

On July 9, 2013 the Gambier Island Conservancy and staff from Forestry, Lands and Natural Resources Operations Sunshine Coast District office met for an information gathering session regarding the proposed Gambier Island woodlots. A local Islands Trust representative and staff were also invited to attend.

Responses in *red* are from the Sunshine Coast Forest District and *blue* items are additional information added by the Conservancy and Islands Trust.

Meeting attended by:

Peter Scholefield – President, Gambier Island Conservancy  
Kathy McTaggart – Director, Gambier Island Conservancy  
Kate-Louise Stamford- Trustee, Gambier Island Local Trust Committee  
Brian Kukulies - Land and Resource Planning Officer for the Sunshine Coast Forest District  
Robert van der Zalm - Resource Manager SCFD  
Aleksandra Brzozowski – Planner, Gambier Island Local Trust Area

## Part 1 Planning and background questions

### ***Why more woodlots on Gambier?***

1. What opportunities are there for negotiating the size and/or type of logging that occurs on Gambier? Who would be part of the negotiation? How best would it occur?  
*Opening size and harvesting system are considered after a Woodlot Licence Plan (WLP) has been approved and are site specific dependent on any constraints, operational requirements, the judgment and knowledge of the Forest Professional. This would be best addressed by the woodlot holder*
2. Are local First Nations and Gambier Island property owners and community consulted at any stage(s) in the process?  
*First Nations are consulted based on current case law and any agreements that the province has with the potentially impacted First Nations. We have consulted with both the Squamish Nation and the Tsleil-Waututh (Burrard) First Nation  
We have referred the proposed woodlots to the Islands Trust for comments. This happened in 2009.  
The local community feedback can be provided at the WLP (planning) stage once the woodlots are finalized.*
3. What, if any, are the benefits to the Gambier Island community, and is there anything specific in this regard?  
*There is the potential for local employment and woodlot operations provide revenue to the province to provide services.  
There are no formalized community amenities but a socially responsible licensee may be willing to negotiate some community benefit. Provincial revenue: the licensee pays the province \$.60 per m<sup>3</sup> cut in rent per year (or about \$1800 per woodlot per year; \$3600 for the two). The current stumpage rate for community forests and woodlot licenses as per the latest Coast Appraisal Manual is \$0.25 per cubic metre for all species, plus a one-time bonus offer paid to the province.  
  
Stumpage rates for community forest agreements and woodlot licenses are determined on March 1st each year. The one-time bonus offer would occur when each woodlot was awarded.(Typical bonus offers for woodlots recently have been \$300,000-\$500,000, with the most recent woodlot allocated, on West Cracroft Island north of Desolation Sound, having a winning bonus offer of \$875,000.*
4. Would Ministry of Forest, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) consider a public meeting on Gambier to respond to islanders' concerns about this process in the near future?  
*We have met with three local representatives and provided information and answered provided questions so this can be communicated to other members of the public. At this time we have no plans to attend a public meeting in*

regards to these proposed woodlots.

These woodlots are being considered as a result of government initiative to expand the Woodlot Licence Program through a disposition plan. We had previously evaluated these area in 2009 for their suitability as woodlot licenses.

## ***Deciding on the suitability of a woodlot location***

1. How does the designation of these woodlots fit into FLNRO's "Principles for locating new forest tenures" of Nov 2011?

Woodlot Licenses are an important tenure option that we have to fulfill the need for tenure opportunities and woodlots fit well within smaller forested areas. The proposed woodlot licenses fit in well with the intent of this document.

2. How does the Ministry calculate the overall impact of logging on a closed system such as an island?  
Gambier Island is part of the Sunshine Coast Timber Supply Area and is available for timber harvesting consistent with the Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw. Assessments of impacts are considered at the cut block road construction stage and must be consistent with the approved WLP. As part of the timber supply review all contributing land is considered which includes islands within the Sunshine Coast Timber Supply Area. Gambier Island is part of the urban interface area that was modeled with a different set of criteria from the remainder of the TSA during the last timber supply review.

