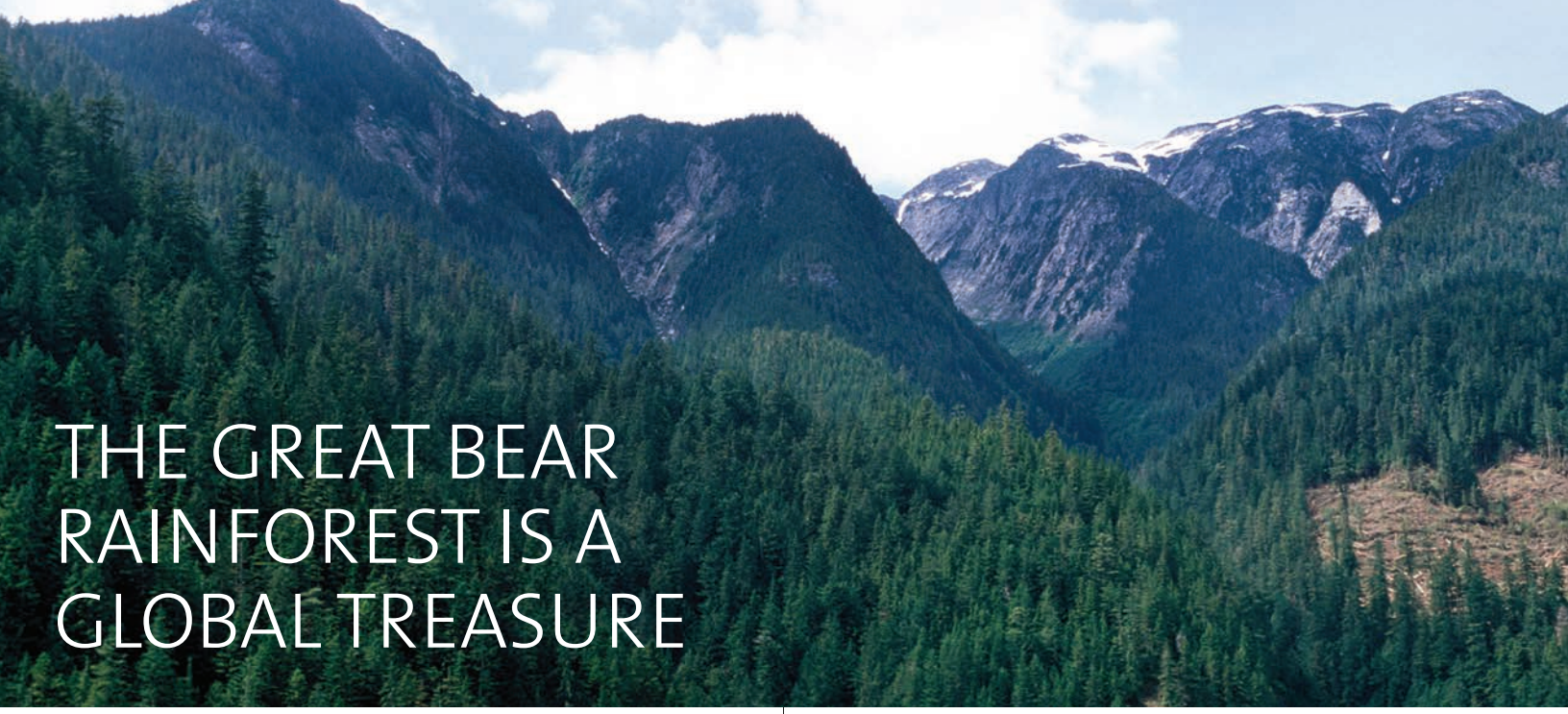
BRITISH COLUMBIA'S GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

Innovative Solution for a Globally Unique Region

As a world leader in sustainable forest management, British Columbia (B.C.) concurrently manages ecological integrity and human well-being in the globally unique Great Bear Rainforest through ecosystem-based management.

The unprecedented collaboration among First Nations, the B.C. government, environmental groups and forest companies protects 85 per cent of the area's forests, provides economic opportunities for First Nations, and offers certainty for the forest industry through sustainable harvesting in 15 per cent of the area's forests.



THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST IS A GLOBAL TREASURE

The Great Bear Rainforest covers 6.4 million hectares (15.8 million acres) along the B.C.'s Pacific Coast – an area almost the size of Ireland. With one quarter of the world's coastal temperate rainforest, it offers breathtaking scenery and unparalleled recreational opportunities that draw visitors from around the globe. Its productive forest and marine resources support local communities and economies.

The timeline to the right shows highlights of the collaborative effort leading to a landmark land use decision that protected vast areas of temperate coastal rainforest while meeting the needs of the people who depend on the land for their livelihoods.

Supporting Ecological Integrity and Human Well-being

Ecosystem-based management is an adaptive, systematic approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the co-existence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities.

