



Who is in charge of protecting wild salmon from the ISA virus?

by Alexandra Morton

The most significant finding of the federal Cohen Commission was the absence of any government mechanism to protect wild salmon in the face of international trade.

Disease in salmon has become a federal secret. The ISA virus, perhaps the most lethal salmon disease known, appears

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HANP: understanding biodiversity in forested coastal ecosystems

by Daniel Bouman

As regular newsletter readers and SCCA website visitors will know, the SCCA has been working hard on the Habitat Area Nomination Project since January 2011.

This project has a public education component, which is about understanding biodiversity in forested coastal ecosystems. We have been building a program of images and thematic maps as an attempt at making this sometimes esoteric subject a bit more understandable. In this way we hope to raise the level of biodiversity appreciation among conservation advocates and also within society in general.

A biodiversity definition. A good definition of biodiversity is actually a bit difficult to nail down exactly. Scientists themselves agree on its importance, that biodiversity is the foundation of life, the source of ecosystem services, and is a defense against the impacts of extinction, but differ widely on how exactly to define it. For our purposes, how about if we just make up a very simple definition: biodiversity is the variety of living things and the variety of ecosystems that supports them.

The next problem is that we don't know how many species there are, and haven't described or identified even a small fraction of the existing life forms inhabiting the planet. To make matters even more humbling, it is unlikely that we will ever have a list of species that is even remotely complete, as the task is just too complicated. Of course we have identified and studied many species, but these tend to be the largest and most obvious organisms: birds,

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This image of black oystercatchers, by Tella Sametz, is from the 2012 SCCA calendar. For information about the 2013 calendar photo contest, see page 13.

"Save the Stillwater Bluffs!" campaign heats up in Powell River

by David Moore

Stillwater Bluffs is a rugged stretch of rocky coastline on the Stillwater peninsula 20 kilometres south of Powell River. Overlooking Malaspina Strait, the bluffs are characterized by bold, sculptural rock formations and mature forest, linked together by moss-covered pathways.

The footpaths and ledges appear carefully landscaped with fragile plantings of exquisite beauty. The artist, however, is simply nature at her aesthetic best.

The bluffs are a perennial attraction for outdoors enthusiasts. The tall forest trees, glacier-scarred cliffs, fragile wildflowers and pure blue colours of ocean and sky have a quiet power of spiritual inspiration, renewal and healing.

This 48-hectare forest on the sea is a quintessential example of an ecosystem

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## "Save the Stillwater Bluffs!"

where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It deserves the highest level of environmental protection.

However, the threat of commercial logging has put this landscape at risk. The site (DL 3040) is private "managed forest," held by the Island Timberlands Partnership Ltd of Nanaimo,



*Stillwater Bluffs on the upper Sunshine Coast, facing west with Texada Island in the middle distance and Vancouver island behind it.*  
photos David Moore

which is part of the \$100-billion Brookfield corporate empire. Logging in the area is in the planning stages. Flagging and surveying have signalled that this may be the beginning of the end for this fragile ecosystem.

A local group, the Friends of Stillwater Bluffs, is trying to keep the area from harm. They have asked Island Timberlands

to delay logging operations to allow advocacy groups, local and provincial governments and private sponsors to raise funds to purchase the site for a public park. The Powell River Regional District has placed the site on its high priority list for parkland acquisition.

The Friends of Stillwater Bluffs was formed in 2008 when the BC government removed private managed forest lands from

the regulations that control logging on commercial tree farm license tenures on Crown lands. This meant a loosening of the restrictions on timber harvesting practices for the corporate owners of forested lands on Vancouver Island and the upper and lower Sunshine Coast. With fewer government restrictions, logging these forests has potentially become more profitable than ever.

Island Timberlands has been logging in the Powell River district since 2006. Alarm bells went off for the Stillwater area when the fine stands of Douglas fir at the entrance to the Powell Forest canoe route were clear-cut. Further clearcuts have produced a scarred landscape over much of Stillwater and the Eagle River surroundings.

The Friends of Stillwater Bluffs hope to bring together all people who are concerned about this piece of coastline. "We represent local people who respect the fragile nature of the bluffs ecosystem and its diversity of life forms," a spokesperson for the group says. The bluffs and surrounding forest are "a local landmark most worthy of permanent environmental protection."

*For more information please contact David Moore by e-mail: [rrap@telus.net](mailto:rrap@telus.net).*



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## Protecting wild salmon from the ISA virus

in every major Atlantic salmon farming region of the world. It is so serious that Justice Bruce Cohen reopened the hearings when my colleagues and I found ISA virus in BC wild salmon. The government had assured us that the virus had not been found, and would not be.

“Rather than turning their primary efforts to protection of the wild salmon, [Fisheries and Oceans Canada] and CFIA [Canadian Food Inspection Agency] reacted against the initial reports

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*The Cohen Inquiry was called on November 5, 2009 by Stephen Harper after an 18-year decline in Fraser sockeye stocks culminated in an all-out crash in 2009. The hearings are now over; the commission will submit its final report at the end of June this year. Alexandra Morton, who testified at the inquiry, looks back.*

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of ISA virus as a public relations and trade problem. They fell into a pattern of denial, delay and suppression, similar to those outlined earlier in the 29 commission hearings for sea lice and the virus signature,” said Greg McDade, in a supplementary argument at the ISA hearings.

All the scientist witnesses, including those from Fisheries and Oceans Canada, got ISA virus positive results from our samples. However, the FOC National Reference Lab said it was policy to ignore weak positives—even though they use a machine recognized for low sensitivity.

Adhering to policy, the minister of fisheries ignored all the positive results in a public statement: “. . . none have tested positive for ISA.” His office called for a letter to US senators stating that all government tests for ISA virus were “negative” (Exhibit 2137).

In a bold move, one of the non-government scientists ignored FOC’s orders and released a draft FOC paper reporting ISA virus positive results six years ago in 100 per cent of the sockeye tested from Cultus Lake. Cultus is one of the mysteriously collapsing Fraser River stocks that triggered the inquiry. FOC hid these explosive results from the inquiry.

Even suspected ISA virus is internationally reportable, but FOC never told the US that they found it in fish caught in Alaskan waters. Why? The Canadian Food Inspection Agency testified: “So if, let’s say, we do find ISA in BC and all of a sudden markets are closed, our role is then to try to renegotiate or negotiate market access to those countries. . . . If we can’t meet it, then there will be no trade, basically.”

