

Timberlands to log near Cathedral Grove

Nature Trust wants to purchase sensitive parcels from company
Julia Caranci, [Alberni Valley Times](#) Published: Thursday, October 02, 2008

Island Timberlands (IT) will be harvesting about 7,500 cubic metres of old growth forest within about 300 metres of the MacMillan (Cathedral Grove) Park boundary.

The news isn't sitting well with an environmental group that has been fighting to have the area protected, and an organization that has been attempting to negotiate the purchase of some environmentally significant land owned by the forest company.

Island Timberlands spokesperson Mackenzie Leine told the Times the harvesting will commence later this week.

"Our biggest concern is that the saws will be audible inside the park," she said.

Leine explained the closest point the logging will come to the park boundary is 300 metres to the south -- the area being harvested is all land privately owned by the forest company.

Helicopters will be used to remove the harvested logs from the area.

Leine explained the company has done a visual assessment of the land to be logged from the highway, pertaining to "Crown Land visual quality objectives."

She said a small portion of the logging will be visible from the highway, but is only expected to affect about 1.5% of the viewscape in the area.

The land being logged is within the company's operating land base, and generally speaking, such plans are laid out up to two years in advance.

Leine could not say where the logs will be going after they are harvested.

"I don't know who the customer is," she said.

Doug Walker, president of the Nature Trust of B.C., said the non-profit, charitable organization has been trying to negotiate with Island

Timberlands to purchase additional parcels of land adjacent to Cathedral Grove (and other areas), but following the hiring of a new director of real estate at the logging company, talks were put on hold.

"They told me they were not logging in that area (near the park), but that was about six months ago," Walker said. "It's unfortunate to hear they are now."

He added it isn't clear whether or not the parcel being logged is one the Trust was interested in, but the group is attempting to secure more land (with cooperation from the province) around the park to protect it for future generations.

Walker said his group is very interested in getting back to the table with IT again.

"We want to negotiate the purchase of extremely important conservation habitat," he explained.

The money the Trust uses to purchase land comes from donors, grants and help from government.

Annette Tanner, spokesperson for the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, has herself been trying to obtain more information about exactly where the IT cut block is located, but says the company has thus far refused to supply her with a map.

"They say they don't need to let anyone know what their plans are," she said.

Tanner is opposed to any logging of old growth forest near the park because she says it is "Canada's most important forest", a designated community watershed area, and a region with high bird, elk, fish and other wildlife values.

WCWC officials also say logging around the park will increase flooding, run off and erosion inside protected areas, which detrimentally affects the natural balance of the area.

"I don't think they should keep logging until there's nothing left," Tanner said.

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