

Presentation to North Cowichan Council

Date of Presentation: December 19/2018

Topic: Community Forest:

What are we asking for?

For Council to delay making any decision on a moratorium of logging and/or related logging activity in the Municipal Forest Reserve until council has informed itself of all of the information and facts available regarding its operation.

Members of Council - I would first like to thank you for the opportunity to present to you today some comments that have been put together by a group of concerned taxpayers of the District regarding the request contained in the notice of motion from Councilor Justice:

“Essentially the request within this notice of motion is to place a moratorium on logging and related activity in the Stoney Hill Block of the Municipal Forest Reserve”.

My name is Jim Dias and I have been selected as the spokesperson for a group of valley residents and North Cowichan taxpayers. The group includes Registered Professional Foresters, Registered Forest Technician, Certified Professional Accountants, Registered Professional Biologists and other concerned residents-They are former employees of the District, former members of Council, former members of the North Cowichan Forest Advisory Committee, the North Cowichan Community Plan oversight committee, and former forest industry employees - **but with one thing in common - they are all genuinely concerned and passionate about their community and in particular the Municipal Forest Reserve, its care , its management and its future.**

We do not have a web site, we are not on social media, we don't have a petition, nor have we attempted yet to broaden our group of concerned residents at this time. We believe there are some facts that council needs to consider in going forward.

Certainly in 10 minutes, I do not want to overburden you with a litany of statistics or long list of facts which are critically important in going forward. I also will not attempt to go toe to toe with what has been said or printed by others who are supporting some form of moratorium or cessation of logging either temporarily or permanently.

Our group simply wants you to understand a few very critical things.

In no particular order of importance please consider the following:

- in 1946, with an affirmative vote of at least 2/3rds of its members without the assent of the electors, Council placed a sizeable amount of land owned by the municipality within a municipal forest. We believe this Council had incredible foresight in assuring that this 12,600 acre (5,000 ha) land base be put into forest management for, not only the citizens of that time, but for future generations of this valley.

-the land that North Cowichan placed into the MFR was tax sale lands that had been logged of its first growth timber –without the owners paying the taxes with the land reverting back to the municipality.

-after 1946 North Cowichan entered into Woodlot Cutting permits with local logging companies who harvested timber from the land base and paid a royalty on their logging - that revenue was simply returned to General Revenue - the land base was not managed in an integrated way, there was no reforestation being undertaken, there was a consultant forester retained, safe to say the cut blocks were **harvested only** for the most valuable timber, without a lot of thought given to the harm being done to not only the land base, but to the future value of the remaining standing timber and related uses. None of this revenue was being directly returned to the MFR to manage its future!

-in the late 70's and 80's then Mayor Graham Bruce, led a group of professional foresters, forest engineers and the District Forest Manager working for the BC Forest Service who collectively put together a project to establish a working community forest which would see this most valuable community asset managed on a sustainable basis for all users, **for the immediate and long term future**. There was considerable work to be done not only to the land itself, based upon the past harvesting practices of the woodlot loggers, but also in creating guidelines, policies, procedures, goals and objectives **to create an all -inclusive and sustainable management plan**. Safe to say this group rolled up its volunteer sleeves and went to work producing a plan and policies to bring this valuable asset into a much needed place. They created, **not only a model that would sustain and improve the land base, but a financial model which would see a forestry operation that would pay for itself and all of the related activities without taxpayer support**.

The management team hired to undertake this plan included a Registered Professional Forester, and an assistant with a Diploma in Forest Technology, both of which had considerable outside practical experience to offer. **While there has been a number of RPF's managing the reserve since 1986, there is one thing that remains constant and that is their commitment to the mission of North Cowichan's MFR**. All of the forestry was overseen by these two individuals while a lot of the specific work itself, road building, logging, replanting, brushing, weeding, fertilization etc was undertaken by contractors.

The Official Community Plan, adopted by Council, makes many statements about Forestry and its positive impact on our communities. It is one of the foundations of the local economy, and for over 100 years we have logged in this area and the forests have become part of the working landscape of the region.

Approximately 30% of North Cowichan is under forest management - 5% under private ownership and 25% as part of the MFR - in total over 6,170 ha or 14,057 acres.

Private lands are subject to the regulations and guidelines of the Forest Land Reserve while North Cowichans are governed by the Community Charter and the Local Government Act as well as by laws and the management plan for the MFR.

I want to quote from your OCP!

