

TIDELINE

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DENMAN ISLAND B.C.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS CONSERVANCY GOAL

by Hillel Wright

"80 Islanders Meet"

The Denman Conservancy Association held an "emergency meeting" on Thursday, April 21 at the Denman Island Community Hall. The topic at hand was the fate of the 144 acre "Lindsay-Dickson" Forest, which has been the focus of an ongoing struggle between Merville logger/developers Richard & Cheryl Shellinck, and the Denman Conservancy and concerned citizens.

The 80 islanders at the meeting heard that the Shellincks, who had acquired the East Road property in November 1993 for \$375,000, had turned down a Government/Conservancy offer of \$1.7 Million. Facilitators Juan Barker & Ann deCosson told residents that the Shellincks estimated the "fair market value" of the property, through logging and development to be about \$4.5 Million. The Government's participation, \$1.55 million, expired on March 31, 1994, the end of the fiscal year.

Islanders also heard that the Lindsay-Dickson Forest is one of only 20 properties remaining in the Coastal Douglas Fir Bio-geo Climatic Zone having old growth potential. Only 1% of this zone, which includes the Gulf Islands, the Sunshine Coast, and SE Vancouver Island, along Georgia Strait, remains unlogged and undeveloped.

The first line of response to be established by the Conservancy is the "Response Team of Elder Women," which is on call to engage any loggers or roadbuilders in on-the-spot negotiation, while more permanent actions can be organized.

After also hearing that Conservancy has spent \$25,000 thus far on legal fees in the attempt to reverse the sale to the Shellincks, the meeting shifted modes, into "Brainstorming."

The first Brainstorming exercise was to voice fears & concerns. These included: outrage at the perceived greed of the Shellincks, and at speculation in land in general, fear of confrontation, concern about energy drain in the community, and despair over the bias of the Courtenay press, in particular, the RECORD.

Next, needs & wants were addressed. Those most often identified were public relations, legal, diplomacy with the Shellincks, direct actions (non-violent), emergency response and creative ideas.

Finally, volunteers were called for and nearly all present signed up for one or more committees. Those interested in finding out more about the issue may call Ann deCosson @ 335-2294 or Juan Barker @ 335-2401.

Guest Columns

Eagle Tree - By Hersh Chernovsky

There's a tree on East Road which grows eagles.

Green strands of erratically proportioned needle strewn branches, wrapped around a tapered trunk, rise ever upwards to a hooked, bare notched birthing stump which touches sky.

On this stump, against a backdrop of leaden or wispy or grey, grey clouds, come rain and shine, and rain again, eagles grow. One moment there's nothing, then one immature appears, which in a blink becomes a magnificent white hooded raptor singing eagle songs, fanning wings to a radiant sun from its niche between sea and sky.

The eagle growing season runs from January thru April. The Eagle Tree, just a hundred years young, but with an old, genetic memory, knows this is a season of momentous events. There's joy in the spawn of herring in

a turquoise ocean, in dancing gull clouds and sea lion pods, in natural creation and natural death. Eagle Tree knows that eagles must be born, to fill their niche in this season of life.

Why is this then a season of grief? --- "Will the herring fisherman who put a bullet through the brain of the sea lion rotting on our rugged shore please come and take it away! You've left behind a smell, not a sweet odour of composting herring eggs in natural regeneration, but a morgue odour reminiscent of gangrene and maggots. Come for your trophy! Come to make wallets for the product of your greed!"

Is Eagle Tree appalled? Does it know? No; it's purpose is to breed eaglets to a human, inhumane earth, where licensed genocide is allowed so that exotic palates may be fed, in exchange for dump truck loads of styrofoam cups and tinCanada cans

and nicotineAmerica butts drifting on the turquoise tide.

Eagles don't drink coffee or pop or beer. They don't smoke, or digest lead shot. They're born to serenade, not mourn, the sea lion song.

Eagle Tree doesn't know human blight. It doesn't know pollution, or the world it brings it's children into. It just keeps growing eagles.

Years ago, an eagle, with legs amputated after it got entangled in a net, died on Hornby Island. Was it a child of the Eagle Tree, born to glide, hover, soar!

Eagle Tree is a magic tree on a magic island. As sea lions die, as eagles die, as pollution fertilizes the ocean and murders the shore, so will magic die, and a magic tree, innocent, will grow eagles no more.