

PEMBERTON CREEK WATERSHED RESERVE DEBATE - LOCAL NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Whistler Question - July 19, 2004 - *Logging issues raised*

Editor's note: This is a copy of a letter to J. Walter Cowlard, registered professional forester for Weyerhaeuser in Powell River.

The Village of Pemberton requests you to come before Council to discuss your proposed cut blocks 800-5 and 800-6 located in and around the community watershed of the Village of Pemberton.

Pemberton Creek is the vital water supply for more than 3,000 residents and supports a large Coho salmon population. The presentation given by Bernice Patterson at our Council meeting on July 6, 2004, failed to outline major issues, which need to be addressed before any further action is taken in our community watershed. These issues and concerns are:

The need for a Geotechnical Report: The hillside above Pemberton Creek has very thin soils or moss over rock with a high probability of a slide if logged. This slope has a history of slide activity and the damage to Pemberton Creek would have great consequences to the community.

The need for a Creek Assessment Report: The Pemberton Creek supports many fish species including Coho salmon, Sockeye salmon, Cutthroat trout and Dollyvarden. The proposed cut blocks contain many seasonal creeks that carry nutrients down stream to the fish. To log in the riparian zone of these upper creeks would upset the balance of water temperatures and affect an integral part of the fish habitat.

The need for a study on affected wildlife habitat: The proposed logging area provides habitat for many wildlife species including black bear, deer, bobcat, marten, cougar, eagle, raven, and spotted owl.

The need to assess First Nation values: The location of the proposed cut blocks is well within the traditional territory of the Lil'wat Nation. The proximity of both blocks 800-6 and 800-5 to the Pemberton Creek provides a high probability of CMT trees and warrants a study.

The need for a Fuel Management Plan: The fire hazards caused by logging practices, which leave slash behind, need to be addressed. The slash left in the previous cut blocks of Timber Licence #0741 is now a fuel problem. The Wildfire Threat Rating System developed for the Squamish-Lillooet forest district gives the Pemberton area a high wildfire threat rating and is a serious concern to the Village of Pemberton.

The need to present an Access Management Plan: The presentation at Council was not clear as to whether the access road Br. 800 was to be constructed or not. The verbal presentation mentioned the use of helicopters instead of building the road, however the written forest development plan indicates a road and bridge location over Pemberton Creek. If the logging plan is to use helicopters, the access plan needs to identify the drop zone for the logs and the safety plan for general public, who use the trail system below the cut blocks.

The need to address environmental noise Issues: The use of helicopters in the proximity of residential neighbourhoods and the downtown core will affect the quality of life for Pemberton residents. The timing of helicopter logging will also have a negative effect on tourists who will experience the loud noise.

The need for a Visual Management Plan: The presentation to Council did not provide detailed digital terrain modeling of the proposed cut blocks. Will these cut blocks be consistent with the Sea to Sky LRMP or the

landscape units are consistent with the objectives of the LUP? The need for detailed images for the public to review is very important to the public process.

The need to review the Integrated Water Management Plan: Logging in the community watershed has great impacts on water quality and the safety of our drinking water. Do the proposed cut blocks 800-5 and 800-6 meet the requirements of the Community Watershed Assessment?

The Village of Pemberton would like further clarification on the above issues and invites you to present your findings. We consider the risk to our community values as very high compared to the limited timber values that exist in TL #0741.

We hope your cooperation with the Village of Pemberton will extend beyond these current issues.

Mayor Elinor Warner

Pemberton

Whistler Pique - Week of July 19, 2004 - Decision on logging in Pemberton watershed rests with Kuster - Forest district manager evaluating information, must decide if proposal 'adequately manages and conserves forest resources'

By Adam Daff

As Pemberton council prepares to throw everything but the kitchen sink at CRB Logging and Weyerhaeuser in a bid to stop a proposed logging operation, Pemberton's own Integrated Watershed Management Plan and the issue of fireproofing have emerged as key arguments in the debate.

The Pemberton council, the Ministry of Forests, local logger Weldon Talbot and other special interest groups, developed the Integrated Watershed Management Plan, or IWMP, in the early 1980s as a guide for logging in the watershed.

