

Logging and Tourism Create Win-Win

By Don Banasky, TLA President

Although not the usual headline, the successful cohabitation between logging and tourism on Maurelle Island (near Quadra Island) this summer is worth celebrating. Both industries are important to BC's economic and social well-being and balancing the industries' combined interests results in far more benefits than choosing one over the other. And, like many forestry/tourism news stories, it didn't start out that way.

It was this time last year that news coverage spoke of disappointment among local tourism operators who feared that logging in Okisollo Channel would dissuade kayakers and tourists, threatening their livelihood. The channel is well protected and close to marine parks for whale watching. Local logging contractors were likewise concerned that calls for yet-another logging moratorium would shrink the working forest again, currently only 16 per cent of the coastal land base, and threaten their livelihood. The channel has a history of logging dating back to the late 1800s.

Given that this was a BC Timber Sale, finding a win-win solution was the responsibility of BCTS manager Norm Kempe, RPF. Being a scenic corridor, Maurelle Island was already subject to visual constraints, which limit visible harvesting to a maximum of seven per cent. Efforts were undertaken by Mr. Kempe to determine the key viewpoints along the channel, where the kayakers travel and stop for picnics and camping. Then computer modelling was undertaken to minimize the visual impact harvesting would have in these areas. Substantial visual buffers were also incorporated along the foreshore and standing trees were retained in the planned cut blocks so as to better blend into the natural terrain.

One of the more significant (and costly) changes to the planned harvesting was the decision to barge harvested logs off the Island instead of using a traditional log dump, eliminating booming ground construction and signs of logging activity near the water. Further, no barging took place in July and August, the peak tourism months. According to Mr. Kempe, "the post-harvest viewscape closely

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matched what was modelled. Both the licensee and the contractor did an excellent job of road building, harvesting and tidying up the barge loading area and log storage site."

As head of the coastal loggers association, I can't speak for the economic contribution of the tourism



Photos taken post-harvest by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, show the cutblocks are barely visible from the water.

operators this summer, but I assume it is significant. With respect to the Maurelle Island harvesting, I can report that \$8.75 million was contributed to the local and provincial economies. Combined, however, the jobs sustained and revenues generated are greater than either industry could have generated individually—revenues which support and sustain our communities, our schools and our hospitals.

Not every tourism/logging issue can be reconciled in this manner. But recognition that the sum of both industries is greater than either individually is a good place to start. Respectful communication and understanding of each others concerns are essential, followed by careful planning and mutual accommodation. In the Maurelle Island example, this led to both harvesting and kayaking in the waterways surrounding the island—a clear win-win for the communities and industries involved.



More photos taken post-harvest by the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, show the logging won't be seen by kayakers in the Okisollo Channel.

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