



Halfmoon Bay's Homesite Creek Blitzed with Logging Proposals

by Andrew Scott

Homesite Creek is born in the Caren Range on the Sechelt Peninsula and races down the hillsides behind Halfmoon Bay to enter the sea at the Long Arm of Secret Cove. Lands adjacent to the creek are currently the target of a number of logging plans—by BC Timber Sales, Terminal Forest Products and Northwest Hardwoods. The SCCA is concerned about the cumulative impact of these plans on the future health and viability of the creek system.

In its lower reaches, Homesite Creek has unusual features, including a series of limestone caves and spectacular Homesite Falls, both of which are in lands reserved under the Halfmoon

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The Sechelt Community Forest: Off on the Wrong Foot?

by Jay Forsyth

The Ministry of Forests has recently invited several BC communities, including Sechelt and Powell River, to apply for new community forest tenures. These tenures, if approved, grant communities the right to harvest timber and botanical products, and also to manage their forests for other important values, such as drinking water, ecosystem protection and tourism.

The Sunshine Coast Conservation Association believes that community forestry could be an excellent opportunity for the residents of the Sunshine Coast. By gaining more control over our local forests, it should be possible to increase participation in forest planning, institute urgently needed improvements to forest

management practices, retain more local economic benefits and protect important community assets. Key requirements for any community forest, however, must include the full participation of the community involved, the support of its inhabitants and a transparent process for selecting the forest location. Unfortunately, the Sechelt community forest initiative may have missed putting in place these crucial first steps.

According to Kevin Davie, a representative of the Sunshine Coast logging industry and forestry consultant to the District of Sechelt, the project has “maintained a low profile” and has included closed-door meetings with MLA Harold Long and Minister of Forests Mike de Jong. Davie explains that

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The Homesite Creek Forest Service Road leads from Highway 101 to some of the best hiking and biking areas on the Sechelt Peninsula. Andrew Scott photo

Murrelet Habitat Protection for Howe LU

by Daniel Bouman

Last December, the SCCA was notified by John Deal, chief wildlife biologist for Canfor, that the company had been successful in getting 11 new Wildlife Habitat Areas officially established for the protection of marbled murrelet nesting habitat in the Howe Landscape Unit. Some details are still sketchy, but it appears that approximately 700 hectares are now formally protected for murrelets. More lands will be protected as Old Growth Management Areas under the (still unfinished) Howe Landscape Unit Plan. Mountain goat winter

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You're invited to two important events:

Sakinaw Lake Stewardship Fair

Saturday, Feb 26, 2005, 10:30 am to 3 pm
Pender Harbour Community Hall

SCCA Annual General Meeting

Saturday, April 2, 2005, 10 am to noon
Sechelt Public Library

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Sechelt Community Forest

this strategy aims to “build community support from the silent majority” and “increase the [timber] cut through intensive forest research and innovations in harvesting.” The SCCA is very concerned about this “low-profile” strategy and the complete lack of public input in developing the vision of the community forest—particularly worrisome when you consider that the District of Sechelt has been working on the concept for over two years.

Another concern with the Sechelt initiative is the fact that the exact location of the community forest, although uncertain, may include the Chapman Creek watershed and sensitive ecosys-

tems on Mt Elphinstone. In a recent local television interview, Sechelt Mayor Cam Reid maintained that “we don’t know where the community forest will be, but it [the watershed] could be part of it.” Kevin Davie went on to say that the Sechelt community forest could be anywhere “from Port Mellon to Egmont, wherever the volume becomes available.” The SCCA believes that the development of a community forest deserves a much more professional approach to planning, and that the communities affected by such a proposal must be involved from the beginning, not informed by forest industry representatives after the fact.

We encourage members to attend an important public meeting on the community forest, to be held January 29, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at Sechelt Legion Hall on Wharf Street.

Community Forest Principles & Goals

To assist with the evolution of community forest initiatives on the Sunshine Coast the SCCA has drafted the following key principles and goals to help ensure that a community forest reflects our community’s values and has broad-based support:

Community Participation and Support: The community, not selected individuals, must determine the vision, goals and objectives of our community forests. A comprehensive public engagement process is required to evaluate community support and work toward clear goals and objectives.

