



Sunshine Coast Conservation Association NEWSLETTER

Spring 2008 - Issue 15

Sunshine Coast Conservation Association, P.O. Box 1969, Sechelt, BC Canada V0N 3A0 www.thesc.ca

Old growth role in climate change re-evaluated

New scientific research has identified BC's old growth forests as one of the world's most significant source of stored carbon...

by Michael Maser

As the need to store carbon in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions makes headlines around the world, scientists are re-examining the role of old growth forests.

Logging interests have long asserted that old growth forests represent stagnant, over-mature (senescent) sources of carbon emission, and should be replaced by newer forest plantations. This view was evidently based only on the carbon stored in old growth trees and ignored the carbon accumulating in soils over centuries.

But scientists now recognize that the soils beneath old growth forests are vast carbon storehouses and that de-forestation through logging releases most of that stored carbon into the atmosphere.

Continued on Page 4



Here, honouring the International Year of the Frog, is the Red-Legged Frog, one of many at-risk species of amphibians which are rapidly declining worldwide. This blue-listed native species is threatened by habitat destruction. Red-Legged frogs can be found in the Bear Bay Forest. See article, page 3.

Photo by Rick O'Neill

Sechelt Community Forest out of Watersheds!

by Daniel Bouman

The details are sketchy as this newsletter goes to press, but it is apparent that the Sechelt Community Forest has been removed from the Chapman/Gray Community watershed. There are now no logging licences operating in the community's main drinking watershed.

Bruce Sieffert of the Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB), in a presentation to the SC Regional

District on March 13, explained that the ILMB is focusing on implementing the New Relationship with First Nations. Toward this purpose, First Nations in this forest district were asked to identify the most contentious areas in their traditional territories. The Sechelts identified the Chapman and Gray watershed situation as one of several major obstacles to land claim settlement. Sieffert said that government is moving to put in place interim protections for many of these areas.

With its selection of the Chapman and Gray watersheds for interim protection the Sechelts have succeeded in helping to secure the watersheds for the benefit of all Sunshine Coast communities.

The intentions of Sechelt Indian Government and the Sunshine Coast Regional District for the watersheds have been known for some time and are expressed in the Joint Watershed Management Agreement of October 1, 2005. This agreement is widely supported by the public; it calls

Continued on Page 7

Also Inside This Issue:

Protection sought for Bear Bay Forest	3
PR Group fights for watershed protection	4
Groups unite to oppose Texada Island LNG	5
Do we have a legal right to a Clean Environment? ..	6
Coal burning controversy continues	7
Anatomy of an endangered creek	8
Logging wreaks havoc on scenic canoe route	9
Eat Local food campaign kicks off	10

The Executive Director's Report:

Why we aren't on the CF Advisory Committee

by **Daniel Bouman,**
SCCA Executive
Director



I have been asked a number of times: “Why doesn’t the SCCA participate in the Community Forest Advisory Committee?” To explain this, I need to start with a bit of recent history.

The SCCA is the original proponent of community forestry in the Sunshine Coast Regional District and so we were interested in the District of Sechelt’s intention to apply for a “probationary community forest agreement”. It soon became obvious that the District’s application was entirely about opening up the Chapman/Gray drinking watershed to logging and that the District had no intention of considering the concerns of the community about this. Just about everyone imaginable (including the Sechelt Indian Band, the SCRCD, the Town of Gibsons, community associations etc.) advised the District during the application process to stay out of the watersheds. All were ignored!

When the first “final” application went to government, the SCCA made a submission to the Minister of Forest’s Community Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) in which we provided the public responses that the District had failed to include in its application. Subsequently CFAC killed the application, determining that it was incomplete and incompetent and that the applicant had “failed to make a full and frank disclosure of public opposition”.

The District of Sechelt then asked the Minister for a new “direct invitation” to apply. In this second application there was no attempt whatsoever to consult with the public. As well, the Ministry of Forests took the lead in writing the second application, advised the District not to engage in any more public consultations and subsequently recommended that the Minister approve the application.

After the community forest licence was established, we made a complaint to the BC Ombudsman, alleging that the Minister and the District of Sechelt had treated the public unfairly and had breached most of the provisions of the Forest Act that require public consultation in the establishment of a community forest licence. The

Ombudsman agreed to investigate whether or not the Minister had complied with Forest Act in choosing to “direct award” the District’s application. (In a direct award situation none of the Act’s requirements for public consultation apply). The Ombudsman found that the Minister did not make a mistake in law by choosing to direct award the license. Therefore, there was no obligation on the part of the Ministry or the District to consult with the public. The Ombudsman also declined to consider the issue of fairness in this matter at all (a shameful retreat from their basic mandate, in our view).

