that depend on them. EBM relies on a high degree of collaboration among people and interest groups, and on the application of knowledge garnered from science as well as local and traditional sources. The framework for developing and implementing EBM in these regions includes:

- three multi-party land-use planning initiatives (LRMPs), sponsored by the provincial government, as well as First Nations land-use plans;
- protocols between the provincial government and First Nations;
- principles and goals that define the scope of EBM; and,
- application of independent science as well as local and traditional knowledge to evaluate ecological and economic factors and to inform the development and implementation of EBM.

The Central Coast land-use planning initiative has just concluded its deliberations and developed consensus recommendations. Discussions at the North Coast table are in their final stages, and CFCI companies remain optimistic that a successful resolution will also be reached there.

A third initiative, co-managed by the provincial government and the Council of the Haida Nation, covers Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands. This process is scheduled for completion in 2004.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The BC Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management is responsible for land-use planning. Please follow this link <http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/rmd/> for further information on coastal planning.



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The independent science intended to inform land-use planning and the application of EBM has been provided and coordinated by the Coast Information Team (CIT). The CIT began its work in January 2002 with funding from the CFCI, environmental groups and the provincial and federal governments. A total of CDN \$3.2 million was budgeted for completion of the CIT work.<sup>2</sup>

Some CIT products are still being developed, while others have yet to be peer reviewed. Effective integration of additional scientific inputs is expected to be achieved over the course of the adaptive implementation of the new management approach that is taking shape, and to be guided by an EBM Council.

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<sup>2</sup> Please follow this link <http://www.citbc.org/> for more on CIT products.