



Protecting our Ancient Forests

Excerpts from recent speeches by Governor Bill Clinton

I believe the Ancient Forests of the Pacific North West are one of our most precious natural resources and must be protected. I support the basic outlines of the Adams proposal to protect both ancient forests and lumber industry jobs. The recent controversy over destruction of the Pacific Yew, the source of the anti-cancer drug Taxol, reminded us that human life depends upon the biological diversity in intact ecosystems like old growth forests. Their protection must be one of the nation's top conservation priorities. The loss of old growth forests would mean the disappearance of irreplaceable knowledge.

We need to protect both ancient forests and families in logging communities. The Adams proposals to assist families and communities that have been adversely affected by timber shortages caused by federal actions and by exports of raw logs overseas are a good start, although the job protection provisions need more work. I would support federal efforts to expand processing and value-added manufacturing of wood products and to diversify the economies of Pacific Northwest communities dependent primarily on lumber resources.

Additionally, I think we should consider developing a new system of user fees in the national forests and earmark the revenue raised to support ecological management and economic development in the lumber communities. The destruction of these forest resources must be stopped before they lose either their wilderness or recreational value.