

WATERSHED UPDATE – May 25th, 2008

Hi everyone,

It has been several weeks since I last issued any kind of update regarding the activities of the Sechelt community forest.

During this time, several of the concerned citizens (including myself) attended a meeting with the CF advisory committee on May 6th where we presented several principles and specific recommendations to the committee listed below:

PRINCIPLES

1. No part of the community forest license area shall be located in the community watershed reserves such as Chapman and Grey Creeks.
2. Community Forest tenure areas removed out of Chapman and Grey creek watersheds cannot be replaced with areas of old growth forest or other sensitive sites such as those identified in the report on “Environmentally important sites and streams on the Sunshine Coast”.
3. The primary purpose of the Community Forest is to supply wood for local construction, woodworking and value added timber products. The CF will use eco-based forest management practices in the extraction of their timber. The main goal of the CF is to encourage the manufacture of local wood based finished products. In order to achieve this goal, it will be necessary for the Community Forest to engage business entrepreneurs in the community. The combined efforts of these businesses would establish the “value added” segment of the CF operations. In the event of any missing component, the CF should attempt to fill this gap by investing it’s own resources in the value added marketplace. (see notes from Terry Hind).
4. **An open and transparent governance structure to be put in place by the CF that will provide the necessary framework whereby all the various stakeholders and residents of the Sunshine Coast will have input to the CF, including public involvement in the appointment of CF Directors. (See recommendations).**

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That a list be compiled of all sensitive and important sites on the Sunshine Coast that are presently within the tenure boundaries of the probationary licence held by the CF. These sensitive areas must be included in the net down of the forest cover inventory resulting in the timber harvesting land base (THLB) and by their removal, not subject to timber harvesting. The report titled “Environmentally Important Sites and Streams on the Sunshine Coast” contains a list of sites that should be used by the CF as a starting point in the development of this list.
2. If the Province offers replacement lands for those portions of the CF tenure that are located in the Grey and Chapman Creek watersheds, then these replacement lands must not be located in

any of the sensitive sites identified in the list developed by the CF and if so, that these lands must be refused by the CF.

3. **Improve the communications with the public at large and between the CF Board and the advisory committee. A member of the advisory committee to attend all future board meetings. This change in governance will improve the communications between the board and the advisory committee when discussing any recommendations and/or motions made by the advisory committee. To increase the “transparency” with the public, at least one member of the public must be allowed to attend the CF board meetings at all times.**
4. To improve communications with the public, it is recommended that the advisory committee hold two public meetings a year. These meetings must be well advertised in all media outlets including the local newspapers. Adequate lead time must be given to the public to attend these meetings. The purpose of the public meetings is to present an “overview” of the CF operational plans. The 1st meeting would describe the current years operational plan, clearly showing the planned cut blocks and obtain the public’s feedback. The 2nd meeting should be scheduled for mid-year and the focus would be to provide the public with the results for the first six months of operations and identify any changes contemplated by the CF to the operational plan for the remaining part of the year.
5. **The District of Sechelt, as the sole shareholder, to engage the public in the process of selecting CF directors.**
6. The CF to investigate the “merits” of the ideas developed by the chair of the advisory committee regarding value added segment based upon the model developed in Japan. It is vital to the success of the CF that a value added component of the business operations be established in order to meet the goal of extracting more value from the forest for the community vs a simple logging operation.

Following this meeting we presented the following two motions at the CF advisory committee meeting held on May 20th,2008.

MOTION # 1

That the CF board approve the following changes to the governance model for the CF effective June 1st,2008.

1. That a member of the CF advisory committee be present at CF board meetings.
2. That a member of the concerned citizens group be present at CF board meetings.

The CF board should only go “in camera” when information of a confidential nature needs to be discussed, otherwise all other information should be discussed in public.

The second motion dealt with land use issues and was designed to remove both the watershed areas and also any other sensitive areas within the CF tenure from any industrial activities.

PRE-AMBLE

The Concerned Citizens group met with the CF Advisory Committee on May 6th, 2008 and several principles and recommendations were presented to the committee.

The following motion focuses on the principles of land use involving the public's drinking water and environmentally sensitive sites on the Sunshine Coast.

