

Delegation: Guy Dauncey, Yellow Point Ecological Society, re the failure of the RDN's planning tools to protect an S1 'critically imperiled' ecosystem, and a proposal for a new RDN Coastal Douglas fir Conservation Strategy

Summary: These are our seven possible solutions (in brief)

1. The voluntary use of ecoforestry covenants, allowing logging but only using ecosystem-based single-tree selection methods, as practiced at Wildwood by the Ecoforestry Institute Society, enabling the forest to recover its old growth character over the next 100 years.

2. The use of a property tax incentive to reward landowners who are already practicing sustainable forest management, or who have placed an ecological covenant on their land.

3. The use of a density transfer, allowing a landowner whose zoning allows for subdivision into two or more lots to sell the development potential to a landowner in an area where density transfer units can be received for an approved development. For example, if you own 20 acres zoned to allow four 5-acre lots, you could sell some or all of the density units, the remaining forest being protected by an ecoforestry covenant.

4. The enactment of a local government zoning bylaw requiring clustered development on lots of ten acres or more. Thus, a landowner who owns twenty acres, allowing four 5-acre lots, could cluster four homes on four 1-acre lots, the rest being shared by the lot-owners and protected by an ecoforestry covenant.

5. The creation by the provincial government of a Coastal Douglas Fir Land Reserve, in which logging would only be allowed following ecoforestry principles, and guaranteeing landowners' development rights but requiring that development be clustered as above.

6. Amending the provincial development permit area (DPA) rules: classifying all Coastal Douglas fir forest as an endangered ecosystem, enabling environmentally sensitive DPAs to be created by local governments; requiring a permit for any subdivision, not just for one of four lots or more; and strengthening the rules to require the clustering of development, with the remaining forest being protected by an ecoforestry covenant.

7. The development of a regional conservation fund, financed by a small increase in taxes to fund conservation projects on private lands, and to purchase private properties for conservation purposes.

Action Requested: The RDN's planning tools have recently failed to protect part of an S1 'critically imperiled' Coastal Douglas fir / Dull Oregon Grape ecosystem in forested land that is being logged and cleared in Yellow Point.

Considering the potential future loss of so much more forest in the RDN to logging and development, and considering that the Area A OCP:

“recognizes the importance of protecting Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystems which are among the rarest and endangered coastal ecosystems within the plan area and on the east coast of Vancouver Island” and “supports developing a strategy for conservation measures within Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystems which occur within the plan area,”

The Yellow Point Ecological Society hereby requests that a public process be established to develop a new RDN Coastal Douglas fir Conservation Strategy including consideration of seven possible solutions for which there is strong support in our community.