Since then, we have seen the community forest adopt extremely low environmental standards in its Forest Stewardship Plan. They supported Western Forest Products’ against the SCRCD’s Local Board of Health ruling last summer, and publicly opposed (in writing) any application of ecosystem based management or any new protected areas in this Forest District. And finally, the community forest recently entered the watershed and started cutting immature trees before meeting with either the Sechelt Indian Band or the SCRCD, all the while claiming that they had the full support of the Band!

The reason we don’t participate in their advisory committee is that we don’t think it’s a genuine venue where the real issues can be raised and fairly considered. By remaining independent, we retain the freedom to say whatever needs to be said. As well, our experience is that participation in community forest functions is often cynically and manipulatively misconstrued as “public support”, even if public input is severely critical.

We don’t criticize those who do want to participate in the advisory committee (Good Luck!). But given the lack of consideration paid to public concerns during the community forest application process itself, how reasonable is it to expect any more respect for the Advisory Board which supposedly represents the public interest? The SCCA will continue to directly advise and inform the public about the community forest as well as we can.

Incidentally, the Ombudsman did advise us that the community forest issues we raised were best viewed as “political” issues that should be resolved through the political process. I hope Sechelt voters will keep the watershed/community forest situation in mind when they go to the polls in November, otherwise we are likely to get a lot more of what we’ve put up with over the last three years!

Protection sought for Bear Bay Forest

by Gail Riddell

Deep in the forest, a dozen of us circle a rusty, moss-covered donkey engine. This relic from our coastal logging history lies in the only remaining veteran tree stand between Pender Harbour and Halfmoon Bay. We are SCCA directors and partners who are led, this sunny Saturday in November, on a wonderful up-and-down trail by John Dafoe of the Bear Bay Stewardship Alliance.

John invited us to observe a threatened habitat. In the spring of 2008, this 89 acre tract close to Mixal Creek off Garden Bay Road will have its logging rights auctioned off. John and his colleagues are trying to save the acreage.

These wetlands are home to the Red Legged frog, which is on the Blue list (at risk). The frogs mate in the ponds and live in the surrounding forest. The land is an old-growth recruiting area, with some veteran trees approaching 1,000 years. The trails are increasingly used by area residents, and John notes that several large new housing developments will soon be built close by. In his view, this 89 acres represents an important local recreational opportunity.

Alliance members also worry that silt run-off from the cut block will harm the spawning coho that return each year to Mixal Creek, just downhill from the cutblock.

We walk through hilly and flat fern-covered areas, a couple of creeks and the ponds that support Red-Legged

SCCA directors and friends start out on the Bear Bay hike, led by John Field. November 2007. Photo by Clint Budd.



Members of the Bear Bay Alliance pose in front of the “Two Towers”, mature Douglas Firs. Photo by Ryan Logtenberg

frog breeding. We hug huge Douglas fir and cedar, noting the black marks from old forest fires. There are brief glimpses of Sakinaw lake lapping the shore just below us. And close to the end of the trail sits that big, rusty, old donkey engine that seems to whisper, “I stayed here to protect this land.” We hope so.

For more information, visit www.bearbay.ca.

Future of Forestry:

FSB Chair to speak in Sechelt

On April 23 the SCCA will host a special guest speaker: Bruce Fraser, Chair of the Forest Practices Board of BC, speaking on *Forestry Implications of a Low Carbon Economy*. He will look at the future of forestry in BC, and will also respond to questions on forest practices issues.

Dr. Fraser has a PhD in Plant Ecology from UBC. He is a former President of both Selkirk College and Malaspina College, and has a wealth of experience as a consultant in economic development and strategic planning across BC and in 19 other countries. He has been the Chair of the FPB since 2003.

This talk will be held Wednesday, April 23 at 7 pm at the Seaside Centre in Sechelt. Admission is free. For more information about the FPB, visit: www.fpb.gov.bc.ca.

Powell River Group fights for watershed protection

While legal action in support of local control of the Chapman Creek watershed continues, a citizens' group in Powell River is dealing with a similar challenge.

The Committee for the Protection of Jefferd Creek Watershed was formed in response to a B.C. Timber Sales' (BCTS) proposal to issue a harvesting licence in the watershed in 2006.

The watershed is located south of Powell River, in the Powell River Regional District, Area C in the Sunshine Coast Forest District.

