

# Coast Forest Conservation Initiative

FEBRUARY 2001

“Anything that has an uncertain end is fraught with some risk, but that’s what leadership is about. We judge the risk of doing nothing to be much more serious.”

— Bill Dumont, Chief Forester,  
Western Forest Products Limited

## What is the Coast Forest Conservation Initiative?

The Coast Forest Conservation Initiative (CFCI) is a voluntary initiative by four BC forest companies committed to development of a forest conservation plan for the Central and North Coast of British Columbia that will be credible both locally and globally. In order to achieve this objective CFCI companies are working with three environmental groups on a project known as the Joint Solutions Project (JSP).

The purpose of the Joint Solutions Project is to generate new solutions to old conflicts over coastal temperate rainforests on the Central and North Coast of BC, a seven million hectare area on the mainland BC coast that extends from the northern tip of Vancouver Island to the Alaska border.

Forests in the region are publicly owned and currently the focus of a variety of different formal decision making processes to resolve conservation and aboriginal issues, including multi-stakeholder Land and Resource Management Planning tables (LRMPs), and modern day Treaty negotiations between local First Nations and the governments of BC and Canada.

There has been significant controversy over forest issues in this area of BC and the conflict has spread from BC to the international marketplace for forest products. The Joint Solutions Project represents an attempt by forest companies and environmental groups to collaborate on development of a model for conservation and management of globally significant coastal forests that fully integrates social, economic and ecological needs.

x The CFCI companies have agreed to defer harvesting in environmentally contentious areas in the region. Environmental groups working with the CFCI companies in the JSP have agreed to defer their market campaign targeting the products produced by the companies involved in the project. This creates a conflict-free period that sets the stage for collaboration on an ecosystem-based

approach to reconciling different interests and perspectives around forests.

- x A key principle of the JSP is that the social and economic impact of change in the way forests are managed and conserved on the Central and North Coast must be addressed in a manner that is equitable to those directly affected and respect the need for community stability.
- x The Joint Solutions Project is not a decision-making body. Rather, it will sponsor scientific, technical and socio-economic research, and will provide information and ideas to public processes in BC mandated to address land use and aboriginal issues in the area.

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*The Kermode Bear makes its home in the Central and North Coast Region of BC — ensuring that the bear’s habitat is maintained is the focus of an unusual initiative between forest companies and environmental groups committed to developing new solutions to forest conservation and management issues in the area.*





Coastal forests of the Central and North Coast are ecologically significant in a local, regional and global context.

## How the Joint Solutions Project started

In late 1999, four of BC's major forest industry companies decided to work together to address growing international interest in the province's coastal old-growth forests. Those companies involved recognized that conflict in the marketplace between themselves and environmental groups could have a serious, long-term impact.

The companies established the Coast Forest Conservation Initiative (CFCI) to drive their involvement in development of a conservation plan for the Central and North Coast that respects the biological richness of globally significant coastal rainforest areas while supporting a diversified and healthy local and regional economy.

In January 2000, the CFCI companies approached a group of environmental organizations in search of common ground and their involvement in a new joint effort to resolve conflict and develop long-term solutions. Some of the environmental groups were involved in market campaigns against harvesting in the region.

In order to create a conflict-free period in which to collaborate on new approaches, the companies offered to voluntarily defer logging in areas that were of the greatest concern to the environmental groups. The envi-

ronmental groups offered to defer campaigning against the companies.

Both sides committed to work together and involve First Nations and other interests to develop an approach to forest management that will conserve critical forest ecosystems while addressing local social, cultural and economic needs.

### Breaking out of structured conflict

The Joint Solutions Project is a product of the desire of some forest companies and environmental groups to breakout from structured conflict and polarization over forest issues on the Central and North Coast of BC. The project is intended to be a change agent. It is based on the belief that the creation of a broader array of information, options and ideas than would otherwise be available to formal decision making processes on land use and aboriginal issues in BC will increase flexibility and create more opportunities for resolve.

