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Greenpeace Q&A on the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement

18 May 2010 (Toronto and Montreal)—Greenpeace along with eight other environmental organizations, the Forest Products Association of Canada and its twenty one member companies have unveiled the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement (CBFA), one of the biggest, most ambitious conservation planning agreements ever. The Agreement was announced at press events in Toronto and Montreal.

1. Why is Greenpeace involved in this agreement?

This long-term agreement is our best chance to save threatened woodland caribou, to protect vast areas of the globally important Boreal Forest and to put in place better, more responsible and sustainable forestry. This historic conservation agreement is unusual because it includes such a diverse and large group of environmental organizations and forest companies and covers a massive area larger than France. The Agreement includes an immediate moratorium on logging of nearly 29 million hectares of Boreal Forest, representing virtually all critical woodland caribou habitat in the lands managed by the forest companies that are party to this agreement – an area the size of Italy. The Agreement is a truce in the Battle for the Boreal Forest, a very clear and strong roadmap to success and a new powerful partnership to make it happen.

2. What is likely to come out of this agreement?

Vast areas of intact Boreal wilderness permanently protected, based on the latest and leading science. Woodland caribou will have a much better chance of surviving and thriving because large areas of its habitat will be preserved. World leading forest practices will be put in place across 72 million hectares of forest and the forest sector and dependent communities will prosper.

3. Why are woodland caribou so important and such a focus of this agreement?

Woodland caribou are important in this agreement for two main reasons: First, they are threatened with extinction, and second, they are considered an ‘umbrella’ species. If caribou populations are healthy, then the populations of many other species also tend to be healthy. They are an indicator of the state of the Boreal Forest, and right now the future of woodland caribou is uncertain.

4. How many woodland caribou are there in the Boreal Forest?

Scientists estimate that only 36,000 woodland caribou remain in Canada’s Boreal Forest. They roam an area roughly 2.5 million km² in size, larger than Ontario and Quebec combined. The largest proportion of woodland caribou range is found in Quebec (28 per cent) and Ontario (19 per cent), with the smallest amount of their range in British Columbia (one per cent). Woodland caribou are listed as a species at risk in Canada, with some populations considered threatened or endangered. In Ontario for example, scientists predict woodland caribou will disappear from the Boreal Forest by the end of the century unless large protected areas are put in place.

5. Why did the member companies of the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) sign on to the Agreement?

FPAC companies understand that the status quo in forest operations is not an option anymore. Today’s marketplace is demanding sustainable and responsibly produced

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products and only companies that deliver on the promise of being green will likely prosper in the long term. In recent years, many major forest products customers from across Canada, USA and Europe have clearly expressed to their suppliers that they want to see change in the way the Boreal Forest is managed. The fact that FPAC companies are responding to this market demand is further proof that what's good for the forest is also what's good for business and the economy.

6. What do the companies get out of it?

Greenpeace, ForestEthics and Canopy are immediately suspending their "Do-Not-Buy" and divestment campaigns against the FPAC member companies. In the longer term, once the Agreement is fully implemented, protected areas are created and woodland caribou are given a chance to recover, FPAC companies will operate in a more certain business environment and their leadership on conservation issues will help them strengthen their relationships with current customers, regain past customers and capture new markets, creating a healthier forest industry in Canada.

7. Will this agreement stop Greenpeace from doing direct actions and protests against forestry companies?

Greenpeace will stop all direct actions and public protests against FPAC member companies. Greenpeace will continue to target companies that are not part of the Agreement and continue to profit from Boreal Forest destruction.

8. Does this mean the Greenpeace Boreal Forest campaign is over?

No, far from it. The announcement of the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement is the beginning of a new and exciting chapter in Greenpeace's Boreal Forest campaign. There is a tremendous amount of work to implement the Agreement and make certain new protected areas are safeguarded in legislation. One of our first steps is to ensure provincial governments across Canada support the Agreement with staff resources, funding and ambitious and binding legislation. Greenpeace will also look to other forestry companies, not part of this agreement, to end their destructive practices in the Boreal Forest.

9. What companies are not supporting this agreement?

Domtar and Buchanan are the two largest companies not part of this agreement. Other smaller companies are not involved either. We welcome new companies with a commitment to better forestry to join the Agreement.

10. How will you measure progress in implementing this agreement?

Progress will be measured by an independent third party auditor and periodic reports will be made public. These reports will help drive all parties to do their best to implement the Agreement.

