



October 16, 2007

Dr. Glen Barry
President
Ecological Internet, Inc.
P.O. Box 433
Denmark, WI 54208

Dear Dr. Barry,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding your concerns with RAN's work. We value your online work via Ecological Internet as an excellent educational resource and respect your views as a committed advocate for rainforests worldwide. Clearly, our organizations share common goals. We both want to protect forests, promote indigenous rights, and promote alternatives to destructive industrial practices that cause climate change.

In most circumstances our approach to achieving those goals also align. Our organizations both seek to enhance public awareness about the value of forest ecosystems, for example, and promote their preservation. We also both recognize the value of exposing corporations and governments responsible for destruction of our planets' most valuable forests. When it comes to our approach toward forestry certification, however, our strategies appear to diverge. Please allow me to address the substance of your concerns and suggest how we may resolve these differences productively.

Your first concern, to paraphrase, is that RAN has lost its focus on rainforests. To be sure, our campaigns have changed dramatically over the years. Since our first efforts to fight illegal loggers in the Amazon Basin more than twenty years ago, we've campaigned from Canada to the Congo and organized activists from Cascadia to Appalachia. During that time, we've also broadened our mission beyond rainforests to include protecting all forests, their inhabitants and all natural systems that sustain life.

Given limited resources, we have a responsibility to pick our battles strategically and we're proud of the choices that we've made. Science continually reinforces what forest-dwelling communities have known for generations—that forests are complex ecosystems intrinsically tied to climate, soils and other natural systems. Our campaigns, in turn, seek to intervene in the marketplace to reduce harm posed to forests and the other natural systems that sustain them.

This approach has won accomplishments, many with the aid of Ecological Internet supporters. We convinced Home Depot to phase out of purchasing from Endangered Forests. We pushed the world's largest bank—Citigroup—to end project financing for destructive industries operating in moist tropical rainforests worldwide. We view these accomplishments as benchmarks toward our long-term mission to transform the global economy to fit within the natural boundaries of what the earth can provide.

Our current campaigns have brought us to other critical sectors where we feel that we can make a difference. Climate change ranks among the most urgent threats facing the world's rainforests.

That's why we've made it the central focus of our Global Finance and Freedom from Oil campaigns. Through our Rainforest Agribusiness and Old Growth campaigns, we're also tackling deforestation in two of the three largest intact forests left on the planet. We hope you'll support this work just as you've supported our past initiatives, and we look forward to hearing more of your feedback as we develop these strategies.

Your letter also raises concerns about RAN's support of the Forest Stewardship Council. Specifically, you take issue with what you call "misleading statements from RAN web site and campaign materials falsely suggesting that FSC certified ancient forest logging is "sustainable."

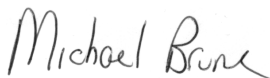
We acknowledge that FSC has flaws. We're most concerned about unresponsive governance systems. Among other problems, we co-filed a [2004 appeal](#) over certifications in Indonesia that took more than 18 months to process. Certifier accountability is also a major focus following a string of recent certifications that we feel failed to meet FSC standards. Finally, we agree that the standards themselves need work including far more stringent protection for endangered forests, stronger limits on clear cutting, and other destructive practices within native forests. We're monitoring these issues closely and playing an active role as FSC members to improve the responsiveness and rigor of the system.

While we're more than willing to consider how to better communicate our position on these issues, we continue to believe that the FSC represents the most equitable and democratic forum internationally for the participation of frontline communities, including indigenous nations and forest workers to participate in forestry decisions. We'd be happy to move our support to another certification system that better served ecological, social, and economic criteria, but none such regime currently exists. To abandon the FSC at this point would be to undermine the hard-fought efforts of many local communities.

Without recourse to viable alternatives, walking away from the FSC would embolden industrial loggers vying to undermine the FSC and similar efforts to raise the bar on logging practices. Industry backed standards including the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and others present a real danger of 'greenwashing' business-as-usual practices. Were the FSC to lose its support among key stakeholders in the environmental communities, these standards would be quick to fill the void. For now, we feel that our time is best spent improving good systems like the FSC and exposing bad schemes like the SFI, not leaving it.

Bottom line, we're working toward the same goals, and we'd prefer working together with Ecological Internet and its supporters than at odds.

Sincerely,



Michael Brune
Executive Director