



## **Sunshine Coast Community Forests Logging Low-Elevation Old-Growth**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Feb 22, 2011**

**In a severely fragmented forest landscape on the lower slopes of Mt. Elphinstone, near Roberts Creek, BC, Sunshine Coast Community Forest (a logging company) is slated to begin clear-cut logging in a rare old-growth forest.**

Cutblock EW002 is 27.5ha in size with 23ha of timber to be logged. The remaining area contains 128 trees to be retained, 13 culturally modified trees and some wildlife patches.

Road construction is slated to begin March 1<sup>st</sup>. There was no public consultation between the company and concerned citizens. Elphinstone Logging Focus (ELF) was tipped about the imminent logging and immediately conducted a site survey. To their astonishment they discovered that the area is actually an important old-growth forest with towering Douglas Firs, Sitka Spruce and emerging under-storey of hemlock and cedar. Several rare white pine trees were located which will be logged.

Ross Muirhead of Elphinstone Logging Focus, a local forestry watch group, says, "The site is located between important 2 Ministry of Forests' OGMAS (Old Growth Management Areas) and thus this logging will create a clearcut gap between these protective areas. Community Forests logging company should stay out of this old-growth forest and do the region a big favor and protect some of the last, low elevation old-growth forest ecosystems on the Coast. In light of announcement by the Sunshine Coast Regional District that they're opposed to further destruction of old-growth forests, how can the Community Forests continue with this cutblock? "

Muirhead continues: "If this clear-cut proceeds it will create a large continuous opening with other clear-cuts in the adjacent area and cause un-predicable wind dynamics which may lead to damaging blow down of trees on the Wilson Creek boundary. Wilson Creek watershed has already been severely compromised by past upstream logging."

"The lower Mt. Elphinstone slopes (Sunshine Coast) is one of the most heavily logged out areas in the province due to its easy accessible timber. The bio-diversity in the area is very low. To that end, we call for an immediate moratorium of logging in the area until an accumulative impact study is completed for the area. ", Muirhead comments.

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**Subject:** Cutblock EW002

To: SECHELT COMMUNITY PROJECTS INC.

Suite 201/204 - 5606 Wharf Avenue, PO Box 215, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0

Dear Mr. Davies,

I'm checking back with you regarding cutblock EW002 of old-growth which is of present concern. Please advise on the current situation to begin roadbuilding March 1.

I realize that MOF has given Community Forests the rights to log the area, however how do you feel about removing an important representative sample of low elevation, old-growth from the Wilson Creek drainage which has been documented to have experienced past damages due to stream side logging?

The area is part of a small, but continuous piece of old-growth between 2 OGMAs that is very rare to find, in fact, from a Forest Service map, it's the most accessible piece of old-growth from Highway 101 between Sechelt and Gibsons.

Consider that because there is no Land Use Plan for Mt. Elphinstone slopes (including west to Wilson Creek) it seems to concerned citizens that we are witnessing is a logging 'free-for-all' by the various logging operators.

Draw a line from Wilson Creek east to Roberts Creek on the lower slopes of Mt. Elphinstone and from Forest

Service maps count 27 cutblocks (including free to grow up areas and planned blocks in the BCTS 5 year plan). Then add another 2 TimberLands cutblocks from 2010, plus a planned one for 2011, and a current private cutblock happening off Pell Rd.

I didn't include the CNI clearcut on the way to Dakota Ridge that can probably can be seen from space. That clearcut must go down in BC forest history as one of the most disastrous legacies left to a landscape and a community. Now that BCTS has removed all buffers on either side of the roads that pass through the cutblock it nicely adds to the moonscape up there.

We need facts on the % of the lower slopes that has had forestry activity on it out of the given area. If this was completed, I think it would give us a picture of how much forest has been logged and what is left and then proper planning could be done. Mt. Elphinstone area numbers need to be broken away from Howe and Chapman areas because we are getting distorted numbers on % of old-growth protected, % logged, % of wildlife habitat areas, etc. when factored into the other land areas.

We thus take the position that its time for all operators to pull-back from their activities until, a) an accumulative impact study is completed for Mt. Elphinstone and b) a Land Use Plan is completed for the same area.

This is not a radical request by any measure considering the circumstances of over-logging, large # of stakeholder groups, and demands for one the last 10 years.

The last government intervention in the area was back in the mid-1990s when 139 ha (in 3 parcels) of Mt. Elphinstone was set aside for park protection. This is not good enough in an area that experiences a high recreational numbers and is just hanging onto its bio-diversity. The contribution that this park makes to the under-represented Georgia Lowland ecosystem is negligible.

When Community Forests re-considers logging this key old-growth forest, then the best plan is to make a request to MOF suggesting adding the area to the existing OGMAs.

Thank you for considering the above points.

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PS Our group maintains a Facebook page that has up to 300 'friends' that follow local forestry issues.

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