Directors / Committee Members,

Thank for the opportunity to speak to you once again about what is happening in our local forests. In the spring of 2011 we spoke to you about Community Forest block EW002 in the Wilson Creek watershed and about the ancient forest on Dakota Ridge. Thanks to the support of hundreds of residents, logging of these blocks was deferred and if community concerns are respected they will remain protected.

Of immediate concern now is BC Timber Sales Cutblock #A87124. This block is now up for sale with a closing date of February 29th. It is located on the southern edge of the 2007 CNI clear-cut and if logging is allowed to proceed, it will be one of the largest clear-cuts in the region.

Like CF block EW002, BCTS A87124 is an important part of the proposed 1500ha Mount Elphinstone Park. (See Map of proposed boundaries). This area contains some of the last low elevation natural forest on the Sunshine Coast. BC Parks describes the existing small park which is similar to these blocks, as “mixed old growth and second growth forest with very diverse and rich fungi populations associated with the forest”. They also note that “All three of the park sites are relatively small and could be impacted by adjacent development or forest activities”. In other words the park needs to be bigger.

The 1500ha Elphinstone Forest was identified in the late 1990s as an environmentally important site in an initiative by the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists with a recommendation of full protection. (See attached copy of Elphinstone Forest site).

In our response to Tom Jensen, Assistant Deputy Minister, Timber Operations and Pricing Division we point out that, while block A87124 may not be age class 9, it has many old-growth-like characteristics regenerating after selective hand logging in the late 1800s – similar to the forests in the three small Parks.

In Mr. Jensen’s letter to ELF he states that they will only be extending the CNI clear cuts along 300m of the 900m shared boundary. In our response we mention that there have been numerous massive blow downs along this exposed perimeter. Extending the clear-cut along 300meters of this boundary into the proposed park area, according to our estimate, will increase the exposed perimeter from 900m to approximately 1800m. It is simple geometry that fragmentation increases the exposed perimeter of the remaining ever smaller parts of intact forests.
BCTS manages 6000ha of forested public lands, across the face of Mount Elphinstone and “harvests” an average of 27ha annually. Surely it is possible for BCTS staff to find 27ha of previously logged forest in the approximately 4,500ha remaining if a moratorium is placed on sales in the proposed 1500ha park area.

Time is of the essence and once again we are asking for the support of our Community and the SCRD. Please write BCTS and urgently request an immediate deferral of the sale of block A87124 and a moratorium of any further logging within the proposed expanded Mount Elphinstone Park.

We need this forest as a living part of our neighbourhood now, and even more so in the future.

Time is of the essence.

Hans Penner
For Elphinstone Logging Focus