The IWMP is relevant in this case because a small part of the area CRB is proposing to log on behalf of Weyerhaeuser is inside Pemberton's watershed.

Talbot, who has logged in the watershed for 20 years and is one of two people both CRB and the council have referred to as an "expert", said the IWMP took "about seven years" to complete.

"What it involved was that all the stakeholders at the time said if there was to be logging, then what had to be done before it would be allowed," said Talbot.

"The result was that there would be a portion cut where we (loggers) operate and there would be an allowable cut for the watershed that would be sustainable.

"I believe it's a 100-year rotation, so as long you met all this different criteria, like having reserves of 100 metres on either side of Pemberton Creek... then you were allowed to log."

Talbot said the IWMP allowed for 2,500 cubic metres of annual logging in the Pemberton watershed.

This is a significant point because Talbot has the contract to take that amount from the area every year, so if CRB starts logging in the area it will breach the recommendations made in the IWMP.

The good news for CRB is that the IWMP is not law, it's simply a guide, but if it is broken there might be other repercussions.

For instance, Talbot could be forced to reduce the amount of logging he does in the watershed to accommodate CRB, or the Ministry of Forests could allow CRB to do some extra logging in the watershed, but this is something that would outrage environmental groups.

Either way, CRB's plan to log the area behind the Signal Hill elementary school is facing stiff opposition and the man in the middle of it all is Ministry of Forests Squamish District Manager Paul Kuster.

Kuster's job is to ensure CRB/Weyerhaeuser's plan will "adequately manage and conserve the forest resources in the area," and if they do then Kuster does not have the power to stop logging.

Kuster is experienced and widely respected for his diplomacy.

"In this application what I have to look at is to see if it adequately manages and conserves the forest resources of the area – that's the test I have to apply – when I have all the information in front of me," said Kuster.

"I'm hearing now a bunch of concerns like whether or not this logging is going to do anything in regards to... improving the area from wildfire risk.

"Or whether this does something to interfere with any known resource."

Pemberton Mayor Elinor Warner outlines in the Pique's letters section this week (page 5) that the council wants CRB/Weyerhaeuser to conduct a number of studies on the area.

One of Pemberton council's strongest arguments so far is that the logging will dramatically affect the "visuals" in Pemberton because it is so close to the village.

But Kuster said CRB proved four years ago when it logged another area close to Pemberton that it can log a section of forest without badly affecting the "visuals".

"But this (project) is awfully close to the community boundary and part of it is even in the community watershed, so there's a bunch of other things that have to be analyzed."

Kuster also highlighted another advantage CRB has working in its favour: its timber licence.

CRB's timber licence in the area behind the elementary school expires in 2005 but the company can get extensions on this because they effectively own the timber and would have to be compensated if they were prevented from logging it.

"It's one of those awkward licences where the forest company is not regulated by their annual allowable cut," said Kuster.

"It's one of those stand alone licences that commits that timber to that forest company.

"These licences were issued back in the early 1900s and the reason that was done was to give us (all Canadians) access across Canada, like rail access, and these licenses were intended to compensate (logging companies) for the benefits the public received."

Another issue the council has raised is why CRB chose to log this area of forest now and Kuster said this is a question many people are asking around B.C.

“We’re quite frequently encountering these issues all over the Forest District, weather it’s for recreational reasons or for other resource reasons we’re getting asked ‘why this patch of timber?’

“And the province of British Columbia has been going through some very difficult processes.

“In the mid 1990s they realized that people wanted to have some more park land and they went through the exercise of setting aside more land for provincial parks.

“Now we have 22 per cent of the total land area in the Squamish Forest District in provincial parks.

“Beyond that there’s a Land and Resource Management Plan that (the province) has been working on for a year and half and that’s looking at constraining other areas because of tourism, recreation or wild-land values.

“The problem that we have now is that when you look around in a district that’s as complicated as the Squamish Forest District it becomes a very difficult situation: where can the forest industry operate?

