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Forest giants worth saving

Wilson Creek forest hike

As part of a home-schooling peace project, three local teens and retired teacher Karen Stein organized an educational hike on November 12, in the logging-threatened Wilson Creek forest.

About 60 Sunshine Coast residents, including local children from age five and up, heard naturalist Rick O'Neill describe this forest's rich diversity of moss, amphibians, and fungi. Its largest tree is a Douglas fir, which measures 2.31 metres across.

"World peace is not just not war," said hike co-organizer Jillian Olafson during a break on the trail. "It's peace for nature and people, like saving a forest that would be logged."

Some local teachers have taken students through Wilson Creek's 27 hectares of low-elevation forest to learn about the forest's biodiversity, thanks to informational trail signs provided by volunteers.

Stein told the group, "One

beautiful possibility is for this part of the forest to be left as a park for us all to enjoy. This is our community forest. You are the next generation. Today, you represent all the children who live on our coast."

The government of BC, which owns this land, has issued a licence to enable the District of Sechelt, as shareholder of the Sunshine Coast Community Forest, to log this forest, known as cutblock EW002. It is one of the last intact, natural forests left in the Wilson Creek watershed.

"This forest is much more valuable alive than clear-cut," Hans Penner of the conservation group Elphinstone Logging Focus (ELF) told the gathering. He said he hopes that local residents of all ages who want to save this forest tell the District of Sechelt: "You're a public body. We expect you to listen to the public."

Olafson is urging 250 people to donate \$100 each to pay the District of Sechelt,



Sechelt (shíshálh) elder Jamie Dixon standing next to the tree recently named in his honour. PHOTO SUBMITTED

which will roughly equal the amount otherwise received for logging this cutblock.

ELF member Bill Legge told the children: "You guys really have a voice." He reaffirmed the land as traditional territory of the Sechelt

(shíshálh) First Nations, who have used this forest for centuries for hunting and gathering. There was even a tree recently named 'Mus-swiya's tree' after Sechelt elder, Jamie Dixon.

Submitted by Heather Conn

generator, heat pump, air conditioning, large custom wood deck off the master bedroom, wood burning fireplace with stunning rock facing, five piece master bath, hot tub. Year-round secure moorage.

site. Owners have been in the location for 30 years. All new decks and railings. Truly a magical spot! This property is a must-see property. Call Bob for appointment.

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