



October 1999

Greenpeace Position on Ancient Forests¹

(Appendix to *The Greenpeace Principles and Guidelines for Ecologically Responsible Forest Use, 1994*)

Greenpeace calls for all the earth's remaining ancient forests to be protected from destruction.

1. Protected areas

Noting that only one-fifth of the world's original forest cover remains as large areas of intact ancient forest, and that nearly half of what is left is now under threat - mainly from logging but also from mining, flooding, agriculture and fires - Greenpeace calls for a moratorium on industrial developments² in ancient forests until appropriately large areas of ancient forest reserves have been established. These must be of sufficient size to maintain native biological diversity and evolutionary processes. The establishment of reserves must be based on conservation needs assessments, encompass all local ecosystem types and form ecologically-representative networks of protected ancient forest areas. These networks must include all ancient forests in regions where most ancient forests have already been degraded or destroyed.

2. Indigenous rights

Noting that ancient forests are the customary lands of indigenous peoples who play essential roles in maintaining and defending these ecosystems, Greenpeace affirms the rights of these forest peoples over their traditional territories. Greenpeace calls on all parties to recognise these rights and ensure the participation and informed consent of indigenous peoples in all land-use planning activities. Greenpeace supports forest uses by indigenous peoples and by other forest-dependent communities that sustain the natural dynamics and biodiversity of the ancient forest ecosystems through time and at both landscape and stand levels.

¹ Ancient forests are defined here as the world's remaining forests which are shaped largely by natural events and are little impacted by human activities.

² Industrial development includes large-scale activities such as mining, pipelines, new highways, dams, agriculture, logging and forestry. Industrial forestry is the large-scale management and manipulation of a forest for the narrow purpose of wood production for

3. Forest use

Outside of the networks of protected ancient forest, acceptable forest uses are set by comparisons of the managed areas with representative unmanaged reference areas appropriate to the scale of the activity. Forest use areas shall be managed to minimise differences with reference areas and sustain the natural dynamics and biodiversity of the ancient forest ecosystem. Assessment parameters include the following:

- species composition, size and/or age distribution and standing volume of the trees
- fragmentation level
- presence of key habitats and indicator species
- soil condition
- other ecological processes and services, including water and nutrient cycles

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