

CIII Announcement
January 21, 2007

Ottawa to give \$30-million to 'Canada's Amazon' - B.C.'s Great Bear Rainforest

Elianna Lev, Canadian Press

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VANCOUVER (CP) - The federal Conservatives have committed \$30 million toward preserving the integrity of B.C.'s Great Bear Rainforest, known to some environmentalists as Canada's Amazon.

The area, which includes one-quarter of the world's remaining coastal temperate rainforest, stretches 750 kilometres along B.C.'s central and northern coast, covering 6.5 million hectares.

Environment Minister John Baird made the commitment Sunday in Vancouver, rounding out a pledge by the B.C. government, which had ear-marked \$30-million for the region last February. At the time, the province agreed to put that money forward once Ottawa had matched it.

Several private donors and philanthropic groups from around the world had also agreed to match both governments' funds - \$60-million - rounding out the so-called Conservation Investment and Incentives Initiative.

In total, the investment stands at \$120 million.

The region is called the Great Bear or Spirit Bear rainforest because it is home to many kermodei bear, a distinct member of the black bear family that resembles a polar bear. It's also home to thousands of species of plants, birds and animals, including 1,000 year old cedar trees, 90-metre tall Sitka spruce, and 20 per cent of the world's wild salmon.

Although Baird didn't have a cheque in hand at Sunday's announcement, he expects Parliament to approve the funds within three months.

He also shrugged off scepticism about the timing of the announcement, the third one by the government in the past week.

"I think so much work has been done (by the Conservatives), particularly with cleaning up government, now Canadians and our government and all Parliamentarians see the environment as an emerging priority," he said.

British Columbia's funding was to go directly to economic development for the Coastal First Nations. This includes more opportunities in sustainable fisheries, forestry and tourism.

Art Sterritt, executive director for the Coastal First Nations, said it was about time that people in the area were given more opportunities to use their land.

"Having the funds means we can work as equal partners," he said. "Not as paupers, not as beggars but as equal partners to build a sustainable economy."

Environmental groups, including Sierra Club and Greenpeace, hailed Sunday's announcement.

"Most people think you can only make money by cutting down forests, but today you're hearing that we are generating money by protecting forests," said Merran Smith, with ForestEthics.

Last February, B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell committed to protecting close to one-third of the region from all logging and the rest would require sustainable logging practices. Some logging and mining is still allowed in the region, but on a limited basis.

Canada to spend millions on Great Bear Rainforest

The Associated Press

Sunday, January 21, 2007

VANCOUVER, British Columbia

Canada announced Sunday it will spend \$30 million Canadian (US\$25 million; €19.3 million) to protect the largest intact temperate rainforest left on earth.

The area is teeming with grizzly bears, wolves and wild salmon in the ancestral home of many native tribes. It stretches 250 miles (402 kilometers) along British Columbia's rugged Pacific coastline.

The funding announcement by Environment Minister John Baird is in addition to the \$60 million (US\$51 million; €39.4 million) private organizations and philanthropic groups committed to the area of land of British Columbia's Central Coast known as the Great Bear Rainforest.

An additional \$30-million (US\$25 million; €19.3 million) has been set aside by the provincial government for new job strategies for coastal native Indians.

Last February, British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell said the province would protect close to one-third of the region from all logging and the rest would require sustainable logging practices.

Funding deal for Canadian rainforest

Sydney Morning Herald

International environmental groups and Canadian officials said they have struck a \$US103 million (\$A130.6 million) deal to help fund environmentally friendly businesses in Canada's Pacific coast rainforest.

The deal comes nearly a year after environmentalists, the timber industry and aboriginal communities in the coastal region reached a landmark agreement to end a long battle over protecting wilderness valleys in the area often referred to unofficially as the Great Bear Rainforest.

International donors, primarily in the United States, had pledged C\$60 million (\$A64.8m) to help develop eco-tourism and other industries. That money was contingent on both Ottawa and the province of British Columbia paying C\$30 million (\$A32.4m).

