



## Coast Forest Conservation Initiative

**For Release**

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**Contact: Linda Coady @ 604-661-8169**

### ***New land use plans for BC Coast will make BC global leader in forest conservation and management***

BC coastal forest companies welcome today's announcement by BC Sustainable Resource Management Minister Stan Hagen that the government intends to complete the interim land use plan for the province's Central Coast and develop plans for the North Coast and the Queen Charlottes/ Haida Gwaii.

The announcement signals the government's intention to have BC's new Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management take a leadership role in completing land use planning on the BC coast based on collaborative processes involving First Nations and a variety of different forest stakeholders.

Land use planning has already been completed in most of British Columbia, but forest planning on the province's Central and North Coast has been the subject of controversy since 1995 when environmentalists called the area the "Great Bear Rainforest" and launched an international market campaign to protect it. The Central and North Coast contain over 100 pristine watersheds that environmentalists say are key to maintaining the fish, wildlife and biodiversity values associated with coastal old growth rainforests.

In the spring of 2001 the environmental market campaign against coastal BC forest products came to a halt when the BC government accepted a set of initial recommendations put forward by a multi-stakeholder planning process involving input from forest companies, environmentalists, logging contractors, forest workers, local communities and First Nations. (See attached *Backgrounder* for more information.)

"Achieving credible and workable outcomes from these planning processes is an important element in restructuring and revitalizing the BC coast forest sector," said Linda Coady commenting on behalf of Norske Canada, Western Forest Products, Weyerhaeuser, International Forest Products and Canadian Forest Products. "The future of our sector now depends on the ability of all the different parties involved to support an industry that is productive, competitive and widely recognized as an environmental leader."

Coady said the framework that has been developed for completion of outstanding land use plans on the BC coast represents a new approach to integrating conservation with ecosystem planning and economic development needs at the local community level.



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The processes will include establishment of an information team of scientists and specialists with local and traditional knowledge to provide economic and ecological options for all three planning tables is another new feature of the planning processes moving forwards. The Coast Information Team (CIT) will be providing information and analysis to all three land use planning tables. In what will be a “first” for British Columbia the new team will be jointly funded by the BC government and interested forest companies and environmental groups\*.

Western Forest Products, Weyerhaeuser and International Forest Products all hold forest harvesting tenures on the Central Coast that were affected by the Interim Land Use plan. The companies have estimated that the short-term operating impact of the interim plan is a 646,000 m<sup>3</sup> reduction in harvesting in the area. At the time the plan was first announced the BC government pledged \$25 million to help mitigate the impact of the initial harvesting reduction on forest workers and contractors.

“It is our understanding that this funding is still available but that companies will have to apply for it within the context of the broader restructuring now occurring in the coastal forest industry and the need to create a more efficient and viable industry,” said Coady. “Within that context, all of the companies involved will be working with affected contractors and forest workers to develop and submit applications before the end of the year.”

Coady said that coastal forest companies would also be working with government and other interests to ensure that public investment in the transition to a different model for forest conservation and management in remaining undeveloped areas of the BC coast would be matched by the private sector. “This is a complex initiative involving a number of parties that will occur over a period of time. It is therefore important that it be framed from the outset as a public-private partnership.”

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\* Funding for the new Coast Information Team (CIT) will be provided by the BC government and a group of forest companies and environmental groups that have agreed to work together to promote new approaches to forest conservation and management issues on the BC coast. The forest companies involved are Norske Canada, Weyerhaeuser, Canadian Forest Products and Western Forest Products. The environmental groups involved are Greenpeace Canada, Sierra Club of BC, ForestEthics and the Rainforest Action Network. The initial commitment to CIT funding by the provincial government and participating companies and environmental groups is \$1 million.



## BACKGROUND

### **Interim Land Use Plan for the BC Central Coast**

In the spring of 2001 a multi-stakeholder planning process involving forest companies, environmentalists, logging contractors, forest workers, local communities and First Nations made an initial series recommendations to the BC government regarding an Interim Land Use Plan for the province's Central Coast area. Key aspects of their recommendations included:

- creation over 20 large protected areas bringing the total area protected for the region to approximately one million hectares or 20 percent of the region;
  - harvesting deferrals for 12 to 24 months in a further 11 percent of the region pending implementation of ecosystem-based management framework and completion of the plan;
  - a commitment by all parties to ecosystem-based planning and management at the regional level, including the creation of a team of scientists and specialists with local and traditional knowledge to provide information to future land use planning processes on the Central Coast, the North Coast and Haida Gwaii/ Queen Charlottes;
  - a special Protocol Agreement between the BC government and First Nations on the Central and North Coast and Haida Gwaii/ Queen Charlottes that means that processes for completion of land use plans in all three areas are jointly mandated by the BC government and local First Nations.
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