"It would be an understatement to say that the companies and environmental groups participating in the Joint Solutions Project do not agree on everything", says Linda Coady, vice president, environmental

enterprise, Weyerhaeuser. "But we can agree on some things and unanimity isn't a requirement to progress." Some of the things participants in the JSP can agree on include:

- ✘ ecosystem planning should provide the basis for forest conservation and management on the Central and North Coast
- ✘ harvest levels in the area are declining
- ✘ the social and economic impact of change in harvest levels must be fairly addressed and respect the interests of all affected parties as well as the need for community stability and orderly change
- ✘ everyone involved in forest issues on the Central and North Coast has to contribute something to the solution
- ✘ new approaches to investment and economic opportunities associated with conservation and ecosystem-based management of coastal forests could help create social and economic benefits at the local level.

# The role of the marketplace

The 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro made forest protection a global cause. Since then, public awareness and consumer pressure for certified, environmentally responsible forest products have increased. Now, large commercial buyers of forest products are setting procurement policies that address the issues of forest management and conservation.

The CFCI project was launched in the fall of 1999, when conflict around forest activity in the Central and North Coast region of British Columbia – an area called the Great Bear Rainforest by environmental groups – was causing concern in the global marketplace for forest products.

Those conflicts were also slowing down regional land-use planning processes such as the Central Coast Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) – a provincial, public process underway for three years to develop a land use plan for the area, involving more than 40 stakeholders.

Companies in BC's coastal forest industry realized that they needed to address the growing concerns of customers, and recognized that the local land use planning process was not designed to address these marketplace concerns.

"BC forest companies know that they have to support customers who want to ensure that they aren't purchasing products from forests that the world views as threatened or endangered," says Bill Dumont, Chief Forester for Western Forest Products.

"We have to think about the relationship between forest and consumer in the global economy," he adds. "We need to figure out how to produce products that are socially and environmentally responsible both globally and locally. And we recognize that we must earn the respect of all the stakeholders who are concerned with these issues."

The World Resources Institute (WRI) identified the Central and North mainland coast of BC in 1997 as an area that contains important intact temperate rainforest. Environmental activists cited the WRI report as reason to campaign against timber harvesting in the area.

This campaign has affected markets for BC forest products, as well as global perceptions of the coastal BC forest industry.

To address this campaign and face the conflict head-on, the companies launched the CFCI. "We believe that ecosystem-based management provides the technical and scientific tools that will ultimately help conserve critical forest ecosystems, while addressing local social, cultural and economic requirements," says Dumont.

"In the past, environmental battles have had few winners," he adds. "It seems to me that by trying to take some leadership and getting ahead of these issues, by acting instead of reacting, the future is more secure than if we did nothing and allowed the Central and North Coast to become an international battleground over forest preservation."

The companies also recognize that marketplace issues are in the long-run community issues. "BC companies need customers to buy their products – and that in turn helps to sustain local operations and communities," says Deborah Somerville, Director, Corporate Affairs at Norske Skog Canada. "If we lose customers because of the perception that our forests are endangered, we all lose."

Rather than perpetuating the conflict and trying to beat each other with competing

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## Who is involved?

The companies participating in the Coast Forest Conservation Initiative are Western Forest Products, Weyerhaeuser BC, Norske Skog Canada, and Canadian Forest Products. The CFCI companies are working with three environmental groups in a special project called the Joint Solutions Project. The environmental organizations participating in the Joint Solutions Project are Sierra Club of BC, Forest Ethics (previously called the Coastal Rainforest Coalition) and Rainforest Action Network.

It is estimated the scientific and socio-economic work to be undertaken by the JSP will cost \$3-4 million over the next two years. Participating environmental groups have raised an initial \$1 million for the project and the CFCI companies have matched this funding.

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perspectives the Joint Solution Project participants – companies and environmental group alike – are trying to work together to find new solutions.

Whatever answers or ideas this unusual collaboration comes up with will be tabled with formal decision making processes in BC on land use and aboriginal issues that involve First Nations, forest workers, local communities, logging contractors, government and others.

Key to the development of new ideas will be the establishment of a study team that will combine the knowledge and experience of First Nations and other local representatives with international respected advisors on the human and environmental components of forest ecosystems.