“I know that this is on the back doorstep of Pemberton and if there’s legitimate reasons that show they might not be able to adequately manage and conserve the area then they (CRB) shouldn’t log.

“But if they can meet all those tests, whether it’s here or elsewhere (in the province), well then, you know, they have to be allowed to operate somewhere.”

Anyone wanting to express an opinion on the proposed logging in Pemberton has until Aug. 9 to forward letters to Bernice Patterson at Box 328, Mount Currie, B.C., VON 2KO or John Howe at Box 974, Squamish, B.C., VON 3G0.

Letters can also be forwarded to Andre Germain, Timber Office, Ministry of Forests, Squamish Forest District, 42000 Loggers Lane, Squamish, B.C VON 3G0.

Whistler Question - August 13, 2004 - *Opposition to Logging Urged*

Although the official 60-day public review period concerning Weyerhaeuser/CRB Logging’s proposal to log a plot of land behind Pemberton’s Signal Hill Elementary School has passed, Pemberton Council is urging the community to continue to write letters to Weyerhaeuser and government agencies.

At the Pemberton Council meeting on Tuesday, Will Koop, coordinator of the B.C. Tap Water Alliance, presented a few recommendations to Council. He reviewed the history of watershed protection in British Columbia and pointed out areas in which the government has compromised the protection of drinking sources.

“My basic message is the government used certain things to its own advantage with the fatal flaw of not consulting the community,” Koop said.

Koop mentioned the Big Eddy Water District, near Revelstoke, and its fight against logging proposals in the Dolan Creek Watershed Reserve.

Koop said the community was relentless in its pursuit of information and would not agree to logging of any kind. It was a four-year fight, but Koop encouraged Pemberton to press on.

The fate of the Signal Hill logging plan is still to be decided and Pemberton Council has remained resolute in its opposition to the plan. Weyerhaeuser, meanwhile, is sending a peacemaker.

“I finally received a phone call from Walter Cowlard of Weyerhaeuser’s Stillwater Division and he is coming to speak to Council,” said Mayor Elinor Warner. “We received lots of support in the last stages of the public review process and I am hoping there is a solution where we don’t have to tie ourselves to trees.”

After Council sent a letter directly to Weyerhaeuser asking Cowlard to come to Pemberton to discuss the proposed cut block, Weyerhaeuser responded. Sarah Goodman, communications officer for Weyerhaeuser Canada, said the company is looking forward to the face-to-face meeting.

“I think there has been a very large communications gap but the reason we gather public input is to give communities a chance to raise concerns,” Goodman said. “We want to give Pemberton Council a chance to meet us, go through the plan and hear their response first-hand.”

Goodman said that until this point, Weyerhaeuser has taken a minimal role in Pemberton-area blocks because the contractor, CRB Logging, has handled the planning process.

“In most areas we have community advisory groups and in some communities the mayor will simply pick up the phone and call us,” Goodman said. “The first we heard of this situation was through the media.”

Goodman insists the lack of involvement with Pemberton helped create misconceptions in the community. She said the company has a variable retention system in which a lot of visual monitoring is done to assure aesthetic values are respected.

“We recognize that we share the land but things have changed a lot in terms of logging practices,” Goodman said. “I don’t think logging and tourism are mutually exclusive. In many areas we coexist with communities and make sure people have the opportunity for input. However, the logging is not set in stone.”

Mayor Warner said that if anything, Council’s stand has become more resolute in the past few weeks.

“We have every right to give the message that we don’t want logging in the area. It is a small hill that reminds me of the hill in front of Alice Lake in Squamish, which would create an uproar if logged. It is just a hill but also a backdrop,” Warner said.

Whistler Pique - July 29, 2004 - Pemberton willing to trade Community Forest for hillside trees - Whistler investigates opportunities for a local Community Forest

By Alison Taylor

Pemberton’s plans to apply for a Community Forest may fall by the wayside as council instead fights to save the trees on the hill behind the local elementary school.

“If we were given the choice of saving the hillside or having the Community Forest, we would save the hillside,” said Pemberton Mayor Elinor Warner.

“That’s how important it is.”

