
BACKGROUND

2009AL0007-000588

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

March 31, 2009

CENTRAL AND NORTH COAST LAND USE DECISIONS HIGHLIGHTS

Following over a decade of negotiations between multiparty stakeholders, consensus recommendations for land use in the Central Coast and North Coast were announced on February 7, 2006. The decision covers an area of approximately 6.4 million hectares, or more than twice the size of Belgium. The total combined protected areas for these regions are approximately two million hectares, more than twice the size of Yellowstone National Park.

The decision protects one of the world's greatest ecological gems while balancing the needs of the environment with the needs of the people who depend upon the land for their livelihoods and way of life. Vast areas of temperate coastal rainforest are protected, including the largest intact temperate rainforest left on earth, which is home to thousands of species of plants, birds and animals. There are 1,000 year old cedar trees and tall Sitka spruce lining rich salmon streams that weave through valley bottoms, providing food for orcas, black bears, grizzlies and eagles. The region is also home to the rare Spirit Bear, the Province's official mammal.

Highlights of this land use planning decision include:

- Government-to-government Land and Resource Forum established to jointly implement land use agreements.
- On January 21, 2007, the federal government, B.C. government and private non-profit organizations agreed to commit \$120 million to support the Coast Opportunity Funds. The fund is aimed at preserving the integrity of the Great Bear Rainforest for generations to come and at promoting economic development opportunities for First Nations.
- In July and December 2007, the Province introduced the new legal framework for the Central and North Coast of B.C. that establishes EBM, covering forest operations.
- All 114 conservancies covering approximately 1.37 million hectares have been established on the Central Coast and North Coast planning regions, which brings the area of total protection on the coast to approximately two million hectares.
- Strategic Land Use Planning Agreements for the Central and North Coast of British Columbia have been signed with over 20 First Nations.

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