3. Is there any kind of environmental assessment and review involved in the process? Is there any plan to produce Sustainable Resource Management Plans (SRMPs) for the landscape units in the Sunshine Coast Forest District? Specifically Howe Landscape Unit, given the particular sensitivity of island environments? So far, looking at the FLNRO website, it seems that all that has been done in terms of an SMRP is assignment of Old Growth Management Areas (OGMAs), unlike in BC's Interior, where there has been significant consideration of wildlife and other environmental factors included in SRMPs. FLNRO states "net timber area objectives will be expressed as a percentage of the total land base accessible for commercial forest harvesting, and the proportion for which other purposes – such as managing for old growth, biodiversity, wildlife species at risk and visual quality – will be emphasized." They referred in 2004 to the Horsefly Sustainable Resource Management Plan as a model for how objectives would be calculated in future. Will this kind of assessment be done here?

The proposed Woodlots were evaluated in 2009 to ensure that there was an opportunity for timber harvesting under a woodlot licence. Site-specific assessments are completed at the time of proposed development of harvesting areas and roads.

Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) have been established for Gambier Island and will be considered in preparation of the WLP. These VQOs map viewscapes of the island from Howe Sound and show areas where view potential must be considered in harvesting plans. Section 10 of the WLPPR says the holder of the WL is not required to specify a result or Strategy in relation to visual quality objectives.

The licensee will complete the required assessments to ensure that they are in compliance with each Woodlot Licence Plan (WLP). There are no plans for completing further landscape plans for the Sunshine Coast.

4. Why are these lots coming up for sale now and how was the size determined?  
These woodlots were originally developed in 2008-2009 when initial assessments were completed. As part of a Woodlot Licence Disposition Plan the Sunshine Coast was requested to make available for advertising two woodlots. The intent is to advertise these over the next two months.  
The maximum size of a woodlot licence is specified in the Forest Act as 800 ha for coastal areas. The boundary of these woodlots used existing private land boundaries, Old Growth Management Areas and physical constraints to harvesting.  
The woodlots are not "sold". They are offered based on a set of application criteria and the areas remain Crown land and available for others to use the land for complementary purposes.

Woodlots are considered one of the smallest replaceable forestry tenure available for public lands and most appropriate for Gambier Island. This is part of the provincial initiative to provide opportunities for smaller operators that was announced three years ago. The woodlot term is 20 years, with a replacement opportunity every 10 years. A woodlot license is looked upon by the ministry as a very long-term form of public forestry.

5. Have the woodlots being examined with regard to the type and value of timber and possible coastal sites to dump or take out timber?

The timber types and potential operability constraints have been assessed and there is a suitable opportunity for timber management on these areas.

Due to the nature of the terrain in the woodlots, ground-based logging is the most likely but helicopter or cable logging is possible. The value of timber to the province is discussed earlier, in question “Why More Woodlots, #3.” 6,000 m<sup>3</sup> will be the initial annual allowable cut for the two woodlots. Timber harvested will likely be a mix of cedar, Douglas fir and hemlock, as is common on the Sunshine Coast.

A reserve for dumping and booming of logs south of Gambier Creek has been in place for many years. This area is being considered for a log dump or a direct to barge load out that will service both woodlot licenses. A bridge will be required across Gambier Creek since the creek is the boundary between the two woodlots. The woodlot licensees will have the option to explore other options for dumping and booming if they wish.

6. Would FLNRO consider using Gambier forests for some other, more specialized use such as Ministry Permanent Sample Plots (PSP) since there has been a loss of such plots to harvesting in the last few years? FLNRO website states “PSP’s matter because they are the only natural-stand data-set that the province has which have been re-measured over time.” Perhaps establishing such a data set on-island in Howe Sound would be more valuable to FLNRO than the stumpage from these woodlots.

There have been no requests to establish Permanent Sample Plots on Gambier Island. If required other Crown Land areas will still be available on Gambier Island for this purpose.

## Part 2 Implementation questions

### *The bidding process*

1. What are the projected or expected timelines with regard to this project?, When is it likely that FLNRO will be inviting bids on these woodlots?

We are intending to advertise these woodlots within the next two to three months.

2. Looking at past offerings, 4-5 weeks seems typical of the period for submitting bids. What will the likely bid period be for these woodlots?

We are intending to allow for up to 60 days from initial advertising to when bids are required. This is to provide opportunities to access the woodlots and to thoroughly evaluate the opportunities, constraints and options to remove the timber from the island.

3. Who is, and who is not, eligible to apply for a woodlot license? Can a logging company apply? Can a major forestry company?

The *Forest Act* specifies who is eligible for applying for a Woodlot Licence. See Section 44 for further information. Who is eligible:

Canadian citizen or permanent resident over 19 years of age; a First Nation or a corporation, other than a society that is controlled by people that meet the above qualifications.