No one knows more than Warner how difficult that decision is for Pemberton council, which simply doesn’t have the resources to both fight the proposed logging and develop a Community Forest.

Before Weyerhaeuser recently announced plans to log the hillside, Pemberton council was very keen to apply to the province for a Community Forest license.

A Community Forest would allow the local government to run a forestry operation, and this in turn could help the shrinking forestry industry in Pemberton.

“We can actually see a standstill of logging,” said Warner.

Big forestry companies like Canfor and Western Forest Products are pulling out of the area altogether, she explained, and Interfor is cutting back significantly.

Roughly 75,000 cubic metres in the Pemberton Valley will be reallocated elsewhere she said resulting in more than 75 job cuts both directly and indirectly.

“It’s huge for Pemberton,” said Warner.

“We’re probably one of the hardest hit communities in the province.”

In addition to reviving the lagging forestry industry in the area, a Community Forest could be another revenue source for the village.

But, with the threat of logging behind the Signal Hill Elementary School, council is having second thoughts about applying for a Community Forest.

At the last council meeting on Tuesday July 20, a proposal from a forestry consultant to deal with Pemberton’s Community Forest application came before council.

Council deferred making a decision on the proposal at that time.

“Logging part of that hill is so contentious that maybe we have to trade our Community Forest to keep it,” explained Warner.

“It’s a bad time for us.”

The hillside is both visible from the village and lies within Pemberton’s watershed.

At the same time the Resort Municipality of Whistler is also investigating opportunities for a Community Forest.

At the last council meeting on Monday, July 19 council approved a \$50,000 budget for research into the provincial Community Forest program.

Two local registered professional foresters are now delving into the issue and bringing the information back to council in time to apply to the Ministry of Forests.

“The reason that the municipality is interested as always is that it would give us more say in what happens on the land around Whistler,” said Heather Beresford, stewardship supervisor with the municipality.

“This would give us more control over what happens in the area.”

Rather than get involved in the daily operations of logging, the municipality would most likely contract the work out to smaller logging companies in the area.

Beresford said the opportunity to be involved in the logging industry would allow the resort to look at more sustainable ways of doing things.

For example, instead of clear-cutting Whistler could practice selective removal, which is something that is done in the forestry industry currently.

“The thought is if Whistler was in control we could do more of that,” said Beresford.

Warner was unaware of Whistler’s plan to apply for a Community Forest. It was her understanding that the provincial program was put in place to help communities like Pemberton, which are affected by job losses in the logging industry.

“The community forests are a really great idea but it is meant for communities who are affected by job losses,” said Warner.

The provincial government launched the program six years ago and at that time received 27 applications. Among those was an application from Whistler, which was rejected.

Only eight communities were given a green light to proceed with logging operations. Some of those projects range in size from 400 hectares to more than 60,000 hectares.

Under the Forestry Revitalization Plan the province withdrew 20 per cent of the wood available to the large forestry companies and reallocated it to Community Forests.

The application process for the next round of Community Forest tenures is expected to begin in the Squamish Forest District in August. The province is expected to make final decisions by the end of the year.

In the meantime Pemberton council will consider the Community Forest consultants proposal at their next regular council meeting on Tuesday August 3.

“If we don’t move forward (with the Community Forest) we may be cutting off our nose too,” said Warner.

“We’re going to make that decision at council next Tuesday.”

Whistler Pique - July 29, 2004 - Questions raised about logging companies’ plans - Current plans make no mention of heli-logging

By Adam Daff

With less than two weeks to go until the official public comment period expires on a proposed logging operation in Pemberton, council would like some written assurances from CRB and Weyerhaeuser that they are not being misled.

A Pemberton resident forwarded pictures of the area to Pique Newsmagazine where CRB, who is working on behalf of Weyerhaeuser, is proposing to log, pointing out the inconsistencies between CRB’s recent statements and their published logging plans.

Three weeks ago CRB spokesperson Bernice Patterson told council that her company could do a “good job maintaining the visuals” in the village. CRB and Weyerhaeuser have proposed to log an area of timber directly behind the Signal Hill Elementary School.