"We have been successful in our short term goal of stopping logging in the watershed in 2006 and 2007," says Rita Rasmussen, a member of the committee. "Good news for us in February 2008 was that BCTS would continue to defer logging in the cut block that includes the Jefferd Creek watershed." However, the area will remain in their operating plans for future consideration.

In reviewing the history of the watershed challenge, Rasmussen notes that in 2007, BCTS "took a cautious approach" and agreed to wait for the results of a "Source to Tap" assessment of the effect of logging in the watershed. A consultant's report concluded that it was "highly vulnerable and susceptible to long-term impacts with high related costs." The consultant recommended

that a multi-disciplinary study be undertaken "to review specific potential impacts, possible mitigative measures and impacts and costs to the water supplier."

Vancouver Coastal Health supported the recommendations, backing up the contention of the committee, and the Drinking Water Officer who initially requested the logging deferral. He recommended further study to determine potential risks and costs that should be measured against the economic benefits of any logging proposal, a position Rasmussen believes "could apply to many community watersheds – locally, regionally and provincially."

With the support of West Coast Environmental Law, the committee is in the process of obtaining a professional report to assess the impact of logging on the watershed.

"This is an important step in the event that an 'interested party' is required to continue with a legal action to protect the watershed and to refute the information brought forward by BCTS and their consultants," says Rasmussen.

She adds, "We support the efforts of the SCCA to protect the Chapman and Grey Creek watersheds and appreciate the continuing efforts of concerned citizens on the Lower Sunshine Coast."

Old Growth Carbon storage

Continued from page 1

The idea of conserving old growth forests as a way of storing carbon was advocated by scientists and activists at the most recent UN-sponsored Climate Change conference in Bali last December. *Carbon in the Bank - BC's Forests and the Fight against Global Warming*, a report released by the group ForestEthics in December, categorizes (remaining) old growth forests found along the BC coast as the world's most significant source of stored carbon among forest types, exceeding even tropical forests of Asia and South America.

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recommended that the forest sector reduce carbon emissions by improved sequestration in existing sinks. And ForestEthics is calling upon the BC government to recognize the vast carbon storage of BC's remaining old growth forests, and to halt old-growth clear-cutting.

Conserving our remaining old-growth forests may not only help our communities achieve the government's stated carbon reduction-targets, it may also be profitable. At December's climate change conference, Carbon

Conservation, an ecosystem services firm, announced it is working with global financial giant Merrill Lynch to explore financial opportunities achieved by avoiding deforestation and instead pursuing integrated sustainable land management.

David Pearse, Director of Strategy for Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry at Carbon Conservation stated: "nowhere else is it more evident than in land use and forestry that the pursuit of short term profit is unsustainable both financially and in terms of climate change."

Clearly, science is telling us that the remaining old-growth forests of the Sunshine Coast are very important sources of carbon storage. Likewise, clear-cut logging of these forests will contribute to increased carbon emissions through natural decay or being burned as slash.

Watch for a future newsletter article discussing how much carbon is stored in remaining old growth forests of the Sunshine Coast and looking at how to persuade government to implement an old growth forests-based carbon-storage plan.

Carbon in the Bank, can be found at http://www.forestethics.org/downloads/Carbon_in_the_Bank.pdf.

Groups unite to oppose Texada LNG project

The Sunshine Coast Conservation Association is among some 25 environmental groups and NGOs who are united in their opposition to the liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant proposed for Texada Island. The group, which includes the Georgia Strait Alliance, Dogwood Initiative and Texada Action Now (TAN), plan to make submissions to Premier Gordon Campbell's Climate Action Team.

“LNG is far dirtier than domestic gas and the production, cooling, shipping, and regasification can result in greenhouse gas emissions 40% higher than domestic gas. The generating plant alone could emit the pollution of a half million automobiles”

“This is not just a Texada problem, it's a problem for the whole Georgia Basin and indeed the whole planet,” says Rob McWilliam, director of TAN, which recently circulated a petition supported by 84 percent of the adult population of the island. (Those who were not at home were not included, so the support is probably much higher, he noted.)

“It's absurd for the Province to consider allowing the importation and burning of fossil fuels for electricity generation while promising to reduce greenhouse gases by 33% by 2020,” stated TAN Chair, Chuck Childress. “LNG is far dirtier than domestic gas and the production, cooling, shipping, and regasification can result in greenhouse gas emissions 40% higher than domestic gas. The generating plant alone could emit the pollution of a half million automobiles”

The \$2 billion plant is being proposed by formerly Calgary based Westpac, which recently moved its office to Vancouver. Westpac has stated it is waiting for the provincial regulation changes resulting from the Premier's climate change initiative before making a formal application.