Who is not eligible: A Society

A person holding two woodlot licenses

Holds an ineligible licence with an aggregate AAC of greater than 10,000m<sup>3</sup>.

A logging company can apply if it meets the above criteria.

If a major forest company has licenses with an aggregate AAC of greater than 10,000m<sup>3</sup> they cannot apply.

4. FLNRO guidelines state that opening the bids may be a public process. If this request for bids goes ahead, will FLNRO make opening these bids a public process? Where will the bids be assessed?

The Applicant’s name is made publically available at the bid opening. In the bidding process, is the bidder made aware of the riparian areas, ecological features, recreational facilities and viewscapes that need to be protected during logging operations?

As part of the application the potential applicants will be urged to thoroughly review the area before making an offer for the woodlot licence(s).

Information on the established visual quality objectives established recreation features and proposed recreation

features will be made available as part of the application package.

5. What are the requirements or restrictions on allowable cuts for these woodlots with regard to the amount of timber to be removed?

Annual Allowable Cuts (AAC) is calculated based on the current inventory information, potential growth capacity of the woodlot and potential constraints to harvesting. The AACs for both woodlots are calculated to be approximately 3000m<sup>3</sup> and is calculated to be sustainable for at least 250 years. An applicant may propose a different AAC but this must be justified with further inventory information.

3000m<sup>3</sup> (AAC for one woodlot) is equivalent to approximately 6 ha (about 15 acres) of opening (usually but not always clear cut) per year based on a volume per hectare of 500m<sup>3</sup>. This could change up or down based on more detailed data that would be prepared as part of a re-inventory. A local comparison is the current woodlot in the south west area of the Island which is 400 hectares and has an average cut of 2700m<sup>3</sup> per year. The annual allowable cut for the entire Sunshine Coast Forestry district (from north of Powell River south to Howe Sound) is 1.9 million m<sup>3</sup>

6. Does the woodlot license always go to the highest bidder or can other factors such as experience and reputation of the bidder, whether the bidder is local or First Nations be considered?

Please see the Woodlot Licence Regulation under the *Forest Act* for more information.

Three components make up a woodlot application score:

Bonus Offer up to 50 points

(see above for recent typical bonus offers)

Proximity of private residence to woodlot licence up to 25 points

Proximity to the woodlot is pro-rated, though the highest rating (25 points) is given to proponents 50 km away or nearer.

Proximity and area of private Land contributed up to 25 points

Private land contributed varies greatly and the proximity of the land as well as its area is considered in evaluating bids (again, 50 km or nearer rates highest, with higher points for larger areas. Some woodlots do not include private land as well as Crown land).

These are the only factors that are considered in the score for a woodlot.

## **Environmental issues**

1. Is there any requirement for wood lot operators to classify streams and assess wildlife impacts before logging takes place?

Yes, streams are classified based on the Woodlot Licence Planning and Practices Regulation (WLPPR).

There is no specific classification/assessment system for wildlife. A woodlot licensee can't damage or render ineffective a wildlife habitat feature. Also, the woodlot licensee must set aside an area from harvesting. The default is 8%, including riparian areas rather than in addition to them. There are also wildlife tree retention requirements for the woodlot.

2. There is a substantial designated community watershed on Gambier Creek and surrounding Gambier Lake. What protections does the Forest and Range Practices Act and its Regulations (FRPA) provide for community watersheds?

See Division 4 – Watersheds Woodlot Licence Planning and Practices Regulation

Can't cause harm to water diverted for human consumption.

Can't cut timber or build road within 100m upslope of a licensed water works where water is diverted for human consumption.

3. How much land will be excluded from harvesting within the two woodlots due to riparian reserves on creeks and streams, community watersheds, possible Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs) for species such as marbled murrelet and tailed frogs, and a lake management zone?

The amount of area removed will depend on the site specific management that will be determined by the forest professional completing the work that is consistent with the approved WLP.

There are no WHAs within the woodlots. Also, woodlot licensees do not have to create WHAs for these species. The lake side management zone width will be identified in the WLP.