But according to maps supplied by CRB and kept in the Pemberton library, the timber CRB is proposing to remove can be clearly seen from the Village of Pemberton and would effect the “visuals” in the village.

Pemberton council highlighted this fact but CRB countered the council's argument by stating that they would selectively log the area with helicopters. However, those plans have yet to be confirmed to the public. With time running out on the public comment period, council is pushing for CRB to present a new plan to the public.

CRB has good credentials in Pemberton because it was largely successful in maintaining the scenic values of those areas when it logged in the area in 2002.

But with this area of forest, unless only a few select trees are taken out of the hillside, the Pique's pictures show that CRB has little hope, if any, of maintaining the "visuals" so close to the village with any large scale forestry operations.

Moreover, if CRB starts helicopter logging so close to the elementary school, the noise could also become an issue for the community.

CRB's existing maps show that the company wants to build a road to truck the logs out once they have been felled.

But Patterson has told the council and the media that CRB would be using helicopters so the road no longer needs to be built.

"That road is scrapped...we're going to 100 per cent heli-logging now," said Patterson.

"The heli-drop zone is going to be off the end of our road we used last time (to log in 2002) and that's across from One Mile lake."

With these changes to the logging plan and the growing public interest in this logging operation, several Pemberton councillors have repeated calls for CRB to make another public presentation.

Pemberton Mayor Elinor Warner said it was unacceptable for CRB not to amend their public plan if they now intend to helicopter log.

"I think they still plan on building a road in here," said Warner.

"Why else wouldn't they have changed their plans in the library?"

But Patterson said such public consultation in this case would not be constructive.

"We have no plans to do a public meeting unless we're directed and it would have to come from somebody like the Ministry (of Forests) for us to do that," said Patterson.

"Last time (before they logged in 2002) we found there was a lot of people that just said 'no' and that was their big comment and that was about it.

"We just stood there and let people abuse us for a couple of hours, we didn't really get a lot of points across. It's kind of like now, people don't really want to look or listen."

Despite the controversy, councillor Mark Blundell said the council had not heard from Weyerhaeuser or CRB since the first council meeting about this proposed logging operation three weeks ago.

"It's a contentious issue and they should explain what they're going to do," said Blundell.

"I'm not against logging, but let's get some public input into it.

“Are they’re going to do some selective logging, or some fire proofing?”

“Maybe if we knew more, more people would be receptive.”

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Whistler Pique - August 19, 2004 - Community Forest could become a bargaining chip - Pemberton council endorses a forester to devise a plan

By Adam Daff

Pemberton council has endorsed a plan that might give the village power to bargain with the logging companies proposing to cut the timber behind the Signal Hill elementary school.

CRB Logging, on behalf of Weyerhaeuser, has applied to take about 300 truckloads of logs out of the hillside behind the school and they also want to log forest inside Pemberton's watershed.

After several weeks of deliberation Pemberton council have decided to endorse a plan for a community forest licence.

Professional foresters will now work on the details of that plan but there is a strong possibility that part of the land inside Pemberton's proposed community forest will include the timber in the watershed and the timber behind the Signal Hill elementary school.

If this happens, and the provincial government approves the community forest plan, then the council will have "a say on what happens" on that piece of land.

This would open a raft of other possibilities for the council and indeed the logging companies, because the council could then contract the companies to log for them inside their community forest.

The council might also be forced to compensate Weyerhaeuser because Weyerhaeuser owns the timber rights to the land they have applied to log and they have a right to log it if they get approval from Squamish Forest District Manager Paul Kuster.

Moreover, the council could just make an offer to buy Weyerhaeuser's timber license for a hefty sum.

Kuster confirmed that a partnership or a trade-off between Pemberton council, Weyerhaeuser and CRB was likely.

"If, for whatever reason, a piece of land is not available for logging the land base becomes constricted, so then what has to give?" said Kuster.

"I guess a new venture (between Pemberton council and Weyerhaeuser/CRB) might be the thing that has to give.

"I'm not saying it's going to happen but that's one of the ramifications."

