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B.C. announces new logging code for central coast

Companies will market timber as an ecologically sound product from the Great Bear Rainforest

By Gordon Hamilton, Vancouver Sun
Published: Thursday, February 07, 2008

VANCOUVER - The B.C. government announced Thursday it has signed new legally binding rules committing forest companies to eco-based logging on the province's north and central coast.

The new logging regime for the area, dubbed the Great Bear Rainforest, was announced by Agriculture and Lands Minister Pat Bell at a Vancouver news conference where he was flanked by leaders from eco-groups, industry and first nations, signalling the broad support the initiative has received.

The 10-year-long war in the woods has ended in "a love-in of collaboration," said first nations leader Dallas Smith, of the groups assembled for the news conference.



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After years of confrontation with first nations and environmentalists, B.C. announced new logging rules for the central and northern coast on Thursday.

Nick Didlick/Vancouver Sun files

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Land-use plans for the region were announced two years ago but implementing the measures has taken some time. The adoption of ecosystem-based logging is a significant step forward, said Valerie Langer, of the eco-group ForestEthics.

"The new logging regime is something that has never been done before, she said. "It takes a lot of tenacity on everybody's part."

Ecosystem-based management is the emerging practice on the coast which aims to leave an intact ecosystem behind after logging. But equally critically - and yet to be tested - is the goal of balancing community needs with economic growth.

Bell said the key to balancing environmental values with human and economic needs lies in marketing the region's wood products as being "a cutting-edge, world-class model of forestry that speaks to the sustainability of our industries."

"Eco-system based management is about environmental values but it is also about social and economic values," Bell said. "This is something we can truly be proud of and market internationally."

Bell also said a \$120-million economic development fund has been created for first nations. The funds were raised by

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