4. Does the FRPA apply to streams and sensitive species (e.g. blue-listed, red-listed) that exist on Gambier, yet have never been formally inventoried by the province?  
A woodlot licensee can't damage or render ineffective a wildlife habitat feature. However, there are no ministry-identified wildlife habitat features listed for Gambier. Woodlot licensee must comply with general wildlife measures for specific species if they apply to an area within the woodlot.  
Again, none of these are listed for Gambier.
5. Are tailed frogs recognized by FRPA as a sensitive species (e.g. blue-listed) and if so what precautions must be taken by a woodlot operator?  
Yes, Tailed Frogs are recognized under FRPA. Generally the management of a species like tailed frog would be considered under riparian management.
6. What protection, if any, is given to individual or groups of old-growth trees if they are located within an existing woodlot?  
There is no specific protection of any old growth stands but there is an option for the woodlot licensee to set these aside. Within the Howe Landscape Unit old growth has been set aside to meet targets. On Gambier Island, the identified Old Growth Management Areas lie outside the woodlot boundaries.

There are no established OGMA's within these woodlots although there are old growth stands that may or may not be logged. Old growth is considered to be a tree 250 years old or more. Older trees are not necessarily valuable as they are difficult to harvest and often rotten. There were OGMA's within the proposed woodlots but they were relocated to other areas on within the Howe Landscape Unit.. Targets for old growth preservation are set by landscape unit.

7. The extent of logging activity permitted in riparian management zones, riparian management areas, and riparian reserve zones appear to be different; what extent of logging activity can we expect to occur in these areas associated with lakes and streams?  
This will be dependent on the approved WLP, site specific circumstances and Forest Professional preparing any plans so it will vary from site to site. See Division 3 of the WLPPR.
8. How about mushroom harvesting? This has a community value but is there any recognition or value for these (e.g. chanterelles) during any stage of the process?  
The best time to share this information is with the woodlot licensee when preparing the WLP. They will determine if this can be accommodated.

## **Recreational issues**

1. Woodlot legislation seems to suggest that woodlot operators need to take recreational resources such as trails into consideration if they are established with FLNRO before a woodlot-harvesting plan is finalized. Can existing trails within the Gambier island woodlots be established and protected after the woodlot license has been awarded? If trails are taken into consideration, what does that entail? To what extent are trail corridors protected from harvesting?  
If an objective for a recreation site, trail or interpretive forest site applies to a woodlot licence area then the woodlot holder must carry out primary forest activities in manner consistent with the objective.  
Questions concerning the establishment of objectives should be directed to BC Recreation Sites and Trails.  
Generally trails are not protected from harvesting. Practices may entail rerouting the trail or re establishment after harvesting.

The extensive Powell River trail network has management principles acknowledging that it traverses working forest. Presumably something similar could happen here.)

2. What procedures are in place to ensure that woodlot operators consult with other interested local parties such as conservation and recreation groups when planning their harvesting?  
This will be up to the woodlot holder but initially they will make the WLP available to the public for review and comment. The woodlot licensee may engage with local groups prior to the preparation of the WLP. The woodlot holder may make other commitments regarding sharing information on harvest planning.

Typically, woodlot holders must maintain "social license"—acknowledging that there are interested community members who need input to the process.

3. How much remediation do woodlot operators have to perform, if recreation resources are impacted

during harvesting?

This will be dependent on the individual situation.

Regeneration (reforestation) is part of the woodlot license plan developed by a professional forester. There may be agreements that operators must repair trail resources damaged during harvesting, etc.

4. To what degree and how is recreational access to the woodlots restricted once the license has been awarded? Generally recreation access to the woodlot will not be restricted. There may be short term access restriction for safety when there are active operations like harvesting and road building being carried out. Woodlots remain Crown land and are available for anybody to use.

## ***Operational Issues***

1. To what degree does FLNRO monitor the operation of the woodlot, particularly with regard to the protection of riparian areas, ecological features, recreational facilities and view-scapes?  
There are reviews of operations completed by compliance and enforcement staff from time to time. Operations have to be consistent with approved WLP and any harvesting or road building authority. Woodlots are part of the Forest Range Evaluation Program—a system of post-harvest audit towards meeting management objectives.
2. Is there a possible role for the community or the Gambier Island Conservancy in monitoring the woodlot harvesting operations?

The best possible situation is for the conservancy to develop a good relationship with the woodlot licence holders. In cases where that is difficult, community members having concerns about woodlot operations can contact Ministry of Forests at their Powell River office (through the front desk) 604-485-0700 (Powell River).

Additional information arising from the meeting:

- Slash burning – Newer forestry practices do not require significant slash burning. However, piles of debris from logging operations can be burned. Any burning that is done is covered by requirements under the Ministry of Environment and would include an acceptable atmospheric venting index.
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