Valhalla Wilderness Society

P.O. Box 324, New Denver, British Columbia, V0G 1S0
Phone: 250-358-2333; Fax: 358-7950; vws@vws.org; www.vws.org

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PRESS RELEASE

MOCK ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT PLAN
WILL MASK LOGGING DEVASTATION OF GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) is a way to log forests that is based upon the science of ecosystems and aims to maintain ecological integrity. But a mock form of EBM is now about to be approved for the Great Bear Rainforest which, despite a few improvements, remains more or less logging-as-usual while the province ships raw logs to the hungry market demand of China. That is the message of the Valhalla Wilderness Society's review of a draft government Order for EBM on BC's mid and north coasts.

"This mock EBM would cover about four million hectares of rainforest and salmon streams," says Anne Sherrod, Chair of the Valhalla Wilderness Society. "The conclusion of our reviewer, bear biologist Wayne McCrory, is that it is not based on science, it will not protect ecological integrity, it will not protect Spirit Bears or grizzly bears or even common black bears. The term 'Order' sounds like a new law, but there appears to be nothing legally enforceable in it. It contains no regulations, only 'objectives,' and almost every objective has built-in clauses that allow it to be evaded, diminished or waived."

"We were glad to see 100% forest retention for class one grizzly bear habitat," says McCrory. "However, those areas are limited. The creation of the Spirit Bear Conservancy and other protected areas left two-thirds of the Great Bear Rainforest open to logging. Everyone understood that without drastic forestry reforms, the new protected areas could not maintain their species. Some of the best habitat for Spirit Bears was left out of protection because, we were told, EBM would be brought in to protect them. Instead we find that these EBM objectives allow Spirit Bear habitat to be 70% logged."

"A drastic reduction of the allowable annual cut (AAC) *before* logging begins is the reality-test for Ecosystem-Based Management," say VWS director Craig Pettitt. "There is no mention of reducing the AAC in the Order. There are no 100% forest retention areas for salmon streams, for estuaries or other wetlands, only thin strips of forest along streams that can be partially logged. There can be massive clearcutting between those strips that would leave only 15% of the trees. There are no restraints on road-building that would, for instance, prevent roads from being built on steep, unstable slopes above estuaries and salmon streams. Without radical improvements, this cannot honestly be called Ecosystem-Based Management."

See www.vws.org for the full text of the VWS submission to government.
Photos of recent logging in the GBR are available
Contact persons: Craig Pettitt - 250-358-7997
Anne Sherrod – 250-358-2610