



CITY OF PORT ALBERNI

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263 Years of Combined Experience Makes a Community Forest Grow

The City of Port Alberni announces that it is proceeding with community consultation to prepare a business and management plan for the Port Alberni Community Forest.

For four years Port Alberni Mayor Ken McRae and City Manager Ken Watson have been working to obtain a Community Forest License for the Alberni Valley. The seed for the project was planted in 2003 when Franklin Forest Products owner Pat McKay went to the Mayor looking for a consistent source of wood for his mill. Since that time the dream of a community forest has flourished in the minds of the seven Port Alberni and Sproat Lake residents who today form the Community Forest Advisory Board. The combined environmental, forest, and business management experience of the Advisory Board and the consulting team hired to prepare the application for the scrutiny of the Ministry of Forest and Range is 263 years. That level of expertise is a sure-fire prescription to make the Community Forest a successful business and forest management venture for the City of Port Alberni.

The Advisory Board's vision of the Community Forest is that it will be an example of forest practices that are sensitive to non-timber forest values and a model of forest stewardship, while generating revenue for the community. The license will permit the harvesting of a projected 18,000m³ annually from a proposed area situated north and west of Sproat Lake, bringing control of forest resources and economic benefit to the Port Alberni community.

Since 2004 the valley's business environment has changed, with economic diversification outside of the forest industry. "I am hopeful that the community will support this endeavour mainly as a means to generate funding for community projects in the Alberni Valley" says Mayor McRae.

The next step for the Advisory Committee is to guide the Community Forest through an application process to obtain a licence from the Ministry of Forest and Range. The application process requires documentation of community awareness and support for the licence, and the preparation of a business and management plan.

Community consultation begins with public outreach to solicit community involvement and find out how the community wants to manage the forest area. The City of Port Alberni is hosting a web site for the community forest. "This is an exciting initiative for the City and the website is a very professional site that should be a useful means of sharing info and involving the public," says Russell Dyson, City Clerk. The site (www.communityforest.ca) contains maps of the proposed area, frequently asked questions, forest management documents, news releases and bulletins, and most importantly, a community survey.

In addition to the website, Advisory Committee members will be on hand to answer questions and solicit comments at the Alberni District Fall Fair, September 6-9 and at open houses on September 17th at City Hall and September 18th at Sproat Lake Community Hall.

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

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