Brock Maartland, a Cohen Commission lawyer dealing with aquaculture, peeled off the gloves regarding CFIA emails in which the agency cheered that they were winning the ISA public

relations war—and at the same time indicating that they were contemplating prohibiting labs in Canada from testing for ISA: “This is a hockey game and we’re wearing red jerseys and we want to score on the other goal. Is it an adversarial thing? Is the CFIA going into this out of a concern for trade partners and other interests with a view to, however we get there, announcing there is no ISA virus?”

The CFIA testified they had never heard of the federal Wild Salmon Policy. In stark testimony by muzzled scientists and sweating officials, it was clear that no one is in charge of making sure this marine influenza does not kill wild salmon.

I will continue to test with a team of volunteers for ISA virus, and for another North Atlantic virus we’ve heard about (HSMI), for as long as I have funds. I will continue to make these results public. If we want wild salmon, it is up to us.

The testimony and exhibits of the Cohen Inquiry are at [www.cohencommission.ca](http://www.cohencommission.ca). For more detailed reporting see: [http://alexandramorton.typepad.com/alexandra\\_morton/2012/01/i-just-finished-reading-the-approximately-450-pages-of-transcripts-of-the-last-three-days-of-the-cohen-inquiry-i-highly-rec.html](http://alexandramorton.typepad.com/alexandra_morton/2012/01/i-just-finished-reading-the-approximately-450-pages-of-transcripts-of-the-last-three-days-of-the-cohen-inquiry-i-highly-rec.html).

Alexandra Morton is a scientist, award-winning author and activist spearheading the fight to preserve wild salmon. Please follow her work at [www.salmonaresacred.org](http://www.salmonaresacred.org).



Alexandra Morton talks to Norwegian parliamentary president Dag Terje Andersen at a Campbell River aquaculture protest.

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## Habitat nomination project

mammals, amphibians, vascular plants, some mushrooms, etc.

The picture in regard to ecosystems is even more daunting. We have some idea of what ecosystems are, and we also have a



Extremely dry coastal Douglas fir forest on the west side of Texada Island, featuring Douglas fir, arbutus, lodgepole pine and juniper. This is one of the rarer plant communities in coastal British Columbia.

photo David Moore

rudimentary understanding of some of the relationships between species and communities of living things. The only thing we know for certain about ecosystems is that they are extremely complex and that we will probably never be able to fully comprehend them.

In the face of such overwhelming ignorance, how could we possibly ensure that biodiversity will persist over time? During the 1990s, the approach pioneered by government for terrestrial biodiversity in BC centered on the idea that significant representative samples of old and mature forests should be set aside to account for the needs of all the species and ecosystems that we don't know much about. This strategy is called the "coarse filter" approach, and this is what "landscape unit planning" is all about. Another strategy called for additional land protection for the habitat of species that are known to be at risk. In both strategies the questions arise: how much land do we need to protect and where do we need to protect land in order to ensure, with a high degree of probability, that biodiversity will persist over time in forested coastal ecosystems?

In our public presentations about biodiversity in coastal ecosystems we are using the province's BEC system (biogeocli-

matic ecological classification), landscape unit maps and forest age-class maps to shed some light on these issues. Our presentation will be available for booking (both large and small groups) around May 1 and throughout the rest of the year. As well, we will post a mini-version on the website.

## More HANP: moving to protect fisheries sensitive watersheds

Looking at the history of the salmon fishery in the greater Sunshine Coast region, it's a marvel that there are any salmon left at all. A litany of causes have, in total, reduced one of our region's largest economic foundations and most important ecological features to a mere echo of the past. These include major hydroelectric dams (Powell, Theodosia, Lois and Clowhom rivers), massive overfishing, destruction of estuaries and spawning grounds, wildly unsustainable herring roe harvesting, excessive concentration of timber harvesting and destructive forestry practices. More recently, fish farming and independent power projects have introduced new dimensions of risk for remnant wild fish populations. And now the federal government is preparing to gut the *Fisheries Act*.

In some ways it seems that society has forgotten the major role of the fisheries in building the region, but recently the public has shown increasing willingness to defend the wild salmon fishery. Note the work of Alexandra Morton and the intense



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“Helping Build a Greener Future”

response of the public to the Cohen Commission.

After a lengthy period of consultation in 2010, the SCCA decided to take steps to document the extent of the fisheries decline and initiate a path to recovery. We applied for and received funding support from the Vancouver Foundation, Mountain Equipment Co-op and Patagonia Corporation for a Habitat Area Nomination Project (HANP). Part of the project involves nominating the region's largest fish-bearing rivers for Fisheries Sensitive Watershed status, which would require logging companies



*Salamander photo by Tella Sametz, from the 2012 SCCA calendar (see page 13).*

to ensure that their practices don't destabilize or degrade designated waterways. Research into historical salmon returns will provide documentation to support the nominations. The historical data will also be used to support our public education efforts to enhance understanding of biodiversity issues in this region.

At this point, we have just about completed our research and are preparing to publish on the SCCA website text summaries of what has happened in each of region's major salmon spawning watersheds, along with data tables of escapements between 1947 and the 1990s. We are operating under the assumption that peak historical returns represent the ecological potential of a restored watershed.

The story that emerges from the historical data is illustrative. The decline in the fisheries relates very strongly to increases in the amount of logging and was well underway by the 1960s.

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The excessive herring roe fishery of the '70s probably aggravated the decline. Overfishing was unquestionably underway, but studies show that the productivity of the major rivers was severely compromised by logging and road-building activity in estuaries, river bottoms and along major tributaries, making recovery from excessive fishing much more problematic. Most of the dams in our region were built before 1947; consequently we don't have much data on these rivers. But we can say that the dam on the Theodosia River (near Lund) wiped out runs of nearly 200,000 spawning salmon. Today there are no runs of this size left anywhere in the forest district. Just as one example, the Tzoonie River at the head of Narrows Inlet traditionally supported escapements of about 75,000 salmon. Recent returns are well below 2,000 fish, and the sockeye and chinook components are completely extinct.