Kuster hinted that another factor in any discussion about timber in B.C. is the fact that the area logging companies can log is rapidly diminishing.

"There is a lot of sentiment because of the high values that we have on land in this area.

“But not only does Pemberton not want logging right up to their doorstep, we’re finding that, say, Whistler in 19-Mile Creek or 21-Mile Creek don’t want to see logging there.

“The more land that’s not available for timber harvesting for whatever reason... it’s getting harder and harder for forestry to say ‘this is where we can propose an operation’.”

One advantage Pemberton council has in this process is that community forests are something that the provincial government is supporting.

Two weeks ago the Ministry of Forests sent out a press release about the community of Creston and the fact that Forests Minister Michael de Jong was inviting the town to apply for a “probationary Community Forest agreement”.

But Kuster said the government’s community forest plan was becoming a lot bigger than first expected.

“The government of B.C. thought they would be looking at community forests to a degree of so many cubic metres.

“But gradually as they start giving the green light for places like Creston the volume of forest is slowly being eaten up across the province.”

In addition to stopping the logging near the village, Pemberton Mayor Elinor Warner said it was also important for Pemberton to get a community forest license so it can bolster local jobs in the industry.

“We’ve lost 170,000 cubic metres of forest in this area and they say you lose one job per 1,000 cubic metres... that’s a lot of jobs,” said Warner.

“We’ve been one of the hardest hit communities by all the changes.”

The next step in this process will occur when Walter Cowlard from Weyerhaeuser meets with the Pemberton council in September.

Kuster, who must give final approval on Weyerhaeuser’s logging operation, said he would not be reviewing any material until after the September meeting between Weyerhaeuser and the council.

Whistler Pique - August 19, 2004 - Mount Currie weighs into logging debate - Pemberton timber also in Mount Currie band territory

By Adam Daff

Weyerhaeuser and CRB Logging have faced some stiff opposition to their proposal to log the area behind the Signal Hill elementary school and now another formidable opponent is about join the chorus of protests.

In addition to being right behind the Village of Pemberton and inside the town’s watershed, the area Weyerhaeuser and CRB are proposing to log is also on land claimed by the Mount Currie Band to be part of its traditional territory.

The Mount Currie Band has a “good relationship” with the Pemberton council and it has already sent a letter supporting council’s bid to stop the project.

But the band is about to send another package of information to the Ministry of Forests and Weyerhaeuser to indicate what research Mount Currie would like to see completed before any logging happens.

Many of their concerns centre on known archaeological sites around Pemberton and the fact that there could be more of them in the area that is proposed to be logged.

Spokesman for the Mount Currie Band Sheldon Tetreault said the Mount Currie Band council and chief shared many of the Pemberton council's concerns.

"Mount Currie and the Lil'wat is concerned when there's logging going on anywhere in the territory because we've always been marginalized from the activity and we have a right in Canadian law to participate in the economic benefit of those activities on the land," said Tetreault.

"So whenever there's an activity we're always concerned and we're always trying to make a case that we should be involved or benefiting from it.

"There's no difference in this case except that there's another community (Pemberton) that has their own concerns, and we share those.

"We feel the local communities should have a say on the development that happens in their backyard.

"In addition to saying that we're supporting the position of the Pemberton council, internally we're also going through a process where we have all of the information about the proposed logging and we're assessing the impact the logging would have on Lil'wat Aboriginal rights and title."

Tetreault said the band had recorded several sacred sites in the Pemberton area and it wanted the logging companies to help facilitate an archaeological survey of the area.

"There are known archaeological sites in that area of the proposed logging so these will need to be identified and highlighted to the Ministry of Forests," said Tetreault.

"The sites that I'm aware of, there is a number of pit houses, which is not a burial area, but like a small gathering site.

"There's also a recorded area of culturally modified trees, which are trees used specifically for cedar bark materials.

"We think the likelihood is very high that there's other archaeological sites there and we believe that they (the logging companies) have a duty to ensure the area is surveyed properly to identify all the sites," he said. "And we need to talk about how we could mitigate any kind of impact on those sorts of things."

