



April 12, 2021

Executive Committee Islands Trust

Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy (LINC) is a non-profit society located on Lasqueti Island. We are a small land trust with over 150 members. We have been partnering with the Islands Trust Conservancy (ITC) for over 10 years. In 2018 we negotiated the acquisition of 28 acres of Coastal Douglas-Fir forest and raised \$250,000 to acquire the property and then donated it to the ITC to create the Salish View Nature Reserve. LINC holds conservation covenants on three ITC Natures Reserves: Mt. Trematon, Johnny Osland and Salish View. We appreciate very much the partnership with ITC and hope it continues.

I write to you today about the recent letter from the Ministry of FLNRORD to the Islands Trust announcing the invitation to the Snaw-naw-as First Nation to apply for a FNWL which would include two parcels of Crown Land on Lasqueti Island. From what we understand, this FNWL could include harvesting of Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) forest over as much as 800 acres on Lasqueti.

We welcome the Snaw-naw-as First Nation to Lasqueti Island and look forward to working together. However, this announcement from FLNRORD has created quite a dilemma for LINC and I would assume for the Islands Trust as well. For while we both support protection of the remaining CDF ecosystem, *we also* support meaningful reconciliation with First Nations. It is unfortunate that the whole process has advanced so far that these two appropriate public goals are suddenly in conflict. Some possible solutions to this quandary might include one or more of the following:

- Trust Council initiate protocol agreements right away with the Snaw-naw-as First Nation to define how we will work together cooperatively going forward to accomplish both our goals;
- Trust Council initiate formal discussions with FLNRORD to cooperatively plan for any future licensing proposals that would affect islands in the Trust Area;
- Trust Council formally request FLNRORD work with Islands Trust and all First Nations in the Trust Area to designate appropriate Crown Lands in the Trust Area as "Conservancy".

The Conservancy designation is a particularly interesting solution to consider, for Conservancies are Crown Land parcels that are transferred to BC Parks to manage for specific uses and with a particular First Nations Context. From the Park Act:

(3.1) Conservancies are set aside

(a) for the protection and maintenance of their biological diversity and natural environments,

(b) for the preservation and maintenance of social, ceremonial and cultural uses of first nations,

(c) for protection and maintenance of their recreational values, and

(d) to ensure that development or use of their natural resources occurs in a sustainable manner consistent with the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) and (c).

The purposes set out in the Park Act for Conservancies could well solve our predicament for it protects important ecosystems from commercial development while preserving the lands for traditional First Nations cultural, social and ceremonial practices. This is a model to be seriously considered and it provides inherently more opportunity for conservation than does a model such as a FNWL, which is naturally tied to commercial forestry.

We urge the Trust Council to investigate the “Conservancy” designation for Crown Lands in the Trust Area as a way forward out of our dilemma and accomplish both the Trust mandate to protect the Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem *and* advance reconciliation with First Nations in the Trust Area. This designation has been applied to Crown Lands in northern BC and along the Central and Northern Coast. A new Conservancy was just announced last week over an area sacred to the Tahltan Nation.

If LINC can be of any help to the Islands Trust advancing the designation of specific Crown Lands to “Conservancy” status we would be happy to assist.

In closing I want to reiterate that we welcome the Snaw-naw-as First Nation to Lasqueti and do not in any way oppose their rights to traditional lands, while at the same time, we wish to advocate strongly for conservation on all lands within the Lasqueti Trust Area.

Sincerely

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