*The Tzoonie River valley at the head of Narrows Inlet, which once supported a run of about 75,000 salmon. photo Bob Price*

By exercising our right to nominate rivers for Fisheries Sensitive Watershed designation, we hope to put a compelling scientific rationale before government and the public, showing that resource management in salmon spawning watersheds needs to change dramatically if the resource is to survive. It may not influence government to act right away, but we believe that a credible body of verifiable documentation showing what is needed will influence—and eventually succeed in changing—forest practices in the Sunshine Coast's major fish-bearing watersheds.

Look for our latest postings about historical salmon returns and FSR nominations at [www.thescca.ca](http://www.thescca.ca).

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## Gravel-mining project threatens recovering health of Howe Sound

by members of the Future of Howe Sound Society

**Over the past 20 years, Howe Sound has been the subject of millions of dollars in reclamation projects to restore its health, paid for by industry and by you the taxpayer.**

Regrettably an Alberta-based company has proposed a large-scale gravel-mining and crushing facility at McNab Creek that will set back these rehabilitation efforts, especially for local salmon populations, and will threaten the beauty and international appeal of the area (which lies on Vancouver's doorstep). This proposal comes at a time when the recovering health of the sound has led to sightings of Pacific white-sided dolphins and grey and killer whales for the first time in decades. We should not allow this progress to be placed at risk.

*McNab Creek is considered a high-quality salmon habitat with spawning channels for coho and chum. The area also supports chinook, pinks, rainbow trout, steelhead and other species.*

The massive project described by Burnco Rock Products Ltd envisions at least 1 million tonnes of gravel extracted per year from the creekbed area, with spikes of up to 4 million tonnes. During the project's first phase, a 77-hectare industrial pit would be dug out of the McNab Creek estuary to depths of 55 metres (more than 15 metres below the water table).

According to Fisheries and Ocean Canada, the proposed project is likely to result in the destruction of fish habitat, which cannot be compensated elsewhere in the sound. In its comments on the project, FOC stated that they "continue to have serious concerns about the extent of the impacts to fish and fish habitat that may result from this project," and concluded that "the project presents a high risk to salmon and salmon habitat."

The site may also be home to up to 20 species at risk, including a population of Roosevelt elk, transplanted to McNab Creek by BC's environment ministry in 2001, in an effort to reintroduce the species to the area. The creek estuary and surrounding waters are used by recreational and commercial

fishers, tourism operators, boaters, recreational property owners, numerous children's camps and other compatible users. All are placed in jeopardy by the Burnco proposal.

Despite concerns voiced by FOC, local governments and local community groups, the Burnco project has recently begun a review by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

This unfortunate situation clearly illustrates the absence of a long-term planning strategy for Howe Sound. The need for a specific Howe Sound plan has been formally recognized by 12 local governments and First Nations representing the communities in the Sea-to-Sky corridor. In September 2002, they signed a "principles of co-operation" agreement, which identified the importance of community involvement in considering issues affecting Howe Sound and highlighted the need to "work together for the greater good because territorial lines on a map mean nothing in terms of sustainability." The review of the Burnco project is proceeding without any long-term planning process involving those interested parties.

If approved, the Burnco Mine proposal will cause permanent, irreversible damage to a unique natural estuary that is home to at-risk species and will also endanger ongoing efforts to sustain marine biodiversity in Howe Sound. In addition, important jobs and significant economic activity and opportunity in recreational tourism and commercial fishery will be put at risk.

Currently, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) review of the project is underway. The initial public comment period closed on February 3, 2012. CEAA is reviewing the project description and is expected to issue draft Environmental Impact Study guidelines shortly. The guidelines will be subject to public comment, and further opportunities for public participation are expected at other stages in the review. A companion review will be conducted at the provincial level, and the BC Environmental Assessment Office is expected to initiate the process later this spring by issuing draft application information requirements (AIR). Although no timeline for public participation has yet been published for the provincial assessment, comment will be solicited through AIR and other public venues.

It is critical that members of the public and community groups make their voices heard during both the federal and provincial reviews. Information on the federal CEAA review can be obtained at [www.ceaa.gc.ca](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca) and on the BC EAO review at [www.eao.gov.bc.ca](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca). Further developments in the review process will be posted at [www.futureofhowesound.org](http://www.futureofhowesound.org), as will details about how to make your views known. For ongoing updates on the status of the review, please join our mailing list.

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## Assessment to proceed despite major federal fisheries concerns

by Margot Grant

**Both the SCCA and the Future of Howe Sound Society have submitted responses to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency over plans for a large-scale gravel pit in the McNab Creek area. Both organizations are firmly opposed and have raised a host of concerns.**

The agency had requested public comment as part of a federal environmental assessment of the proposal put forward by Burnco Rock Products Ltd.

The SCCA believes that this project presents too great an impact to the land and marine environments of the watershed and the biodiversity within those environments to be allowed to proceed.

Apart from that, the operation, which includes a crushing plant, would create noise pollution for area residents and wildlife. Dust and operation by-products would have negative effects on riparian ecosystems, and bright lights at night would disrupt wildlife. Considering that excavations more than 15 metres below the water table are proposed, there may also be risks to groundwater. McNab Creek, furthermore, could flood or change course and enter the mine pit.

The Future of Howe Sound Society (see article opposite) has also addressed the harmful impact that a project of this nature will have on established fish environments in McNab

2010, Burnco applied again and FOC refused again.

In November of 2010 Burnco submitted a revised application. In June 2011, FOC issued a letter stating that it “continues to have serious concerns about the extent of the impacts to fish and fish habitat that may result from this project . . . . The Negativity Rating for this project is High as the footprint for portions is large and the duration is permanent.” On September 23, 2011, FOC advised Burnco that the information supplied was not sufficient.



*A view over Howe Sound and the McNab Creek valley.*

Meanwhile, the gravel-mining proposal is gradually working its way through the federal environmental assessment process.

“I’m wondering,” said councillor Daniel Bouman at a January

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*Burnco Rock Products Ltd wants to establish a large-scale gravel mine on the western shore of Howe Sound. Annual extraction would be in the range of 1 to 1.6 million tonnes, with spikes of up to 4 million tonnes. The development would include a crushing plant and a dock for heavy barge traffic. Loading capacity is projected at 1,000 tonnes/hour. The mine is expected to run 300 days a year.*

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Creek and adjoining spawning channels, as well as its effect on environmental remediation efforts in the sound and the recent return of whales, dolphins and other marine mammals to the area.