The Mount Currie Band is now in the process of collating their archival material and sequencing it with the maps of the Pemberton area.

At the same time the Pemberton council will begin working with a local forester, John Davies, to develop a community forest and wildfire management plans.

Davies said he would be meeting with Pemberton Mayor Elinor Warner later this month to work on the details of the plan, which would eventually have to be approved by the provincial government.

"A community forest would be run by the municipality and they would be free to hire whoever they want, which could include CRB, to help with logging in there," said Davies.

“The other option is they could put their logging sales up to the highest bidder.”

Whistler Pique - August 19, 2004 - Letter to the editor

The way I see it, as a citizen of this town since the early 1960s, I am appalled that a big American company like Weyerhaeuser and their local contractors C.R.B. are again considering logging on the face of the hill above Pemberton.

Lets face it, in 2001 when the whole town said “leave this hill alone”, some kind of deal was struck that enabled them to do about 300 logging truck loads on a Weyerhaeuser licence and some Crown timber adjacent to this timber licence to make it a feasible helicopter show. They say “Oh look what a wonderful job we did”, but as we know the logging they did then had no sight lines visible from town. Now the 29 hectares in question are right on the face of the mountain, so why even bother saying this?

I for one have seen the “wonderful” job they did on the Crown portion of this logging and I have pictures to back this up. Believe me, if you superimposed this mess onto this 29 hectare portion it will be a huge eyesore with the potential, in my opinion, to devalue property in this town: logging in the watershed, future slide damage and just plain out and out people won't want to buy in a community where logging takes place on a hill right in our watershed and the visual backdrop of the town!

All of this for what most of us thought a deal that was made and now is being broken.

Isn't it funny that most of the people thought that with the Crown wood thrown in last time to sweeten the deal, the logging in 2002 was a one-time thing. But alas the principles from C.R.B. tell us that no, we who thought that are all mistaken. And now they intend to log this hill no matter what anyone thinks. Give us a break!

When Steve Miles and Bernice Patterson presented C.R.B.'s new logging plan to council, a meeting I attended, we were pretty astounded when they said no deal was ever made and now they would go ahead with logging right behind town regardless of what people thought. Not only great P.R. but as far as I'm concerned a deal reneged on – maybe not on paper but definitely in good faith. We thought the 2002 logging was the end of it.

When someone says we can take out two out of three trees and it won't have much of a visual impact on this area I ask myself, are we really expected to swallow this?

I for one will park my butt up that hill if I have to, and the older I get the more that butt is becoming an immovable object!

Gerald Giguere

Pemberton

Whistler Question - August 24, 2004 - *Eco-group joins logging fray - RAN claims 'People for Pemberton' drive has netted 1,000 letters to Weyerhaeuser*

Opposition to a Weyerhaeuser proposal to log in the Pemberton Creek watershed has gone North America-wide.

The San Francisco-based Rainforest Action Network (RAN) recently launched a campaign called “People for Pemberton,” supporting the stand taken by Pemberton Council against the plan to log on the slope above the village centre.

Pemberton officials plan to meet with Weyerhaeuser officials Sept. 14 to discuss the plan. The meeting is to involve Council and Walter Cowlard, director of Weyerhaeuser's Stillwater Timberlands Division, said Sarah Goodman, communications director for Weyerhaeuser Canada.

Pemberton lawmakers have expressed opposition to the plan because of concerns about the potential for impacts on the Pemberton watershed and on viewsapes from the Village.

This isn't the first time RAN has taken issue with Weyerhaeuser. A recent RAN press release refers to the U.S.-based company as "the No. 1 destroyer of old-growth forests in North America."

The group's website (www.ran.org) includes details of a recent decision by California-based grocery store chain Trader Joe's to stop buying grocery bags produced by the forestry giant. The statement also includes an admonition to Weyerhaeuser to "adopt global environmental policy that protects endangered forests."

Brant Olson, RAN's old-growth campaign director, told The Question this week that Friday's (Aug. 13) decision by Trader Joe's was at least partly attributable to pressure from RAN supporters, including "about 1,000 letters" to Weyerhaeuser concerning the Pemberton situation.

