



CITY OF PORT ALBERNI

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Residents Vote 94% in favour of Port Alberni Community Forest

Results are in from the Port Alberni Community Forest “Community Support, Awareness, and Management Survey” and 94% of responding residents of Port Alberni and the Community of Sproat Lake voted YES to the question “Do you support the concept of a community forest, managed and operated for the benefit of the community?”

The community was asked to participate in the development of the community forest by attending open houses, completing an online or printed survey, by providing feedback by phone or email, or volunteering their time and skills.

Opportunities to discuss issues with members of the Community Forest Advisory Committee were provided at a booth at the very popular Alberni District Fall Fair. This booth attracted a diverse cross-section of the population, and facilitated contact with people who normally would not be interested in forestry discussions or participate in forestry initiatives. Open house meetings were held at the Port Alberni City Hall and at the Sproat Lake Community Hall which mostly attracted community members concerned about forestry activities. Members of the forestry community and members of the public interested in forestry were on hand at a booth at the Glenwood Centre during the Federation of BC Woodlot Associations AGM during National Forest Week.

The objective of the meetings, web site, and survey was to share information with the community, and consult regarding management visions, values, and objectives that would be in the public’s best interest. Seventy-two surveys were completed during the period from August 19th to October 31st 2007.

Of those responding, 63.4% think the land base for the community forest located north and west of Sproat Lake is appropriate. Seventeen percent of responders think it is too small; while 20% indicated that it is not appropriate for other reasons.

When asked to rank the importance of nine potential uses for the land base for forest management responders indicated that water quality and fish habitat protection, protection and/or creation of wildlife habitat, and maintenance of old-growth forests are their top three forest values for the community forest land base. Creation of economic benefit for the community was ranked fourth. Although all forest values are important, the ranking shows that community members are willing to find a balance between non-timber benefits of the forest and receiving revenue from the forest by harvesting wood and non-timber forest products. Water, however, is of the highest priority for protection, and residents will not tolerate any degradation in quality or alteration of quantity of flow due to industrial operations.

Responders indicated that they are largely in favour of the revenue from harvesting in the community forest being reinvested in the community forest (46%); though directing the revenue to community projects is also a popular choice (28%).

Survey answers will aid with the development of forest management goals and objectives outlined in the Management and Business Plans in the Community Forest licence application.

Public involvement is expected to evolve and grow as many community members have expressed interest in helping with the planning and operation of the community forest.

The complete survey results can be viewed online at www.communityforest.ca.

Members of the public are encouraged to continue to discuss community forest issues, ask questions, and express opinions by emailing the Community Forest Advisory Board at communityforest@drhconsulting.ca or contacting Ken Watson, City Manager, at 720-2824.

For additional information on the Port Alberni Community Forest, contact:

Ken Watson, City Manager
250-720-2824
Email: ken_watson@portalberni.ca
www.communityforest.ca