The District will encourage forest management practices that protect the resource for future generations by:

- Preserving the land base and encouraging appropriately sized units for timber management based on productive capacity**
- encouraging co-operative partnerships between the various forest land managers**
- discouraging further parcelization for non-forest or agricultural based activities except as supported by plan policy for alternative use**
- recognizing opportunities for multiple uses of the land that do not reduce its primary forestry use**
- minimizing the impacts of residential intrusion into the forest land base.**

And also from the OCP - **the Municipal Forest Reserve is managed for multiple use on a long term sustainable basis. The plan goes on to address, Integrated Management, Silviculture Management, Old Growth Guidelines, Riparian Zones, Visual Landscape Management, Forest Recreation, Terrain Stability Assessment, and Biodiversity Policies.**

The mission statement for North Cowichan's Forestry Program is:

"to maintain and enhance North Cowichan's valuable municipal forest resources for all users through sustainable forestry, ecological stewardship and sound fiscal management"

The initial Forest Advisory Committee, established by bylaw in 1986, put a plan in place to achieve that mission. And I would suggest that every FAC since and every employee engaged in the Municipal Forestry Department has approached this mission statement in a professional and responsible manner and worked extremely hard and diligently to make sure that mission is adhered to.

Fact Sheet:

Did you know there is no demand on the municipal taxpayer to fund any of the activities taking place within the MFR land base and that the mandate of the program as stipulated by Council in 1981 was:

“Forestry management expenditures and operational costs will be financed entirely through the cumulative revenues generated by sales of the forest resources

Did you know that North Cowichan is a leader in small scale Forestry in North America and was part of a Provincial Committee to establish a new Community Forest Agreement for the Province of BC using MNC’s MFR policy, program and management objectives to grant Community Forestry Licenses on Crown Lands.

There are now 58 Community Forest Licenses issued in the Province that are based upon the North Cowichan Model!!

Did you know that North Cowichan’s MFR land base has been used for a number of trials by the Province of British Columbia’s Forestry Ministry-Maple, Douglas Fir, Noble Fir and Grand Fir.

Did you know that North Cowichan’s community forest is an outdoor education lab and has been accessed by students right from elementary schools, through high schools, and post-secondary institutions including UVIC, VIU, UBC, UNBC and BCIT. **It is a model to be proud of** and your Municipal Forestry Department has conducted tours of the reserve for visiting foresters from not only Canada and the United States but from all over the world. They all come here because of the excellent example of intensive forest management being set in the Municipal Forests of North Cowichan.

Did you know that one of the earliest examples of engaging students in appreciating the value of replanting occurred on the east slope of Mt. Prevost. In 1985, the graduating class from Cowichan Secondary planted some 3 hectares with new seedlings. I would venture to guess many of those students to this day maintain an interest in how their trees are doing?

Did you know that North Cowichan has on many occasions hired **independent experts on an on-going basis** to assist in achieving the overall mission statement - the list includes: professionals engaged in their specialty of **View Scape, Terrain and Slope Stability, Wildlife, General Environmental, Eco Systems Classification, Community Wild Fire Protection , Fire Fighting and Suppression.**

Did you know that the Municipal Forest Operations Department is subjected to an audit every two – three years to the standards established by the Province of BC’s Forest Practices code - on all aspects of its operation - harvesting, planting, road building, lesser vegetation management, recreational and other user group interactions etc. While there are financial audits done every year for the Municipality generally, there is no other municipal department or its staff, professionals or otherwise, that is audited in this way. How many of you could say that in your chosen career path that you and your operation, whatever that might be, get audited by a peer group of professionals? The bottom line is outside expertise is used, valued and called upon when needed

Did you know that every Registered Professional Forester or Registered Professional Biologist, whether directly employed by the municipality or volunteering on your Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) prescribes to a code of professional ethics and standards? Your FAC and your Municipal Forester

completely understand this and know full well that ultimately their accountability is to you and the public!

Did you know that the FAC, up until 2014, consisted of 3 volunteer registered professional foresters that lived in the municipality, along with the mayor and two elected council members. After this the FAC consisted of five members three of which were volunteer professionals and one council member.

Did you know the revenues earned from North Cowichan's Municipal Forestry Program have resulted in:

- the construction and maintenance of miles of trails as well as the construction of wash rooms and parking lots
- establishment of a Forest Legacy Fund that over the years has contributed well over \$600,000 to support community projects - to name a few

- Antique Truck Building - BC Forest Discovery Center
- Waterwheel Park improvements - Chemainus
- Hiking Trail at the BC Forest Discovery Center
- an Annual Scholarship and Bursary Fund
- lights at Sherman Road Soccer Field
- Washrooms at Fuller Lake Park
- projects at the Chesterfield Sportsplex

- funds to purchase lands now commonly known as the Chemainus Lake Park,
- funds to purchase additional land to add to the MFR land base (61acres)
- funds to establish a Fire Fighting Contingency Fund,
- contributing over \$2.5 million to the General Revenue fund of the Municipality,
- contributing over \$20 million in Economic Activity from direct spending within the MFR alone and probably with adding in employment multipliers, job creation and indirect spending the total economic activity could well be into the \$40-\$50 million range.
- a job creation program in the 1980's where approximately 1,500 people were engaged in meaningful Employment Bridging Program where their UI was topped up - they worked in the MFR doing Silviculture work such as juvenile spacing, pruning, brush removal, trail building.
- Direct Man years of employment 10/yr aver X 38 years - 380 man years of employment – with multiplier of 3-7, we have generated anywhere between 1,140 and 2,660 man years of employment - a considerable amount of economic activity in itself.
- miles of logging roads for not only logging, but hiking, biking, horseback riding, etc.
- the ability to manage opportunities for additional revenues through firewood sales, lesser vegetation permits for products used in the floral industry.