Under the proposal, the

LNG, stored at minus 161 deg. C, would be shipped from around the globe in 950-ft supertankers, and deliquified at the plant.

“An incident involving one of these tankers could result in an almost unimaginable catastrophe” says Chuck Childress. He noted that at the end of January, The Chair of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation introduced legislation that would prohibit approval of any LNG terminal in the US until the Coast Guard has adequate security capability.

“It's looking more and more like the real motive for the LNG plant is to ship much of the gas to the US market, where there is strong opposition to building terminals on US shores.” He noted that BC is a net exporter of gas so that any new gas coming in will either be exported to the US or will displace domestic gas so that it can be freed up for export.

“This is going totally in the wrong direction,” said Childress. “The locating of heavily polluting industry on any of the Gulf Islands or the Sunshine Coast would be criminal.”

For more information contact Chuck Childress, Chair, Texada Action Now (604) 414-3537 or visit www.texadaactionnow.org



Do you have a legal right to a Clean Environment?

by Andrew Gage

The notion that there are public rights in the environment that reside in the Crown has deep roots in the common law.
– Supreme Court of Canada, Canadian Forest Products v. B.C.

This passage, from a 2004 decision by the Supreme Court of Canada, signals an opportunity for a discussion about how environmental law works and the status of the environment in our society. It is not a narrow legal discussion – but one for the whole environmental movement.

This particular case revolved around the ability of the B.C. government to sue for environmental harm caused by a forest fire. The Supreme Court accepted the idea that the public had rights in respect to “running water, air, the sea and the shores of the sea,” even suggesting that the government itself might be sued if it failed to protect these public rights.

Environmental lawyers have usually been cautious about the idea of environmental rights, pointing to a handful of court cases where such rights have been raised, but rejected by the courts. Environmentalists are more likely to believe that we have a right to clean air and water, but have not always articulated this message in the media or in political campaigns.

Lawyers need to ask what such rights mean for environmental law. The job of a lawyer is to translate the client’s interests into legal arguments – to explain why they fit within recognized legal categories. If environmentalists

believe that the public has a right to clean air and water, then why have environmental lawyers so rarely raised that argument before the courts? These arguments are difficult, but aboriginal rights lawyers made arguments that were at least as challenging 30 years ago when they argued that First Nations had legally enforceable rights to land and resources.

The environmental community needs to ask whether our messages to the media should be framed differently if we really believed that we have a right to clean air or

The environmental community needs to ask whether our messages to the media should be framed differently if we really believe that we have a right to clean air or water, or to the continued existence of endangered species.

water, or to the continued existence of endangered species. What do we give up if we focus on rights? What do we gain? How does it change our campaigns?

And together we need to discuss the interplay between public campaigns and legal battles: Can the way we frame our campaigns change the legal arguments available in court? How do lawyers work with activists to develop these ideas? Should these rights be advanced first through a public or legal debate, or both at once?

There are reasons to be skeptical of “environmental rights”: Is this just a right to exploit the environment (rights to hunt or fish for example), or do we have a right to have the environment conserved? Are such rights just for human benefit, and if so, what about the interests of the environment itself, or of future generations who are not here to assert their rights?

At the same time, our legal system is rights based. Logging and mining companies have rights; if the public doesn’t, then the legal system is going to be skewed against the public, and against the environment. And the idea of rights can motivate people: one anecdote tells of activists who mobilized a community against a polluting power plant by announcing that the government was planning to “sell off your right to clean air.”

The Supreme Court’s decision in Canfor raises questions that are not just legal – but go to how we address environmental issues as a society. Environmentalists and environmental lawyers need to figure out together how we want to answer those questions.



Andrew Gage is a staff lawyer with West Coast Environmental Law. He oversees the Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund – a fund for individuals and community groups that need legal assistance

in dealing with environmental conflicts. Andrew’s assistance with legal advice has been invaluable for the SCCA and many other organizations. For more of Andrew’s thoughts on public environmental rights, visit: <http://www.wcel.org/wcelpub/2007/14265.pdf>.

HSPP Coal Burning Controversy Continues

by Louis Legal

Controversy continues to swirl around coal burning trials currently under way at the Howe Sound Pulp and Paper mill at Port Mellon.

Last year, the company initiated what it termed a "pilot project" to test the effect of using coal instead of natural gas to improve the combustion of hog fuel in its boilers.

The project drew the attention of the Ministry of Environment which, as long ago as March, 2007, requested that the mill submit emission data from the original trial results. When the requested data and subsequent monitoring details were not forthcoming, and in view of numerous objections from individuals and concerned citizens groups, including the Sunshine Coast Clean Air Society, the government requested in early October that HSPP discontinue trials until public concerns had been addressed and a revised permit was issued to allow the burning of coal.

