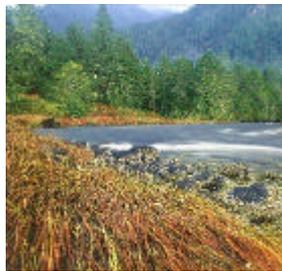


# GREENPEACE

## PROTECTING CANADA'S GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

**the first steps**



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## THE FIRST STEPS

Greenpeace celebrates the first significant steps in ensuring the future protection of Canada's Great Bear Rainforest on British Columbia's central and north coasts.

This region of one-thousand year old cedar trees, towering ancient spruce, grizzly, black and rare white "Spirit" bears, wild salmon, eagles, wolves and enormous biological diversity is globally rare and truly an international treasure worthy of protection.

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**Grizzly bear tracks**

These first steps by the forest industry and politicians toward ensuring a healthy future for the rainforest follow an intensive global campaign by Greenpeace to build a consensus of opposition among international buyers of forest products to the irresponsible destruction of B.C.'s last intact rainforests.

## THREE AGREEMENTS ON THE B.C. COAST

On Wednesday, April 4, 2001, the government of British Columbia announced support for new approaches to conservation and forest management in B.C.'s Great Bear Rainforest.

The announcement included the adoption of consensus recommendations arising from the government-facilitated, multi-stakeholder process - the Central Coast Land and Coastal Resource Management Plan (CCLCRMP). At the same time, the B.C. government announced the signing of a formal government-to-government protocol with six coastal First Nations. The third tier of agreement is the result of bi-lateral discussions between environmental organizations, including Greenpeace, and B.C.'s major coastal logging companies.

Together, these constitute a first step forward towards the conservation and protection of some of the last large areas of intact ancient rainforest on B.C.'s coast and a new approach to environmentally responsible logging practices in the future. B.C. Premier Ujjal Dosanjh acknowledged in his April 4<sup>th</sup> announcement that the tainted reputation of B.C. wood products globally, and the impacts of lost market share were decisive elements in helping to forge these agreements.

## ANATOMY OF THE AGREEMENTS:

- Protection: 20 large, pristine rainforest valleys (18 on the central coast, 2 in the northern Kalum forest district) will be protected from industrial logging and development.
- Moratoria: 69 large valleys will be designated as “option areas” with no logging allowed for the next 12 to 24 months.
- A government-to-government protocol with six First Nations ensures principles of ecosystem-based management form the basis for future land use plans in their traditional territories.
- A multi-party process to develop an ecosystem-based plan for the temperate rainforest is expected to lead to further protection as well as ecologically responsible logging practices.
- Bi-lateral agreements will lead to voluntary moratoria on some critical valleys outside the Great Bear Rainforest, and processes to move to resolution.

These decisions do not completely ensure the future health of the Great Bear Rainforest, but are the first concrete steps in the right direction. Ecosystem-based management recognizes the need for large, contiguous tracts of wilderness and the need for ecologically responsible logging practices.

## THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST – A GLOBAL TREASURE

*“The Great Bear Rainforest is an icon of the unique environmental and cultural values B.C. can share with the world. It truly is that island paradise of legend.”*

- B.C. Premier Ujjal Dosanjh



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The temperate rainforests of Canada's west coast embody a living legacy of global significance. These ancient forests hold some of the oldest, largest and most magnificent trees on earth.



Sitka spruce grow as high as a 30 story building. Thousand-year-old cedar trees shelter streams teeming with wild salmon. The pristine valleys harbour grizzly bears, black bears and the rare, white Kermode or “Spirit” bear – a pure white genetic variation of the black bear found nowhere else on the planet.

Grey wolves, eagles, mountain goats, cougar, black-tailed deer, red-tailed frogs, owls, otters, seabirds – thousands of plant, animal and insect species call the rainforest home. The Great Bear Rainforest is truly a global treasure, worthy of protection.

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## BY THE NUMBERS

The Central Coast Agreement (the southern portion of the Great Bear) received the following designations:

- 603,000 hectares will be designated “protection areas”
- 191,000 hectares will be designated “Special Management Zones for Visual Quality”. This controls logging in popular tourism destinations, retaining forest cover along shorelines
- 526,000 hectares will be designated as “option areas”. Scientific and economic analysis, combined with ecosystem-based planning will lead to either further protection or ecologically responsible logging
- 3,060,000 hectares will remain open to logging and development

(These are preliminary figures, courtesy of the B.C. government and subject to revision)



The proposed protection areas, totaling more than 600,000 hectares may appear enormous and more than adequate to conserve the diversity of life in these rainforests.

