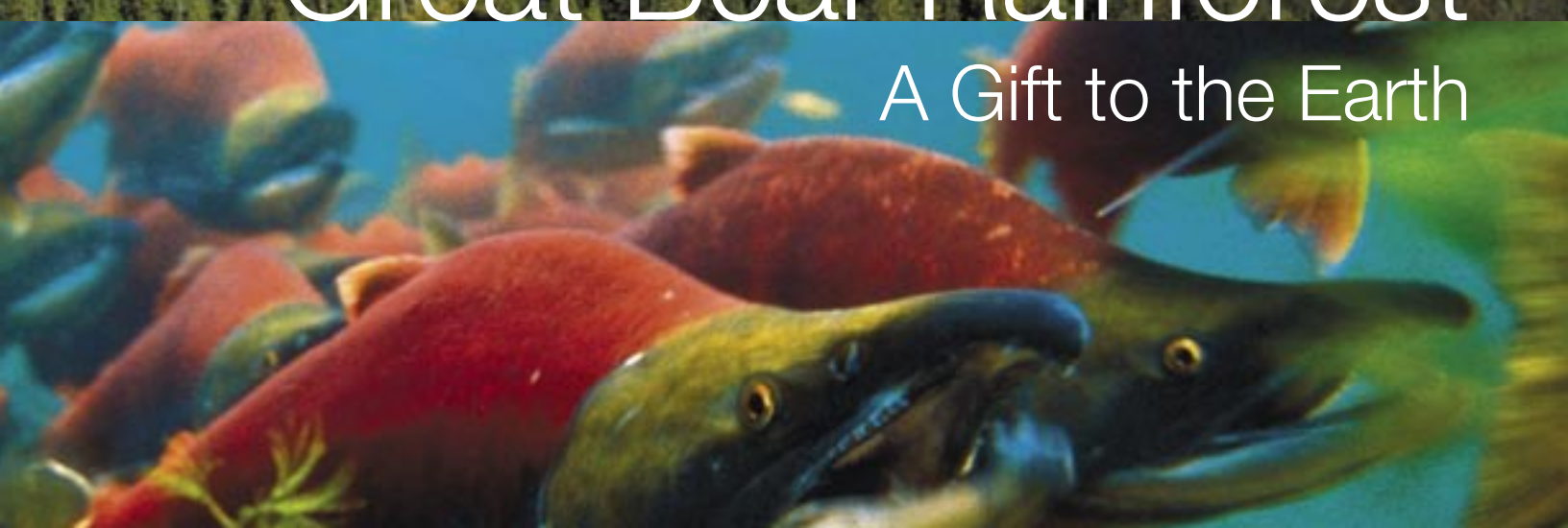




*for a living planet*

# Conservation in the Great Bear Rainforest

A Gift to the Earth





*“When WWF launched the Gift to the Earth programme in 1996 the aim was to encourage governments, companies, organizations and individuals to make significant conservation commitments. The agreements reached between the Provincial Government, First Nations, the forest industry, environmental groups and coastal communities in the Central and North Coast of British Columbia – the Great Bear Rainforest – are globally significant in several respects. The process of negotiation and consultation, the expansion of the protected areas network and the establishment of an innovative and well-endowed conservation funding mechanism are all worthy of international recognition. Ultimately, much will depend on continued collaboration among all these parties to ensure that future management preserves the integrity of this extraordinary ecosystem. The agreements we celebrate today, however, are an historic step.”*

James P. Leape  
Director General, WWF International



# Summary

array of ecological, social, cultural and economic values.

Building on consensus land use recommendations made in 2004, the governments of British Columbia and First Nations communities have now committed to protecting one third of the region and implementing an ecosystem-based management approach to guide future development outside of protected areas. The scope and complexity of these commitments are unprecedented in Canada and have attracted global attention. Once fully implemented the land use agreements for the Great Bear Rainforest will conserve habitat for a diversity of wildlife and foster the wellbeing of communities in the region or relying on the region's resources.

