



BCFA calls on North Island, Courtenay-Comox candidates to state position on forestry

CAMPBELL RIVER, OCTOBER 7, 2020 – More than 1 in 20 jobs on northern Vancouver Island are tied to forestry, and yet the industry continues to operate without a certain land base and in a divisive, political environment.

Campbell River-based BC Forestry Alliance (BCFA) is asking candidates running in the North Island and Courtenay-Comox Electoral Districts to publicly state their position on forestry – whether at an upcoming all-candidates forum or in a statement on their websites.

“Forestry is integral to the lives of thousands of residents in these ridings, yet after so many decades we continue to operate in a divisive manner without certainty that the rules or the working forest land-base won’t shift again with the whims of politics and protests,” says Carl Sweet, a Campbell River resident and co-founder of the Alliance who has worked in forestry for more than 20 years. “We need to understand the perspective of local candidates when considering our votes later this month. We are seeking representatives in Victoria who will be open-minded, who will be swayed by fact rather than rhetoric, and who will advocate for a balanced approach to this industry that’s so important in their ridings.”

The BCFA is calling for no further reduction to the current harvest level. Any further removal or impediment of access to harvesting will be detrimental to communities and families, who work in and depend on a healthy working forest.

“As most forestry workers live, work and play in our forests, they understand the need for a balanced approach which is being satisfied,” Sweet says. “We need the certainty of knowing we can work in designated areas, responsibly managing the land as a working forest for the long-term to support jobs and supplying the materials we depend on for everything from building our homes to making medical masks.”

Campbell River’s municipal website states a 2011 Statistics Canada survey found six per cent of jobs in the Campbell River areas are connected to forestry. Port Hardy’s website notes forestry supports an estimated 650 jobs and approximately \$26 million in annual income in the Regional District of Mt. Waddington annually.

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