



RESOLUTION #2

TITLE: Protecting Old-Growth Forests for Climate Stabilization

WHEREAS:

- The theme of the 9th World Wilderness Congress is “Wilderness, the Climate’s Best Ally,” and the 2009 Congress was convened as a results-oriented conservation project to develop solutions for effectively combating the imminent threat that climate change poses to ecosystems and human communities globally;
- The United Nations Climate Change Conference, to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark in December 2009, will define principles that broaden and strengthen international climate protocols;
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has prioritized the preservation of intact ecosystems, and the carbon they sequester, as a critical component of efforts to combat climate change by promoting nature-based solutions toward adaptation and mitigation;
- Old-growth forests (also known as primary forests or ancient woodlands), and remnant stands of old growth, naturally capture and sequester vast quantities of carbon, thereby significantly countering the negative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions;
- Old-growth forests are uniquely important for biological diversity, natural habitats, and the production of clean and abundant air and water. Old-growth forests also are essential for the preservation, restoration, and the very survival of indigenous peoples’ traditional lifeways, and for the spiritual, social, and environmental values they provide for all human communities;
- The September 2007 *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* recognizes the role of indigenous peoples’ knowledge and traditional practices in “sustainable and ... proper management of the environment” (Preamble), and that indigenous peoples’ rights include active participation in the “conservation and protection of the environment” (Article 29), of which old-growth forests constitute an integral part;
- Only a small fraction of historic old-growth forests worldwide now remain intact;
- Many of these remnant areas of old-growth forest are still threatened, and their continued destruction or degradation will substantially reduce the effectiveness of other efforts to address climate change;

THEREFORE, this 9th World Wilderness Congress:

- hereby urges all concerned parties to support permanent protection of the world’s remaining old-growth forests in order to combat climate change, protect indigenous peoples’ cultures, and preserve and expand wild lands for the sake of present and future generations of all peoples;

RESOLVED, this 9th World Wilderness Congress:

- hereby calls upon all participants in the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference, and in particular all member States of the IUCN, to take concrete steps leading to permanent legal protections for all remaining areas of old-growth forest within their borders as an integral part of the climate commitments to be executed at Copenhagen; and
- hereby urges the IUCN to ensure that such protective status provided to these areas should be consistent with their continued use and stewardship by indigenous peoples, in keeping with Resolution #2 from the 8th World Wilderness Congress in 2005; and
- hereby supports the submittal of this Resolution to the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

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