A Transparent Decision-Making Structure: A clear and equitable decision-making structure must be in place to ensure that all sectors of the community are involved in decision-making about our community forests. Politically appointed boards, or the devolution of community participation to a token “advisory” role, is not acceptable.

Financial Analysis and Accounting Structure: A detailed economic analysis must be completed to assess all the economic values of our community forests, such as: timber, tourism, drinking water and botanical products. Costs and benefits must be given careful consideration to ensure that public funds are not used to subsidize resource extraction from our community forests. The accounting structure must clearly show how revenue is handled and how benefit sharing would be organized.

Area-Based Planning: Community forests are designed to manage specific areas of forest rather than specified volumes of timber. The area-based nature of community forests will allow our communities to consider various economic, cultural and ecological values *before* determining timber-harvesting levels. Starting the planning process with a pre-determined timber harvest volume must be avoided.

Recognition and Accommodation of Aboriginal Rights and Interests: Our community forests must respect the inherent rights of local First Nations. Local First Nations must have a mutually acceptable role in management and economic-benefit sharing in our community forests.

Assuming community forests on the Sunshine Coast are founded on these principles, the SCCA suggests the following core goals for our community forests:

Protect Our Community Watersheds: Residents have the right to an adequate supply of clean and safe drinking water. The Sunshine Coast’s community forests must respect the community’s legitimate desire for local control and authority to protect



Recent logging in the Chapman Creek watershed area by AJB Investments Ltd. of West Vancouver. Daniel Bouman photo

its vital water supply. The community is clearly not willing to tolerate any further industrial resource extraction in its drinking watersheds. This long-standing position has been consistently demonstrated through public processes, referendum and petition.

Promote Community Economic Development: Our community forests must balance all forest-based economic activities, such as timber harvesting, tourism, recreation and non-timber forest product harvesting. Economic development must maximize local employment and be consistent with Official Community Plans.

Achieve Independent Certification: Operations in our community forests must meet or exceed the Forest Stewardship Council of Canada (FSC) certification standard. FSC is the most stringent certification standard and the only one offering independent verification of on-the-ground sustainable management practices.

Maintain Ecological Integrity: Our community forests must follow an ecosystem-based management (EBM) approach that requires comprehensive maintenance of all ecosystem functions at all planning scales as well as protection for species and plant communities at risk (as identified by BC’s Conservation Data Centre).

Sustain Social and Cultural Activities: Our community forests must address and protect social and cultural activities such as recreation, outdoor education and scientific research.

Adapted from Section 3.4: Attributes of a Successful Community Forest Venture, Community Forest Advisory Committee Background Discussion Paper 1, 1997. BC Ministry of Forests Community Forest Agreement Program, June 2003.

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Homesite Creek Logging

Bay Official Community Plan for future recreational use. West of Highway 101, the creek flows through a residential interface area that is laced with a well-used trail system. Indeed, the communities along Secret Cove and Brooks and Truman roads consider the forest west of the highway as important wildlife habitat and a vital spiritual and recreational resource. Much of it falls within the rare coastal Douglas fir moist maritime biogeoclimatic subzone (CD-Fmm), described by BC's Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection as threatened and in dire need of preservation.

BC Timber Sales (BCTS) has marked the lower Homesite Creek area for a number of potential timber licences, the first of which, cutblock A58209, was advertised for sale in November 2004. One block, A71846, located west of the highway, is largely in CDFmm and even overlaps recently approved Old Growth Management Area 104. Another block, A71820, is located near the caves, opposite a previous cut that resulted (despite Ministry of Forests assurances) in major blowdown damage to Homesite Creek. Northwest Hardwoods, a Weyerhaeuser subsidiary that specializes in alder, also has a cutblock straddling the creek.

