

AFA denounces MLA office

Environment group says it's against logging in Nanoose Bay's DL33

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NEWS REPORTER

An environmental group working to protect old-growth forests in B.C. is condemning local MLA Ron Cantelon's office for insinuating they support the logging of a parcel of Coastal Douglas Fir forest in Nanoose Bay.

"It's a sleazy tactic to try and link us in their responses to concerned citizens when they write letters back as somehow insinuating that we are supporting the Nanoose Bay ancient forest logging," said Ken Wu, one of the founders of the Ancient Forest Alliance (AFA) in Victoria.

Wu said he found out Cantelon's office was sending out links to an article on his organization's website from local citizens who received e-mail responses to their concerns about DL33 in Nanoose Bay.

He said although AFA is supportive of the government's



Coastal Douglas fir in District Lot 33 in Nanoose Bay could be logged soon.

recent announcement to protect 1600 hectares of CDF — and thanks them in the linked article — the government needs to do more, and specifically protect DL33.

"(The government's recent announcement) is a good thing and we have to say thank you and give credit

where credit is due," said Wu, "but at the same time we've got to put up a fight every time the government takes a backwards stance and right now, overall, their stance is very backwards and destructive when it comes to the rest of our old growth forests."

The letter Wu is speaking of is an e-mail that came from Caroline Waters, constituency assistant for Ron Cantelon, in response to an e-mail from Helga Schmitt, a local resident who has been active in the fight to save DL 33.

Waters said she was simply sending out a link to try and explain that positive things have happened with CDF land.

"I'm just sending back a response to the neighbour. She doesn't want the lot next door cleared and I certainly appreciate that," said Waters.

"I'm sure every person in Parksville who had something going on in the next lot would be in the same exact situation ... they would approve of it if it were happening next to somebody else but not so much when it's right there where they are," she said.

Waters went on to say her office recommends that all residents that oppose logging on this site should meet with the Nanoose First Nations, who "have been completely open to holding and meeting groups up there."

Wu said perhaps Cantelon's office thought citizens would only read the beginning of the linked document that commends the government.

"If you look at what we wrote we actually made it clear that we're actually against it," he said, "but maybe they thought that people don't necessarily read the whole text."

Wu said he likes the analogy that just because someone gives you a rain jacket doesn't mean you're going to be thanking them when they dump a bucket of cold water on your head.

Waters said she just took a quote showing the environmental group was pleased with the amount of land Minister Penner announced for protection, even though it states they would like more.

"It seems I'm just going to be damned no matter what I do," she said.

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