Local governments are surprised they were not involved in the assessment process. “We’ve got a huge thing going on, and we find out about it in the newspaper,” said Lee Turnbull, SCR D director for West Howe Sound, at a January 19 meeting of the SCR D planning committee. “The extent of this—it’s going to be bigger than Sechelt.”

The first proposal for an aggregate mine in the McNab Valley dates from 2005. At that time, Fisheries and Oceans Canada determined that the project would result in “harmful alteration, disruption or destruction” of fish habitat and would not issue an authorization. This effectively stopped the development. In June

17 Gibsons town council meeting. “FOC is the key agency that has statutory authority to grant or not grant authority to do habitat damage. They are saying it’s too much. Why are we going into environmental assessment?”

In March 2012, it was rumoured that the Conservative government was planning major changes to the federal *Fisheries Act*. Leaked documents indicate that only habitat for fish of economic, ecological or cultural importance would be considered for protection, a revision that could have major negative consequences for aquatic ecosystems and could streamline large industrial projects.

Both the SCCA and the Future of Howe Sound Society have requested that extensive environmental studies be undertaken in a number of areas as part of the federal assessment process.

## Conservation covenants: an important task for the SCCA

by Jason Herz, SCCA Chair

**The SCCA was granted the right to hold conservation covenants under Section 219 of the *Land Titles Act*. In the fall of 2010, the Sunshine Coast Regional District inquired as to whether the SCCA would consider holding such a covenant on Cliff Gilker Park.**

The request was brought about by people's comments during the development of the Cliff Gilker Management Plan, which



*Peter Scholefield, chair of the Gambier Island Conservancy (left), and Jason Herz of the SCCA celebrate their new partnership.*

was prepared in 2007, and more recently reaffirmed in the Roberts Creek OCP process. The board and our executive directors felt that this was a great opportunity to merge the wishes of the community with our mandate for the protection of biodiversity.

Upon review of the original covenant presented by the SCRCD, it was decided that we would attempt a rewrite to make the document more suitable to the long-term goals of both the community, the SCRCD parks department and the SCCA. To do this, we enlisted the assistance of retired SCRCD head of planning Judy Skogstad and the legal assistance of Lois Potter. It has been a year-long adventure and education in legalese and the language of conservation covenants.

As Cliff Gilker Park has two fairly distinct areas, one with playing fields and various structures and the other a forested area interlaced with several paths and bridges, it was difficult to make one covenant suit both needs. It was decided to demarcate the two portions, recognizing that each required different types of permitted activities, as described by the Cliff Gilker Master Plan and monitored by the SCCA as the covenant holders.

We hope that we have found that balance with this document, meeting the wishes of the community while protecting and hopefully enhancing the natural values of the park in perpetuity.

### Gambier

While we were considering taking on the Cliff Gilker covenant, our friends from the Gambier Island Conservancy approached us, hoping that we would consider joining with them in holding

three more covenants on Gambier Island: Mt Artiban Nature Reserve, Long Bay Nature Reserve and Brigade Bay Bluffs Nature Reserve. These reserves are presently under the control of the Islands Trust Fund, and the trust was interested in seeing that the three were protected and secure over the long term. We reviewed the three properties in question and agreed that they were indeed worthy of protection in perpetuity.

Our first task was to write up a memorandum of understanding with representatives of the Gambier Island Conservancy to describe our relationship and responsibilities in relation to the covenants. That document was just signed recently in January 2012, during a visit to Gambier Island.

The Islands Trust Fund is preparing the language of the covenants, which will be reviewed by both the SCCA and GIC over the coming weeks, and is having baseline studies done to determine ecological values within the three areas.

The three parties involved hope to gather by the end of the summer for a signing to protect these valuable natural assets.

## Monitoring is why I'm here

by John Gibb

**We've emerged from the forest on Gambier Island into an opening that contains a spectacular holly tree. It's a tall, robust Christmas-time fantasy of sharp leaves and bright red berries. And it's bad news.**

Holly is an invasive species. Suddenly, it's everywhere we look, apparently spread from a defunct holly farm. The tree with all the berries will promote the spread. There is talk of a campaign to battle the holly and, if that happens, the heavily-berried specimen will be one of the first targets.

We've come on this grey Saturday to look at two parcels of land. Our group consists of leaders of the Gambier Island Conservancy, a Victoria representative from the Islands Trust Fund and two members of the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association.

As the owner of the lands in question, the trust is entering into a covenant with the local conservancy. This agreement will include monitoring to ensure that what is natural is preserved—and perhaps enhanced.

Monitoring is why I am here. My task is to develop a monitoring system for Cliff Gilker Park in Roberts Creek, where the owner—the Sunshine Coast Regional District—is entering into a conservation covenant with the SCCA. Cliff Gilker is my local park, a favourite patch of forest and stream (and also, of course, popular sports fields and washroom facilities).

The monitoring details are still being finalized, but the idea is to help keep the park as natural as possible—despite the fact that it is visited by thousands, dissected by a logging road, and bordered by a golf course and a potential housing development.

On Gambier, the covenanted lands were recently in private hands. In one spot, there is a decommissioned gravel pit, where the first impression is of a wasteland. Closer examination reveals a tiny seedling that has taken root and is fighting for life, then a second seedling, and a third. There is a sense of excitement and talk about how to encourage such growth.

It seems very different from Cliff Gilker, which is rich with bursting greenery and rushing waters. Our job will be to keep it that way.



## In memoriam: John E F Keates

We lost a true environmentalist in January.

Following a long illness, John Keates died on Jan 7. Everyone who met John was inspired by his commitment to important causes, with both the arts and the conservation communities. While living in Prince George, John was chair of the Parks and Recreation Board and served on the Save the Rivers committee. After moving to the Sunshine Coast, he became a passionate advocate for the protection of the Chapman Creek watershed and strongly opposed any industrial activity there. He hosted many



Coral Bay: one of John's wonderful watercolour paintings.

meetings and was very involved in the fight to get watershed logging stopped. John also worked actively to ban the use of cosmetic pesticides in Sechelt.

John Keates was an environmental champion who will be very much missed. A celebration of his life will be held on June 15, 2012, at 4:30 pm, at the Sechelt Arts Centre (5714 Medusa St, Sechelt). All are welcome to attend, and further details may be obtained from John's son, Paul, at [pkeates@gmail.com](mailto:pkeates@gmail.com).