Bill Hughes, BCTS planning forester for the Strait of Georgia Business Unit, confirmed in December that the OGMA portion of block A71846 would not be logged. He noted that he'd "had a whole pile of letters" opposing the cut and suggested by phone that no decision would probably be made about the remaining portion of the block until access problems were solved and new,



Homesite Creek with blowdown damage clearly visible from previous logging operations. Andrew Scott photo

updated information considered from the Conservation Data Centre and Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory about the boundary of the CDFmm subzone. (Both the Sunshine Coast Regional District and the SCCA are writing letters urging BCTS to apply the latest SEI data to their mapping and forest planning procedures in the Homesite area.) "If that line was moved farther to the north," Hughes added, "we likely wouldn't have any opportunities for harvesting in there." That's the good news. The bad news is that the other BCTS blocks will be listed for sale as originally specified.

Meanwhile, farther up Homesite Creek, Terminal Forest Products also has extensive cutting plans and operations, including in what is considered to be the best matsutake (pine mushroom) habitat on the Sechelt Peninsula. The entire Homesite drainage, in fact, offers fine recreational and commercial mushroom picking opportunities. Mature forests from 50 to about 145 years old are generally the most productive; chanterelle, hedgehog, lobster, cauliflower, matsutake, oyster and boletus are some of the valuable mushroom species found.

The Friends of Homesite Creek, an SCCA member group, has long advocated a mountain-to-ocean habitat corridor along Homesite Creek. (The SCR D Strategic Parks Master Plan board has also endorsed this vision.)

"We strongly object to any logging

in the Homesite Creek watershed and particularly in the areas of mature forest and the rare ecosystems adjacent to Homesite Creek," said Friends spokesperson Alda Grames. "We will take every measure possible to protect the integrity of the watershed, its wildlife habitat and its biodiversity."

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Howe Sound MaMu

ranges have also been identified, and Canfor is now moving decisively to have these areas formally protected before handing this landscape unit over to BC Timber Sales (as part of the BC government's timber take-back program.) Readers of the SCCA newsletter will recall that Canfor had previously given up a number of logging approvals to make these changes possible.

This news has been a long time coming. The SCCA first raised habitat issues with Canfor in 2000. In 2003 we began to work cooperatively with the company on the Howe LU Plan. About \$20,000 was spent on helicopter flights to identify areas suitable for murrelets. Canfor withdrew from all the most critical wildlife areas. A draft LU plan was submitted to the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management that contained extra old growth protection to accommodate the needs of murrelets.

Government rejected the plan on the grounds that it protected too much old growth. We thought that the whole effort was headed back to the drawing board, but John Deal insisted that Canfor would continue to seek habitat protection in Howe LU. In 2004 word was received that Canfor's chart area in the Howe LU was being given to BC Timber Sales. Again, we thought that planning would have to start over with new players. However Canfor felt that a great deal of time and money had already been invested and that they should finish the job before leaving. Last summer we discussed the Howe LU situation with BCTS staff and asked them to respect Canfor's habitat work and—informally, at this point—they have agreed to do so.

Although we've had our differences with Canfor in the past, we certainly recognize that under John Deal's leadership, the company has accomplished something of lasting value for wildlife conservation on the Sunshine Coast. Let's hope BC Timber Sales can do as well.

First an Ocean Commotion; next a Stewardship Fair

Photos by Daniel Bouman

The SCCA's annual fundraiser and celebration of conservation was held in late November at Sechelt's Seaside Centre. The theme for 2004 was marine protection, and we decided to name the evening social event the Ocean Commotion. The entire day was a great success, raising funds and awareness not only for the SCCA but also for marine protection and Sunshine Coast conservation in general. The directors of the SCCA wish to thank all volunteers and silent auction donors for their generous contributions. Thanks also to all the participants. We trust you had a good time! ☺ The daytime portion of the event featured a series of afternoon presentations on the science and theory



The mysterious dancing hombre with the hat gave the gals a whirl.

behind marine protected areas or MPAs. We had three excellent speakers: Kurt Grimm, a sustainability specialist at UBC's Earth and Ocean Sciences department; Jodi Stark, BC marine campaign coordinator for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society; and Nikki Wright, eelgrass expert and executive director of the SeaChange Marine Conservation Society. About 40 people showed up and enjoyed a lively, relevant discussion. ☺



"Rocky," a tiger rockfish pastel and silent auction donation by Katherine Johnston, served as the Ocean Commotion mascot.