11. Will you stop urging customers to take action against logging companies?

Greenpeace will maintain its relationships with the major customers of the forest companies that are part of this agreement. These customers can help push all parties to implement the Agreement quickly and fully. A number of customers will be asked to join

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the formal Customer and Investor Update Group to closely monitor progress. If progress is not being made, we expect customers to act.

12. First Kimberly-Clark, and now this? Isn't Greenpeace getting too close to the companies that you've been aggressively campaigning against for years?

Greenpeace has no permanent friends or permanent enemies. We challenge companies that profit from forest destruction, and we work with those that are truly committed to protecting the environment and taking action on the ground. We strongly believe that this agreement is the best chance to save woodland caribou and to protect the most important and very large areas of intact wilderness in the Boreal Forest. We also believe the Agreement will lead to sustainable management of the Boreal Forest. The Agreement is a roadmap to get there; we realize that those who manage and log in the forest must be part of the solution.

13. How is the almost 29 million hectares of caribou habitat exempted from logging during the three-year planning period? What happens if an FPAC member company reneges on this agreement?

Logging companies have modified their logging plans so that no logging or road building will happen over the next three years in virtually all woodland caribou habitat (amounting to nearly 29 million hectares across the country, an area the size of Italy). If a company decides to violate this aspect of the Agreement or other provisions, the independent auditor will report it. Under the formal dispute resolution process, if a company does not comply then it will be forced to leave the Agreement. We also expect customers to pressure this company to fix these problems.

14. What happens to the 72 million hectares of Boreal Forest land under the Agreement?

Under the Agreement, we have set a timeline of three years to complete conservation planning across 72 million hectares of Boreal Forest, an area twice the size of Germany. If we have been successful in this planning, new permanent protected areas will be in place across the tenures and land managed by FPAC members. The goal is to have science inform how much of the 72 million hectares needs to be protected. Areas outside of these protected areas will be managed to a new set of leading forestry practices that at minimum meet the standards of the Forest Stewardship Council certification system. To give us space to do this planning, starting immediately, logging will be suspended in roughly 29 million hectares of Boreal Forest, encompassing virtually all of the most valuable woodland caribou habitat in this area.

15. Without government sign-on, does this agreement actually do anything?

Absolutely. Even outside of the near 29 million hectares of woodland caribou habitat where logging is immediately suspended, this historic agreement between NGOs and the forest industry sends a very clear message to provincial governments across the country that it is in their best interest to follow the trend towards a sustainable future for the Boreal Forest. If we can come together and propose solutions, so can our policy makers. An agreement of this size and scope puts pressure directly on provincial governments to follow up with meaningful regulations and legislation. Also under the Agreement,

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proposals for protected areas, and conservation plans more generally will be acted on to the greatest extent practicable regardless of government action.

16. What does Greenpeace expect from provincial governments now?

Greenpeace expects that provincial governments will support this agreement with funding and staff resources and by aligning current policy and land use planning processes to make this agreement successful. Most importantly, we expect provincial government to legislate for the Agreement's proposed protected areas and new standards of forestry.

17. What does this agreement mean for Canadians in northern communities who are already struggling to find work in the forest sector? Are they going to be put out of work?

This agreement means more stability for northern communities. Right now jobs are being shed on nearly a daily basis because companies are not able to compete globally. With the conservation outcomes of this agreement in place, FPAC member companies will stand out as leaders in sustainable forestry and conservation. As such they will secure stronger relationships with customers and grow their business. This will be good for northern communities and workers. The status quo is not an option.

18. The Agreement includes areas of the Boreal Forest in Alberta. Will this affect tar sands development and if so, how does that impact your tar sands campaign?

This agreement is a great lesson for oil companies operating in the tar sands on how real environmental leadership can be embraced. Change and better business practices need to happen. We expect oil and gas companies to respect outcomes of this agreement, including proposed protected areas. Our Tar Sands campaign continues.

19. Has Greenpeace taken steps to involve First Nations in this process?

Greenpeace, along with other ENGOs, has already communicated this agreement to many First Nations communities, organizations and leaders. We believe that it is essential that they are involved in determining the outcomes of this agreement and we hope they will join us. We are asking First Nations leaders to help implement this agreement.

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Editors may also download photos themselves at www.greenpeace.ca/gallery

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