

Our Forests: A Community Conversation

Salt Spring Community Alliance

Mon. Jan. 27th. Lions Hall, 7- 9 pm

The Community Alliance invites the community to an exploration of the vital role that forests play in our adaptation to climate change. As we enter this new decade, the climate crisis has become more than a distant possibility - the effects are appearing now and we are experiencing serious shifts in all aspects of life. Given how forests play a crucial role in mitigating the impacts of climate change, and protecting our water supply, we are inviting discussion on this question:

How can we have the conversations that build unity and resilience for our community that also recognise the variety of our relationships with, and dependence on, the forests?

A resilient and bonded community can stand strong in the face of climate change. Please come to this community meeting to learn more, to listen and to share your own thoughts and experiences regarding the forests of Salt Spring. Join together with others to take action through existing projects or project ideas that emerge in this meeting.

Background

Salt Springers have a variety of opinions and concerns over how to best manage our forests on both private and public lands. Some prioritize private property rights, personal observation and stewardship, and reducing the influence from government on what activities are allowed on private lands. Others are concerned with increasing conservation of trees, forests and ecosystems and believe that, with climate change especially, this is a priority we should all share.

Recently, large tracts of logging have been taking place on private lands. This has spurred concerns for some around the impact of private logging on surrounding neighbourhoods and ecosystems.

In this range of perspectives, we have offered the following links and thoughts to help create a healthy conversation on this topic. We hope this meeting will help spread information on the topic of forests and their enormous complexity within our lives on Salt Spring and in BC.

Some Questions

- What ideas do people have that respect old growth, protect rare ecosystems, provide continuous forest tracts, control fire risks, and reduce windfall damage while respecting the diversity of needs and perspectives regarding our forests?
- How can we ensure that all private landowners choosing to develop their properties have the resources they need to steward the forests well? Where are the examples of and opportunities for enhanced stewardship techniques for those with the responsibility and access to manage forests?

Some Thoughts

- [Forests produce the air we breathe, reduce atmospheric carbon](#), hold slopes for water retention, prevent landslides, increase water retention and aquifer recharge. They can offer solace and peace in our connections to nature, and create complex biological communities about which we know very little. [More on our conservation status here.](#)
- Forests have provided the foundation for economic development in this province for over 100 years. Logging has been a way of life, a way of building our nation, a major source of employment, and essential for much food production, wildlife and forest renewal.
- Private landowners have rights to tree cutting in our current legal system and owners may depend on the income generated by cutting and selling trees. See these links for more information: [Private Forest Landowners Association](#) and [Canadian Association of Forest Owners](#).
- Some suggest there is no real proof that logging on Salt Spring is currently (or ever has been) a problem partly because of our favorable growing climate which leads to rapid regrowth. They point to the large amounts of land protected in parks, Crown land, Conservancy land, and in private hands.

Some Background Resources

- Islands Trust: [Update on Coastal Douglas-Fir Local Trust Committee Activity](#) and [Carbon and Biodiversity mapping assessment](#)
- [Driftwood article](#) about the regulation, history and complexities within forest management on Salt Spring.
- [FAQs about clear cutting, carbon sequestration and forest vitality.](#)
- [Info on carbon sequestration and commercial wood products.](#)
- [Recent Narwhal article on BC Timber Sales corruption.](#)
- [First Nations Guardian programs](#): First Nations can lead us in restoration education activities and a deeper awareness of forest values and stewardship.
- [Essential Permaculture Principles](#): a different relationship between land and people.
- [Yellow Point Ecological Society video 'For the Love of the Forest'](#)
- [Eco Forestry Institute](#) with links to other world examples of selective logging programs.

Please note: *The Community Alliance would like to disclose that our board members hold a bias towards protection, stewardship, and climate change mitigation and we recognize that the links above emphasize the value of our forests held intact with minimal disturbance. We look forward to hearing views that will help to balance this bias. We highly value creating a space where all opinions can be voiced and heard in a respectful way. Please join us to add your voice!*