The SCCA board extends heartfelt condolences to his family.

## Decision on Davie Bay appeal expected anytime

by Richard Fletcher

**The Friends of Davie Bay are asking the BC Court of Appeal to require BC's Environmental Assessment Office to assess the enormous proposed Lehigh Quarry at Davie Bay on Texada Island. West Coast Environment Law, who have supported FODB from the outset, has recognised that the Davie Bay case highlights problems with environmental assessment laws.**

The FODB are essentially saying that the BC practice of accepting a proponent's stated mining output, without doing an independent assessment of production capacity, is contrary to regulations. Lehigh stated in its application that its output would be just 240,000 tonnes per year—under the 250,000-tonne threshold for an assessment. That being the case, the application

went straight to the Department of Mines; the Environmental Assessment Office was not involved at all.

The FODB have argued that, with stated reserves of 100 million tonnes and a loading ramp capable of processing 2,500 tonnes per hour, the LeHigh project is clearly being set up for a much larger operation. They claim that the project should have been submitted to the EAO for an assessment.

When the case went to the BC Supreme Court on February 1, 2011, Justice Peter Voith came up with his own reasons why the EAO's practice was reasonable; however, he could not explain the loophole in BC's environmental protection legislation. The case went to the Court of Appeal on Jan 18, 2012. If the judges decide against us, they will need to explain how this loophole is justified, so we may win. A decision is expected anytime.

For more information, go to [www.daviebay.com](http://www.daviebay.com).

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## The gift of legacy: charitable giving through life insurance

by Tella Sametz

**Would you like to do something really significant for your favourite charity? There is a way. Life insurance will benefit not only the charity, but also the donor.**

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The proceeds are paid, in full, directly to the charity upon the donor's death without the delay of probate and without any reductions in the amount due to taxes, fees or administrative costs.

Bequests made by a will may be reduced or fail because of insufficient assets in the estate. Life insurance on the other hand is separate from the estate and payment is guaranteed by contract/policy.

Unlike a final donation made through a will, life insurance is not a matter of public record and, as such, typically remains anonymous.

A will providing a bequest may fail. The estate is then settled under the laws of descent and distribution of the province where the donor was domiciled. Provincial laws do not provide for charitable payments. Life insurance is direct and certain.

Insurance policies can be purchased with a waiver of premium provision, which guarantees that the bequest program will be self-completing, even if the donor is unable to make the insurance premiums due to disability or sickness.

To ensure that your favourite charity will benefit, donors can either use an existing policy or purchase a new policy. Typically, either a Whole Life or Universal Life policy is used, which provides coverage for life. Affordability for the donor is typically achieved when the policy is purchased early in life and the donor's health has not been compromised. Having said that, policies are still issued to individuals in their retirement years, when disposable income may not be a significant issue anymore.

It is nice to know that, for a relatively small amount (the premium), we can give a more substantial amount of money to

organizations that do good work.

For further information, contact Tella Sametz at 604-885-1091 or [tellart@dccnet.com](mailto:tellart@dccnet.com), and/or Paul Lith, independent insurance broker, at 604-885-7307 or [plith@dccnet.com](mailto:plith@dccnet.com).

Note: the information in this article is meant as a guideline only. We've attempted to be as accurate as possible. However, up-to-date, accurate information should always be verified with industry professionals.

## FOSCCA: mark your calendars

**The 2012 FOSCCA Awards evening is on Tuesday, May 15, at the Sunshine Coast Arts Centre, from 5 to 7:30 pm.**

Traditionally, at this event the board of the SCCA gives thanks to volunteers and members of the community who have supported the organization over the course of the year. This year's FOSCCA function will highlight two separate awards and will also honor long-time executive director Daniel Bouman.

The John Hind-Smith Environmental Award will once again be handed out to a deserving Sunshine Coast environmentalist. The award, established in 2006, honours John Hind-Smith, a founding member of the Salmon Enhancement Society and Tetrahedron Alliance, and a lifetime member of the Sunshine Coast Natural History Society. John inspired a generation of community environmental advocacy on the Sunshine Coast.

The deadline for nominations for this year's award is April 30, so there's still time to nominate someone. Send your choice, along with documentation clearing showing why your nomination is a worthy one, to [chair@thescca.ca](mailto:chair@thescca.ca).

The selection of the artist for the 2013 fundraising calendar will also be announced. Selected works by the artist will be exhibited at the Sunshine Coast Arts Centre, along with those of this year's calendar artist, SCCA board member Tella Sametz. The exhibit will run for two weeks; the official opening will occur the following evening, Wednesday, May 16, at 7 pm.

Finally, we look forward to honouring and thanking Daniel Bouman, who left his role as executive director of the SCCA to successfully run for councillor in Gibsons in last year's election.

For the first time the SCCA will open the doors of the FOSCCA event to the entire community. So if you're interested in the environment and would enjoy meeting like-minded people, please come and join us while we thank supporters and award artists and environmentalists alike.



You bring the plans and I bring the mechanical advantage of a rubber track mini-excavator and 20 years of landscaping experience

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## Iris Griffith Centre at Ruby Lake is working on biodiversity

by Margot Grant

The Iris Griffith Interpretive Centre is holding a Biodiversity Summit at Ruby Lake from May 31 to June 2. Stakeholders from the mining industry, real estate, the tourism sector, health care, forestry, environmental groups and government will try to identify what the key elements of biodiversity on the Coast are and how threats can be lessened. The objective is to develop a framework for a biodiversity strategy for the Sunshine Coast.



Biodiversity project coordinator Cynthia Bendickson shows visitors a salamander at the Iris Griffith Centre. photo Margot Grant

“Between all these groups, we’re trying to find common ground,” Dr Michael Jackson, chairman of the Ruby Lake Lagoon Nature Reserve Society (which runs the Iris Griffith Centre), said recently. “The Iris Griffith Centre can provide a wealth of information. We should bring our groups together to try and achieve things. Like Iris Griffith said: ‘It’s amazing what you can do if you don’t ask for the credit. Just do it.’”

