

We have real reason to be concerned about **Ministry of Forests Lands Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO)/BC Timber Sales (BCTS)** intentions to log on Bowen. They act on behalf of the landowner, the Province, and have the legislation to log our Crown Lands. They are developing the planning framework for this logging, and have advertised for public consultation. Once a plan is in place, BCTS can proceed with a bid process to operators wishing to log, or a community forest or woodlot license with the community. BCTS has identified the areas open for logging, looking to be between 20-25% of the island, over a 20 period.

Five areas on Crown Lands are identified by BC Timber Sales (BCTS) for logging. All are on high ground, on each of the three “big bumps” of Bowen. Collectively they affect just about every part of Bowen.

The “Collins Mountain” BCTS block sits above Eagle Cliff, Hood Point and Grafton Bay, includes water supply watersheds for Hood Point, Eagle Cliff and Grafton Bay, and directly abuts Eagle Cliff residential areas and Crippen Park.

The “Mount Gardner North” BCTS block sits above Mt Gardner Road, Mt Gardner dock area, and Grafton Lake Valley, includes watersheds of Cove Bay and Endswell Farm areas and extensive recreational trails on Mt Gardner, and directly abuts Crippen Park.

The “Mount Gardner South” BCTS block sits above Bluewater, King Edward Bay, Bowen Bay, Sealeigh Park and Tunstall Bay, and includes Bluewater-Bowen Bay-King Edward Bay, and Tunstall Bay water supply watersheds and extensive recreational trails on Mt Gardner.

The “Radar Hill” BCTS block sits above Sunset, Fairweather, Cowan Point Estates, Cowan Point, Golf Course, and Josephine Ridge, and includes water supply watersheds for Josephine Lake and the Golf Course, completely surrounds Fairy Fen Islands Trust Fund Nature Reserve, and directly abuts residential properties at Josephine Lake, and Cowan Point Estates.

The “Cowan Point” BCTS block sits above Cowan Point Estates, Seymour Bay and the Golf Course, includes the headwaters of Lee Creek water supply. It directly abuts the Cowan Point Estates and Apodaca Mountain Ecological Reserve. Industrial logging is common in coastal BC so it is not difficult to understand the potential impacts of this scale of logging on Bowen. Impacts are amplified because we are a small island with a myriad of land uses and environmental values that are not easily compatible with industrial logging. Many come to mind.

Any logging, and even the best logging, heavily damages the ecological functions of the cut forests. Wildlife habitat is lost. Recreational values can be compromised, or badly damaged. Road building intercepts natural runoff, focuses flow, increases erosion, and can lead to siltation in streams that affects water quality. Drinking water quality and stream habitat for fish and invertebrates can be damaged. Logging operations create noise, whether by road construction, cutting and yarding timber, or hauling, that impacts residents, visitors, recreationalists and tourism operators. Because all the proposed logging areas are on high and sloping ground, this noise will travel widely across the island. Likewise for visual impacts. Clear

cuts create visual scars on landscape, and many of the logged areas will be visible from many parts of the island, and nearby waters. Logging trucks will take space on the ferry, and sometimes that will be inconvenient for us. Our island brand, so much built around being a get-away and quiet place, is at risk.

The opportunity for a Community Forest on Bowen has been raised by some. This might sound like an eco-friendly sustainability solution for the island. I suggest caution. My understanding is that Community Forests are contractual agreements that require minimum annual timber yields. I think the outcome of a “mom and pop” selection forestry operation is unlikely. If Bowen had capacity for value-added forest product enterprises, there might be a stronger argument, but we don’t. Most likely the raw logs will be exported to the mainland. The few jobs created could well be operators from the mainland. And, as other communities have discovered, Community Forest operations can divide, creating conflict between those operating and supporting it, and those impacted by its operations.

If Bowen Island does not want this logging, we will need to appeal to politicians to instruct staff to change course. The person with the most say in this regard is the Minister of FLNRO. We will have to illustrate to the Minister, both by argument and action, that Bowen Island does not want this logging. We need to present good reasons why industrial logging does not fit Bowen Island; that it just does not make sense to compromise the economy, values, quality of life, and environmental attributes of this community for modest revenues to the Provincial coffers. We need to communicate that we are passionate about this, that we will make our case heard, and we will do what is necessary to oppose the logging.

We have a long road ahead. We will see what a bunch of plucky islanders can do. Writing letters to politicians does matter. As a start I would suggest that letters of concern should be addressed to the person who ultimately will decide this issue, the Minister of FLNRO, with a cc to other politicians with influence: MLA Jordan Sturdy, BIM Council, and the Chair of the Islands Trust. Copy the letter to BCTS staff so that they are alert to your arguments and opposition, but also so that they know that this is not just an operational issue for them, but that this issue has “gone political”.

Bob Turner

Honourable John Rustad, Minister of Forests, Lands, & Natural Resource Operations: [FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

Jordan Sturdy, MLA: [jordan.sturdy.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:jordan.sturdy.mla@leg.bc.ca)

Mayor and Council, Bowen Island Municipality: [mayorandcouncil@bimbc.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@bimbc.ca)

Peter Luckham, Chair of Islands Trust: [pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:pluckham@islandstrust.bc.ca)

Enrique Sanchez, BC Timber