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Participants at a socio-economic workshop work together to identify issues and possible solutions, bringing together diverse perspectives and highlighting the need to reconcile many interests.





## What has the JSP accomplished so far?

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### Where is the Central and North Coast Region of BC?

The Central and North Coast region of British Columbia is an area of about seven million hectares of temperate rainforest, fjords, inlets, islands, mountains and glaciers. Its boundaries are Bute Inlet in the south and the Alaska border in the north.

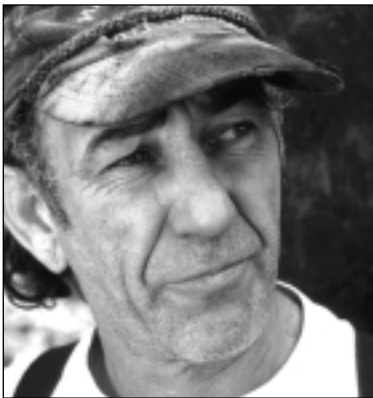
Often referred to as the "Great Bear Rainforest" by environmental groups, the region contains one of the largest areas of intact temperate rainforest in the world. Forests on the Central and North Coast also provide direct employment for more than 5,000 workers, and are home to many First Nations communities.

It is largely remote terrain; approximately 10 per cent of the area is operable for commercial forestry and approximately 10 per cent of the area has already been set aside for protection. The region is mostly public Crown land with unresolved issues involving Aboriginal title.

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While there is much work ahead for the JSP, some work has already been accomplished. To date, the project has focused on the following tasks:

- x A Terms of Reference, Principles and Goals Framework document has been drafted to help guide proposed research on ecosystem and social and economic issues.
- x Scientific and technical consultations have been held.
- x A workshop on socio-economic issues has been held.
- x An inventory of innovative coastal forest practices has been identified.
- x A survey of riparian management strategies has been conducted.
- x A regional economic profile has been developed.
- x Discussions with First Nations have been held.
- x Discussions with workers, communities, government and other key interests have been held.



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Balancing environment and socio-economic needs is critical. They are interrelated: what affects one affects the other, and vice versa.

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Migration corridors and feeding areas are part of the complex ecosystem — a system that includes ecology, society and economy.



# Discussions and workshops help define the process

To assist in developing the terms of reference, as well as establish principles and goals, the Joint Solutions Project has convened a number of consultations and workshops. These include an ecological workshop; a workshop with communities and First Nations on economic development issues; a forest modeling workshop; and a socio-economic workshop.

## Ecological workshop:

On July 15, 2000, a workshop was held to present a draft preliminary framework for ecosystem-based planning, and to solicit initial feedback from participants. A panel of six ecological and biological scientists provided key comments on the draft.

Terms of reference for a scientific and technical team were discussed, and participants addressed the question of how local and First Nations traditional knowledge can be incorporated effectively in the ecosystem-based planning process.

## Input on community economic development issues:

On Oct. 5, representatives of the companies and environmental groups sponsoring the JSP met with community and economic development officers as well as First Nations.

The session provided an opportunity for discussion and helped to develop an agenda for the upcoming socio-economic workshop.

## Modeling workshop:

On Oct. 13, the JSP held a workshop on landscape and stand-level forest simulation with computer modeling professionals. Participants discussed what modeling techniques could be used in designing and implementing an ecosystem-based management framework.

“Modeling tools are enabling for the many different values which are brought to the table,” says Bruce MacArthur, of the MacGregor Model Forest. “Models allow effective use of resources, provide a link to certification, and have an inherent capacity to deal with changing issues.”

Using the right modeling tool will help facilitate the planning process, clarify the problems, develop guidelines, and assess complex spatial relationships. Today’s sophisticated systems can provide landscape analysis, habitat analysis, silviculture investment analysis, forest level carbon accounting, and forest regulation assessment.

## Socio-economic workshop:

Nearly 80 people attended the JSP socio-economic workshop on social and economic issues, held in early November. Many First Nations representatives took part, as well as others from the Central and North Coast communities, academia, environmental organizations, forestry companies, local and provincial governments, and a federal government observer.