In January of this year, with coal burning still underway, the Ministry of Environment issued a new permit which specifically prohibits coal burning and lowers allowable discharge limits.

The mill appealed the Ministry's coal burning prohibition and the Appeal Board has granted a stay against the Ministry on arguments that the mill would



otherwise have to close. The appeal process is expected to take several months.

The mill's persistence in the use of coal in place of costlier but cleaner natural gas flies in the face of the B.C. government's new carbon tax. In effect, the mill management is thumbing its nose at the Premier's initiative—the first of its kind in North America, soon to be followed by a cap-and-trade system. Some observers believe the mill's rationale, apart from economic considerations, is to boost its base emissions prior to implementation of the new regulations. Another factor is the financial situation faced by the mill,

which is labouring under adverse market conditions and repaying the cost of a \$1.3 billion modernization carried out in the 1990s.

Mill management claims that the addition of coal to the hog fuel causes hotter burning, which in turn improves air quality by reducing emissions, however, this is disputed on grounds that while initial particulates may be reduced, there are other additional emissions.

In its defence, the mill claims to have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent since the Kyoto baseline year of 1990, and management fears the government's proposed new cap-and-trade system will require it to make further costly cuts.

Sechelt Community Forest

Continued from Page 1

for the parties to pursue and assume the right to control the watersheds and to allow or disallow any activity for the purpose of protecting community drinking water.

Kevin Davie, operations manager for the community forest was given the word to cease operations in the watersheds in a meeting with Pat Bell, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, on March 11 in Victoria. In all likelihood the community forest will be given new operating area(s) as compensation for the lost cutting rights. We hope the community forest owners see this as an opportunity for a fresh start.

Any new operating areas in close proximity to the District of Sechelt are likely to be contentious, Mount Elphinstone for example. However, an honest and genuinely respectful approach to public consultation could well provide the direction that the

community forest needs to have if it is to become the environmentally responsible, socially acceptable and economically feasible enterprise that everyone would like it to be.

Check our website (www.thescca.ca) for updates.

During the summer of 2007 it seemed like *everyone* was protesting watershed logging. Photo by Junco Jan.



Anatomy of an Endangered Creek

by Esther Dyck and Nadja Hocking

Threatened by thoughtless logging and residential development, Myrtle Creek is typical of many salmon-bearing streams throughout the Sunshine Coast.

The creek meanders through farmlands, wetlands, forests and canyons to its outlet at Pebble beach, about five

kilometers south of Powell River. Fed by natural springs and Hammel Lake, its strong year round flow supports wild Coho and Chum runs as well as cutthroat and rainbow trout populations. The low elevation reaches are critical for spawning. Because Myrtle Creek stocks are completely wild, they serve as an important benchmark for survival rates of other wild fish stocks on the Mainland coast.

Although Myrtle is a unique creek, it has typical problems. It runs through private property as well as privately managed forest land. Residents and developers often do not understand the significance of the stream and are unaware of legal obligations not to damage streams or fish habitat. Logging on both private and Crown land can also inflict major damage.

The litany of problems that have occurred in Myrtle creek are typical. In 2006 a private developer cleared land next to the creek without putting necessary sediment control in place, and silt ran like molasses into the creek. Volunteers and Boy Scouts came to the rescue, planting grass and installing culverts and sediment ponds. Then another rain storm in November 2007 washed a heavy deposit of silt from a nearby residential development into Chum spawning beds. Habitat restoration is still going on.

More problems are in the making: A proposed new real estate development could see road building and land clearing right up to the creek banks. As well, harvesting on private managed forest land along the creek is scheduled for this coming summer.

“Removal of stream side trees and natural vegetation leads to dramatic changes in the environment,” explains Esther Dyck, a locally based fisheries field technician.

“Water temperatures rise, peak flows during rain storms increase in volume and force, often blowing out the creek’s food chain, mud and sedimentation levels increase, which in turn threatens to suffocate eggs and small fry and make new spawning attempts more difficult.

“Once habitat is severely compromised, restoration is extremely difficult, time consuming and expensive.”

Dyck and others believe that in order to keep our salmon streams healthy, changes are desperately needed. First of all, the federal Fisheries Act should be rigorously enforced wherever habitat is damaged. The new Private Managed Forest Act is completely ineffective in protecting fishery values and needs to be amended. And there is need for a lot of public education.

Once this diverse wild salmon resource is lost it can never be replaced.

