
[Canada: birds of a feather in certification process](#)

Western Forest Products (WFP), a Canadian logging company with a long record of clearcutting ancient temperate rainforest, has applied for FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification for an operation in a watershed on British Columbia's central coast called the Ingram-Mooto. WFP is seeking the FSC stamp of approval to combat the international market campaigns targeting the company's customers in Europe and the United States. WFP has already clearcut, blasted and bulldozed a logging road several kilometers deep into the once pristine Ingram-Mooto. What WFP has done there can only be described as an environmental atrocity, yet has been able to contract SGS from the UK to act as its certifier. SGS was involved in a controversial certification process in Gabon and as a result was suspended as a certifier by the FSC for its non-compliance to FSC principles and criteria. According to Greenpeace Sweden, SGS has also recently been involved with another questionable certification process in Arviken in northern Sweden.

WFP also has publicly stated its intention to clearcut eight other intact river valleys throughout the Great Bear Rainforest over the next year. The widespread clearcut logging WFP has planned for key ecological areas on the coast such as the Aaltanhash River, Pooley Island, and Green Inlet is generating worldwide concern and condemnation. WFP's clearcutting and industrial forestry practices have had severe impacts on coastal rainforest habitat for grizzly bears, Spirit bears, wolves, and wild salmon throughout the Great Bear Rainforest.

The Ingram-Mooto falls within the traditional territory of the Heiltsuk First Nations. WFP constructed the logging road in the Ingram-Mooto over the objections of the Heiltsuk hereditary chiefs. In fact, the hereditary chiefs have repeatedly asked the company to agree to a one-year moratorium on all new logging in Heiltsuk territory, but WFP refuses to heed their requests.

Many NGOS are concerned that before FSC regional standards in BC can be established and before a trusted BC based certifier can be accredited, SGS could very well undermine all future eco-certification efforts in the province. An assessment of WFP's logging plans by Greenpeace and consulting biologist Dr. Rick Zammuto found WFP in "serious non-conformance with 22 individual FSC criteria." SGS has essentially adopted the BC government's "Forest Practices Code" as its initial certification checklist for WFP. The "Code," which has been universally criticized by BC NGOs, enshrines clearcut logging, does nothing to address the unsustainable rate of cut in BC, and fails miserably as a mechanism to protect biodiversity. Yet SGS has chosen to hold it up as the FSC standard for WFP's certification bid.

Canada has already been saddled with one certification debacle on the east coast where Irving was given the FSC stamp of approval by the US based Scientific Certification Systems. NGOs on the east coast have now been forced into the painstaking process of appealing the Irving certification. NGOs on the west coast do not want to see a repeat of that unfortunate situation.

What You Can Do:

Please contact SGS Qualifor, and request that SGS terminate the certification process for Western

Forest Products or at the very least suspend the process until such time that the BC FSC Steering Committee has developed credible regional standards for the province.

SGS Qualifor
Oxford Centre for Innovation
Mill Street
Oxford, OX2 OJX
Fax: +44 1865 790441
E-mail: forestry@sgsgroup.com

Source: Chris Genovali, Raincoast Conservation Society, Victoria, British Columbia.