



huu ay aht

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Huu-ay-aht First Nations and Western Forest Products Inc. Continue Along Shared Path to Reconciliation**

**March 20, 2018 – Port Alberni, British Columbia** – Huu-ay-aht First Nations (“Huu-ay-aht”) and Western Forest Products Inc. (“Western”) today announced the signing of a Reconciliation Protocol Agreement. This agreement continues progress along the shared path to reconciliation and a joint vision for a safe, competitive and forward-looking forest sector in the Alberni Valley.

Founded on mutual trust and respect, the agreement affirms the parties’ commitment to seek mutually-beneficial solutions that work to achieve their respective interests, while also developing inclusive opportunities that bolster the long-term sustainability of the forest sector in the Alberni Valley.

“Long-term sustainable revitalization of the forest sector in the Alberni region is a critical component of Huu-ay-aht’s efforts to achieve reconciliation, self-reliance and a brighter future for Huu-ay-aht citizens and everyone in the region,” said Chief Councillor Robert Dennis.

This ground-breaking approach guides how Huu-ay-aht and Western will work collaboratively with different forestry tenures, assets and interests to explore opportunities that improve the economic vibrancy of the Huu-ay-aht Ha-houlthee (traditional territory), including Huu-ay-aht Treaty Lands, and the broader Alberni Valley while respecting the three sacred principles of the Huu-ay-aht people: *hišuk ma ćawak*, - “everything is one”; *ʔuuʔaluk* – “taking care of”; and *ʔiisaak* – “greater respect”.

“Our protocol with Western is an important next step on the road to reconciliation. We look forward to working with the Province and everyone in the Alberni Valley to make forest sector revitalization and reconciliation a reality,” said Chief Hereditary Chief Tliishin, Derek Peters, “Most importantly, Western is committed to fully respect Huu-ay-aht sacred principles.”

“Reconciliation requires a shared vision of the future, along with trust and an unwavering commitment to embark on that journey together,” said Shannon Janzen, Vice President and Chief Forester for Western. “Huu-ay-aht and Western are starting the hard work required to give reconciliation meaning and Western looks forward to building on this going forward. This Reconciliation Protocol Agreement is just one step on the path towards a better, more sustainable future for everyone.”

The Reconciliation Protocol Agreement builds on Huu-ay-aht’s and Western’s agreement in 2017 which included Huu-ay-aht’s purchase and long-term lease-back of Western’s dry-land sort at Sarita, a timber sale from Huu-ay-aht’s Treaty Lands, and an employment and training agreement. Together, Huu-ay-aht and Western are implementing those agreements as they look for opportunities to operate across a larger land base.

Huu-ay-aht and Western recognize that the way forward involves working closely with everyone in the Alberni Valley, and looking at different ways to achieve value from the forest land base to increase the economic vibrancy of the region. The parties believe that by everyone working together, a brighter future can be achieved.

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**About Huu-ay-aht First Nations**

Huu-ay-aht First Nations is an indigenous community located on the west coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia. It is a part of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation, formerly called the Nootka. Huu-ay-aht is a party to the Maa-nulth Final Agreement, a modern treaty that grants its five member-nations constitutionally-protected self-government as well as ownership, control and law-making authority over their lands and resources. For more information, visit [huuayaht.org](http://huuayaht.org).

**About Western Forest Products**

Western is an integrated Canadian forest products company and the largest coastal British Columbia timberlands operator and lumber producer. The Company has a lumber capacity in excess of 1.1 billion board feet from seven sawmills. Western has an annual available harvest greater than 6 million cubic metres of timber, of which approximately 5.8 million cubic metres is from Crown lands. Principal activities of the Company include timber harvesting, sawmilling logs into specialty lumber, and value added remanufacturing. With operations and employees on the coast of British Columbia and Washington State, Western is a premier supplier of high-value, specialty forest products to markets worldwide.

**Forward-Looking Statements and Information**

This news release contains statements and estimates that may constitute forward-looking statements by Western under the applicable securities laws. Readers are cautioned against placing undue reliance on forward-looking statements. All statements herein, other than statements of historical fact, may be forward-looking statements and can be identified by the use of words such as “look”, “seek”, “explore”, “will”, and similar references to future periods. Forward-looking statements in this news release include, but are not limited to, statements relating to: progressing along the path to reconciliation; forest sector strategy; long-term revitalization; or regulatory developments. Although such statements reflect Western management’s current reasonable beliefs, expectations and assumptions, there can be no assurance that forward-looking statements are accurate, and actual results and performance may materially vary. Many factors could cause our actual results or performance to be materially different including: general economic conditions; changes in annual allowable cut; competition and selling prices; foreign trade disputes; changes in foreign currency exchange rates; labour disruptions; natural disasters; relations with First Nations groups; changes in laws, regulations or public policy; and the factors discussed in Western’s annual information form, which is available on Western’s website at [www.westernforest.com](http://www.westernforest.com). The foregoing list is not exhaustive, as other factors could adversely affect Western’s actual results and performance. Forward-looking statements are based only on information currently available to Western and refer only as of the date hereof. Except as required by law, Western undertakes no obligation to update forward-looking statements.