The federal share had been tentatively agreed to by the previous Liberal government, but the final deal stalled after the Conservatives were elected in January 2006.

Earlier this month Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper acknowledged that voters feel his government has not made the environment a high enough priority.

"The environment is not the domain of any one political party," Environment Minister John Baird told a ceremony in Vancouver.

The Great Bear Rainforest region, on the Pacific coast from Vancouver Island to the southern end of the Alaska Panhandle, contains some of North America's most dramatic scenery, with rugged mountains, coastal islands and few people.

Environmentalists said the deal to use private and public funds to promote environmentally sustainable businesses should be an example for international wilderness conservation.

"We need to succeed here, because if we do we can succeed in other places," Merran Smith of ForestEthics said.

Much of the money will be used in small native Indian communities, where unemployment is often more than 70 per cent because of the decline of the fishing and timber industries.

Canada's New Government Signals Investment of \$30 Million to Support Sustainable Economy in British Columbia's Spirit Bear Rainforest

Vancouver, January 21, 2007 – The Honourable John Baird, Minister of the Environment, today signaled that the government will proceed with a \$30 million contribution to support the Conservation Investments and Incentives Initiative (CIII) fund. This fund, supported by governments and private foundations, is aimed at preserving the integrity of the Spirit Bear Rainforest for generations to come. This announcement is yet another milestone in the environmental agenda of Canada's New Government.

"We know there is a strong link between a healthy ecosystem, a healthy society and Canada's economic prosperity," said Minister Baird. "This ambitious and collaborative initiative will achieve just that, and we are committed to work closely with First Nations and non-government organizations to bring it to life."

The planned federal commitment matches the \$30 million for economic development initiatives for First Nations on the coast committed by the Province. Private conservation organizations and philanthropic associations have committed to contribute an additional \$60 million in funding for conservation activities if government provided matching funding for economic development. The federal commitment therefore brings the total public and private funding to \$120 million. The announcement was made today by Minister Baird and B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell.

"This marks another milestone in ensuring the economic and environmental sustainability of the coastal regions of British Columbia, building on the historic Central Coast and North Coast land use decisions announced last February," Premier Campbell said. "This commitment recognizes that this unique part of our province truly is a national treasure and that we must work in partnership to advance economic opportunities for First Nations who have been such strong partners in charting the future of the coastal regions of B.C."

This ancient forest, the largest intact temperate rainforest left on earth, is home to thousands of species of plants, birds and animals. There are 1,000 year old cedar trees and 90 metre tall Sitka spruce, lining rich salmon streams that weave through valley bottoms, providing food for orcas, black bears, grizzlies and eagles.

Through the Central Coast and North Coast Land Use Plans announced by the Province of British Columbia in February, the total protected areas for these regions are 1.8 million hectares, or more than three times the size of Prince Edward Island. They include more than 200,000 hectares of the Spirit Bear's habitat, including the 103,000 hectare Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy that was enshrined in legislation by the Province last year. With this announcement, Canada's New Government has signalled its intention to contribute \$30 million towards a \$120 million total investment to support a global model of sustainable development planning.

The combined federal-provincial contribution to the CIII will be directed toward economic development opportunities for First Nations businesses involved in activities such as sustainable fisheries, forestry and tourism. The matching private funding will provide an endowment fund for conservation management and research projects in the region.

"By working together governments, foundations and First Nations have created a unique approach to sustainable development on B.C.'s coast," said Art Sterritt, executive director of the Coastal First Nations. "The funds will ensure the well-being of our people, lands, and waters. We look forward to working closely with all our partners as we move forward to create an economically and ecologically sustainable coast."

"We've been waiting a very long time for this federal funding and I'm pleased it has finally come," said Kitsoo First Nations Elder Percy Starr. "This would not have happened without the leadership of the provincial government who facilitated and brokered what I hope will be a long-lasting relationship that will bring many benefits to our people."

"This initiative is a clear illustration of the partnerships and cooperation that are necessary to build a diversified economy on the coast," said Dallas Smith, chair of KNT First Nations.

