

RAINFOREST FLYING SQUAD



A LETTER FROM ELDER BILL JONES

Hello all defenders of our sacred forests.

I am an elder in the community of Pacheedaht. We all have a role and a part in this and we need to appreciate and honour our differences. Difference is a good thing. Different strategies are a good thing. People of all ages and genders and races and cultures and classes need to walk together in order to help heal the wounds of colonialism and environmental destruction.

Get out to the woods.

Talk to each other, listen to each other. If you feel like somebody is not honourable take the time to communicate directly with them and meet them face-to-face to discuss your concerns.

We must trust that people involved in this movement are taking time out of their short lives and doing their very best to make positive change in this world. If people are willing to put themselves in this vulnerable position – of standing on a logging road or speaking out on the internet about the damage to our mother earth and the destruction of our sacred places – then we must trust that although we might not always say the right things or walk the right path we still deserve to be treated with respect.

The Fairy Creek watershed is a sacred place for many reasons. I have many stories about this area, from my own experiences as a child and young man and also stories that were told to me by my elders. It breaks my heart in half when I see these last remaining stands being ravaged so a few people can have jobs for a few more months.

For any of you who are non-indigenous or do not identify with your indigeneity, do your best to follow the protocols of the land and culture where you live but also know that lifelong learning happens for everybody, in every culture. You will make mistakes, as we all do, and you, like myself, will continue to learn until the day you die.

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For those of you who are indigenous, remember that there are many voices within our community. We have different priorities and many different paths to take. Some of us have committed our entire lives to upholding or reviving our cultures and traditions and some of us have only recently come to that place early in life and some of us came to it late. We are men and women of all ages. Some of us live in cities, some of us live in the bush. Some of us live on reserves, and some of us live thousands of miles away from our homeland. We work in offices, we are loggers, we are miners, we are healthcare providers and teachers and students and activists. We, like everyone else, are wonderfully diverse.

These forests bring us the clean air that we need to breathe and the clean water that we need to drink and all the plants and animals that we need to sustain not only our bodies but also our spirits.

Be humble and remember why you have all crossed paths in the first place.

I'll say this again. Go for a walk in the woods.

Thank you all.



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