The foundation laid down by the government of British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest decision – coupled with the hard work and commitment of First Nations, environmental groups, forest companies and local communities – is being recognized by WWF's *Gift to the Earth Award*. Additionally, the award is meant to encourage all those involved to continue collaborating to fully implement the land use agreements and ecosystem-based management.

In February 2006 after more than ten years of conservation campaigning, multi-interest negotiation and land use planning, scientific investigation and government-to-government deliberations between First Nations and the province of British Columbia a landmark conservation decision was reached in the Great Bear Rainforest. The 64,000 square kilometre (24,700 square miles) Central and North Coast region on Canada's Pacific Rim contains the largest tracts of primary temperate rainforest on Earth. Located in the heart of the Pacific Temperate Rainforests, which is recognized as a Global 200 Ecoregion by the WWF, this area supports a globally outstanding

Left: North Coast landscape  
© moresbycreative.com and BCMON

Right: BC Premier Gordon Campbell  
flanked by Dallas Smith, Chairman  
Nanwakolas Council and Kitasoo  
Elder Percy Starr at February 2006  
announcement.  
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## Global 200 Ecoregions

*The Global 200 is a collection of the Earth's most biologically diverse and representative terrestrial, freshwater, and marine habitats – areas where the Earth's natural wealth is most distinctive and rich, where its loss will be most severely felt, and where we must fight the hardest for conservation.*

*The central concept is simple: By conserving the broadest variety of the world's habitats, we can conserve the broadest variety of the world's species and most endangered wildlife, as well as whole communities and ecosystems.*



# Background

contiguous expanse of this type of forest. At its heart – containing what is believed to be the most important remaining assemblage of coastal old growth – is the Great Bear Rainforest.

**The Pacific Temperate Rainforests** Global 200 Ecoregion lies like a green ribbon along the west coast of North America. The coastal mountain range steps above the temperate rainforest to the east and the Pacific Ocean forms its western boundary. Stretching from the redwood forests of Northern California to the lower reaches of Alaska's Copper River, Pacific Temperate Rainforests are biologically diverse, culturally rich and vital to the wellbeing of coastal communities. For an interactive map and further information on Pacific Temperate Rainforests please visit [www.nationalgeographic.com/wildworld/global.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/wildworld/global.html).

Temperate rainforests are globally rare ecosystems found in seven regions most of which are associated with coastal zones and always in relation to high rates of rainfall. Covering 295,000 square kilometers (114,000 square miles), the Pacific Temperate Rainforests are the largest

The Great Bear Rainforest hugs the Pacific Coast of Canada from Butte Inlet in the south to the border with Alaska in the north and includes the islands of Haida Gwaii. The Great Bear Rainforest represents about one-quarter of the Pacific Temperate Rainforest Ecoregion; encompassing 74,000 square kilometers (28,500 square miles) of land the region is larger in area than all of Ireland.

The Great Bear Rainforest is rich in wildlife including grizzly bears, the white coat Kermode bear, black bears, wolves, black-tailed deer, moose and mountain goats. The Great Bear Rainforest's glacier and rain fed rivers rise through the Coast Mountains providing spawning and rearing habitat for six species of Pacific salmon returning to natal streams from their ocean journey. The old growth forests blanketing the slopes, benches and lowlands support Sitka spruce, western red cedar, western hemlock, Douglas fir and yellow cedar trees, some of prodigious size and great age. These slow growing



Left: Hunwadi/Ahnuhati – Bald Conservancy  
(34,532 hectares), Central Coast.  
© moresbycreative.com and BCMON

Right: Kermode bear  
Princess Royal Island, Central Coast.  
© moresbycreative.com and BCMON



## Protected Areas

*The protected areas system encompasses 21,120 square kilometers (8,150 square miles) or one third of the land area of the Central and North Coast.*

*The protected areas include:*

- 55 percent of estuaries
- 54 percent of wetlands
- 40 percent of known salmon-bearing streams
- 30 percent of all habitat for key species such as northern goshawks, marbled murrelets and grizzly bears, and
- 34 percent of old growth forests.

