

CANADIAN BOREAL FOREST AGREEMENT CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Progress with more work to be done

May 18, 2011: Environmental groups and forest products companies that signed the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement (CBFA) say significant strides have been made in the past year to turn the landmark agreement into concrete steps to make change on the ground that will protect the Boreal Forest and the people who rely on it for their economic prosperity and traditional way of life.

CBFA signatories have established a secretariat to coordinate the ecological and marketplace agendas of national and regional working groups, convened an independent science advisory team, and intensified outreach efforts with Aboriginal groups, provincial and municipal governments, and interested stakeholders. Major International customers of Boreal Forest products representing more than \$140 billion in revenue are supporting the agreement through the recent set up of the Boreal Business Forum, and the agreement's first independent assessment of progress by auditing firm KPMG is underway. Regional Working groups are actively looking at conservation planning in Alberta, Quebec and Ontario.

The CBFA is an unexpected and dramatic departure from the past. Original commitments to suspend logging in 29 million hectares of Boreal forest, representing virtually all of the habitat of woodland caribou in company tenures and to cease do-not-buy and boycott campaigns have been upheld. These both are creating the space for joint conservation planning.

"Nothing has ever been attempted on this scale and we know the challenges are monumental," said Janet Sumner, Executive Director of CPAWS-Wildlands League. "So, yes we are behind on securing on the ground conservation, but we have a solid foundation and approach that will realize the vision of the greener jobs in a healthy forest industry and the habitat endangered species need to survive".

"It has been an amazing year," says Avrim Lazar, the President and CEO of FPAC. "Together with environmentalists, we are learning to take a pragmatic and productive problem-solving approach towards integrating the economic and environmental challenges in the Boreal Forest. This unprecedented agreement is serving as a shining example to other industries and countries that there can be a win-win rather than win-lose approach to resolve difficult issues. It is clear that we can continue succeeding with continuing good will and sufficient resources."

"As a working member of the CBFA and Resources Advisor for the West Region Tribal Council which comprises approximately 10,000 tribal members, I can candidly state that the protocol of the CBFA is a first major step for Canada to move towards addressing the biodiversity, critical habitat and forest health of the Boreal Forest," said Thomas Nepinak. "I applaud Canada, industry and all involved where it is heading, protecting our forests for the next generation to enjoy. As the CBFA is in its infancy, it is premature for my community to prejudge its outcome, but I am gratified that aboriginal people are now part of the on-going process of the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement, after all for many of us the forests are our living rooms, and part of mother earth."