

British Columbia Groups Win Prestigious Buckminster Fuller Design Award for Role in Safeguarding Great Bear Rainforest

Fuller Challenge Award 2016 goes to Rainforest Solutions Project, a project of Tides Canada Initiative with Greenpeace, Stand.earth and Sierra Club BC

October 5, 2016 (Vancouver, BC) – British Columbia’s Rainforest Solutions Project (a project of Tides Canada) with member groups Greenpeace, Stand.earth (formerly ForestEthics) and Sierra Club BC has won the Buckminster Fuller Institute’s (BFI) Fuller Challenge Award for their role in crafting and implementing solutions for the recently finalized Great Bear Rainforest Agreements. The BFI is a prestigious cross-disciplinary academy dedicated to solving global problems through design-thinking education. This \$100,000 award specifically recognizes the innovation in complex process design that the three member organizations worked collectively and collaboratively to develop.

For over fifteen years the three groups worked together with the forest industry, First Nations governments and the Government of British Columbia to troubleshoot barriers and develop solutions for safeguarding the Great Bear Rainforest. The outcome is a new legal and policy framework that concurrently advances First Nations governance and economic aspirations over their territories, high levels of conservation, and logging activity which respects nature’s limits. Eighty-five per cent (3.1 million hectares) of the region’s coastal temperate rainforests will be permanently off limits to industrial logging. The remaining 15 per cent (550,000 hectares) will be subject to the most stringent legal standards for commercial logging operations in North America.

“Thank you to the Fuller Challenge for believing in our collective work to help safeguard this spectacular region, home to more than two dozen Indigenous communities who have stewarded their traditional lands since time immemorial. This award further validates our solutions model for large-scale forest conservation, uplifting Indigenous rights and fighting climate change,” says Greenpeace’s Eduardo Sousa. “We’ve learned that breakthroughs are possible, but only through constructive dialogue and steadfast collaboration. We believe what has been achieved here in the Great Bear Rainforest can inspire other forest regions facing their own challenges.”

“Everywhere we look we see the environment, the economy and Indigenous people pitted against each other. It’s not a coincidence, it’s systemic. The model of management now operating in the Great Bear required prying open that system and then inventing what would replace it”, says Valerie Langer with Stand.earth (formerly ForestEthics). “It took villages to do so and our unwavering dedication to see the change through multiple scales across multiple jurisdictions.”

The Fuller Challenge Selection Committee noted that by collaborating and innovating solutions with Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments and industry, the Rainforest Solutions Project member organizations demonstrated “the importance of large-scale and long-term comprehensive design thinking.”

“This award is a big motivator for us to build on the Great Bear Rainforest solutions. What has been accomplished offers us a compass to guide us toward solving similar conflicts elsewhere: science-based decision-making, aligning with nature’s limits, respecting Indigenous rights, and collaboration between governments and stakeholders. This is the approach we must pursue globally and with urgency, to save the life-support system of our planet, the web of life and our own species.” says Jens Wieting, Sierra Club BC.

The Rainforest Solutions Project’s members Greenpeace, Sierra Club BC and Stand.earth together with Coastal First Nations-Great Bear Initiative, Nanwakolas Council, the Government of British Columbia, BC Timber Sales, Catalyst Paper, Howe Sound Pulp & Paper, Interfor Corporation and Western Forest Products, worked hard to move from conflict to a shared outcome rooted in 15 years of collaboration and negotiation. As of February 2016, the vision for conservation and community well-being committed to in 2006 is now underway with legal and policy agreements.

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For more information:

The Great Bear Rainforest Agreements:

http://www.savethegreatbear.org/images/uploads/RSP_GBRBackgrounderFebruary2016.pdf

The Buckminster Fuller Institute’s Fuller Challenge Award:

<https://www.bfi.org/ideaindex/projects/2016/rainforest-solutions-project>