The Iris Griffith Centre has been working on cataloguing bio-

diversity on the Sunshine Coast for years. Its aim is to identify habitats, species and genetic material. Every year, during a “bio blitz,” local people can report species they have found in their area. Experts are invited on field trips. In 2007, a team, including Jackson, discovered a new stickleback species pair in Little Quarry Lake on Nelson Island. These small, threatened freshwater fish are among the rarest and most fascinating species imaginable.

“We have a lot of unique data on biodiversity now,” said Jackson. “We are also mapping habitat on the higher levels of mountains.”

The 230-m<sup>2</sup> Iris Griffith Centre sits on the 10-ha Ruby Lake Lagoon Nature Reserve. It has a nature school program for school students; they go every day for a week and participate in workshops and outdoor activities. The Lagoones Club for kids aged 5-13 is a weekly after-school program during the school year, and children can drop in during the summer.

For the general public, there are adult nature education courses, lectures, slide shows and forums. The Centre organizes guided nature walks and field trips for anyone who is interested. Volunteer work parties remove Japanese knotweed on the Sunshine Coast and work in Tyner Park and the Botanical Gardens in Sechelt.

The Lagoon Society is in the process of restoring four hectares of wetland adjacent to the Iris Griffith Centre. Beavers, birds, small water creatures and western painted turtles have been attracted to the area. This latter species is BC’s only native freshwater turtle. It is provincially red-listed and federally endangered, and is vulnerable to wetland degradation, human disturbance and mortality on roads intercepting nesting areas.

Members of the Lagoon Society conduct nesting and other types of surveys to uncover valuable information about the distribution, habitat use and population structure of painted turtles, to guide their conservation on the Sunshine Coast. In addition to the research and monitoring, volunteers are installing basking logs, nesting beaches, turtle-crossing signs and predator exclosures, and working with landowners to protect turtle habitat on private property.

For more information: [www.lagoonsociety.com](http://www.lagoonsociety.com).

## Want to get involved?

### Help preserve the biodiversity of the Sunshine Coast region.

Why not become a member of the SCCA? It won’t break the bank. A single annual membership is \$20, a whole family is \$30, non-profit groups are \$40, and a business membership is \$100.

Want to **volunteer**? We’d be happy to welcome you. Maybe you would just like to donate some time for events. You could also consider joining one of our **committees**. We are looking for people with expertise in the environmental sciences, or skills in grant writing, fundraising or editing. Contact [chair@thescca.ca](mailto:chair@thescca.ca) or [info@thescca.ca](mailto:info@thescca.ca).

You could even think about becoming a **director** on the SCCA board. We meet once a month and take on various responsibilities to keep the ball rolling. You’d be more than welcome.

Want to advertise in the **newsletter**? It’s great value for your money—and a great opportunity. You donate to a good cause and

get advertising in return. The rates range from \$50 for a black & white business card-sized ad to \$350 for a whole page. There are usually two issues per year. The circulation is 1,000 and the readership is likely at least twice that. These are all people interested in green issues! Plus you get additional exposure for free with the digital version of the newsletter (where your ad can appear in full colour).

Our AGM is April 28th 2012. All are welcome.

### Please don't hesitate to contact us:

Gayle Neilson, at [membership@thescca.ca](mailto:membership@thescca.ca), is the membership co-ordinator.

Sheenah Main is our events co-ordinator: [events@thescca.ca](mailto:events@thescca.ca).

Jason Herz is our board Chair: [chair@thescca.ca](mailto:chair@thescca.ca).

Take a look on our website: [www.thescca.ca](http://www.thescca.ca).

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions for newsletter articles, please contact Tella Sametz at [directors@thescca.ca](mailto:directors@thescca.ca).

## Watch out for waterfront signs about our amazing sponge reefs

by Leah Honka and Sabine Jessen, CPAWS

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, BC Chapter (CPAWS-BC), and the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association have worked together with the Sunshine Coast Regional District, District of Sechelt and Town of Gibsons to showcase some of BC's most unique marine creatures—glass sponge reefs—in the waters off the Sunshine Coast.



graphics Roger Handling, Terra Firma Digital Arts

Glass sponge reefs covering 1,000 sq km of sea floor were first discovered in BC's Hecate Strait in the late 1980s. Thought

to have been extinct for millions of years, these 9,000-year-old structures were the only living glass sponge complexes known to exist anywhere on Earth. Recently, more reefs have been discovered in the Salish Sea near the Sunshine Coast, West Vancouver and the southern Gulf Islands.

In order to promote greater awareness of these globally significant phenomena, we developed outdoor signage in waterfront areas near Sechelt, Roberts Creek and Gibsons that overlook the locations of the reefs.

Glass sponge reefs provide crucial refuges for a variety of marine species, including juvenile rockfish, and form the basis of an ecosystem that extends well beyond the reefs themselves. Refuges such as these are especially important in regions of high human use, such as the Salish Sea. The health of the reefs is an indicator of the health of our oceans, and is ultimately connected to our quality of life.

Our goal is to secure initial protection for the glass sponge reefs through fishing closures, and ultimately Marine Protected Area status. By working with local partners, CPAWS and the SCCA have been able to build a strong base of public and community support for the protection of the reefs.

We want to thank Global Green grants and the Marisla Foundation for supporting the development of this signage and for helping us highlight these internationally important natural features and protect them for future generations.

We hope to see the signs at Gibsons Dock, Chaster House (near Chaster Park), Roberts Creek Pier, Mission Point Park/Davis Bay SeaWalk, Trail Bay Pier/Waterfront and Coopers Green.

## Conserving energy with the lazy person's guide to gardening

by Tella Sametz

**It's that time of year again. Here are a few tips for the gardener who wants to work less and at the same time make a positive contribution towards the environment.**

Eliminate as much lawn as possible by creating LARGE beds of shrubs and/or flowers. The mowing area is decreased, thus reducing the hydro or gasoline usage.

When creating beds of flowers, choose perennials. They bloom year after year. Garden stores can provide a garden layout free of charge, thereby saving some brain power.

To minimize the weeding, cover the free earth with landscape fabric then mulch with woodchips. For large beds, a ground cover like periwinkle could be used. It is also best to isolate the lawn from the bed to prevent grass from creeping in. Hey, we have lots of rocks around here for just this purpose.

A keen conservationist will plant trees, since they act as air purifiers—removing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.



illustration Mohammed Asgari

Again, mulch around the trees, thereby eliminating the need to get out the energy-consuming weed whipper.