Glass Sponge Reefs: A Choral Coral Presentation



Recently discovered on the coast of BC and northern Washington State are life forms that were thought to have died out in the Jurassic era some 75 million years ago—giant reefs composed of crystalline sponges. These glass sponge reefs, found nowhere else in the world, range from Hecate Strait south to the Gulf of Georgia, including areas off the east coast of Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast.

Tragically the reefs have already suffered massive damage from deep sea trawling activity, and efforts are being made to give them permanent protected status.

On May 31, the SCCA is sponsoring a presentation about the sponges by Megan Baker, of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. Accompanying hauntingly beautiful images of the reefs will be a short concert by the Suncoast Singers, led by Choir Director Joy McLeod, singing a selection of inspiring environmental songs.

The concert/presentation will take place from 1-4 pm at the Heritage Playhouse in Gibsons. Admission is by donation.

Indiscriminate logging wreaks havoc on canoe route

Among the recreational jewels treasured by residents and tourists on the upper Sunshine Coast is the Powell Lake Canoe Route. A chain of lakes connected by rivers and portages makes for an unique wilderness experience that has attracted a reputation well beyond Powell River. Now, reports David Moore, of Friends of Eagle River, a key portion of the route has been spoiled by “aggressive and destructive” clearcut logging.

For decades, local residents had assumed that the entire area was Crown land. However, the Horseshoe river, which connects two of the lakes (Lois and Horseshoe) runs through private forest lands, owned by Island Timberlands Partnership Ltd., of Nanaimo.

This section was acquired by Island from Weyerhaeuser who in turn acquired it from its former owner, MacMilland Bloedel. Island Timberlands is wholly owned by Brookfield Asset Management Inc. (formerly Brascan) whose directors include B.C. businessman, Jimmy Pattison and Frank McKenna, former premier of New Brunswick. The Canada Pension Plan and Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan are reported to be significant shareholders.

Because the river is whitewater for most of its one-kilometre length, Moore explains, a well constructed portage trail fitted with canoe racks for paddlers, campsites and picnic areas, was built through the shady understory of lush conifers, mostly Douglas fir nearing 100 years old.

“It couldn’t possibly be called a tourist attraction any more.”

“I doubt that anyone could take this idyllic walk and not exclaim upon its exceptional beauty—we’ve enjoyed it for decades. Now it has been ruined by Island Timberlands,” laments Moore. “It couldn’t possibly be called a tourist attraction any more.”

The company has clearcut right to the river bank and along part of the lakeshore, reports Moore, adding that no attempt has been made to clear up debris and blowdown timber “which crisscrosses the river, the portage, the banks and everywhere you look.

“Island Timberlands claims to conduct their operations



Dismayed outdoor enthusiasts view the ruins of the Horseshoe River portage, logged to the shoreline by Island Timberlands. Photo by David Moore.

to meet the standards set by the Private Managed Forest Land Act,” Moore notes. “If that is the case then attention should be focused on the appalling weakness of the regulations...”

“In the end, logging companies do what they do, but the regulator, the BC Government, must be held accountable if our environment is destroyed.”

The Horseshoe logging took place a year ago, but Island Timberlands has other private holdings remaining to be logged. Of particular concern is the popular Eagle River and the ecologically sensitive Stillwater Bluffs, an unspoiled section of rocky headlands overlooking Malaspina Strait, both of which are in the Island Timberland’s private managed forest holdings.

Calling the logging “a shame and a disgrace” and “indisputable evidence of the kind of timber harvesting we thought an educated society had advanced beyond,” Moore and his colleagues at the Friends of Eagle River are seeking the support of the Regional District to encourage Island Timberlands to “recognize community values and to have some respect for the ecological considerations we thought would be given to rivers and lakes.”

For more information, email David Moore at rmap@telus.net or phone 604.487.4169

Eat Local food campaign kicks off

by Robin Wheeler

Like communities throughout North America, Sunshine Coast residents are waking up to the vulnerability of our food supply.



Gibsons organic gardener Dawn Cambrin is using local yards and fallow farmland to produce organic vegetables for sale. Dawn's website is www.localorganicveggies.com.

As a ferry-dependent community with a store reserve measured in days, we clearly need to develop food self-sufficiency. So it is disheartening, to say the least, when the B.C. government introduces Meat Regulations which make selling meat off small farms illegal, with a fine starting at \$25,000. It is even more disheartening to learn recently that our own local health department had voluntarily put us under these regulations years ago.

Unfortunately, right behind these tightened controls come many others. New regulations restricting the sale of medicinal herbs will make it increasingly difficult for small food producers to move their products.

