STUDY SAYS B.C. FOREST LAWS AMONG THE MOST STRINGENT

VANCOUVER – A comprehensive independent study by Yale University Professor Ben Cashore shows that British Columbia has some of the toughest forest policies on earth.

“Throughout our research, we found that B.C. takes a stringent approach to forest policy regulation development, and on key measures we compared, is among the top of the 38 jurisdictions we studied from around the world,” Dr. Cashore said.

The BC Market Outreach Network and the Forest Products Association of Canada asked Dr. Cashore to compare Canada’s environmental forest practice regulations with those in other jurisdictions. He chose key environmental forest practices criteria in 38 jurisdictions with the most forest cover and/or where forests have the highest economic importance.

The resulting report, Global Environmental Forest Policies: Canada as a Constant Case Comparison of Select Forest Practice Regulations, which was released July 16, found that B.C.’s stringent, mandatory approach to forest policy regulation development was near the top for all the measures studied. These included riparian zone management, clearcutting regulations, road building, reforestation requirements, annual allowable cut regulations, plantation management, biodiversity, enforcement and third-party certification.

“The detailed data in this ground-breaking study reinforces that B.C. has some of the toughest forest regulations on earth,” said B.C. Forests Minister Michael de Jong. “This kind of academic validation helps us show the world that B.C. cares about its forests and is taking the necessary steps to manage them responsibly and sustainably.”

Continued inside

RECOMMENDATIONS RELEASED FOR CENTRAL COAST

VANCOUVER — The British Columbia and First Nations governments have launched the government-to-government negotiations that will lead to draft land use plans in the Central Coast and North Coast regions.

The Central Coast and the North Coast land and resource management planning tables have formally passed their recommendations on to the B.C. and First Nations governments. In both cases, the recommendations were reached through consensus agreements and are consistent with the guiding principles of ecosystem-based management, an adaptive approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure that ecosystems and human communities are healthy and fully functioning.

Premier Gordon Campbell congratulated the tables for their hard work. “They took the time to learn from one another and to find solutions that make sense and are sustainable.” He also said the consultations with First Nations will include a government initiative to establish a sanctuary for the Kermode bear, also known as the spirit bear, on the Central Coast.

The Central Coast planning area, part of which is sometimes called the Great Bear Rainforest, covers 4.8 million hectares (12 million acres) along the Pacific Coast and has both rich natural resources and a spectacular natural setting.
The planning table has recommended that the protected area increase from 11 per cent to 21 per cent, with another 12 per cent identified as biodiversity areas where limited resource use is allowed. In other words, more than 990,000 hectares (almost 2.5 million acres) would be fully protected, and no logging would be allowed on another 545,000 hectares (almost 1.35 million acres).

The remaining 67 per cent (about 3 million hectares or 7.4 million acres) would permit full resource use in accordance with ecosystem-based management principles. The table also recommended creation of 2 grizzly bear management areas and visual management areas to guide activities where tourism, recreation and forestry are all important.

The North Coast process, which was co-chaired by a First Nations representative and a local community leader, involves 1.7 million hectares (4.2 million acres) on the North Coast. The planning table has recommended protecting a total of more than 400,000 hectares (more than 1 million acres), which is almost one quarter of the area. This compared with only 3 per cent protected today. No commercial forestry would be allowed in an additional 11 per cent of the area (187,000 hectares or 462,000 acres), with full resource use in the remaining 64 per cent (about 1 million hectares or almost 2.7 million acres).

In late June, the Central Coast planning team formally handed over its recommendations, to George Abbott, B.C.’s minister of sustainable resource management, and Dallas Smith, representing First Nations governments, at an event held in the coastal community of New Vancouver.

“As the largest producer of softwood building products in the world, B.C. is extremely proud of the wide diversity of its high-quality wood products,” said FII President Christine Kennedy. “We worked very closely with the forest industry in developing our new World Leader in Forest Products approach to trade show representation, and the award received in Guangzhou reflects that partnership.”

