

TimberWest logging in the Great Bear Rainforest like there is no tomorrow

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New information compiled by Greenpeace, ForestEthics Solutions and Sierra Club B.C. reveals that logging company TimberWest has dramatically sped up logging in the Great Bear Rainforest and targeted globally endangered rainforest ecosystems before stricter logging regulations come into effect. The environmental organizations are calling on the company to freeze their logging operations in the region until planning is completed to ensure that endangered rainforests will be safe. Additionally the organizations are asking the BC government to ensure they aren't approving new cutting permits until new stricter logging regulations are in place. These are currently under negotiation with the BC Government and the region's First Nations.

"Both TimberWest and the BC government should freeze logging plans until we have certainty that rare and endangered rainforest ecosystems will be set aside," said Jens Wieting, Sierra Club BC.

According to the organizations' analysis, the company significantly increased the rate of logging in this area between 2009 and early 2015. In this period, TimberWest logged more than 4,400 hectares of rainforest (equivalent to 11 times the area of Vancouver's Stanley Park) in the Great Bear Rainforest. The company also logged more than one million cubic meters over what they had been allocated as a government-mandated Annual Allowable Cut between 2010 to 2014; the equivalent of a million telephone poles. This cutting coincides with the period agreed to by the BC government, First Nations, a group of forestry companies and environmental organizations as a transition period towards stricter logging regulations.

Today, Greenpeace called out TimberWest by deploying a large banner on its ship *Esperanza* near Sonora Island in the southernmost part of the Great Bear Rainforest where the company operates.

"TimberWest has sped up logging in the Great Bear Rainforest like there is no tomorrow," said Eduardo Sousa, Greenpeace. "Their actions compromise the integrity of the forest and disrupt the vision First Nations communities have for their traditional territories."

Due to decades of extensive logging, the southern region of the Great Bear Rainforest has very little remaining old-growth forest and very few protected areas. As a result, many of these forest ecosystems and wildlife species like the Marbled Murrelet that depend on them are now endangered.

Final implementation of Ecosystem-Based Management in the Great Bear Rainforest was due by March 31, 2014. Significant progress has been made to achieve these steps but finalization is delayed and will require ongoing leadership and resources by the BC government.

"TimberWest's rush to clearcut and their plans to use the delay to log even more endangered forest is opportunistic and irresponsible," says Valerie Langer, ForestEthics Solutions. "It's a double whammy for the Great Bear Rainforest. TimberWest needs to understand that either they are part of the solution or they have a very big problem."

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For more information:

The appendix is available here: <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/Global/canada/pr/2015/05/Appendix-to-TimberWest.pdf>

*Hi-Res photos and B-Roll of TimberWest banner on the *Esperanza* available here:

<https://plus.google.com/photos/115091252523597859318/albums/6151176767530084497>

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