Almost 150 attendees at the Ocean Commotion savoured great food, fine musical entertainment by Michael Maser and Gaetan & Friends, a spectacular silent auction that included works by many well-known coast artists, and two stunning, multi-projector slide shows of underwater photography by Tom Sheldon from Gibsons. ☺ At the Ocean Commotion SCCA directors presented Lifetime Achievement Awards to two senior Sunshine

Coast conservationists: Paul Jones and Joop Burgerjon. Paul is a founding member of the Friends of Caren and devoted ten years to researching the behaviour of the marbled murrelet, which is

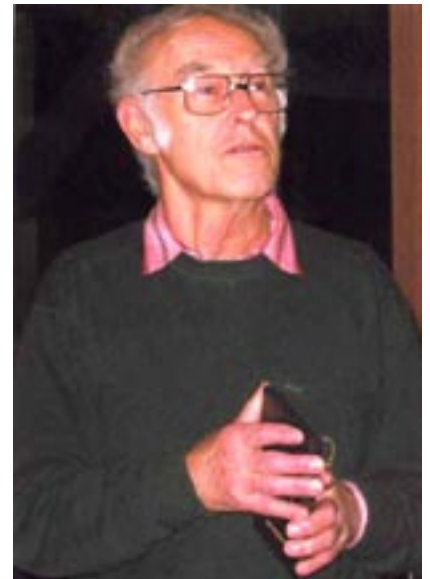


Murrelet expert Paul Jones accepted a Lifetime Achievement Award.

now known to nest primarily on the mossy limbs of old-growth trees. Paul was a co-discoverer of the first marbled murrelet nest found in Canada. His efforts, and those of others, helped preserve part of the ancient Caren forests as Spipyus Provincial Park, and his book, *The Marbled Murrelets of the Caren Range and Middlepoint Bight*, has added greatly to our knowledge of these elusive seabirds. Joop was the presiding genius behind the original

creation of the SCCA—and of the Sargeant Bay Society—and was instrumental in the formation of Sargeant Bay Provincial Park. Due to the society's ongoing efforts, 4.2 hectares was added to the park in 2004, finally bringing the entire watershed of Triangle Lake under protection. ☺ The SCCA has been

heavily involved over the last few months in efforts to help save the endangered Sakinaw sockeye. Despite the federal government's failure to list this rare salmon stock under SARA, the Species at Risk Act, a recovery plan is nevertheless underway. Working with the Pacific Salmon Foundation, the SCCA participated in a public open house at Pender Harbour in November 2004. Next, we are co-sponsoring a **Stewardship Fair**, also to be held in Pender Harbour



Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Joop Burgerjon.

(at the community hall in Madeira Park) on Saturday, February 26, from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please mark your calendars and come out to learn what the community can do to help protect the Sakinaw salmon. There will be displays, speakers and workshops. Check the SCCA website at www.thescca.ca for more details in early February.

Ethics and Practices, Part II: The Executive Director's Report

by Daniel Bouman

Regular readers will recall the discussion in Newsletter #7 about forestry ethics and professional practices and the complaint that the SCCA has filed with the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP). The ABCFP is a self-governing body that grants its members the right to practise forestry in BC and purports to hold foresters accountable for their conduct and practices. I posed the question: "Does the ABCFP in fact hold foresters accountable?" Here's an update on this very important question.

In July 2003 the SCCA sent a complaint against a forester working in our area to the ABCFP. In January 2004 we received a formal reply that the ABCFP would not allow our complaint to be investigated. We were somewhat surprised, as our complaint clearly met the criteria for investigation specified in the *Foresters Act*. We considered that the ABCFP was obligated to accept our complaint, as the *Foresters Act* does not allow the ABCFP any discretion to refuse a complaint that alleges a breach of the act or of the Association's bylaws, which our complaint did do. We offered the ABCFP an opportunity to reconsider their decision, and they again refused to investigate the complaint. In November 2004, with the assistance of West Coast Environmental Law, the SCCA filed for a judicial review against the ABCFP in the BC Supreme Court. The case will be heard in March. We contend that, in refusing to allow our complaint to be investigated, ABCFP has violated its mandate to hold professional foresters accountable to the standards outlined in the bylaws of the association.