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The B.C. World Leader in Forest Products exhibit, produced by Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd. as part of a coordinated industry trade show strategy, centres on a home built of wood, with display areas where customers can view the many uses for B.C. wood products – from patio decks to kitchen cabinets to cross-sections of walls. FII developed the new tradeshow booth in close cooperation with B.C. forest industry association partners – many of which also participated in the Guangzhou show.

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“It’s historic - the work that you have done,” Smith told the process participants. “You have built a foundation that is necessary for First Nations and the provincial government to agree on land and resource management in a pre-treaty environment.”

The Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management will post the recommendations from both processes on its website at http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/rmd/lmp/

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“Customers expect the highest environmental standards when they buy forest products,” said Avrim Lazar, President and CEO of the Forest Products Association of Canada. “This study confirms that Canada’s forest products industry meets those expectations – it is among the most advanced nations in the world and its performance is improving every year.”

Once data collection concluded in January 2004, the draft report went through a peer review involving more than 20 North American and international scientific experts. The report is posted at www.ifor.ca, and a summary of the findings related to B.C. is posted at www.bcforestinformation.com under forest facts.

“B.C.’s comparatively stringent approach to forest policy regulation is worth sharing, and can serve as the basis for a dialogue about the next and most appropriate steps in global forest management,” Cashore said.

A summary of Dr. Cashore’s report can be found on the BC Market Outreach Network website at www.bcforestinformation.com under “Breaking News.”
FIRE CREWS PROTECT NESTING SPOTTED OWLS

LILLOOET — B.C. Ministry of Forests fire crews came to the rescue of a family of endangered spotted owls when a wildfire east of Vancouver threatened their nest early in July.

Bruce Morgan, director of the biodiversity branch for the B.C. Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection called the quick action “a truly great example of on the ground collaboration with the Ministry of Forests”, adding it likely saved one of the most productive nesting pairs of spotted owls in B.C. and their nest site. “Our colleagues in the Ministry of Forests were fabulous in their support.”

Working closely on-site with biologist, Jared Hobbs, from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, fire crews had moved in to quickly put out a small fire that threatened the owl family, and also worked to direct a larger fire away from the nest stand. Biologists from Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection worked with the fire crews to advise them of the owls’ location during the firefighting efforts. The Forest Service kept wildlife specialists advised of the fire situation, provided safety monitoring for the biologists, and even put a crew in the nest stand to watch for any new flare-ups from the nearby main fire.

FOREST INVESTMENTS ANNOUNCED

PRINCE GEORGE — British Columbia will invest $16.1 million this year in marketing and research projects that will strengthen B.C.’s reputation as the home of the best forest products, the best forest practices and the best forest workers in the world.

The announcement, made by Premier Gordon Campbell at Forest Expo, included $8.6 million for international marketing and product development through Forestry Innovation Investment, and $7.5 million through the B.C. Forest Science Program for forestry research. Industry and federal support will increase the total value of the projects.

International marketing and product development activities include showing the benefits of wood construction to North American consumers and builders, promoting the environmental benefits of cedar over substitute products such as plastics and vinyl. They also support the promotion of B.C.’s high-quality products to key export markets, such as marketing B.C. hemlock in Japan under the brand name Canada Tsuga, and increasing the use of wood in residential construction in China and Japan.

BOARD PREPARES FOR RESULTS-BASED REGIME

VICTORIA — British Columbia’s independent Forest Practices Board is updating its approach to auditing and monitoring forestry operations as the province moves to results-based regulation.

“As forest regulations shift from detailed rules to a focus on achieving results, our role in monitoring forest practices and reporting findings to British Columbians is more relevant than ever,” says board chair Bruce Fraser. “At the same time, we must adjust the way we audit and monitor forestry operations because we will be measuring effectiveness on the ground rather than compliance with specific rules.”

The board will continue to work with government, industry, environmental organizations and members of the public to test the new regime. “We want to be sure we can effectively measure whether the results and strategies adopted by forest licensees meet the objectives set by government,” Fraser said.