*Of the 104 protected areas 65 have been legally designated as conservancies, the remaining areas are in the process of receiving legal designation. Each of the areas goes through a process of consultation with First Nations whose traditional territory encompasses the area. The consultation process ensures that the protected areas designation respects the cultural and traditional use values of affected First Nations.*



### The Land Use Zones

A Protected Areas System - One third of the region [21,120 square kilometres] becomes part of a protected areas system. There are two zones designated for protection:

- Mining and Tourism Areas cover 5% of the region. In these areas logging and hydro development are excluded, but mining and tourism development may be permitted. The primary use for these areas is biodiversity conservation and protection of key ecological and cultural values.
- Protected Areas encompass 28% of the region. These areas are fully protected to represent the region's ecological and cultural diversity.
- An Ecosystem-Based Management Matrix – Outside of the Protected Areas System a new adaptive approach called ecosystem-based management (EBM) will guide development including forestry operations. EBM seeks to ensure that the wellbeing of ecosystems and communities is sustained into the future. In EBM operations the environmental footprint of development will be softened while providing jobs and economic development opportunities.

rainforests contain more biomass than any other forest on earth.

Long ago the richness of these ecosystems gave rise to one of the world's most diverse and enduring human cultures. For thousands of years, coastal First Nations have made this place their home carving their place here from the forest and ocean. Within the Great Bear Rainforest more than two-dozen First Nations have claim to the land and waters. Outside of Prince Rupert – the only urban centre in the region – most residents are First Nations living in small communities such as Klemtu, Bella Bella, Kitkatla, Hartley Bay and Oweekeno that are accessible only by air or water.

In modern times the wealth of marine and forest resources of the Great Bear Rainforest attracted newcomers who came to log the vast tracts of forest and fish the abundant salmon runs. Throughout much of the last century pulp mills, sawmills, logging camps, canneries and mines provided employment in the region's communities. The era of regional growth came to an end as the mills and canneries closed, the victim of changes in the economy and the over exploitation of easily accessible resources.

By the 1990s isolated logging camps, a much reduced fishing fleet and a handful of tourist lodges scattered through a region without roads provided the backbone of the local economy. But with many of those working in the region living elsewhere in British Columbia local rates of unemployment were high. In some of the region's communities as few as three out of ten working age people had jobs and people were leaving their homes to find work.

In 1995, fueled by a growing concern about the state of the world's forests, environmental groups launched a campaign to raise awareness of the threat logging posed to the old growth forests of the Great Bear Rainforest. Throughout most of the Pacific Temperate Rainforests old growth forests had disappeared. The Global 200 analysis listed the region as threatened or endangered pointing to the growth of development including logging in an ecoregion once dominated by old growth. The Great Bear Rainforest, with its vast area of undeveloped ecosystems, became a place of intense controversy involving forest companies, environmentalists and forest products customers on three continents. Yet from this controversy a surprising, perhaps unprecedented, solution arose.





## Ecosystem-based Management

*The Coast Information Team developed an ecosystem-based approach to managing the resources of the Central and North Coast. This approach was adopted by the land use planning process and forms a central part of the agreements ratified in February 2006. The goal is to fully implement the ecosystem-based management framework and guidance provided by the Coast Information Team (CIT) by March 2009.*

*The goal of the ecosystem-based management (EBM) approach adopted for the region is to implement an integrated set of principles, goals, objectives, and procedures that together seek to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities.*

*The EBM system represents a significant departure from the approach to resource management practiced in the past. It requires planners and managers to not only better understand ecosystems and their component parts, but to manage what is left behind before deciding what to take. The CIT EBM Planning Handbook describes elements of the planning framework, provides guidance related to secure human wellbeing and establishes a number of precautionary thresholds to support ecosystem integrity.*

