



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Monday, August 12, 2019

File: CR-1629
Sent Via: Email

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
Provincial Private Managed Forest Land Program
PMFLProgramReview@gov.bc.ca

RE: Provincial Private Managed Forest Land Program Review

On behalf of Council for the District of Sparwood, I would like to share our concerns on how tree harvesting (or clearcutting) on private lands continues to have a profound effect on our community's social wellbeing (both environmentally and economically), and how it impacts our watershed, big game animals (e.g. elk, bighorn sheep, deer, moose, mountain goat, black bear, grizzly bear, cougar and wolf) and birds (e.g. Ptarmigan, Blue Grouse, Franklin's Grouse, Ruffled Grouse, Morning Grouse, migratory geese and ducks) that migrate through Sparwood.

Under the Provincial Private Managed Forest Land Program, the Private Managed Forest landowners are given tax breaks for registering and making a declaration of what activities they will complete in a given year, however, there is no real oversight to ensure they are doing what they said they would do, nor does the District of Sparwood get anything in return, including a voice on how community impacts could be mitigated. Private forest harvesters don't have to worry about wildlife or our local viewscapes or trails; they simply must leave a few trees alongside our streams to comply. They are free to clear-cut for maximum profit, without worrying about our community's long-term sustainability or how their harvesting impacts the overall landscape of Sparwood.

As a local government, we are a strong supporter of administrative fairness by establishing and enforcing regulations for similar property types in the same manner whether those properties are privately owned or are owned by the District of Sparwood. We believe that Private Managed Forest landowners should be made to follow the same set of rules regardless of whether that tree harvesting is taking place on private or public (Crown) lands. We believe for our community to remain sustainable; Council must have the authority to introduce and enforce bylaws to protect riparian areas, sensitive habitats and community watersheds. We need stronger stream and water protections that include requirements to maintain biodiversity, such as wildlife tree patches, old growth and wildlife habitat.

In addition to protecting local values such as clean drinking water, we need to safeguard our recreational trail infrastructure and wildlife habitat with stronger regulations that protect those wildlife habitats and migratory paths, including stream and water protection, by requiring forest harvesting to be sustainable and for Private Managed Forest landowners to engage with local governments and the affected communities.

Please feel free to contact me directly at 250.425.6271 for clarification or additional insight into how the community of Sparwood has been and continues to be impacted by tree (clear-cutting) harvesting.

Yours truly,

David Wilks, Mayor

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DISTRICT OF SPARWOOD