- **Ecological integrity** is a quality or state of an ecosystem in which it is considered complete or unimpaired; including natural diversity of species and biological communities, ecosystem processes and functions, and both the ability to absorb disturbance (resistance) and to recover from disturbance (resilience).
- **Human well-being** is supported through policies and initiatives designed to achieve social and economic benefits for First Nations and others who depend on the Great Bear Rainforest. This includes supporting a viable forest economy and delivering other economic benefits such as carbon offsets.

Managing Old Growth Forests

The 2016 Great Bear Rainforest land use order will conserve 70 per cent of the natural range of old growth forests, with some minor exceptions, across the entire 6.4 million hectare (15.8 million acre) region over time.

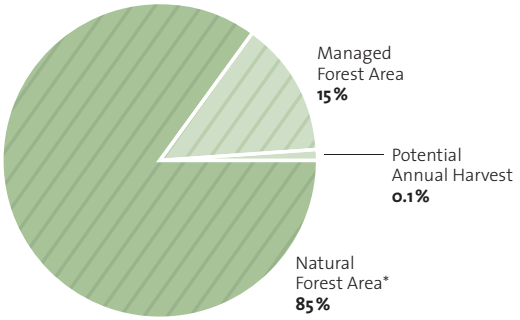
Timeline

1997	Land and resource management planning begins on B.C.'s coast.
2000	Several coastal forest companies and environmental groups set aside differences and begin to work collaboratively through the Joint Solutions Project.
2004 / 2005	Planning participants deliver consensus recommendations to B.C. government; government-to-government discussions with area First Nations begin.
2006	B.C. and First Nations announce land use decisions and commit to ecosystem-based management throughout the Great Bear Rainforest.
2007	New legal land use orders are established for the South Central Coast and Central North Coast.
2009	B.C. government amends legal orders to protect 50% of natural historic old growth forests; all participants agree to five-year extension to implement ecosystem based management.
2009	114 conservancies and 21 Biodiversity, Mining & Tourism Areas are established from 2006 to 2009.
2010 / 2011	B.C. government reaches reconciliation protocol agreements with Coastal First Nations and Nanwakolas Council. One outcome is to increase their participation in the forest sector and protect cultural and social interests.
2014	Joint Solutions Project submits detailed recommendations to B.C. government, Coastal First Nations and Nanwakolas Council.
2015	B.C. government, after government-to-government discussions, invites public comments on proposed Great Bear Rainforest land use order and potential new Biodiversity, Mining and Tourism Areas.
2016	B.C. government to introduce the *Great Bear Rainforest (Forest Management) Act* and a new Great Bear Rainforest Land Use Order to legally implement elements as agreed to.

Top Left: Photo: Moresby Creative

Certainty and Security for All

Forests make up more than half of the Great Bear Rainforest – a total of 3.7 million hectares (9.1 million acres). The land use orders identify 550,000 hectares (1.36 million acres) of managed forest that will support a sustainable harvest. This creates stability for First Nations, workers, communities, investors and customers.



**Maintained in protected areas and landscape reserves.*

Great Bear Rainforest Land Use Zones

One third of the Great Bear Rainforest is fully protected in parks and conservation areas and about nine per cent of the total area (equates to 15 per cent of the forested area) is available for timber harvesting in the managed forest.

The managed forest comprises 550,000 hectares (1.36 million acres) where harvesting of old growth and second-growth is focused, guided by ecosystem-based management.

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

471,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) are fully protected.

CONSERVANCIES

1.5 million hectares (3.7 million acres) are in a designation that protects ecological values and recognizes the importance of specific areas for First Nations.