*Some elements of EBM are being established through legislation, others through policy and others through practice. Coast Forest Conservation Initiative companies began implementing transitional EBM planning and practices in 2004 following completion of the LRMPs. In 2006, the EBM Working Group with representatives from government, First Nations, forest industry and environmental groups was established to oversee implementation. One of the Groups first tasks has been development of an Adaptive Management Framework as a key component of the system of EBM.*

*The transition to EBM is a process and not an event. It will take time. The provincial government, First Nations and stakeholders* (to be continued)





# Consensus – a long and difficult journey

In 1997 Greenpeace sailed their ship Moby Dick to the Great Bear Rainforest to protest logging operations. ForestEthics engaged in market campaigns and global communications activities while the Sierra Club of Canada BC Chapter released new satellite maps to draw the world's attention to the coastal forests of British Columbia. That same year the British Columbia government convened the Central Coast Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) process. These events – markets campaigns, activists blockading logging operations and a planning process involving stakeholders – set the stage for an outcome a decade in the making.

Activism brought the region and the loss of rainforest to the forefront with forest products customers and opinion leaders around the world. The marketplace was being effectively leveraged to protect old growth. Whether it was a blockade at a remote logging site, a demonstration at a corporate headquarters in Europe or an article in the New York Times the message was out there and taking root: The old growth forests of the world are disappearing, it's time to protect what's left.

The strategic planning process for the Great Bear Rainforest sought to develop consensus recommendations that would form the basis for ensuring the forest and its values didn't disappear. Planning here also set the stage for engaging First Nations and the government of British Columbia in a new relationship. The Central Coast LRMP was the first of three planning processes established for the Great Bear Rainforest. Two more followed, one for the North Coast and one for Haida Gwaii.

British Columbia began regional, multi-party strategic land use planning around the time of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The government's approach was founded on the premise that those with a stake in the land – local residents people, resource companies, First Nations, environmentalists, workers and others – would inform decision-making through consensus recommendations. The intent was to resolve disputes over land and resource use through designation of protected areas and systems of resource use and management intended to balance the demands for development with the need for a higher level of conservation. In the 1990s strategic land use planning was used to double the amount of protected

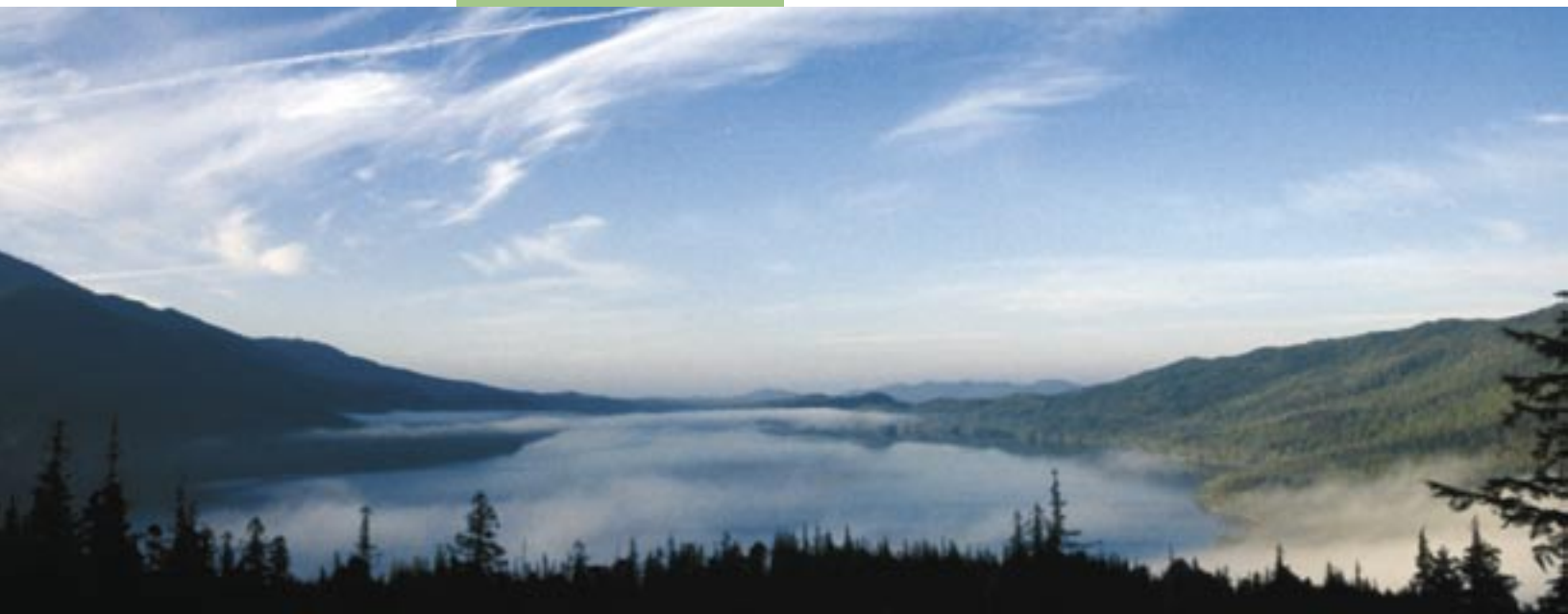
Left: Protecting western red cedar used for cultural purposes is required by EBM.  
© moresbycreative.com and BCMON