An irony of the situation is that the SCCA strongly supports the mandate of the ABCFP to hold foresters accountable for their

practices. We also strongly encourage foresters to maintain the high standards of ethical conduct and professional practice outlined in the association's bylaws. In our complaint we documented the manner that forestry was actually being practised, primarily with regard to the conservation of critical habitat. Essentially, we have asked the ABCFP to determine if these practices meet their standards. This is an ethical question that only the ABCFP can answer. In the end we expect that the ABCFP will not be able to avoid answering our questions. Members of the public,



Pinhole camera image of Gospel Rock in Gibsons, with Keats Island and Vancouver's North Shore mountains in the background.

Daniel Bouman photo

as well as members of the profession of forestry, have a right and a need to know if the practices described in the complaint are, in the view of the ABCFP, ethical and competent, or not. We believe that the answers to our questions will significantly affect the practice of forestry everywhere in the province, especially insofar as it concerns the conservation of at-risk species.

We'll keep you posted.

Chapman Watershed Update

by Daniel Bouman

The public finally got an opportunity (December 2, 2004, at the Seaside Centre in Sechelt) to tell AJB Investments what it thought about sand and gravel mining in the Chapman Community Watershed. Over 200 people showed up including regional district representatives, town councillors, raging grannies, aspiring politicians and a wide diversity of concerned individuals. Not a single person unassociated with AJB stood to support the applicant. Clearly, the overwhelming vision of the community is for conservation-oriented management of the watershed and

adamant opposition to any further industrialization.

In January 2005 AJB produced a narrowly focused "hydrological study" that purports to show that impacts and risks on the watershed will be negligible. The study even argues that a net increase in groundwater flows will result from the elimination of such competing water users as trees and shrubs.

The next venue for watershed discussion appears to be a political one. A provincial election is now only months away, and candidates are busy formulating their policies on watershed issues. Now it's up to citizens to ensure that candidates understand those issues and are prepared to promise the public what it clearly wants. See you at the polls!

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Area A Quality Water Association	Friends of Caren	Sandy Hook Community Association
BC Spaces for Nature	Friends of Homesite Creek	Sargeant Bay Society
Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society	Gambier Island Conservancy	Storm Bay Joint Tenants Association
Carlson Point Property Owners	Gibsons Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre	Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Society
Eco-Care Conservancy (Powell River)	Halfmoon Bay Greenways	Sunshine Coast Clean Air Society
EcoTech Youth Service Program	Native Plant Society of BC (SC Chapter)	Sunshine Coast Natural History Society
Elphinstone Living Forest	Okeover Ratepayers Association	Sunshine Coast Water First Society
	One Straw Society	Tetrahedron Alliance
	Pender Harbour & District Wildlife Society	Tuwanek Ratepayers Association

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"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, specifically to:

1. Conduct research to inventory and describe our remaining natural areas with the goal of identifying land and waters important for the preservation of biodiversity. All information collected will be freely available to the public.
2. Work to retain such lands and waters in a natural state and make them available for the public enjoyment where possible.
3. Raise public environmental and conservation awareness by sponsoring educational programs and workshops and by building access infrastructure for low-impact recreation."

(Our constitution requires that membership in the SCCA is conditional upon acceptance of the purpose of the SCCA stated above.)

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL

Name: _____ Affiliate (individual) membership (\$20)
Mailing address: _____ Affiliate (family) membership (\$30)
_____ Group membership (\$25)
_____ Group representative _____
Phone: _____ \$ _____ Membership Fee
Fax number: _____ \$ _____ Donation
Email address: _____ \$ _____ Total
Website: _____ Receive newsletter by email? Yes _____ No _____

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

Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued for donations. Registered charity #87322 0446 RR001