In 2003, the board used a set of indicators developed by government agencies and experts to assess soil conservation and riparian (stream) protection. This work is continuing with plans to develop indicators this year for water quality, landscape- and stand-level biodiversity, visual quality and karst features.

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“Under B.C.’s new Forest and Range Practices Act, which will be fully implemented by the end of 2005, forest companies licensed to harvest timber on public land must outline how they can best achieve objectives set by government for soils, timber, wildlife, water, fish, biodiversity and cultural heritage resources, and will be held accountable for their on-the-ground performance.”

The Forest Practices Board was created in 1995 and has close to 10 years of experience auditing forest practices and responding to public concerns. Professional foresters, biologists, accountants and lawyers who work for the board carry out the audits and investigations. The board’s 2003 annual report, which highlights its past accomplishments and future priorities, is posted at www.fpb.gov.bc.ca
CALIFORNIA REVISES BILL

B.C. Forests Minister Michael de Jong was among those who advised the natural resources and wildlife committee that Bill AB 2994 was unfair and inaccurate. In a letter to the committee, de Jong wrote: “Similar to California, British Columbia holds itself to the highest standards of sustainable forest management, and we wish this was true of the rest of the world.”

He pointed out that less than 2 per cent of B.C.’s forest land has been converted to other uses, significantly less than almost any jurisdiction in North America, and that its new Forest and Range Practices Act maintains the province’s high forest management standards. B.C. is also a North American leader in third-party forest certification.

The inaccurate wording was removed from the bill, which encourages California state agencies to purchase California-grown forest products, before the committee passed it on June 29.

“We applaud California’s efforts to encourage state agencies to buy forest products from jurisdictions that practise sustainable forest management, and we are keen to offer whatever support we can,” President Christine Kennedy said.

This is the second time the Network and the Forest Products Association of Canada have led a challenge to a draft California state senate procurement bill. Last summer, they convinced state senators that a bill to bar state agencies and school districts from buying products made from ‘ancient forest trees’ would likely not achieve its goal because it did not account for the many factors that make up healthy and sustainable forest ecosystems. That bill was sent back for re-drafting, and went no further.

“Canada is a model for sustainable forest management, and it is important that we work with partners like the BC Market Outreach Network to let our customers know this,” said Avrim Lazar, President and CEO of the Forest Products Association of Canada.

FOREST briefs

B.C. CERTIFICATION INCREASES

OTTAWA – The Canadian Sustainable Forestry Certification Coalition’s latest status report on forest certification in Canada shows that as of June 2004, forest companies operating in B.C. have 22.4 million hectares (55.3 million acres) certified to recognized sustainable forest management standards (under the Canadian Standards Association, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative or the Forest Stewardship Council) – that is 4.2 million hectares (almost 10.4 million acres) more than 6 months earlier. In addition, B.C. has 44.8 million hectares certified to ISO 14001 the international environmental standards management system standard. Canada has the largest area of third-party independently certified forests in the world.

WILDLIFE CORRIDORS PROTECTED

FERNIE, B.C. – Tembec Inc.’s private land conservation agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada will help protect critical wildlife corridors in the Elk River Valley in southeast B.C., identified recently in an NCC fundraising campaign as one of Canada’s most significant biodiversity hotspots. The conservation agreement involves 40,000 hectares (98,000 acres) around 3 wildlife corridors used by wide-ranging carnivores such as grizzly bears, grey wolves and Canada lynx. NCC has called the agreement a breakthrough for habitat conservation in the Rocky Mountains, noting that the impact will be realized throughout the region, and on both sides of the Canada / United States border.

CFLA APPOINTS PRESIDENT AND CEO

VANCOUVER – Rick Jeffery has been appointed president and chief executive officer of the Coast Forest and Lumber Association, an independent association representing the B.C. coastal forest industry. Jeffery has more than 20 years of experience working with the B.C. forest industry, most recently as vice-president, corporate development, for Hayes Forest Services Limited. He also served as president of the Truck Loggers Association. Brian Zak has assumed the new role of chief operating officer.