Right: Example of retention harvesting to meet EBM stand level requirements – Gillford Island, Central Coast.  
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*(Ecosystem-based  
Management  
continued)*

*(including environmental groups, forest companies and local communities) have committed to fully implementing the system of EBM by March 2009 to enhance the conservation gains provided by protected areas. Ecosystem-based management fully implemented in the matrix of land outside of protected areas is required to secure adequate representation of old forest ecosystems, protect sensitive sites and sustain fish and wildlife habitat while securing the wellbeing of people and communities. For further information on the role of ecosystem-based management please visit the Coast Information Team website [www.citbc.org](http://www.citbc.org).*





areas in British Columbia. Today nearly 13 million hectares (32 million acres), almost 14 percent of the province, had been protected.

In British Columbia the majority of the land is publicly owned. For example 95 percent of commercial forests in the province are found on public land. This provides a strong incentive for multi-party planning, especially if decisions are to be sustained.

This meant that land use planning in the Great Bear Rainforest had to engage environmental groups as well as other interests. However, for their part environmentalists remained reluctant to participate in the Central Coast process as long as logging was proceeding in areas of undeveloped rainforest. They didn't want to foreclose on options to protect rainforest values while planning proceeded. To press their case they continued their marketplace campaigns, setting the stage for a unique collaboration that would overcome the stalemate.

In 1999 a group of coastal forest companies met to consider how to solve the problem they faced. For many years these companies had defended their practices and challenged their critics in the

environmental community. It was a classic PR struggle, and it wasn't working for the companies. It was time for a change. It was time to talk with environmentalists not at them. For nearly a year environmental groups campaigning to save the Great Bear Rainforest and the forest companies negotiated to find the means to reduce or eliminate the conflict embroiling them and the region. The negotiations culminated in what became known as the standstill agreement and the establishment of the Joint Solutions Project.

The agreement included a commitment by the companies to a standstill in logging in more than one hundred rainforest valleys, and a commitment by the environmental groups to a standstill in market campaigns targeting the companies and coastal forest products. It also included a commitment to work collaboratively in the public land use planning process and to explore the development of an ecosystem-based approach to forest management.