Buy a mulching lawn mower if you must have something motorized. Of course the push mower is the best. Keeps you looking as good as your garden.

We get lots of water here on the coast, so look into a cistern system or at least a rain barrel to store rain water for when it's

needed for watering the garden. If possible, you could recycle grey water (from the shower, etc) and use it for irrigation.

Conservation-minded folk will realize that there is altogether far too much watering going on and far too much time moving sprinklers around. If you are too busy to hand-water your garden . . . you are too busy. Many of us are still working on this problem, so a drip irrigation system is the second-best method of watering. This type of set-up uses 50 per cent less water than conventional methods.

You avoid inadvertently washing the driveway and/or sidewalk.

Also, far fewer pest-controlling chemicals/methods are used because the foliage is not wet.

Here's to happy conservation gardening for all!

## The Jellyfish Project is all about education and music

by Dan and Bronia Kingsbury

This is the story of the Jellyfish Project and our son’s band, Mindil Beach Markets. All the members of the band—Daniel Kingsbury, Patrick Codere, Matt Posnikoff, Rod Campbell, Cam Ainslie—lived on the Sunshine Coast while growing up. When they learned that the oceans were dying, they decided to do something. That’s how the project got started.

Jellyfish are a symbol of the fragility of the oceans. They are appearing in record numbers today and are the SOS of the ocean world. When everything else is dead in the oceans, jellyfish may be all that is left, along with minnows and bacteria.

The Jellyfish Project is an environmental initiative focusing on the world’s oceans. It’s about having a future worth living into and about teaching young people to be aware, to care and to take action. The project’s logo is a jellyfish.



The project has three sets of activities:

The **Jellyfish Project Curriculum for Grades 4-7**, on “Ocean Health, Your Health, Your Future...” (a free resource).

**Free school sustainability presentations.** Mindil Beach Markets and other Jellyfish Project bands go to high schools and elementary schools to present the sustainability theme. They play a live set followed by a 15-minute presentation on ocean sustainability. Since January, Mindil Beach Markets has made this presentation at four high schools.

**Urgency Fundraising Concerts.** These events are organized by environmental non-profits. Jellyfish Project bands perform, introduce environmental messages during the concert and provide project handouts. Proceeds go to the non-profit and to the performers to help fund their work touring schools.

See [www.mindilbeachmarkets.com/jellyfish-project](http://www.mindilbeachmarkets.com/jellyfish-project) for more information.



A Tella Sametz image from the 2012 calendar

## Want your photos in a calendar?

**Would you like your art work featured in a 2013 calendar? And a two weeks’ showing at the Sunshine Coast Art Centre? The Sunshine Coast Conservation Association is holding a competition for an artist for next year’s fundraising calendar.**

If you have a portfolio of environmental images featuring the Sunshine Coast and would like your work aligned with a leader in the protection of biodiversity on the Sunshine Coast, then the SCCA would like you to apply.

Submissions must reflect the SCCA’s mandate to protect the natural biodiversity of the Sunshine Coast.

The 2012 calendar was the first of what we hope will be an annual fundraising project. It features the work of accomplished photographer and SCCA board member Tella Sametz.

The deadline for submissions for the 2013 calendar is April 11, 2012. For more information and to download the application form, please visit [www.thesc.ca](http://www.thesc.ca).

The winner will be announced at the annual Friends of the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association (FOSCCA) event on Tuesday, May 15, at the Sunshine Coast Arts Centre in Sechelt from 5:00 to 7:30 pm.

For more information contact [events@thesc.ca](mailto:events@thesc.ca).

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**Published by the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association**

Box 1969, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0

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For more information about the SCCA and to view this newsletter in full colour, please visit our website at:

[www.thescca.ca](http://www.thescca.ca)

**2012 John Hind-Smith award**

The Sunshine Coast Conservation Association welcomes nominations for the John Hind-Smith Award.

The award was established in 2006 in honour of environmentalist John Hind-Smith. A founder of the Salmon Enhancement Society and Tetrahedron Alliance, and a lifetime member of the Sunshine Coast Natural History Society, John has inspired a generation of environmental advocates on the Sunshine Coast.

The successful recipient of the John Hind-Smith Award must have demonstrated:

1. A long and enduring service to the protection of biodiversity within the greater Sunshine Coast region.
2. A high level of personal integrity and a commitment to scientific accuracy.
3. The ability to inspire others to appreciate and protect biodiversity.
4. Success in the protection of biodiversity within the greater Sunshine Coast region.
5. The ability to act with grace and respect for all.

Nominees are not required to be members of the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association. Please ensure that nominations are sent in with appropriate support material; this will be a significant factor in the jury's selection process.

Submissions must be sent by April 30, 2012, to Jason Herz at [chair@thescca.ca](mailto:chair@thescca.ca). The award will be presented at this year's Friends of the SCCA function, Tuesday, May 15, at the Sunshine Coast Arts Centre in Sechelt.

For more information on the award, please visit the SCCA website at [www.thescca.ca](http://www.thescca.ca) or contact [events@thescca.ca](mailto:events@thescca.ca).



SCCA chair Jason Herz (left) and Rick O'Neill, recipient of the 2011 John Hind-Smith award.

**Sunshine Coast Conservation Association**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Individual name: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual membership: \$20

Other family members: \_\_\_\_\_

Family membership: \$30

Group or business name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group membership: \$40

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Business membership: \$100

Additional donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to receive newsletters by regular mail. (Unless specified, newsletters and other information will be sent by email.)

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

As a member of the SCCA, I accept its purpose as stated above.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail cheque or money order with this completed application to: SCCA, Box 1969, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0  
 Receipts for income tax purposes will be issued for donations of \$25 or more. Registered charity #87322 0446 RR0001

## Lack of oversight and regulation results in major IPP pollution

by Daniel Bouman, with files from Marina Stjepovic

**Within its first few weeks of operation, in early 2010, Renewable Power Corp's Tyson Creek hydroelectric facility was responsible for a massive sediment release into fish-bearing waters. The significant drawdown of Tyson Lake destabilized a glacio-fluvial delta, which sent plumes of fine silt through the facility and into downstream fish habitat. Compromised water quality ensued for the next few months, while the facility was forced to operate at a fraction of its capacity.**

How did this happen? In June 2011, Gwen Barlee of the Wilderness Committee submitted a major Freedom of Information (FoI) request to the BC government, seeking answers. In August 2011, the province released 2,000+ pages of correspondence. SCCA staff and volunteers have been reading through these documents, and here is what we found:

There was confusion between regulatory agencies as to who was responsible for what. One glaring example was that, in March 2010, Fisheries and Oceans Canada authorized a test of the facility that produced a plume of silt-laden water in the Tzoonie River and Narrows Inlet. FOC didn't notify the Water Stewardship Division (WSD) of the BC Ministry of Environment of this decision, leaving the ministry to face the public with no explanation of what had occurred.

