



CUSTOMER ADVISORY

April 9, 2001

British Columbia Government approves Interim Land Use plan for the Central Coast & signs Historic Agreement with First Nations

Land Use Plan

On April 4, 2001 the government of British Columbia approved an interim land use plan for the 5 million hectare (= 12.3 million acres) Central Coast region of the province. The plan is the result of four years of multi-party negotiation and evaluation. The plan:

- More than doubles the amount of protected area in the Central Coast to 21 percent (1 million hectares = 2.4 million acres).
- Defers development in 11 percent (550,000 hectares = 1.3 million acres) of the region for 12 to 24 months. These areas have important cultural, economic and ecological values; their future status will be determined through an implementation process that has been agreed to by all the parties.
- Commits the parties to the agreement—including the BC government, communities, tourism operators, forest companies, environmental groups and others—to implementing ecosystem-based planning and management. A working group made up of the interests who negotiated the plan will work with an independent team of social, ecological and economic specialists to design and implement ecosystem-based management for the region.
- Requires that a framework for transition be developed to address the impact of the plan on forest workers, contractors, companies and communities while diversifying and strengthening the economy of local and First Nations communities and enhancing business opportunities in the region.
- Establishes a fund with an initial \$10 million provided by the provincial government to help mitigate immediate impacts on forest workers and logging contractors displaced by reductions in forestry activity within the next 6 – 12 months. It is estimated that the initial impact of the land use plan will be a reduction in annual harvest of approximately 500,000 cubic metres (m³) and loss of 500 jobs. Further impacts are expected and will depend on the outcome of the ecosystem planning. (Note: previous to this decision the Central Coast area supported an annual harvest of up to 4 million m³ and up to 4,000 direct jobs in logging and forest products manufacturing.)

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The Coast Forest Conservation Initiative (CFCI) is an initiative by a group of coastal BC forest companies committed to development of a forest conservation plan for the Central and North Coast of British Columbia that is credible both locally and globally. In order to achieve this objective CFCI companies are working with environmental groups on a project known as the Joint Solutions Project. For more information please see www.coastforestconservationinitiative.com



Agreement with First Nations

At the same time that approval of the interim land use plan was announced, the British Columbia government and several coastal First Nations signed an historic protocol agreement that provides a new mechanism for reconciling aboriginal and crown title in the land use planning process. Development of the protocol was spearheaded by a group of eight First Nations peoples through a special initiative with the David Suzuki Foundation known as 'Turning Point'.

The protocol acknowledges the leadership role of aboriginal people on the Central and North Coast and Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands) in land use planning, economic development and environmental protection in their traditional territories. It also facilitates the allocation of forest tenure to First Nations.

The importance of First Nations involvement in land use planning is reflected in the 96,460 hectare (= 138,250 acres) Spirit Bear protection area established by the Kitasoo/Xaixais First Nation as part of their land use plan for their traditional territory.

Reaction

Responding to the announcement, Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network and ForestEthics announced they would suspend their market campaign against British Columbia coastal forest companies and inform customers purchasing forest products from the region of progress on implementing the plan. For media coverage of further reaction to the announcement please see www.coastforestconservationinitiative.com.

Forest Company Role

Since launching the Coast Forest Conservation Initiative (CFCI) over a year ago, Western Forest Products, Weyerhaeuser (BC Coastal Group), Canadian Forest Products and Norske Skog Canada have worked with the Sierra Club of BC, ForestEthics and the Rainforest Action Network to provide a common perspective to local land use planning processes and First Nations on issues involving protection, harvesting deferrals and ecosystem-based planning on the Central and North coast. During the past month, Greenpeace and other environmental groups conducting market campaigns against coastal BC forest products reached agreement with International Forest Products and West Fraser on these issues.

Next Steps

CFCI companies will be working with government, local communities (aboriginal and non-aboriginal), environmental groups, forest workers, logging contractors and the Turning Point First Nations initiative to implement the interim land use plan and the protocol agreement. The implementation process will take between 12-24 months.

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