Both the companies and the environmental groups organized themselves to create the Joint Solutions Project. The Coast Forest Conservation Initiative represented Canadian Forest Products, Catalyst Paper Corporation, International Forest Products, Western Forest Products



Left: North Coast landscape  
© moresbycreative.com and BCMON

Right: Killer whales Johnstone Strait,  
Central Coast.  
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## Conservation Financing

*Conflict between conservation and economic development has long been one of the most significant barriers to conservation efforts across North America. New funding mechanisms and approaches are needed so that conservation can actually attract new investment that is conducive to long-term economic diversification and community benefit on the BC coast rather than hinder economic development. Consequently, First Nations, the BC government, conservation organizations, forest companies and foundations came together to create an initiative to meet the challenge of raising \$120 million dollars for conservation and sustainable development in the region. In January 2007 the governments of Canada and British Columbia provided \$30 million each to match \$60 million pledged by philanthropic donors. These funds will be used to support new businesses and support conservation management in First Nations communities in the Central and North Coast.*

*Tides Canada Foundation and The Nature Conservancy, together with ForestEthics, Greenpeace and Sierra Club of Canada BC Chapter, played a central role in securing the philanthropic investment and encouraging the contribution by the governments of British Columbia and Canada.*





and Weyerhaeuser Canada. The Rainforest Solutions Project included the environmental groups ForestEthics, Greenpeace, Rain Forest Action Network and the Sierra Club of Canada BC Chapter.

At the same time, coastal First Nations began developing institutional capacity dedicated to preserving and renewing First Nations cultures and territories and implementing sustainable land, water and resource management practices within their traditional territories.

In 2001, the Central Coast LRMP reached consensus on an interim set of recommendations that included an initial suite of protected areas, principles and goals for ecosystem-based management (EBM), outline for the use of independent science and requirement to complete planning in the region. The agreement was endorsed by the full range of stakeholders with an interest in the region and was based in part on recommendations provided by First Nations. The protected areas recommendations included land

use zones identified by the Kitasoo-Xaixais whose village of Klemtu is in the Great Bear Rainforest. The Province accepted the recommendations and signed a landmark protocol agreement with Coastal First Nations that paved the way for future planning.

The next year the Province reconvened the Central Coast LRMP and began a similar process for the North Coast and Haida Gwaii. At the same time the independent science requirement led to the creation of the Coast Information Team supported by funding provided by the British Columbia government, the government of Canada, Rainforest Solutions Project and Coast Forest Conservation Initiative. The following two years saw a lot of hard work that culminated in consensus agreements being reached in the Central and North Coast LRMPs and the establishment of a government-to-government process involving coastal First Nations and the Province. In the spring of 2004 the two LRMPs delivered their recommendations to both the British Columbia and First Nations governments.

Left: Hartley Bay—Gitga'at village, North Coast.  
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Right: Central Coast landscape.  
© moresbycreative.com



## Joint Solutions Project

*The Joint Solutions Project – a collaboration between five coastal forest businesses and four environmental groups – was formed in 2000 to reduce conflict over logging in the Great Bear Rainforest and to support land use planning. Today the Joint Solutions Project collaboration is focused on the implementation of the land use agreements and EBM in the Central and North Coast. Participants include:*

*Coast Forest Conservation Initiative  
[coastforestconservationinitiative.com](http://coastforestconservationinitiative.com)*

- *British Columbia Timber Sales*
- *Canadian Forest Products*
- *Catalyst Paper Corporation*
- *International Forest Products*
- *Western Forest Products (including Weyerhaeuser coastal tenures acquired in 2006)*

*Rain Forest Solutions Project [savethegreatbear.org](http://savethegreatbear.org)*

- *ForestEthics*
- *Greenpeace*
- *Rainforest Action Network*
- *Sierra Club of Canada BC Chapter*