"WWF applauds the hard work and collaborative efforts of First Nations, environmental groups, industry, communities and governments in this initiative aimed at the greater protection of B.C.'s globally significant coastal rainforests," said Dr. Chris Elliot, WWF's Pacific Region Vice-President. "The intended funding contribution announced today by Minister Baird is key to the successful implementation of the agreement and improved management of the coastal forests of British Columbia".

The commitment of Canada's New Government to the Spirit Bear Rainforest sustainable development initiative will involve close cooperation with the Government of British Columbia, the Coastal First Nations and private conservation foundations. All First Nations whose territory lies within the Initiative's area will be formally consulted. Once such consultations are successfully finalized, and subject to Parliamentary and Treasury Board approval, Canada's New Government will proceed with the signature of a formal contribution agreement.

Related Document:

**Conservation Investments and Incentives Initiative Fund for the Spirit
Bear Rainforest**

Spirit Bear Rainforest

The Spirit Bear Rainforest represents one quarter of the world's remaining coastal temperate rainforest covering 6.4 million hectares stretching along 750 kilometers of British Columbia's coastline. The forest is home to 1,000-year-old cedar trees, 90-metre tall Sitka spruce trees, and more than 350 species of birds and animals.

The natural resources within the Spirit Bear Rainforest are a source of significant economic development for the region. For example, logging, fisheries and tourism are crucial to British Columbia's economy.

As part of its environmental agenda, Canada's New Government intends to invest in an innovative model of sustainable land and resource management development. This commitment will ensure that economic needs of the region are balanced with the need to preserve the Rainforest's sensitive ecosystem.

Conservation Investments and Incentives Initiative for the Spirit Bear Rainforest

The Conservation Investments and Incentives Initiative supports conservation and sustainable economic development activities over 6.4 million hectares of land in the Spirit Bear Rainforest, the largest coastal rainforest left on earth. It is the result of local communities, forest companies, First Nations, environmentalists and governments who have come together to discuss, develop and implement a responsible land management plan.

The proposed \$120 million fund that supports this initiative is an investment partnership between a consortium of private foundations, the Government of British Columbia, and the Government of Canada.

Government's funding will provide financial support for both an Economic Development Fund for Coastal First Nations communities and for sustainable development initiatives. Private funds will be directed to a Conservation Endowment Fund for conservation activities.

The \$30 million contribution from Canada's New Government to this not-for-profit fund would contribute to economic development projects that support job creation and business development initiatives for coastal First Nations. Such projects will take place in sectors that have potential for sustainable development including fisheries and eco-tourism. There would be strict requirements for what activities can and cannot be funded by the investment: all activities must be consistent with the ecosystem based management plans for the region.

To determine whether a Conservation Investments and Incentives Initiative project is environmentally sound and sustainable, the fund managers will consider the overall environmental impact of the project, including whether any use of natural resources involved is sustainable and whether steps have been taken to minimize the release of any pollutants. Priority will be given to projects that have positive environmental or social impacts, direct or indirect.

Examples of businesses that may be eligible include tourism, including cruises and wildlife viewing; non-timber forest products and ecosystem-based management forestry operations; green building projects, and fisheries, among others.

Activities that will not be eligible include open net-cage finfish aquaculture; trophy hunting; any activity associated with the large scale extraction of subsurface resources; and any activity that is not sustainable, with particular regard to fish and wildlife stocks in the area, among others.

As part of its funding commitment, the Government of Canada will work closely with the Government of British Columbia and private foundations to deliver results for First Nations in the coastal BC region. All First Nations whose territory lies within the Initiative's area will be formally consulted. A distinct consultation process will be established for the Haida Gwaii territory. Once such consultations are successfully finalized, and subject to Parliamentary and Treasury Board approval, Canada's New Government will proceed with the signature of a formal contribution agreement.

For more information, please contact :

Mike Van Soelen_Director of Communications_Office of the Minister of the Environment_(819) 997-1441 _

Environment Canada Media Relations_(819) 934-8008_1-888-908-8008_

Mike Morton_Office of the Premier_(250) 213-8218