"We've been meeting with Weyerhaeuser regarding their environmental policies and saw (Pemberton) as an example of how they're not dealing with local concerns in the way they operate," Olson said.

Olson said RAN, founded in 1985, has about 10,000 members in the U.S. and Canada. Its best-known campaign was one that persuaded officials at Home Depot to stop purchasing products from old-growth forests.

"We just have the single office here in San Francisco, but we traditionally will link with local or individual folks in the work that we do," Olson said, adding that he plans to talk to Weyerhaeuser and local officials about the situation.

The RAN website includes a series of "Action Alerts." On Monday, the "People for Pemberton" campaign topped the list.

"The mayor and residents of the Village of Pemberton, British Columbia, are fighting to prevent Weyerhaeuser from logging in a critical watershed that overlooks the village," the alert says. "Despite such outcry including letters of protest sent to the company by Pemberton's Mayor and City Council, Weyerhaeuser is moving ahead full steam. Tell Weyerhaeuser that communities matter."

The website includes a sample letter which can be sent to Cowlard and Steven R. Rogel, Weyerhaeuser CEO.

Goodman said the company is working to ensure that concerns are heard and addressed.

"We're obviously going to try to work with the local community in terms of any input that they have," she said. "We're open to input from other groups, including environmental groups, but what's really important is the input from the local community."

"I'm not dismissing those groups' input, but it's really the local community input we think is important. That's why we're going to meet with Council and why there's a public input phase of the approval process — and it's (hearing about concerns) just part of doing good business."

Whistler Question - August 24, 2004 - Opinion piece - *A new twist*

The scrap over a proposal to log on the slope overlooking Pemberton took on a new and interesting twist this week with the news that a San Francisco-based environmental group, the Rainforest Action Network (RAN), is taking an active role in supporting the Village of Pemberton and others opposed to the logging.

By all accounts RAN's "People for Pemberton" campaign was launched without the prior knowledge of Village of Pemberton Council, which has expressed strong opposition to the plan by Weyerhaeuser and its contractor, CRB Logging, to log in the Pemberton Creek watershed in view of the village centre.

The RAN entry into the fray makes for somewhat strange bedfellows — a U.S.-based environmental group working toward the same end as the leaders of a small B.C. community whose economic well-being depends to a large degree on logging.

We've said it before and we'll say it again: We think the fact that the community is so dependent on logging only serves to legitimize the unanimous opposition of Village lawmakers to the Weyerhaeuser plan. Village of Pemberton lawmakers may or may not have strong "green" sensibilities, but first and foremost their job is to look after the interests and desires of their constituents. It's clear to us that in this instance they're thinking about the public good that goes beyond merely economic factors.

While it could be argued that the sentiments expressed to date are just another example of NIMBY-ism (Not In My Back Yard), we think those claims would be off-base in this instance.

While some may feel RAN is an unwelcome group of green-tinged outsiders, we think the attention RAN can bring to the issue can only help the Village of Pemberton and others opposed to the logging. We see no reason for Village Council to reject any help RAN may offer, now or in the future.

On Sept. 14, Pemberton's mayor and council will have their first face-to-face meeting with Weyerhaeuser officials about the plan. We have little doubt that the company will attempt to provide assurances that the proposed cut would have minimal impact on the Pemberton Creek watershed — Pemberton's primary source of drinking water — and on the viewscapes of Pemberton residents and their prospective visitors. While there's no harm in hearing company officials out, based on the sentiments expressed to date we see little chance that the Council will emerge from the meeting having experienced an abrupt change of heart.

To us, the issue is similar to the outcry that emerged in connection with the Miller Creek independent power project in 2002. As with Miller Creek, citizens have expressed concerns in the past and received assurances that those concerns would be respected. Now they're being told that there's a renewed threat and have been forced to fight the same fight all over again.

The ultimate decision is up to those at the Squamish District office of B.C. Forestry. We hope and pray that unless something changes drastically, those responsible for the decision will accede to public concerns and put the kibosh on the plan.