
Weyerhaeuser subsidized by the people of Uruguay

The giant US-based Weyerhaeuser Business employs 2,300 people and manages 5.3 million acres of private forests in the United States. Additionally Weyerhaeuser Canada manages 27 million acres of publicly owned forestland through long-term licenses in western Canada. Weyerhaeuser owns a majority interest in 193,000 acres of tree plantations in New Zealand. and 62,500 acres in Australia. In spite of trumpeting itself as being very committed to the environment, the company has got a sad record concerning its environmental performance worldwide.

News of Weyerhaeuser's recent purchase of British Columbia logging company MacMillan Bloedel, in a transaction valued at approximately US\$2.45 billion, has caused concern among environmentalist organizations across the US and Canada. The sale came just days after Mac Millan signed a memorandum of understanding with environmental organizations and Canadian Indigenous Peoples' Organizations not to log in pristine forest areas within the company's holdings in British Columbia.

The company is not only expanding in North America, but also purchasing private grazing land in the temperate region. In addition to its estates in Australia and New Zealand, Weyerhaeuser has also targeted Uruguay for establishing fast-growing tree plantations. 234,000 acres (some 95,000 hectares) of fertile grasslands have been purchased by that company in this Southern country. It is interesting to underscore that the Uruguayan Forestry Law provides subsidies to every investor in the forestry sector, regardless of its country of origin and size. So now the Uruguayan people will hand out money to this huge corporation and get very little in return, not to talk about the negative environmental and social impacts expected.

Glen R. Barry, 21/6/99,