



# BOWEN ISLAND CONSERVANCY

P.O.Box 301  
BOWEN ISLAND, BC V0N 1G0

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16 July 2017

Enrique Sanchez, R.P.F.  
Planning Forester  
Chinook Business Area  
British Columbia Timber Sales  
46360 Airport Road  
Chilliwack, BC V2P 1A5

Dear Mr. Sanchez:

## **BC Timber Sales Bowen Island Forest Development initiative**

The Bowen Island Conservancy is a registered BC Society that acts in a stewardship role to work with governments, land owners, and the public to conserve, protect, sustain, and enhance the quality of the natural environment of Bowen Island, neighbouring islets and surrounding waters. Our membership is made up of over 150 individuals living on, or affiliated with, Bowen Island.

We are writing to you with comments and an initial request concerning the BC Timber Sales (BCTS) Forest Development initiative, as it concerns Bowen Island. Our comments and request focus on:

- The way in which you have so far engaged with the Bowen Island community
- The upcoming Open House, scheduled for July 30th on Bowen Island
- The public review and comment period for the draft Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) #643
- The suitability of Bowen Island for industrial logging operations, community forests, or woodlots

## **The “process” so far: engaging with the Bowen Island Community**

The first opportunity for Bowen Island residents to learn about the BCTS initiative for potential development of Crown Land on Bowen Island—for timber harvesting purposes—was on Thursday, July 6<sup>th</sup> (which, we note, is **after** the July 4th start of the FSP public review and comment period), when your email message to Mayor and Council was included in the published Agenda for the July 10th Council Meeting. Of course, only a small subset of the island population follows Council’s schedule of meetings and agenda items closely, so it’s very unlikely that more than 10-20% of island residents saw your email when reviewing the Council Meeting Agenda.

Subsequently, your organization published a notice in the local community newspaper, the “Bowen Island Undercurrent”, on Friday, July 7th (which is also **after** the July 4th start of the FSP public review and comment period) providing information about the approval of Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) # 643. Besides mention of an Open House on July 30th, though, there was no specific information in this notice about the potential for timber harvesting activities on Bowen Island itself. Readers were directed to view the FSP, and public comments were invited. That is all.

All Island residents are grateful to a few local individuals who this week read both your email to Mayor and Council, and the newspaper notice, made the connection between the two, and sounded the alarm: *that there is now a possibility that our beautiful island may be logged on an industrial scale over a 20 year period starting at some time in the near future.*

**Your organization is in the inexcusable position of—accidentally or deliberately—failing to provide critical information to Island residents in a timely and transparent manner.** The critical information that’s missing from your communications is that:

- Industrial logging operations may take place on Bowen Island at some point in the future, and
- You have put in place a rapidly-moving process with a very short time frame to which you expect all interested parties (including the residents of Bowen Island) to adhere.

In your email message to Mayor and Council, referenced above, you write “*I am seeking your advice in [sic] how to proceed in a manner that is beneficial to the residents of Bowen Island and the rest of British Columbians.*” **So far your actions have not been beneficial to either group.**

### **The upcoming July 30th Open House**

First, we take great exception to the time span between your initial communications and the scheduled Open House date of Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup> (which, as we pointed out above, is **after** the July 4th start of the FSP public review and comment period). The total elapsed time is only three weeks, and more notice is required at this busy time of year for people.

Second, holding an Open House on a Sunday in July, at a time when many residents are away on vacation, busy with other pre-arranged commitments, or entertaining visitors, suggests that you are not making an earnest effort to provide information to the public, and gain meaningful public input.

As a comparison, the Bowen Island Conservancy holds four or five public education events each year. We never schedule any meetings during the summer, because we know from experience that attendance would be very low. The excuse that you have made to at one Island resident that you were unable to find a suitable venue to hold the Open House at an earlier date simply confuses us. There are many venues on the Island that are available for meetings on a year-round basis.

### **Public review and comment period for draft FSP #643**

Your organization has put in place an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the draft FSP that lasts from Tuesday, July 4th, to Wednesday, September 6th. This means that you are expecting lay individuals to review and make comments on what you have stated is a highly technical 179 page document in a 9 week period. Your Open House is the sole opportunity for the Bowen Island community to learn about the FSP and what it means. So, in fact, the review and comment period for Bowen Island residents is only just over five weeks, since your Open House occurs almost one month into the review and comment period.

**We strongly object to the duration and timing of this review and comment period.** We suggest moving the end of the period to a date in October or November, which would give the public more time to understand the 179 page FSP and make cogent comments.

### **Our initial request**

Bowen Island is not a suitable location for an industrial-scale timber harvesting initiative:

1. It is a small island, with populated areas adjacent to every block of Crown Land.
2. It is located within the Islands Trust area, which was established to preserve and protect the area and its unique amenities and environment **for the benefit of residents of the area and of the province generally.**
3. The community has just completed an extensive and expensive process that defined its brand, which centres on the island's peacefulness and unspoiled natural environment, as well as its suitability as a get-away from Vancouver and other parts of the Lower Mainland.
4. Bowen Island has an extensive and heavily-used trail network that extends through the Crown Lands, used by residents and visitors from elsewhere.
5. Many of the parcels which are proposed for your development purposes include important water-supply watersheds for residential areas. Impacts of logging on water availability and quality are likely.
6. At least two of the parcels are adjacent to Nature Reserves owned by the Islands Trust Fund. The idea of logging operations taking place a short distance from these reserves is disquieting.
7. The impact of logging operations on wildlife will be magnified on Bowen Island since the Island is small and is relatively urbanized: there is nowhere else for wildlife to go.
8. Ferry congestion resulting from logging trucks and other vehicles used in logging operations will interfere with commuters, as well as the ferry schedule.
9. The impact of logging operations on Bowen Island's tourism economy, which attracts visitors not only from the Lower Mainland but elsewhere in BC and farther afield is likely to be significant.

**The cumulative effects of any logging operations, therefore, will be too much for Bowen Island, and will also have a negative impact on all British Columbians. We request that you remove the island from the list of potential timber harvesting areas in the FSP.**

### **A final observation**

We note that there is existing FSP in place, and the expiration date for that FSP has been known for some time. An obvious question to ask is why there is now such a rush to complete the

flawed process of obtaining public input to the new FSP. The process that you have put in place for completing it could have been launched in the spring of 2017 (or earlier), which would have allowed more time for a thoughtful and reasoned response from the public.

We welcome your comments on this observation.

Yours sincerely,

The Board of the Bowen Island Conservancy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Owen Plowman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Owen Plowman, President

Leo Chan, Ellen Coburn, Allie Drake, Nerys Poole, Bob Turner, Adrian van Lidth de Jeude,  
Everhard van Lidth de Jeude

CC:

- Honourable John Rustad, Minister of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations
- Jason Fisher, Associate Deputy Minister – Forest Sector, Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations
- Mike Falkiner, Executive Director, BC Timber Sales
- Jordan Sturdy, MLA, West Vancouver-Sea to Sky
- Peter Luckham, Trust Council Chair, Islands Trust
- Jennifer Eliason, Manager, Islands Trust Fund
- Neil Carley, General Manager, Parks, Planning and Environment, Metro Vancouver
- Mayor and Council, Bowen Island Municipality
- Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, MP, West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country
- The Bowen Island Undercurrent
- Bowen Island Conservancy membership