

In-camera**DATE:** November 5, 2020**FILE:** 3200-01**TO:** Chair and Directors
Committee of the Whole**FROM:** Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer**R. Dyson****RE:** Bevan Lands**Purpose**

To provide information on options and further analysis of lands within the Bevan Trail system slated for harvest by Comox Timber.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT the Comox Valley Regional District Board encourage BC Hydro to explore securing the timber rights for BC Hydro-owned lands along the Puntledge River, including those slated for harvest by Comox Timber, both in the short term and over the longer term.

Executive Summary

- The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board directed staff to investigate options and further analysis of lands within the Bevan Trail system slated for harvest by Comox Timber at its October 6, 2020 meeting. This direction came in response to an online petition and public interest in the proposed harvesting plans in the area.
- Hancock Timber Resource Group owns the timber rights over the BC Hydro lands where the Bevan Trail system is located along the Puntledge River (appendix A). This area is approximately 300 ha in size, of which approximately 100 ha is harvestable after riparian setbacks and other restricted lands are removed. The area proposed for harvesting includes approximately 25 ha of the 100ha of harvestable area. In discussion with Hancock representatives, the company is interested in disposing of the timber rights. Staff would need specific direction from the Board to further investigate disposition potential.
- The CVRD delivers a parks service in Electoral Areas A, B and C. Guidelines to expand parks and greenways in the three electoral areas is guided by the Rural Comox Valley Parks and Greenways Strategic Plan (2011) which, identifies priorities for parkland acquisition. While the Bevan Trail system lands slated for harvest are not specifically listed in the strategic plan, the lands do form part of the Puntledge trail system and contain conservation, recreation and community values. However, other priorities exist for the Areas A, B and C parks service, funds are limited and these lands could arguably be considered of regional rather than rural interest. A dormant regional parks service does exist, which could support acquisition of properties with a regional interest. An investigation of the regional parks service potential is underway and will be reported to the Board in due course (a resolution was adopted by the CVRD Board at its open meeting on October 27, 2020)
- BC Hydro develops and maintains a wide range of recreation areas as one part of its efforts to balance the province's energy needs with the preservation of the natural environment. BC Hydro has operations throughout this corridor, and could be recommended to pursue

acquiring the timber rights in question, to further its mandate for preserving the natural environment.

- As an alternative, the Board could direct staff to further investigate the acquisition of the timber rights over the BC Hydro lands slated for harvest or for the timber rights over all the BC Hydro lands along the Puntledge River corridor, which could include partnerships with land stewardship groups or other entities.
- Staff recommend that the Board use its advocacy role to encourage BC Hydro to pursue the acquisition of the timber rights along the Puntledge River corridor.

Prepared by:

J. Warren

James Warren
Deputy Chief Administrative
Officer

Attachments: Appendix A – Map showing BC Hydro-owned lands along Puntledge River

Appendix A

Legend

Parcel Ownership

- BRITISH COLUMBIA HYDRO AND POWER AUTHORITY
- COMOX TIMBER LTD
- COMOX VALLEY (REGIONAL DISTRICT)

- Approximate Harvest Area
- Comox Timber 50m No Harvest Zone
- Administration Boundary

