

NEWS

Holding out hope to save lot

Environmental and political representatives tour DL33 in Nanoose Bay, yet the pro

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District Lot 33 got some out-of-town visitors last week, the controversial Nanoose Bay land slated for logging, as the NDP forest critic flew in for a tour along with the national campaign director of the Wilderness Committee and other community leaders.

"I was invited by a number of people to witness this area and understand the issue more fully," said NDP Forest Critic Norm Macdonald from Golden, B.C. "And it ties into other issues that you hear around the province. Government is choosing to ignore science which is pretty clear about the value of this area and really very little public land is left on Vancouver Island."

The Nanoose First Nations have been given a woodlot license from the provincial government to log the piece of Crown land and are awaiting a cutting permit in order to log this summer.

Alberni-Pacific Rim New Democrat MLA Scott Fraser has toured the land more than once and believes it should be protected. He said it's important to bring as much attention to the issue as possible.

"Bringing politicians from all stripes here — except for Liberal politicians — I think is important to try and get the attention of this government and the ministries responsible and have them take responsibility where they should and where they are not right now," he said.

Fraser said the land is



Qualicum Beach Councillor Barry Avis (from left), NDP Forest critic Norm Macdonald, NDP MLA for Alberni-Pacific Rim Scott Fraser and Wilderness Committee's national chair Joe Foy all toured DL33 last week to try and save it from being logged.

Guided tours of Nanoose Bay lot available

The public is invited to guided tours of the forest and wetlands, at 11 a.m. every Saturday, in Nanoose Bay, (north of Nanaimo), meeting at the Petrocan station on the corner of the

Inland Island Highway and Northwest Bay Road. Contact Annette Tanner, head of the Wilderness Committee's local chapter, for more information, 250-752-6585.

part of one of the most globally-imperiled ecosystems in Canada. The Minister of Environment,

he said, is asleep at the switch on the issue while the Minister of Forests is misrepresenting the truth

by saying it isn't significant.

Wilderness Committee national campaign

from logging

vince isn't moving to protect the area

director Joe Foy said he was delighted to tour the incredibly rich land and felt it was a crime to log it.

"If we had the laws we should have it should not be logged," he said. "I think that it's an absolute crime that our government is trying to tell us that this must be logged and there's got to be a way to stop this."

Foy said it opens up a much larger discussion about the amount of private, corporate forest in the area. He said instead of talking about logging the last remnants of coastal Douglas fir forest, people should be talking about how to get some of this private land back and then justly resolve some of the issues with the First Nations who have had so much land taken from them.

Christopher Stephens, director of the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Foundation and field ornithologist from Parksville, said the area is one of the most biologically diverse habitats in Canada. He said the government signed an international agreement to significantly reduce and halt biodiversity loss, and allowing this land to be logged would be "a blatant contravention of United Nations convention on biological diversity."

Stephens said after using tax payer's money to do an inventory of many local areas, the government knows which are sensitive and critical for wildlife.

"DL33 is one of those areas," he said. "So they know what's important, they know what's endangered, and they know

what must be preserved to maintain our biodiversity. But they seem to be bent on logging it and that's just not okay."

Qualicum Beach councillor Barry Avis was also present at the tour — he is vice-president of the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC). This association, made up of 51 municipalities, passed a unanimous resolution to have DL33 included in the Land Use Order for protection, which recently identified 1,600 hectares in the area, excluding DL33.

At a meeting last week with members of the provincial government, Avis said he and others indicated the importance of saving this land. He said, however, government staff said there is little room for further negotiations.

"They kind of indicated to us that the 1,600 hectares has been decided on (for protection) and that's that," he said.

"There's been so much media coverage of this, all local government has spoken out against this, (there have been) resolutions from the (Regional District of Nanaimo) and AVICC and it seems like none of that matters ... and that should be very concerning to our residents."

Macdonald said the public doesn't have input into forestry decisions like they used to. He said he would work with Fraser in speaking with the ministries of Environment and Forests.

"To listen to local government, to listen to the science and protect a special area," he said.