

**Western Canada Wilderness Committee,
Mid-Island Chapter**

Box 442, Qualicum Beach, BC, V9K 1S9, ph. 250 752-6585, fax: 250 752-7085

email: wewcqb@shaw.ca

Press Release

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

Wilderness Committee Applauds the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities' Call to Stop Vancouver Island's Forest Land Liquidation

Qualicum Beach, BC – At its Annual General Meeting this past weekend, the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities passed a comprehensive and stringent resolution calling for an immediate, "...moratorium on the sale and land transfer of all land currently zoned as Forest or Resource Land and a moratorium on development approvals within those forest lands..." The resolution was presented by Councillor Barry Avis, representing the Town of Qualicum Beach, at the annual AVICC convention held in Victoria this year.

"What numbered, off-shore and private companies are able to do in these early stages of their forest land sell-off deals, will determine whether the E & N lands which comprise 23 percent of Vancouver Island, can obtain significant public benefit in exchange for the forest land removals which have already taken place," explains Annette Tanner, chairperson of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee's Mid Island Chapter.

"The creation of a protected area strategy for this historically under-protected region of Vancouver Island is of utmost urgency," Tanner continues. "As a result of the famous E & N land grant to the Dunsmuir Family, only 2 percent of this magnificent and rare Mediterranean-type coastal region of the Island has been protected as parks."

"Protection of community drinking watersheds, wildlife corridors, the survival of the threatened Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem, access to recreational land and to safe, locally grown food, depend on sustainable land use planning, which must put the benefit to the public ahead of private profit. The recent sell-offs and rezoning of private forest lands since 2002 would go far towards achieving benefits to the public if an audit is finally done," concludes Tanner.

The resolution also addresses other points, such as the fact that the original withdrawal of E&N lands from the public domain in the late 1800's occurred without recognition of Aboriginal title. The resolution also stresses that the reduced taxes on private forest lands as a result of forestry licensees entering into tree farm licences were part of a social contract with British Columbians in return for sole access to public timber with an objective of stable employment in dependent communities.

-for more information contact Annette Tanner, 250 752-6585 or cell 240-7470 –

