

Backgrounder for Press Release**June 28, 2011****TimberWest logging threatens Great Bear Rainforest conservation model**

Gray Landscape Unit in TimberWest tenure, South Central Coast, Great Bear Rainforest, June 2011

Photo: Garth Lenz, with aerial support by Lighthawk

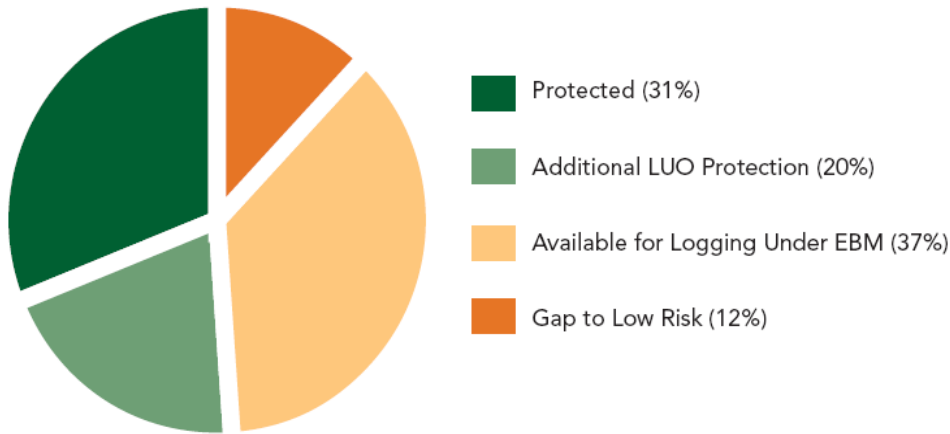
State of forest protection in the Great Bear Rainforest 2011

During the 1990s, industrial logging operations clearcut large swathes of forest in the Great Bear Rainforest. Today 33 per cent of the region (2.1 million hectares) is protected from logging in parks, conservancies and biodiversity, mining and tourism areas through historic agreements endorsed by the B.C. government, First Nations, environmental groups and logging companies.

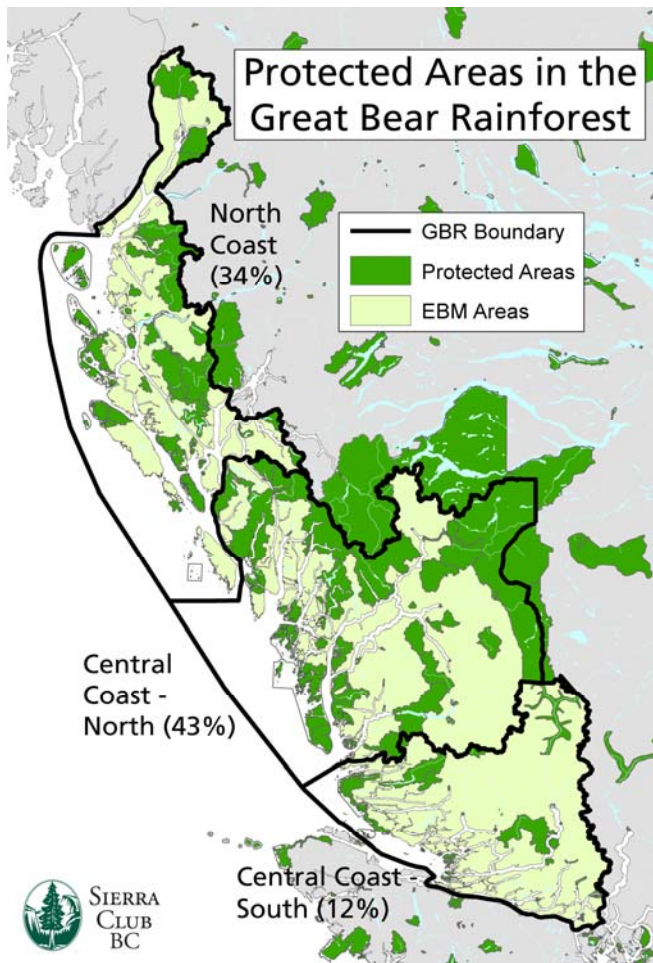
As part of March 31, 2009 Agreements, new logging regulations, based on Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM), ensure that, as a transitional measure, at least 50 percent of the natural level of old growth forest is off-limits to logging over the entire region.

The parties also endorsed a multi-year work plan to achieve the goals of low ecological risk and high quality of life in communities. Key conservation milestones of the workplan include the development of a

network of reserves outside of the protected areas and the commitment to revise logging regulations that would set aside 70 percent of natural levels of old growth forests (up from the current 50 percent).



Percentages of forest area in the Great Bear Rainforest in protected areas, off limits to logging through 2009 Land Use Objectives, remaining gap to meet low risk, and available for forestry operations under EBM.



The range of rainforest lands off limits to logging under EBM represents all ecosystem types, from valley bottoms (where the tallest trees grow) to mountain forest types. However, there are significant differences in the level of protection within the three planning areas in the Great Bear Rainforest. While 34 percent of the North Coast and 43 percent of the North Central Coast are in protected areas, only 12 percent of the South Central Coast is in protected areas.

Today, logging has converted most of the rainforest in the south to second growth forest. For example, within TimberWest tenure, only 10 per cent of the productive forest growing in lower elevations remains as old growth forest.

A key short-term conservation commitment of the 2009 agreements was to map and set aside a network of forests and critical habitat for five species of conservation concern outside of protected areas by the end of 2009 (grizzly bear, marbled murrelets, northern goshawks, mountain goats and tailed frogs). This key short term conservation commitment is critically delayed, which raises particular concern for the health of the forest in the South Central Coast. Past excess logging has left marbled murrelets and northern goshawks already facing a critical lack of habitat in this region.

Timber West has been the only major logging company that has not supported the new Ecosystem-Based Management conservation model. The company, now under new ownership, is currently considering whether to follow the lead of other major operators in the region by adopting voluntary measures to set aside a slightly higher minimum amount of rainforest in each landscape unit than is legally required.

It remains to be seen if TimberWest will correct its course and fully support the goals of the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements under its new owners, B.C. Investment Management Corporation and the (federal) Public Sector Pension Investment Board,



Thurlow Landscape Unit in TimberWest tenure, South Central Coast, Great Bear Rainforest, June 2011

Photo: Garth Lenz, with aerial support by Lighthawk

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