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It is critical to note, however, how little actual valley-bottom old growth is encompassed within this total. Often as little as five to ten per cent of a watershed is lush, diverse old growth forest.

The Khutze watershed is slated for protection and is crucial habitat for the white “Spirit” bear. Although the entire Khutze watershed is 33,236 hectares in size, much of that is rock, ice and steep mountain slopes. The actual operable forest area is a mere 1,532 hectares - or 4.62 per cent of the land base.

## GREENPEACE NOT ENDORSING B.C. LOGGING OR FOREST PRODUCTS

The agreements reached on the coast of B.C. represent a significant first step and are wholeheartedly supported by Greenpeace and other participating environmental groups.



These agreements, however, do not mean that the problems in B.C.'s forest industry have been resolved. Nor should Greenpeace's suspension of campaign activities targeting specific B.C. coastal logging companies be interpreted as an endorsement of B.C. forest products.

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At present, B.C. wood and pulp products cannot be defined as ecologically responsible or sustainable.

- The Annual Allowable Cut is still far too high and fundamentally unsustainable. B.C.'s Minister of Forests has publicly admitted as much. In the upcoming election, the party currently favoured to win has stated their intention to increase the level of cut.
- The Forest Practices Code is still fundamentally flawed and may be subjected to further weakening of its environmental standards under a new government.
- Clearcut logging, throughout the province, is still the industrial system of choice and is still causing massive environmental damage.
- While some small to mid-sized logging operations have achieved Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, and while some B.C. logging companies are pursuing FSC certification, no major logging company has yet attained certification under the FSC system.
  
- B.C. continues to have one of the industrialized world's lowest rates of job creation per cubic metre logged, and the value-added sector is woefully neglected while raw log exports have increased exponentially over the past 3 years.

- Lobbying is on the increase for the development of intensive forestry zones, where fibre-farming is the only forest value under consideration. This approach to industrialized forestry could lead to dramatic reductions in forest species diversity, intensive use of chemical fertilizers and herbicides, soil erosion and stream contamination as well as the possible introduction of genetically-modified tree species with potentially disastrous consequences.
- The current agreements to adopt ecosystem-based management and forestry practices do not apply to rainforests on Vancouver Island or interior forest ecosystems.

While Greenpeace is encouraged by industry and government support for this positive first step in the coastal rainforests of the Great Bear region, this must not be interpreted as an endorsement of B.C. wood products or the perception that the B.C. forest industry is now on a sustainable footing.

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## Next Steps

Customers are still critical to the success of this process.



Over the next two years, Greenpeace will provide the marketplace with regular updates on the progress being made in B.C.

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Indicators of the success of the process underway will include:

- legal mechanisms to entrench the protection status of the twenty valleys proposed for protection
- adherence to the moratoria on logging in the 69 identified valleys
- consensus on the further development of ecosystem-based management strategies, including maintenance of the conservation biology principles underlying ecosystem management
- effective mitigation and transition strategies for workers
- effective economic diversification strategies for affected communities, including capital raised for investment in the new economy
- the availability of Forest Stewardship Council certified wood products; the FSC system is currently the only certification system with support from the international environmental community

## The Challenges Ahead

Changing the economy:

- investment capital will be essential to help move communities towards a sustainable economy
- investment in protection – through the creation of conservancies, grizzly and/or salmon sanctuaries etc. will contribute to overall success of the transition
- mitigation and transition funds for workers must be fair and adequate to meet their needs

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## Appendix A – Protection for the Valleys

*For the first time in B.C.'s history, the protection of large complexes as opposed to individual watersheds has been recognized as an essential component of protecting species biodiversity and natural forest function.*

The actions taken by B.C. forest products customers around the world have led to the forthcoming protection of the following regions of global significance:

#### The Lockhart-Gordon complex

The lush forests, productive salmon streams and glorious estuaries of the Lockhart-Gordon, Allard, Johnson and Draney watersheds will form a significant protection area for grizzly, deer, wolves, eagles and salmon in the southern Great Bear Rainforest.

These stunningly beautiful valleys, plus the Smokehouse River watershed and Long Lake, are the last intact systems in the Rivers Inlet/Draney Inlet area. The shelter endangered runs of wild salmon, and significant numbers of the endangered marbled murrelet, an old-growth dependent seabird, have been sighted in the complex.

