
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

EBM PROTECTS COASTAL JOBS, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

VICTORIA – The Province has met its commitment to establish an Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) system for coastal B.C. by March 31, 2009, Agriculture and Lands Minister Ron Cantelon announced today.

“Three years ago we announced an unprecedented collaboration and today B.C. has set an example for the world in one of the largest co-ordinated land use planning efforts on record,” said Cantelon. “Working hard with our First Nations partners as well as industry, environmental and community leaders, together we have achieved a holistic approach to managing human activities and protecting biodiversity. EBM represents a new foundation towards a sustainable economy, First Nations economic self-sufficiency and community well-being.”

The Province committed to implementing EBM as part of the historic Coast Land Use Decisions encompassing the North and Central Coast plan areas, announced on February 7, 2006. The decision called for new protected areas and logging regulations in order to balance the needs of the environment with the need for sustainable jobs and a strong economic future for coastal communities. The decision also called for government-to-government land use agreements with First Nations. Strategic land use planning agreements for the Central and North Coast of British Columbia have now been signed with over 20 First Nations.

“I commend the Province for working with us to build a strong government to government relationship,” said Nanwakolas Council President Dallas Smith. “This relationship is the foundation to protecting wildlife and fostering economic opportunities that are both ecologically and culturally appropriate for the benefit of all coastal communities.”

“The Coastal First Nations are making slow but steady progress in advancing our economic interests in forestry, tourism, and training while finalizing the groundwork for creating a sustainable land base,” said Coastal First Nations Executive Director Art Sterritt. “In moving our economic initiatives forward we will adhere to strong ecological standards.”

As part of the implementation of EBM, the Province has completed numerous land use planning commitments to support a sustainable economy and conserve sensitive ecosystems.

Achievements to date include:

- A combined land use planning area of approximately 6.4 million hectares, or more than twice the size of Belgium.
- A total of approximately two million hectares of protected areas are now in place, or more than twice the size of Yellowstone National Park.

- \$120 million Coast Opportunity Funds established, aimed at preserving the integrity of the Great Bear Rainforest for generations to come and promoting economic development opportunities for First Nations.
- One-hundred-and-fourteen conservancies have been established across the Central Coast and North Coast planning regions.
- A new land use zone with 21 designated Biodiversity, Mining and Tourism Areas (BMTAs) has also been established, comprising 300,000 hectares where commercial forestry and hydro-electric generation linked to the power grid are prohibited.
- Low-impact logging regulations that will conserve 50 per cent of the natural range of old growth forests.
- An Adaptive Management framework that will continually test and improve the EBM system.

“Today we are marking a milestone in B.C.’s coastal rainforest that results from 10 years of determined co-operation between stakeholders,” said Catalyst Paper Corporation President and CEO Richard Garneau. “As we recognize the ecological integrity of this region, it is important that we also see today as a good day for the industry. This milestone helps provide assurance to customers worldwide that high-quality forest products will continue to be supplied from the B.C. Coast.”

“EBM fosters community-based land use planning and ensures development is guided by our mutual interest to protect this globally unique region,” said Port McNeill Mayor Gerry Furney. “Our communities look forward to participating in a sustainable economy where job creation and environmental protection can coexist.”

Greenpeace, ForestEthics and the Sierra Club of BC were intimately involved in building this collaborative solution for many years. 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.

Footage of EBM in action, as well as scenery and wildlife from the region is available for download at: ftp://ftp.multimedia.gov.bc.ca/EBM_b-roll/

Still photos and maps are available at:

<http://www.mediaroom.gov.bc.ca/DisplayEventDetails.aspx?eventId=441>

3 backgrounder(s) attached.

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