The MoE lacked policies for project assessment and did not act on staff recommendations. The regional hydrologist, for instance, recommended that the potential for sediment mobilization in Tyson Lake be assessed, but the water licence was issued without this recommendation being carried out. He also raised concerns to senior members of his ministry that the "MoE still has no guidelines detailing the information requirements to allow agency assessment of ecological impacts associated with such [lake draw-down/storage] proposals." Later he wrote that "I'd like to re-emphasize the value in establishing MoE protocol for use of alpine lakes as water storage facilities for hydropower generation. . . . despite several enquiries, I did not receive a

response from Victoria regarding the policy."

The company's environmental monitor, who seemed to be in a difficult position to act independently, stated in an email, "At some point I would like to talk to [MoE staff] about this style of project. . . . I have a bunch of concerns about the proposed design and operation of lake storage and tunnelling that are not being taken seriously by the proponents. We have viewed Tyson as a large experiment in some ways. Right or wrong we have a poor understanding of the effects of negative storage that begs some tough questions."

Personal communication with the former Section Head of WSD (water allocations)—one of several MoE officials who did an exceptional job under difficult circumstances—has indicated that he left the ministry at the end of 2011, frustrated over staff shortages and inadequate resources. Referring to an after-the-event consultant's report, which summarized that no significant environmental impacts had resulted from the Tyson incident, he indicated clearly that MoE staff had *not* stated that they agreed with that conclusion. The FoI documents also support this view. Further, the documents do not show that there was an investigation of a possible fish kill at the time of the sedimentation events, so the report's conclusions can neither be confirmed nor denied.

In an additional twist, Renewable Power is required to maintain minimum flows in Tyson Creek by pumping now sediment-laden water from Tyson Lake into the creek. Adding silty water to fish habitat could be considered an offence under the *Fisheries Act*—a conundrum created by the design of the project.

In summary, BC's first alpine lake draw-down project went ahead without adequate pre-project assessment, monitoring systems or reasonable contingency plans. Is this what happens when we reduce the "regulatory burden" on industry?

Given that these kinds of projects are new, the SCCA cautions local governments and the public not to support any further lake storage projects until appropriate provincial guidelines have been developed to ensure that irreparable environmental damage will not be caused. As well, we would like to see improved accountability, transparency and opportunities for public review and comment during the approval process.



Seastars in Sechart Inlet

photo Tella Sametz

## Protecting Mt Elphinstone has turned into a 20-year struggle

by Linda Williams

**Mt Elphinstone holds some of BC's most productive forest land. Its remaining mature regeneration (from fires eight decades after Captain Vancouver's historic journey) is still virtually unrepresented in the Sunshine Coast's protected areas**

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*"The country in general produces forest trees in abundance, of some variety and magnitude; the pine [Douglas fir, yet to be named] is the most common, and the woods are little encumbered with bushes or trees of inferior growth." – Captain George Vancouver, Journal, June 16, 1792 (as he explored north from Gower Point along BC's mainland shores)*

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system (only three small, disconnected parcels are preserved, a total of 139 hectares). But not for want of trying. For more than two decades, the forested slopes that Vancouver first described have been rigorously defended by local residents, recreationists and scientists alike, all seeking protection for the area's remarkable ecology.

During the 1990s, members of Elphinstone Living Forest, the Crow Road Concerned Residents and Mt Elphinstone Forest Watch brought to bear an unsailable array of scientific, social and economic reasons for why the area should be considered for protection under BC's Protected Areas Strategy. They organized weekly educational hikes, and thousands of participants toured the area. Enlisting experts from many disciplines, the groups studied and catalogued the area's unique diversity.

Local residents participated in every venue that presented an opportunity to inform decision making. They worked tirelessly for a community-based plan—one that involved the entire community. They brought famed ecoforestry proponent Merv Wilkinson from Wildwood on Vancouver Island to describe how the area could be managed sustainably for all community-held values, including forestry.

The forest industry was not in the mood for sharing, however. Spurning all overtures for a possible community-based solution, the Ministry of Forests abruptly cancelled the Mt Elphinstone Local Resource Use Plan in 1996.

In 2002, the ministry imposed the Forest Practices Code's lowest biodiversity emphasis option on the contentious area (as well as on the Chapman and Gray community watersheds), even though the Forest Practices Board had recommended re-examining whether the low biodiversity assignment was appropriate, "given the apparent biological diversity in the Mount Elphinstone area."

(Low BEO is "appropriate for areas where social and economic demands, such as timber supply, are the primary objectives," and high BEO is "appropriate in areas where biodiversity conservation is a high management priority.")

The Ministry of Forests then assigned additional logging chart area to BC Timber Sales and the Sunshine Coast Community Forest, intending to end all debate and pre-empt the ongoing calls for a real public participation process for Mt Elphinstone.

Less than three percent of the Sunshine Coast Forest District is protected as provincial parkland, and nearly one-half of that is comprised of ice fields located far from the coast near T'sylos

Park in the Chilcotin. Today's Mt Elphinstone park proposal, as advocated by Elphinstone Logging Focus, provides an exceedingly rare opportunity to protect mature, accessible low-elevation forest on the Sunshine Coast. The current proposal is to safeguard a 1,500-ha area located between 200 and 600 m in elevation, almost entirely contained within the coastal western hemlock dry maritime biogeoclimatic



Logging truck on the Sunshine Coast Highway. Going, going, gone?

photo Tella Sametz

subzone. This important subzone is critically underrepresented—locally, regionally and provincially—in BC's protected areas system. The Elphinstone park proposal deserves immediate, serious consideration. (For more info: [www.loggingfocus.org](http://www.loggingfocus.org).)