Networks of grizzly bear trails lace the sedge grass of the Lockhart Gordon estuary and bear day beds nestle beneath the forest cover. Canada geese and trumpeter swans use the estuary, which also offers some of the best spring forage for bears in the entire Rivers Inlet region.

#### The Ahta / Ahnuhati Complex

Ranked by Ministry of Environment biologists as some of the best grizzly bear habitat on the entire southern coast, the valleys of the Ahta River, the Ahnuhati, upper Kakweiken and Kwalte rivers form a living legacy for the world.

Individually, each of these valleys is too small to support a viable grizzly population. However, the protection of all four valleys as an intact complex, combined with the rich salmon streams they shelter, will ensure a future for grizzly in the southern-most reaches of the Great Bear Rainforest.

Wolves, rainbow trout, steelhead trout, and viable salmon populations enrich the wilderness experience for sports fishers and visitors to a nearby eco-tourism lodge on Knight Inlet.

#### The Spirit Bear complex

Significant portions of the proposed Spirit Bear Conservancy will receive protection under the current agreement and with the support and leadership of the Kitsoo/Xaixais First Nation.

On Princess Royal Island, known as the "Spirit Bear Island" the watersheds along Larado Inlet will receive protection from industrial development. This complex includes the river valleys of the Canoona, Bloomfield, Arnoup and Nias. Across the channel, the lush forests of the Khutze River valley will remain as intact bear habitat. The Khutze connects to the existing protected areas of Fjordland, which in turn links to the enormous, intact Kitlope Conservancy area.

Together, these linked valleys will shelter grizzly and the rare white Kermode or "Spirit" bears - a genetic variant of black bears. Only a small percentage of black bears in the Great Bear Rainforest are capable of producing a white cub, and only one in every 10 cubs are born white. They are not albino, rather snow white black bears and the Great Bear Rainforest is the only place on earth where they exist.

## **The Upper Klinaklini**

The Klinaklini River spans seven of British Columbia's fourteen biogeoclimatic zones, reaching from the coastal temperate zone through to the high, dry vastness of the Chilcotin Plateau in the province's interior. The watershed contains significant grizzly populations and an extraordinary range of biological diversity.

The upper reaches of the Klinaklini connect to Tweedsmuir Park to the north and the interior plateau to the east. Because of this reach, the Klinaklini serves as a critical wildlife travel corridor.

Mountain goats, deer, grizzly and black bear, beaver, otter, porcupine, grouse, eagles, geese, wolverine and moose call the Klinaklini watershed home. In the upland reaches, woodland caribou take refuge in the old growth forests, feeding on lichen in winter and spending summers in the high alpine. Cougar and Lynx can be found in the upper reaches of the watershed and the Klinaklini also shelters furbearing animals such as marten, fisher, weasel and coyotes and over 150 bird species.

## Talheo Hot Springs / K'iskwatsta

16 hot springs occur along 400 metres of shoreline in these two unlogged watersheds close to the Nuxalk village of Bella Coola. Many of the springs are below the high tide line, but one is well used and of great spiritual and cultural significance to the First Nation community. Grizzly bear and other mammals are present in the watershed.

All other natural hot springs in the traditional territory of the Nuxalk people have been severely impacted by clearcut logging. Now Talheo and K'iskwatsta will be protected for future generations.

## Koeye River

The Koeye River estuary is the last unlogged watershed on B.C.'s coast where visitors can watch grizzly bears walk the white sand beaches in sight of breaching humpback whales offshore. All 5 species of salmon, wolf, deer, cougar, mountain goat, river otter and black bear depend on the Koeye's healthy, intact forests and rich estuary. Geese, swans and ducks winter in the region and grizzly travel cross-country from Rivers Inlet to feed on the Koeye's abundant salmon runs.

Four ancient First Nations village sites and numerous archeological treasures including fish traps and culturally modified trees are found throughout the Koeye River system.

The Koeye is an extraordinarily rich and diverse watershed, with enormous biological, cultural and historical significance.

## Northern Great Bear

Foch Lake and Lagoon / Giltoyees River

Both these watersheds are excellent examples of coastal, salt water estuaries with steep-sided, short fjords, extensive wetlands and bogs. The watersheds link directly to the magnificent Skeena River, supporting salmon and a rich diversity of species.

Foch Lagoon allows viewing of marine mammals and rock paintings and visitors are drawn to the nearby hotspots.