The gross tenure area of the CF licence is 11,807 ha. After net downs the timber harvesting land base (THLB) is 5,081 ha. Because of the pending decision by the Province granting interim protection to the SIB for both the Grey and Chapman Creek watersheds, then these areas of the CF licence should be removed from the THLB until further notice. The number of ha to be removed is identified below:

1. Chapman Creek watershed gross area 3,063 ha, net productive area 740 ha.
2. Grey Creek watershed gross area 3,047 ha, net productive area 1,603 ha

The total area to be removed from the THLB is 2,343 ha (740 ha + 1,603 ha) which reduces the THLB from the present 5,081 ha to 2,738 ha. (approx)

MOTION

1. That 2,343 ha be removed from the THLB of the CF to reflect the pending decision of the Province regarding Chapman & Grey Creek watersheds.
2. The lands identified in the report titled "Environmentally Important Sites and Streams on the Sunshine Coast" that are presently within the CF THLB, these lands to be removed.
3. The number of ha to be removed will be determined by the CF RPF. The results of these revised net downs will need to be reflected in the CF operational plan currently under review and construction.

The list of sensitive sites is attached to this motion to assist the CF professional forester in the process of removing these lands from the THLB.

ENVIRONMENTALLY IMPORTANT SITES AND STREAMS ON THE SUNSHINE COAST - list

Map Ref. #	Site Name	Map Ref. #	Site Name
1	Sechelt Heritage Forest	32	Waugh Lake Watershed Reserve
2	Elphinstone Forest	33	Carlson Lake and Creek
3	Elphinstone Summit	34	Sechelt Bluff

4	Chapman Plateau Wetlands	35	Stalashen Marsh
5	Roberts Creek Grand Fir Grove	36	Sechelt Waterfront
6	Wilson Creek Estuary	37	Lower Roberts Creek
7	White Islets	38	Camp Byng
8	Mission Point	39	Porpoise Bay
9	Coopers Green Lagoon	40	Cliff Gilker Park
10	Chapman Falls	41	Merry Island
11	Brooks Rd. Wetland	42	Islands off Frenchman's Cove and Jeddah Point
12	Ruby Lake Lagoon	43	Katherine Lake
13	Oyster Bay and adjacent wetlands	44	Lower Gray Creek
14	Ocean Beach Esplanade	45	Wormy Lake Wetlands
15	Snickett Park	46	Grant Island
16	Mixal Lake Wetlands	47	Soames Hill
17	Sargeant Bay Rock	48	Truman Road Nature Trails Forest
18	Triangle Lake and Trail	49	Camp Olave
19	Gospel Rock Property	50	Gibsons Heritage Trail System
20	Lower Chapman Flood Plain	51	Mt. Hallowell Recreation Area
21	Mt. Richardson	52	Nature Endowment Lands – Hidden Grove
22	Kokomo Lake and Creek	53	Davis Brook
23	Big Fir Veterans east of Trout Lake	54	Homesite Creek Forest
24	Mt. Daniel	55	Bonniebrook Wetland

RESULTS OF OUR MAY 20TH, 2008 MEETING

The committee debated the governance motion and amended it to read “That the CF board should give consideration to allowing a advisory committee member to attend all CF board meetings”

The latest news we have is that the CF board has decided to allow a member of the advisory committee to become a full fledged member of the CF board.

While this is perhaps a step in the right direction, it falls far short of what this community requires from its CF.

In investigating other CF across the Province I found perhaps a really good example of how a genuine CF should be set up. **Burns Lake has had a CF since 1998 and I have attached a press release dated Feb 25th 2008 outlining the importance of public involvement and transparency.**

I also have attached a copy of page 43 from the BCCFA community forestry handbook where the association sets the standard for governance and transparency.

Our CF falls way short of meeting the BCCFA standard in terms of transparency.

I want to give people a “heads up” because this coming weekend (May 30th-June 1st) the BCCFA will be having their annual general meeting hosted by our own CF right here in Sechelt.

This is a perfect opportunity for our community to send the right message to the BCCFA and our CF that our CF governance structure is not an open and transparent structure and that the residents want our CF board to allow the public to attend the CF board meetings

The Burns Lake CF has set up a nine member board of directors with six directors from the community, one municipal member (Mayor) and two First Nation representatives. This governance structure involves publicly elected officials (mayor), members of the public and First Nations.

Our CF should copy this governance structure and SIB, Mayor of Sechelt and members of the public should be allowed to become CF board members. The present method of appointing CF board members with no public process and engaging the public is self defeating in the long run.

We need an open and transparent governance structure for our CF

Several of the concerned citizens will be meeting tomorrow night to discuss plans for the upcoming weekend and we will inform the residents of actions we intend to take to get our message out.

So please leave some time in your busy schedules for possible rally/protest this coming weekend to help us get our messages out.

I have attached a copy of the BCCFA schedule and conference details & AGM, etc

Regards

John Bebbington