“I was very impressed with the energy, enthusiasm and openness that I witnessed on the part of all the stakeholders,” says Robert Lee, professor of Sociology of Natural Resources, College of Forest Resources, University of Washington.

Workshop participants looked at the definition of ecosystem management, discussed key milestones achieved to date, and worked to refine the scope and intent of socio-economic work to be undertaken by the study team, including approach and timeline.



The JSP will only succeed with the active participation of local communities and other stakeholders.

# Creating a comprehensive research team

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## *Some of the principles and goals that will guide the study team:*

- x Healthy ecosystems provide the basis for sustaining economies, cultures and the quality of human life.
  - x Resource managers are stewards of future ecosystem health and resource development opportunities.
  - x Knowledge of natural processes and human interactions is incomplete and inherently limited, and decisions made in the present can pose unacceptable risks for the future. Concern for the future is a fundamental obligation.
  - x Respect individuals, communities of interest and cultures.
  - x A diversity of economic opportunities is key to healthy communities and sustainable economies.
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The Joint Solutions Project intends to integrate ecological, social, economic, First Nations, community development and operational forestry perspectives to shape an ecosystem-based management plan. To accomplish this, a comprehensive research team is being assembled.

The team will consist of local and international scientists and technical experts to provide a range of advice and analysis of various options.

While the team will provide information, analyses, options and recommendations to support ecosystem-based planning, it is not a planning or decision-making body itself.

The team will combine scientific expertise, local experience, and traditional knowledge that incorporates First Nations values. The other key element is that the team won't be formed until there is broad agreement amongst all the participants in the Central and North Coast. This will ensure that it includes all the various perspectives.

"Assembling the team and defining the terms of reference is a complicated process," says Bill Dumont. "It involves engaging international and local experts as well as involving key local stakeholders including the IWA, Truck Loggers Association, and Union of BC Municipalities, labour and contractors. It also will require the active involvement and support of First Nations and the BC government."

The team will be guided by a steering committee reflecting the range of interests and perspectives in the project. A team

leader will oversee the four working groups, to ensure an integrated approach to the planning process.

The four working groups, each also led by a working group leader, will focus on the areas of ecosystem, innovative forestry, economics and investment, and healthy communities.

The study team will develop a series of detailed options for protecting and managing forest resources, as well as providing a thorough analysis of the impacts, risks and benefits of each option.

### The timeline:

- x March 31, 2001: The government of British Columbia requires recommendations from the Central Coast Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) process by March 31/01. In addition, the government of BC and First Nations from many parts of the Central and North Coast are currently in negotiations aimed at producing a special framework agreement by March 31/01. This agreement will, among other things, provide for an ecosystem-based approach to completing land use planning on the Central and North Coast that is supported by both the province of BC and by aboriginal peoples living in the area.
- x April, 2001 - April, 2002: These two developments will make it possible for the study team to conduct work that will contribute to an innovative and comprehensive resolution to forest issues on the Central and North Coast of BC.

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The timber wolf and mountain goat are residents of the Central and North Coast Region, part of the biological richness and diversity of this globally significant area.



# Addressing impact and managing change

Companies and environmental organizations participating in the Joint Solutions Project recognize that managing change on the Central and North Coast is essential.

In June 2000, Bob Friesen, an independent forestry consultant and Stephen McBride, Professor and Chair of Political Science at

Simon Fraser University were engaged to develop options for mitigating the impact of harvesting deferrals in the area.

Discussions continue with affected stakeholders to agree on equitable solutions for all parties.

## Taking the next steps

During the year 2000, the JSP focused on consulting with and engaging other stakeholders, talking with interested parties, researching and planning, developing the principles and goals, and drafting the terms of reference and framework documents that will shape the work required. Time was also spent determining the appropriate structure and participants to ensure that the principles, goals, and results can be accomplished in a credible manner and can be supported both locally and internationally.

During the year 2001, the JSP will focus on core research and the work required to complete the plan by December.