## First Nations in the Great Bear Rainforest

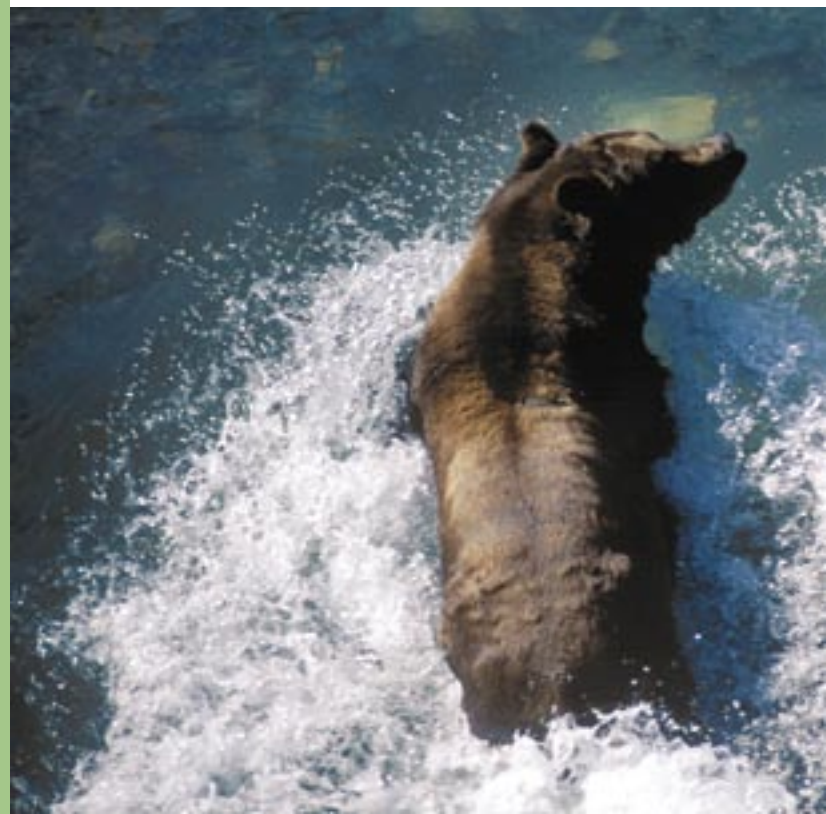
*For thousands of years First Nations people have lived along the coast of British Columbia. Their culture and language is part of the land and waters. It endures in communities, place names, village sites, and creatures of the land and sea, art and everyday life. One cannot visit, live or work along the coast absent the presence of these people.*

*The Council of Haida Nations, Coastal First Nations Turning Point Initiative, Nanwakolas Council and Tsimshian Stewardship Council assist coordination of the diversity of First Nations communities in the government-to-government deliberations. Many, but not all, First Nations claiming traditional territory within the Great Bear Rainforest are represented by these organizations.*



Left: Carving Big House poles at Oweekeno, Central Coast.  
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Below: Grizzly bear Kimsquit River, Central Coast.  
© moresbycreative.com





# The Outcome

expectations, environmental groups called the agreements historic and First Nations said they marked the beginning of a new relationship with British Columbia.

Although nearly ten years of campaigns, negotiations and planning culminated in an agreement to protect one-third of the Central and North Coast region and implement ecosystem-based management (EBM), ratification marked a beginning not an end. There is still a lot of work to be done. Protected areas have to move through a process of legalization, EBM has to be learned and implemented and a system established to govern implementation, and donors engaged to help finance conservation. The goal is to fully implement the agreements by March 2009. This will be a challenge, but progress is being made and change is upon the Great Bear Rainforest.

In February 2006, the government of British Columbia ratified the land use agreements for the Central and North Coast following 18 months of government-to-government dialogue with First Nations. Meanwhile, the Province and the Haida Nation continued discussions on the land use plan for Haida Gwaii.

When the agreements were ratified, forest companies involved said they were beyond

Forest workers near Hartley Bay  
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British Columbia  
Ministry of  
Agriculture and  
Lands, Integrated  
Land Management  
Bureau



*Through the Integrated Land Management Bureau British Columbia's Ministry of Agriculture and Lands is responsible for land use planning throughout the province. For more information on land use planning in the Great Bear Rainforest please visit <http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/cis>.*

For further information

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Cover:

K'wall Conservancy, protecting the 3,300 hectare estuary and wetland of the Quall River, North Coast

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Sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*), spawn in many of Great Bear Rainforest streams

© WWF-Canon / Michel ROGGO

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WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- reducing pollution and wasteful consumption.



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