Organic farmers in particular have a history of deep concern for their planet and human health. Throttling their freedom is completely contrary to true food security.

The Be Subversive - Eat Local Food campaign is the Sunshine Coast's response to the new regulations. In contrast to the claim that these regulations are to protect our own health, there are thousands of meat recalls each year throughout North America from supposedly well inspected and approved abattoirs. This new regulation also reinforces overcrowded factory-farming—a practice many of us are trying to avoid. It is a good thing to avoid eating meat, but well tended farm animals are a healthy dietary component for those choosing not to eat imported foods.

Lapel buttons and information sheets are being distributed at Ashley's Book Store in Sechelt, the Roberts Creek Health Food Store, Jean's Organics in Roberts Creek and Seaweeds in Gibsons, and *Be Subversive* images and information can be downloaded from www.ediblelandscapes.ca. People can also email farm.food.freedom@gmail.com for more information.

It is increasingly important that individuals begin to speak up and learn to look after ourselves - to "move outside the box".

With this in mind, I have started the Sustainable Living Arts School, a new educational opportunity on the Sunshine Coast to re-teach old fashioned skills that are being lost. A community that can look after itself is more stable and better able to ride through emergencies - and knowing these skills reduces our environmental footprint. Instructors teach chick rearing, winter gardening, low water use, soil improvement, proper use of the wood stove, food preservation, forest gardening and much more. Our goal also includes good networking

of students to promote sharing of resources and more information. The spring/summer schedule is now being created. Please see the Sustainable Living Arts School button at www.ediblelandscapes.ca.



Sechelt adopts Pesticide By-Law

by Elizabeth McNeil

In February, the District of Sechelt unanimously adopted a bylaw to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides. Sechelt joins the Town of Gibsons and many other jurisdictions across Canada where similar bylaws are in effect.

Passage of the bylaw was the result of a hard-fought campaign by members of the Clean Air Society, supported by the Cancer Society and other community groups and organizations. Thanks are also especially due to the support of Councilor Darren Inkster and some others on the Council who championed the cause.

The bylaw forbids residents to use synthetic pesticides for non-essential uses on lawns, ornamental bushes, flower beds, or trees. There are alternative, less toxic and organic products available in the garden supply stores. We can have beautiful gardens AND protect the public's health and the environment from the toxic effects of pesticides.

The Bylaw does not affect a homeowner's right to use a pesticide to combat an infestation of rats or mice, termites or ants. Nor does it apply to agriculture. These

uses are deemed essential, not cosmetic.

The question now is, "How is this Bylaw going to be enforced?" In effect, the enforcement program IS the education program. An education program plus a Bylaw has reduced pesticide use in other Canadian communities by 50-90%. When people find out about the dangers of pesticides, they want to make the switch. Fortunately, there are now less toxic products to use, plus there are folk remedies that our parents and grandparents used on bugs and weeds before synthetic pesticides. The Sechelt landfill will take unused synthetic pesticides and dispose of them safely.

A "sunset clause" was added to the bylaw at the very end, which means it expires in two years. It's up to all of us to make it as effective as possible. Share the information you obtain with friends and neighbors. Those of us who use non-toxic and organic methods are the educators. Adopting these bylaws across Canada has been a grass-roots effort. Thanks to everyone who helped, in so many ways, with the passage of this bylaw.



Networking of like minded people concerned about environmental issues and sustainability is the goal of an international program called "Green Drinks". The first such event on the Sunshine Coast was hosted by the SCCA on February 29th at Gumboot Café in Roberts Creek.

"What a high-energy event!" said Gail Riddell, the SCCA director who organized the program. "It's both fun and necessary to celebrate the upside of conservation activities, and we did so with more than 70 participants."

The program is an unstructured get-together where people can chat over a drink and a snack, exchange ideas and make plans.

The Gumboot Café has been booked for subsequent Green Drinks on the last Fridays of the next four months: March 28th, April 25th, May 30th and June 27th.

Currently active in over 340 cities worldwide and growing, the Green Drinks program attracts a lively mixture of people from NGOs, academia, government and business who meet monthly in an informal setting. For more information, visit www.greendrinks.org.

"Green Tour" planned

To find out what technologies and strategies we can employ to reduce our environmental "footprint" on the Sunshine Coast, Empower the Coast (a coalition of concerned citizens) plans to host a "Green Tour" later this year. Similar to a garden tour, it will feature homes and other establishments that incorporate examples of innovative, energy saving and sustainable technologies.

