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Time Ticking Down for Great Bear Rainforest

If Governments and Logging Industry don't keep pace, the world will know

March 29, 2007 (Vancouver, BC) – Time is running out to keep the Great Bear Rainforest conservation plan on track, say environmental groups. And with only two years remaining to meet the March 31st, 2009 deadline for the internationally heralded agreements, three leading groups today put Premier Campbell and logging company CEOs on notice that time is ticking down – and they are keeping track.

“With only two years left, the pace of change must accelerate if the conservation goals the world was promised are to be met by the deadline of March 31, 2009,” said Valerie Langer of ForestEthics.

One of the world's most significant conservation efforts, the Great Bear Rainforest plan protects a swath of temperate rainforest the size of Prince Edward Island, commits industry to new lighter-touch logging practices and invests \$120 million in conservation management and economic transition.

“This plan provided an ambitious blueprint for change, and it is now time to see those changes hit the ground,” said Lisa Matthaus, Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter. “The milestones set out a transparent way to track that progress.”

To remind government and business leaders of the looming deadline, today digital countdown clocks were distributed and a new website launched. Through eight easy-to-understand milestones, the environmental groups are giving citizens and forest product customers the tools to track progress. The milestones are set out on the new website, greatbearwatch.ca.

“The public and the international marketplace now have the tools to continue to track British Columbia's progress to 2009,” said Amanda Carr of Greenpeace. “Governments and industry are accountable to the bold promise that this conservation plan represents.”

Significant milestones include formally legislating the region's new protected areas, the protection of at-risk ecosystems and incorporating new logging standards into forestry planning.

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