

Logging part of bigger economic picture

BRAD BIRD OCEANSIDE STAR

The decision to log DL33 wasn't easy, but was taken after much deliberation and work to acquire a licence and is in the best interest of the 230 members of the Snaw-naw-as First Nation, its director of operations said Wednesday.

"It was a hard decision, but you don't go anywhere without making decisions," said Brent Edwards, who is also an elected band councillor.

He described the logging of the 160-acre site not as a make-work project but "an exercise in capitalism" in conjunction with other projects such as wild fish harvesting, aquaculture, and possible further logging in other areas under negotiation. "It's a piece of the puzzle."

Band members, Edwards said, are not part of the logging crews, but about eight are assisting with site safety. The tree falling is being done by Malloch Logging of Cobble Hill.

Western Canada Wilderness Committee member Annette Tanner said the Snaw-naw-as First Nation suggested in its affidavit for a Supreme Court injunction that activists had dug "suicide pits" to hinder logging. These references were later removed.

"It was false," said Tanner, as no such holes had been dug by them.

Edwards said that in the rush to get the document done, when emotions were high, the misinformation got through. He said the band didn't know who dug the holes. It removed the statements when they were found to be false.

Tanner said holes on a nearby private property had been dug by ministry of health officials as part of a "perc" test to see if the land is suitable for septic fields.

Edwards said safety is foremost in their minds, but so is economic growth, as the band members live on only 160 acres.

"At the end of the day," he said, "we all have to be neighbours, right?"