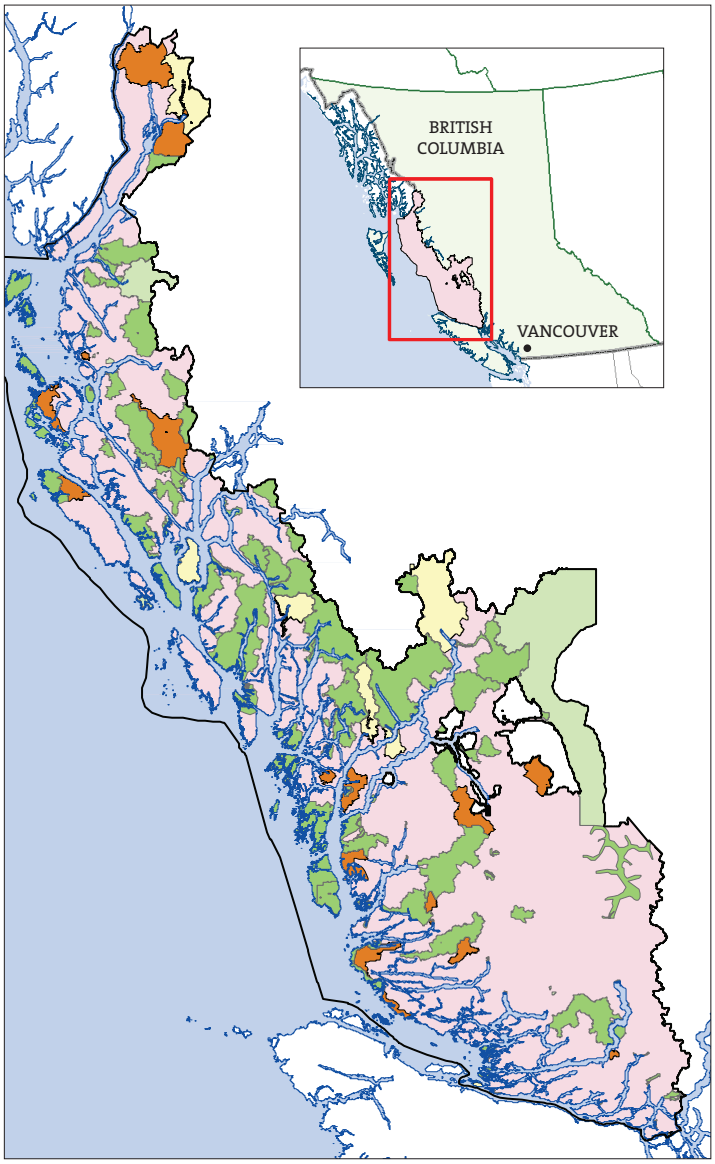
BIODIVERSITY, MINING & TOURISM AREAS

309,000 hectares (764,000 acres) are areas where the primary use is biodiversity conservation and protection of ecological and cultural values. Commercial forestry and hydroelectric generation linked to the power grid are not allowed.

SPECIAL FOREST MANAGEMENT AREAS

273,000 hectares (675,000 acres) are in areas where hydroelectric generation, mining and tourism development is allowed as long as it maintains ecological integrity. Commercial forestry is not allowed. It is expected that some of these will become Biodiversity, Mining & Tourism areas or Conservancies over time.

Policies and initiatives are designed to achieve social and economic benefits for First Nations. Photo: Moresby Creative



Shared Decision Making with First Nations

The B.C. government has entered into government-to-government protocols with area First Nations to ensure management decisions in the Great Bear Rainforest are informed by their perspectives.

It also has human well-being agreements with Coastal First Nations, an alliance of First Nations on British Columbia's North and Central Coast, and members of Nanwakolas Council, representing First Nations in the southern Central Coast. It consulted with 12 First Nations that are not part of Coastal First Nations or Nanwakolas.

Among other things, the agreements increase First Nations involvement in the forest industry, consider new protection areas, protect cultural interests and provide revenue from the sale of carbon offset credits to First Nations.

From Conflict to Collaboration

In 2000, forest companies and environmental groups agreed to work together and created the Joint Solutions Project. The group is a collaborative of coastal forest companies (BC Timber Sales, Catalyst Paper, Howe Sound Pulp & Paper, Interfor Corporation, and Western Forest Products) and environmental groups (ForestEthics, Greenpeace, and the B.C. chapter of the Sierra Club).

Maintaining Wildlife Habitat

An integral component of ecosystem-based management implementation in the Great Bear Rainforest is the assurance of sufficient habitat for five species of special interest – mountain goats, grizzly bears, marbled murrelets, tailed frogs and northern goshawk.

The land use order includes provisions for Kermode bear habitat. Photo: Government of B.C.

The land use order creates stability for the coastal forest economy. Photo: Moresby Creative

Mitigating Climate Change through Sustainable Forest Management

Forests – and the wood products derived from them – play a critical role in mitigating climate change by sequestering and storing carbon. This is just one of the multitude of important values managed in the Great Bear Rainforest. It is supported by both sustainable forest management and the protection of old growth values.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has stated: "In the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit."[1]

B.C. is a climate change leader through sustainable forest management balancing environmental, economic and social needs, while benefitting from carbon sequestration in forests and forest products.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

BRITISH COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT Great Bear Rainforest Order www.for.gov.bc.ca/TASB/SLRP/GBR_LUO_2016.html

COASTAL FIRST NATIONS www.coastalfirstnations.ca
Great Bear Initiative
www.coastalfirstnations.ca/programs/plans-and-agreements

NANWAKOLAS COUNCIL www.nanwakolas.com

COAST FOREST CONSERVATION INITIATIVE
www.coastforestconservationinitiative.com

RAINFOREST SOLUTIONS PROJECT www.savethegreatbear.org

About 50% of wood products exported from Canada come from British Columbia's sustainably managed forests. This publication is part of the 'Forest Facts' series, published by Forestry Innovation Investment, the Government of British Columbia's market development agency for forest products.

To learn more about other B.C. forest facts, visit:

naturallywood.com

Cover photo: Ecosystem-based management addresses the unique ecology of the Great Bear Rainforest while meeting the needs of the people who live in the region. Photo: Moresby Creative
The wood grain featured at the top of this factsheet is western red cedar.

Endnote: [1] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report 2007 www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg3/en/ch9s9-es.html