

Central Region Chiefs and Environmental Groups commit to Working together to find resolution in Clayoquot

August 8, 2006 - Representatives from five environmental organizations, ForestEthics, Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Greenpeace, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, the Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter and five Central Region First Nations Hesquiaht, Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Ucluelet, and Toquaht met yesterday in Clayoquot Sound to discuss their existing Memorandum of Understanding and the controversy in Clayoquot Sound. The parties agreed to pursue the full consultation and accommodation of aboriginal title and rights of the Central Region First Nations and ensure ecological and cultural integrity of Clayoquot Sound.

The Central Region Chiefs and the environmental groups are calling upon the Provincial and Federal Governments to identify resources and infrastructure to create economic alternatives for Clayoquot Sound and enable legal mechanisms to ensure a lasting solution.

“We will accept nothing less than legislation that gives our Havih decision-making power over our territory and we are pleased to be working together with the environmental community to give expression to our shared values.” said Chief Councillor Joe Tom.

This meeting was convened based on the existing Memorandum of Understanding. In the meeting the parties agreed to re-establish and re-invigorate a working group that will:

- Strengthen and renew the existing agreement between the environmental groups, the Central Region Chiefs and Iisaak Forest Resources to advance economic and ecological prosperity;
- Review the science in a local, regional and international context;
- Work together to increase the influence of the Central Region Chiefs over their entire Hahoulthee (territory) and their capacity to address land use and forestry throughout Clayoquot Sound; and
- The working group will release a status report by early fall.

“We are relieved that there is no logging planned in the pristine valleys at this time and that the Central Region Chiefs are committed to working with us to explore common ground and identify economic alternatives,” said Tzeporah Berman, Program Director ForestEthics.