

RAINFOREST SOLUTIONS PROJECT
A JOINT INITIATIVE OF



There are more jobs if we keep the trees
The short version of a long story

The BC government has a choice to make. Participants in the Central Coast and North Coast stakeholder processes have recommended bold new land use plans. A similar plan is in the works for Haida Gwaii. This is a unique opportunity, where coastal First Nations and a range of stakeholders, including the logging industry and environmental organizations, agree that it is in our common interest to set aside a significant portion of the Great Bear Rainforest as protected areas, where no logging, mining or other industrial development is allowed, and that the remainder of the landbase be managed with sustainable methods of resource extraction. ForestEthics, Greenpeace and Sierra Club of Canada, British Columbia Chapter support this vision, which we are calling the ‘Sustainability Scenario.’ The Sustainability Scenario implies keeping more trees and logging less, but contrary to what British Columbians might expect, this scenario actually involves creating jobs, compared to business-as-usual industrial logging and other resource extraction practices.

The following table summarizes job gains and losses over the next twenty years if we keep the trees in the Great Bear Rainforest by implementing the Sustainability Scenario. The table breaks down job estimates by looking at jobs for people who live within the Great Bear Rainforest, as well as looking at province-wide employment.

Jobs lost and gained with the sustainability scenario as compared to business as usual

Job loss/gain category	Great Bear Rainforest		Province-wide	
	low	high	Low	high
Jobs lost due to reduced volume logged	-70	-70	-251	-251
Jobs gained due to sustainable forestry practices	85	175	85	175
Jobs gained in value added processing*	150	170	150	170
SUBTOTAL Net change in forest sector jobs	165	285	-16	104
Net change in mining sector jobs	0	0	0	0
Tourism jobs otherwise lost if sustainability scenario not implemented	55	110	110	220
New jobs, Shellfish Aquaculture*	200	350	200	350
New Conservation jobs*	85	90	85	90
New tourism jobs	172	259	241	362
New jobs, other sectors*	95	95	190	190
Net gain in jobs	772	1178	810	1305

* Because of global interest in the world-class environmental values on the Coast, under the Sustainability Scenario, First Nations would be eligible to benefit from a fund worth up to \$120 million under the Conservation Investments and Incentives Initiative (CIII), while Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) opportunities could attract up to an additional \$80 million in venture capital and loan funds to support new sustainable economic opportunities in all coastal communities and communities dependent on the Central and North coasts. Together, these funds will help create a significant number of jobs – but only under the Sustainability Scenario.

How does the Sustainability Scenario create more jobs than its unsustainable, business-as-usual counterpart? Here's how:

- The coastal timber industry has been shedding jobs. By 1995, BC achieved the dubious distinction of creating the fewest jobs per 1000m³ logged in the industrialized world.
- In the 1960's, logging 2000 m³ from BC's coast would keep one logger working for a year. Today, 4000 m³ would have to be logged to employ one logger. Under business as usual, logging jobs will continue to be lost as industry continues to become more efficient and as old growth forests are rapidly depleted.
- In wood processing, jobs are being lost to automation. In recent years, 2,250 positions have been lost in coastal mills. More mills will be shut down as industry consolidation continues, and more jobs will be lost as mills are upgraded.
- Sustainable logging requires more careful practices, requiring more loggers per 1000m³ of timber logged.
- Under business-as-usual practices, it is difficult for the small value-added processors within the Great Bear Rainforest, such as Abfam Enterprises on Haida Gwaii, to gain access to the logs they need, even though Abfam creates more than twice as many jobs per 1000m³ of timber processed than the large mills. Many logs are exported from BC without processing, while the jobs are exported along with the raw logs.
- Under the Sustainability Scenario, more of the logging will be done by joint ventures with local First Nations and through community forestry operations, which will in turn make timber available for local value-added processing. Redstone Strategy Group has shown there are a number of opportunities for value-added processing on BC's coast. By attracting investment capital and loan funds to the coast, the Sustainability Scenario can help increase the size of the value-added sector, meaning fewer logs will leave the coast unprocessed.
- By logging too quickly and unsustainably, business-as-usual puts long-term jobs at risk by eliminating highly productive forest types much faster than they can grow back and achieve the high-value attributes of old growth.
- For over twenty years, there has not been a metallic mineral mine on the coast. The Sustainability Scenario does not affect mining jobs and proposed new protected areas have little or no mineral wealth.
- The Sustainability Scenario brings with it up to \$120 million to support conservation-related jobs and for investment in First Nations economic development. Up to an additional \$80 million in Social Responsible Investments will flow to business ventures in coastal communities and communities dependent on coastal resources. Together, these funds create jobs in conservation, and in emerging sectors such as shellfish aquaculture.
- The Sustainability Scenario protects tourism sector jobs that would be lost if landscapes were degraded and it creates new jobs as tourism businesses invest in new and expanded facilities with the knowledge that by protecting the coast's unique environmental qualities, and ensuring healthy wildlife populations, the land will attract visitors for decades to come.

For more information, we encourage you to read “Revitalizing British Columbia’s Coastal Economy: A New Economic Vision for the North and Central Coast and Haida Gwaii.”

Sources:

The above estimates of losses and gains in jobs come from a number of reports.

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