### The work ahead includes:

- x Recruiting the study team
- x Establishing a project steering committee
- x Refining existing data
- x Analyzing social and economic information
- x Establishing community well-being indicators
- x Developing strategies to strengthening existing economies
- x Conducting a biological overview
- x Initiating landscape-level pilot projects
- x Employing risk assessment and decision tools
- x Preparing an adaptive management framework
- x Investigating scenarios and options
- x Employing risk assessment and decision tools
- x Preparing an adaptive management framework

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## Ecosystem management is looking at the big picture

When you hear the term “ecosystem management,” what springs to mind? If you think of tree planting and stream restoration, you’re only seeing part of the picture.

The three components of ecosystem management are ecology, society and economy. It is important to consider all three of those areas, to develop a sound, workable management plan.

**Ecology:** Looking at the forest ecosystem falls under this category. This is a complex system, with many interrelated elements. Protecting salmon habitat, for example, is key to sustaining bear populations. Migration corridors, feeding and foraging areas, water quality, streambank stability, even the proportion of plant species – these are all part of the delicate balance. Altering one element can have an impact on the overall ecological health.

**Society:** This component considers the people of the area – their communities and culture, as well as their local government and social stability. Changes to the area’s ecology will have an impact on the society who live and work there. That’s why it’s so important to involve First Nations and local community representatives as an ecosystem-based management plan is developed.

**Economy:** We must consider the employment, income and wealth of the people in the area, as well as the existing and possible economic situation. The key is to consider innovative ways to expand and strengthen opportunities for new investment, and the local and social economic infrastructure of the region.

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The forests of the Central and North Coast Region are the source of livelihood for many and support jobs and economies in many local communities.







*Bella Bella is one of the communities in the North and Central Coast Region. The well-being of communities such as Bella Bella is critical to the health of forest ecosystems in the region.*

“One of the lessons that has come from sustainability studies from around the world is that when people have a sense of shared control over their environment, they’re far more likely to be diligent in protecting the environment they are using. The JSP is facilitating discussions that will help people have that sense of shared control, and will bring about accommodation among different groups of people.”

—Robert Lee,  
Professor of Sociology of Natural Resources,  
College of Forest Resources,  
University of Washington

## Forest management is more than planting trees

Where forest management once referred mainly to forest regeneration, the concept has developed to include many more issues. The Joint Solutions Project will consider every aspect of the Central and North Coast, including such factors as social, ecological or economic values.

Bringing together First Nations people, local residents and independent, internationally recognized scientists will help provide a full picture of the area and integrate traditional knowledge, local experience, and scientific information.

“The key indicators include First Nations employment, community development, and all the elements of the ecosystem,” says Mike Bradley, Director, Technology at Canadian Forest Products.

As part of this broad examination, the Joint Solutions Project commissioned a socio-economic profile of the area which includes information on population, education levels, employment, and income.

The region faces a number of socio-economic challenges including geographic isolation, a young population, out-migration, First

Nations populations issues, education levels, declining manufacturing employment, the benefits of forest sector activity flowing to other areas of the province, unequal distribution of income, and low levels of economic diversity.

The profile reflects some of the key issues that must be addressed by new economic and social development efforts. To improve the situation and facilitate a move to a more diverse, equitable and stable economy, a creative, long-term, sustainable plan is required.

### Leading by example

Joint industry and environmental collaboration to find forest management solutions is a new concept. “Many of the natural forests in the world are in similar situations as our Central and North Coastal forest,” says Bill Dumont, Chief Forester, Western Forest Products Limited. “The Joint Solutions Project can serve as a model for countries such as Russia and Brazil, who face many similar issues.”



Coast Forest  
Conservation Initiative

For more information on the Coast Forest Conservation Initiative, please contact the CFCI at:

[www.coastforestconservationinitiative.com](http://www.coastforestconservationinitiative.com)

To reach the CFCI key contacts by telephone:

- x Linda Coady,  
Weyerhaeuser  
BC Coastal Group  
604-661-8491
- x Bill Dumont,  
Western Forest Products  
604-665-6224
- x Mike Bradley,  
Canadian Forest Products  
604-661-5264
- x Deborah Somerville,  
Norske Skog Canada  
604-654-4933