

Honourable Steve Thomson (email: FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)
Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
PO Box 9049 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

October, 2013

Dear Minister Thomson:

Subject: New Woodlots on Gambier Island, Howe Sound (Sunshine Coast Forest District)

As a property owner on Gambier Island, I was shocked to learn of impending plans to open two new woodlots on Gambier, which would mean nearly half of the island's Crown lands and one quarter of the entire island will be subjected to clear-cut logging. Please stop this process now, and reconsider. It is difficult to understand why your department would embark on such an initiative without public consultation and with an apparent disregard for community values. Instead, wouldn't it be more appropriate to consider alternative, off-island locations where logging would better benefit the local communities, integrate well with local planning initiatives, and have less relative impact on pristine wilderness?

These woodlots would encircle Gambier Lake, where popular primitive campsites are nestled amid a relatively undisturbed and ecologically sensitive area. This is a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts. The lakeside campsite is located right inside one of the newly designated woodlots. Clear-cut logging of the old growth along the hillsides adjacent to the lake would destroy the lake's wilderness setting, which attracts so many people to the lake. Does our Ministry truly intend to pursue a plan that would clear-cut the areas adjacent to this jewel?

A significant portion of the Island's recreational trail network is located within the new woodlots and includes trails leading to and from Gambier Lake from all four directions. Trail access from the southwest, through Woodlot 039, operational since the late 80s on the island, has already been drastically altered by recent clearcutting in that woodlot. Logging within the two new woodlots will seriously affect other trails as well as the Community Watershed that spans both new woodlots and is centred around Gambier Creek, flowing eastward out of Gambier Lake.

It doesn't make any sense to initiate logging operations on a part of the Gambier Island that is so visible and admired by recreational boaters, film producers, tourists on boat excursions and those traveling along the Sea to Sky highway. Howe Sound, located on the outskirts of one of the largest urban centres in Canada, is renowned for its spectacular scenery and is a recreational playground for the residents of the entire Lower Mainland. There are four yacht club outstations on the island, three children's summer camps, about 100 full-time residents and hundreds of recreational properties. Children's Camp Latona and Burrard and Thunderbird Yacht Club outstations are located along the north coast adjacent to, and within plain view of, the new woodlots. Local property values will suffer as well. The proposed log dump for the woodlots is near Douglas Bay, close to a recreational property subdivision, and blocks of clear-cut forest on the nearby hills will undoubtedly devalue the investment of these property owners significantly.

Why does your Ministry consider the \$1,500 dollars of annual stumpage revenue from these woodlots can reasonably compensate the loss of current and future tourism and recreation revenues throughout Howe Sound? Surely the recreational value of this largest and most dominant island in the middle of the sound far exceeds the provincial revenue for the annual allowable cut of the woodlots? And from a practical point of view, due to the very limited access to northern Gambier Island, equipment and personnel for the woodlot would likely have to come from the mainland, resulting in little, if any, benefit for the local island community.

For the sake of the island's precious wildlife, the flourishing recreation and tourist industry, local property owners, film producers and the province at large, I urge you to put an end to this destructive plan to expand logging on Gambier Island. I understand that the Gambier Island Conservancy opposes these woodlots, so I would like to see you meet with them as soon as possible to resolve this issue. Given the urgency of the situation and the fast developing opposition to the woodlots, I would appreciate a prompt reply to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

cc: Dave Peterson, A/Deputy Minister, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (email: Dave.Peterson@gov.bc.ca)

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