Did you know that an Intensive Forest Management Plan was completed for the Maple Mountain Block and 300 ha has been set aside, along the eastern edge (abutting Sansum Narrows) of this Block, as a view protection zone - no logging or removal of vegetation. This zone contains the very popular hiking trail which runs from Arbutus Avenue to Crofton.

Did you know the MFR gifted the 17 Acres on Mt. Tzouhalem containing the Wildflower Preservation area to the province of BC, an additional preservation area around the Mt Prevost Cairn, as well as several tree arboretums that have been created within the MFR.

Did you know that your Municipal Forestry department has partnered with the Province on cost sharing projects to remove and evaluate areas of fire hazard from debris overload? The grants are cost shared 75/25 with the Province.

Roads built within the reserve, at the expense of the Forestry Department, provide not only logging and recreational access, but are used in the event of forest fire, safety, rescue and extraction of injured persons.

Did you know that **within the working Municipal Forest Reserve**, we currently have either formal or informal agreements and relationships with:

- Cowichan Trail Stewards-Maple Mountain and Mt. Tzouhalem Trails
- Providence Farm-Nature Conservancy (Chase Woods)-Trail to the cross
- Story Trail-Cowichan Tribes
- Downhill Mountain Bike Racing Maple and Prevost Mtns
- Fuller Lake area-Cowichan Triathlon
- Gut Busters - Mt. Tzouhalem
- Horse events - organized and otherwise Grace Road and Maple Mtn
- Prevost Middle School Running Race
- Victoria Parasailing-Mt Prevost
- Victoria Kayaking and Canoeing-Grace Road and the Chemainus River
- Chemainus Rod and Gun Club

Did you know that there have been **2,130,974 seedlings planted in the MFR since 1982** and that there are more trees in the Reserve today than existed at that time?

Did you know that every cut block is evaluated prior to harvest with respect to **drainage, slope stability, visual aspects, species and other factors**. And that following harvest they are replanted and that every replanted stand is brushed and weeded for invasive species until it reaches a free growing state where other vegetation is not impacting the new trees-**free standing in 8 -10 years**.

Did you know the survival rate of the planting program over the past 37 years is over 90%.

Did you know that (the carbon sequestration for a 50 year old Douglas Fir stand (medium growing site) is estimated at 3.5tonnes per year/per hectare. If you extrapolate that number estimating that 50% of your 5,000 hectares is 50+ years)**your MFR is sequestering 8,750 tonnes of carbon per year!!**

Did you know that your Municipal Forestry Department is developing a species at risk guide as well as a species of concern list. An example of an evolving management practices.

Did you know that **the cut block sizes in the Reserve range from 1.5 ha to a maximum of 15 ha**, and that the total area cut within the reserve averages less than 50 ha (110 acres) per year - approximately 1% of the 5,000 ha land base.

These ladies and gentlemen are just some of the facts regarding the operation and management of your Municipal Forest Reserve. More information is available and we would encourage each and every one of

you to completely familiarize yourself with all that has been presented to-day. If you have not had the opportunity to tour your land base, ask your forester and your Forest Advisory Committee members to take all of you out to see the land first hand. Tour all of it! Take a helicopter ride over the top of it! See for yourself how well it is being managed

You know our municipal forests are a huge asset.

You have a great management plan.

You have a great team of employees, and volunteers.

The facts prove that past councils, **your staff and volunteers have and will with the guidance of this Council continue to manage this land base to balance a multitude of interests and activities.**

You do not need to stop logging.

There is a significant economic impact if you do not only to the local economy, but also to the taxpayers of this community where revenue lost from forestry means taxpayers paying for things like trails, washrooms, parking lots, forest fire and fire load management, maintenance of roads, etc.

The evolution of management plans and new forestry practices is not new.

Forestry and forest management practices have in the past and will continue in the future to be adjusted and altered without stopping or discontinuing forestry.

You have a growing bank account! An investment for the future!

Continue to let it grow and be managed in a responsible and sustainable way!

Be proud of what has, and can be accomplished!

Don't stop what you have been doing!

There are more trees than ever in the MFR!

-There are more and safer trails than ever in the MFR!

-There is more recreational use than ever in the MFR!

-There is more carbon sequestration than ever before in the MFR!

And all of this has been accomplished within a Working Forest! Managed successfully and proudly by the District of North Cowichan's political leaders, staff and volunteers!

Thanks for listening and for your time today