



# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Huu-ay-aht First Nations Receives \$375K Contribution for Watershed Renewal from Western Forest Products Inc.

July 13, 2020 – Port Alberni, British Columbia – Huu-ay-aht First Nations ("Huu-ay-aht") and Western Forest Products Inc. ("Western") are pleased to announce that Western will provide \$375,000 in support of Huu-ay-aht's Watershed Renewal Program. The program began in 2017 in an effort to renew and enhance fish and wildlife habitats on Huu-ay-aht's traditional territory ("Hahuułi") for the benefit of future generations, specifically in the Sarita, Pachena, and Sugsaw watersheds.

"Western's contribution to this program signals its understanding of Huu-ay-aht's goals, of both our current Hereditary ("Ḥawiiḥ") and Elected Councils, and from our elders for generations before us who passed on the teaching of: what you take out, you must put back in," said Tayii Ḥawił λiišin (Head Hereditary Chief Derek Peters). "Huu-ay-aht's values and sacred principles of ?iisaak (utmost respect), ?uu?ałuk (taking care of), and hišuk ma cawak (everything is one), must be upheld, and Western recognizes this. They are clearly implementing these principles and this contribution is an example of reconciliation and ?uu?ałuk in action."

"Western is pleased to support this work as it reflects our common interest for the long-term stewardship of the forests," said Shannon Janzen, Western's Vice President, Partnerships & Sustainability and Chief Forester. "Through our collaborative relationship with Huu-ay-aht, we have developed a shared vision for forestry based on leading industry practices for sustainable forest management, and through this work we intend to apply our shared knowledge and understanding to enhance forest ecosystems and the values we all care about."

"Following the wisdom of our elders during the 90s when they spoke loud and clear that urgent action needed to be taken to restore the watersheds – this contribution will ensure we can move these objectives forward," said Chief Councillor Robert J. Dennis Sr. "I am very thankful for Western stepping up and working together with Huu-ay-aht to restore our watersheds."

λiišin emphasized that Western's support of Huu-ay-aht is a great example of healthy working relationships between governments and business; one that has resulted in several outcomes that reflect a shared understanding and model for forestry. "This is what reconciliation looks like for our Nation on the ground. This type of relationship is unheard of – there is a lot to focus on and there needs to be balance – but when you work together, good things happen," λiišin (Derek Peters) said.

Funds in support of Huu-ay-aht's Watershed Renewal Program will be provided in equal installments of \$125,000 over three years, for a total of \$375,000. Huu-ay-aht intends to use some of the funds to apply for additional financial support through programs such as the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, Pacific Salmon Foundation's Community Salmon Program, and others that may arise.

There are over 20 separate projects and 14 technical reports that comprise Huu-ay-aht's Watershed Renewal Program. Key outcomes include salmon enhancement, habitat restoration, fisheries and wildlife research, and enhanced forestry initiatives, such as improving riparian zone protection and windthrow management. The program has provided training and employment to Huu-ay-aht citizens since its inception. Huu-ay-aht has also established its own Watershed Renewal Fund and thus far, has allocated more than \$1 million towards watershed and fisheries efforts.

## For further information, please contact:

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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 <u>huuayaht.org</u>.

### **About Western Forest Products**

Western is an integrated forest products company building a margin-focused log and lumber business to compete successfully in global softwood markets. With operations and employees located primarily on the coast of British Columbia and Washington State, Western is a premier supplier of high-value, specialty forest products to worldwide markets. Western has a lumber capacity in excess of 1.1 billion board feet from eight sawmills and four remanufacturing facilities. The Company sources timber from its private lands, long-term licenses, First Nations arrangements, and market purchases. Western supplements its production through a wholesale program providing customers with a comprehensive range of specialty products.