If you have a project you would like to be considered for inclusion in the Green Tour, please call Michael Siddall at 604.740.8369 or email: publish_mags@uniserve.com.

SCCA Receives MEC Grant

The SCCA is delighted to acknowledge receipt of a \$35,000 Capacity Building grant from Mountain Equipment Co-op. Among the projects to be funded by this grant are a complete restructure of our website (currently underway), a technology upgrade for our Executive Director, strategic planning for the Board of Directors, and urgently needed administrative support.

SCCA Chair, Brad Benson said: "We are extremely grateful for Mountain Equipment Co-op's funding. It comes at a very critical time for us as we struggle to expand our effectiveness in protecting our regional biodiversity and improve our organizational base."



Upcoming Events

- Every Sunday, 10 am - Eagle River hikes start at Hwy 101 & Stillwater main (Powell River). Call ahead: 487-0245.
- Sunday, April 20 - Earth Day. Look for us down at the pier in Roberts Creek!
- Wednesday, April 23, 7pm - The SCCA hosts Bruce Fraser of the Forest Practices Board speaking on **Forestry Implications of a Low Carbon Economy**. Seaside Centre, Sechelt. No charge.
- Friday, April 25, 5-7 pm: The SCCA hosts **Green Drinks** at the Gumboot Cafe, Roberts Creek. All welcome.
- Sunday, April 27, 1:30 pm: COSCO presents John Calvert, author of **Liquid Gold**, speaking on Independent Power Projects, Roberts Creek Hall.
- Friday, May 30, 5-7 pm: The SCCA hosts **Green Drinks** at the Gumboot Cafe, Roberts Creek. All welcome.
- Saturday, May 31 - The SCCA presents **Glass Sponge Reefs: A Choral Coral Presentation**, 1-4 pm, Heritage Playhouse Theatre, Gibsons.
- Friday, June 27, 5-7 pm: The SCCA hosts **Green Drinks** at the Gumboot Cafe, Roberts Creek. All welcome.
- TBA: **Green Tour** with Empower the Coast. For details call Michael Siddall at 604.740.8369 or email: michaels@thescca.ca.

Newsletter of the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association

Executive Director: Daniel Bouman (daniel_bouman@hotmail.com)
 Newsletter Editor: Michael Siddall (michaels@thescca.ca)
 Production: Donna McMahon (office@thescca.ca)

Articles and photos may be submitted by email to michaels@thescca.ca or by phoning (604) 740-8369. For back issues visit www.thescca.ca.

Member Organizations

Association for Responsible Shellfish Farming
 B.C. Spaces for Nature ■ Bear Bay Stewardship Alliance
 Ecocare Conservancy of the Powell River Region
 Elsphinstone Living Forest ■ Empower the Coast
 Francis Point Marine Park Society ■ Friends of Caren
 Friends of Eagle River ■ Gambier Island Conservancy
 Gibsons Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre ■ Gospel Rock Park Project
 Halfmoon Bay Greenways ■ Heart Gardens
 Native Plant Society of B.C., Sunshine Coast Chapter
 One Straw Society ■ Pender Harbour and District Wildlife Society
 Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society
 Roberts Creek Co-Housing Project
 Ruby Lake Lagoon Nature Reserve Society
 Sandy Hook Community Association ■ Sargeant Bay Society
 Sechelt Village Residents Association
 Sierra Club of Canada, Powell River Chapter
 St. Hilda's by the Sea Anglican Church
 Storm Bay Joint Tenants Association
 Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Society
 Sunshine Coast Clean Air Society
 Sunshine Coast Natural History Society
 Tetrahedron Alliance ■ Tuwanek Ratepayers Association
 Water First Committee ■ West Sechelt Community Association

Application for SCCA Membership or Renewal

Membership in the SCCA is conditional upon acceptance of the purpose of the SCCA:

The purpose of the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association is to preserve the natural biodiversity of the Sunshine Coast region for the present and future benefit of humanity and all life.

Individual Name: _____	Individual Membership \$20	\$ _____
Other Family Members: _____	Family Membership \$30	\$ _____
Group or Business Name: _____	Group Membership \$30	\$ _____
Mailing Address: _____	Business Membership \$100	\$ _____
_____	Additional Donation	\$ _____
_____	TOTAL	\$ _____
Phone: _____	Would you like to receive your newsletter via email (pdf)? Yes _____ No _____	
Email Address: _____		
Website: _____		

I accept the purpose of the SCCA. Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mail completed application form and cheque to SCCA, P.O. Box 1969, Sechelt, BC Canada V0N 3A0.
 Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued for donations. Registered charity #87322 0446 RR0001