

PROTESTS LOOM OVER NANOOSE FOREST

DARRELL BELLAART POSTMEDIA NEWS

Environmental protesters and the B.C. Opposition have waded into the fight to protect a Nanoose forest slated for logging by the Snawaw-as First Nation.

Western Canada Wilderness Committee head Joe Foy and NDP forestry critic Norm Macdonald have joined the fight to block logging on District Lot 33.

They took part in a tour of the forest west of the Nanoose Bay Petro-Canada station last Thursday.

WCWC, known for its high-profile protests to stop logging in old-growth Island forests, won't rule out that tactic to protect DL 33.

Macdonald said he will pressure the government to not allow a cutting permit and find other ways to create economic activity for the Snawaw-as (Nanoose).

The land is within the boundaries of the Mount Arrowsmith UNESCO biosphere reserve, one of only two such zones on Vancouver Island. Protecting the land has the support of all Island municipalities, which voted to spare it from logging through the Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Association.

DL 33 is a mix of old-growth forest and forests logged in the past century but it is considered rare because of development on both coasts of the Strait of Georgia.

"It's a terrible place to log," said



Barry Avis, Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities president, left, stands beside a veteran Douglas fir with NDP forestry critic Norm Macdonald, Alberni-Pacific Rim MLA Scott Fraser and WCWC campaign coordinator Joe Foy. All took part in a tour of the rare DL33 forest near Nanoose Thursday.

Foy. "On the east coast of Vancouver Island this forest is as rare as hens' teeth. Anyone with half a brain would know it's time to stop killing these types of forests."

Macdonald travelled from his Columbia River-Revelstoke constituency to see it. While acknowledging old-growth forests may be more spectacular, he said the government

we should have a say in what goes on in lands around our community," Macdonald said. "I think local government has been very clear about no logging in the area."

He plans to write to the ministers of forests and environment.

Foy wouldn't rule out a war in the woods. "Will you see a protest? You will certainly see a protest if moves are made to log it," Foy said. "The real time to protest it was earlier on but, whatever, this portion won't go down without a fight."

Alberni-Pacific Rim New Democrat MLA Scott Fraser said all coastal Douglas fir forest is worth preserving because it is "the most endangered ecosystem in Canada." Since it falls within a UNESCO biosphere, he said there are "huge moral and ethical consequences" if government allows logging.

Parksville-Qualicum MLA Ron Cantelon, who represents the constituency, hasn't seen the forest but said he hopes to tour it with a professional forester. He said logging fears are overblown since only 25% will be harvested.

"It's always difficult to get a balance between harvesting and people who want to preserve all the forests," Cantelon said. "There has to be a middle ground and the middle ground seems to be: leave three-quarters of it."

Councillor defends logging DL 33

WALTER CORDERY POSTMEDIA NEWS

Edwards, a councillor and band