

## Scientists' Declaration to Protect Intact, Old-Growth Rainforests of Clayoquot Sound in British Columbia

As scientists, we urge the British Columbia government to recognize the global significance of its intact coastal rainforests by protecting them from logging and development, particularly the intact valleys of the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve<sup>1</sup>. Clayoquot Sound is recognized as a biosphere reserve because it is one of the few remaining intact temperate rainforests in the world.

Temperate rainforests constitute only about 2.5 percent of the earth's forests, and British Columbia's coastal forests are a global resource representing over one-quarter of this total<sup>2</sup>. However, productive rainforests have been reduced by more than one-half throughout British Columbia and up to three-quarters on Vancouver Island<sup>3</sup>. Thus, protection of remaining intact rainforests is of vital conservation importance.

New information shows that British Columbia's Great Bear, Haida Gwaii, and Clayoquot Sound rainforests may play an important role in helping to stabilize the global climate, as these forests store an estimated 1.8 billion tonnes of carbon, the equivalent of nearly 100 times the province's official annual greenhouse gas emissions<sup>4</sup>. When rainforests are cut down, up to 40 percent of their stored carbon is released as a global warming pollutant<sup>5</sup>.

Clayoquot Sound's temperate rainforests remain highly vulnerable to continued development. With the exception of the valleys within Strathcona Park, Clayoquot Sound's parks, as well as the watershed reserves created in 2006, are likely too small and fragmented to maintain viable populations of rainforest species. The watershed reserves are also open to some forms of development.

Therefore, given the global importance of the region and the imminent threats posed to intact rainforests, we the undersigned urge First Nations, provincial and federal decision-makers, logging companies, and other stakeholders to cease logging in all remaining intact valleys of Clayoquot Sound. We propose that these areas receive full recognition and protection as core conservation areas of the biosphere reserve to preserve the integrity of its ecosystems<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The current declaration builds on the 2005 "Scientists' Declaration to Protect the Ancient Rainforest of Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia," signed by 14 highly recognized scientists.

<sup>2</sup> DellaSala, D. A. 2011 (ed.). *Temperate and boreal rainforests of the world: ecology and conservation*. Island Press, Washington, D.C.

<sup>3</sup> Figures provided by Sierra Club BC.

<sup>4</sup> Carbon storage estimates were extrapolated from State of British Columbia's Coastal Rainforest, Sierra Club BC 2009 ([www.sierraclub.bc.ca/campaign-spotlights/coastal-rainforest-at-risk](http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/campaign-spotlights/coastal-rainforest-at-risk)), converted to CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents, and then compared to official annual greenhouse gas emissions in BC ([www.env.gov.bc.ca/cas/mitigation/ghg\\_inventory/index.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cas/mitigation/ghg_inventory/index.html)).

<sup>5</sup> Harmon, M. E., S. L. Garman, and W. K. Ferrell. 1996. Modeling Historical Patterns of Tree Utilization in the Pacific Northwest: Carbon Sequestration Implications. *Ecological Applications* 6:641–652.

<sup>6</sup> A protected area under Category 1 of The World Conservation Union (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas would not infringe upon the rights of indigenous peoples to extract resources for traditional, subsistence and ecologically sensitive development purposes, such as non-timber forest products, eco-tourism, and other sustainable activities.

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