

FOREST HIKING TRAILS AND WILDLANDS or URBAN EXPANSION AND TRAFFIC JAMS

The Choice is Yours!



On October 11, 1995, the residents of North Vancouver have a choice. The North Vancouver District Council is holding a public hearing. The question: should the forest lands adjacent to Mt. Seymour Park be designated PRO (Park, Recreation and Open space) or should they be developed for housing?

Special to WCWC - Tony Eberts

The quality of life of the people of North Vancouver District is seriously threatened.

The tranquil forested mountain slopes east of the Seymour River have long represented the soul of the community--a treasured natural asset envied by people living in over-crowded cities elsewhere in the world.

Many people wrongly assume that the forested lands above the existing housing in North Vancouver are part of Mount Seymour Provincial Park. Not true. They



are part of North Vancouver District lands zoned "Urban Reserve".

These low-level woodlands, called the Mountain and Cove Forests by those who want to save them, have been used extensively as a park by many people for many years. Because of the gentle terrain, the area is ideal for everyday use by families for exercise, unwinding and a wide assortment of outdoor hobbies and activities.

But, despite overwhelming public support for preservation, there remains a threat that these wild yet accessible woodlands will be destroyed to make way for urban sprawl.

Most North Vancouver citizens enjoy living where they do because the residential and commercial areas are nicely balanced by green space--the unique, wildlife-rich forests with their networks of trails literally in their back yard.

But these values clash with pro-development world views. "In wilderness is the preservation of the world," said Henry David Thoreau. "People don't necessarily want wilderness," says North Vancouver District Mayor Murray Dykeman, who voted against even considering rezoning these lands to PRO.

Not many people of Mayor Dykeman's generation still cling to the old myths and slogans from the days when it was thought that our forests and wildlands were unlimited and inexhaustible. In the 1950s and 60s the cry was "develop or die." *(continued on page two)*

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Today, most have seen the horrors of out-of-control urban development and the timber industry's rampant destruction of forests, and recognize the need to save the few quiet, green places that luckily still survive near large population centres.

Citizens of North Vancouver have a history of battling to keep their green spaces. In 1991 they fought hard to successfully quash a housing plan that would have taken over the green space adjacent to Lynn Canyon Park.

Similarly this spring, more than 10,000 North Vancouver District residents signed a petition calling for a halt to proposed housing developments that threaten the Mountain and Cove Forests and for designation of these lands as PRO.

Because of this outcry, the North Vancouver District Council ruled (with only the mayor opposed) that park status for the forest should at least be considered. But since then, developers and land speculators have been putting on pressure propagating the believe that urban growth is inevitable and that North Vancouver has to shoulder its share. PRO zoning, despite the strong support shown so far, is not assured.

But where is it written that North Vancouver's readily accessible and irreplaceable forest lands MUST be sacrificed in order to crowd in 10,000 more people into North Vancouver?

You can't put a dollar value on what will be lost if the green heart of North Vancouver is bulldozed away to be replaced with an estimated 2,150 housing

units. Already 295 acres of forest land adjacent to Mount Seymour Provincial Park are being destroyed to make way for 750 housing units. The rest of the adjacent forests--the Mountain and Cove Forestlands--cover nearly 1,000 acres, an areas about the size of Stanley Park. They are more important to North Vancouver residents and the rest of the people living in the Lower Mainland as a place for peaceful outdoor recreation than as another bedroom community.

The pro-development clique claims that sale of municipally owned forest land to developers will bring a bonanza of as much as \$300 million into municipal coffers.

However \$300 million doesn't go very far when you consider the long term cost of providing the schools, roads, sewers and other basic services for another 10,000 residents.

A recent survey by the real estate industry found that new home buyers rated proximity to hiking and biking trails third on a list of 39 features they would pay extra to have. Quality of life is important.

There is currently a very high ratio of motor vehicles per household in North Vancouver District. Already this contributes to lower air quality and causes commuting problems. What happens if the population suddenly increases by 10,000 more people?

No doubt the development-minded will claim that Seymour and Deep Cove residents are showing the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) syndrome when they



Famous Knee-knacking North Shore Trail Race

North Vancouver should be more concerned about controlling already rapid growth than about spurring mega-developments on reserve lands.

- North Vancouver District Councillor

be lost if the green heart of North Vancouver is bulldozed away to be replaced with an estimated 2,150 housing units.

The Greater Vancouver Regional District planners forecast a growth rate for the whole Lower Mainland area of about two percent per year up to the year 2021. This growth can be met without destroying anybody's forests!

claim that Seymour and Deep Cove residents are showing the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) syndrome when they oppose this proposed urban development.

Remember, real estate developers and promoters come and go, but today's residents will be left to live with added congestion and lower quality of life. If you don't look after your own neighbourhood, who will?

- North Vancouver District Councillor **Jim Cuthbert**

This spring Cuthbert submitted a report to council urging redesignation of North Vancouver's Mountain/Cove Forestlands from Urban Residential Reserve to Park, Recreation and Open Space. At the same time, he asks for the fullest possible public participation in deciding the

(continued on page three)

Quiet forest walk beats noisy freeway jam

Public appreciation of the wild creatures that share this planet with us is growing rapidly. So is awareness that heedless destruction of natural habitat is wiping out native animals and birds at a tragic rate around the world.

The Mountain/Cove Forestlands seem silent and peaceful compared to the roar of the city, yet they pulse with many forms of life, inter-connected and inter-dependent in ways that not even the finest naturalists come close to fully understanding.

Fortunately, you don't need to be versed in wildlife biology to appreciate the song of a wren, the sight of a scurrying squirrel or a glimpse of graceful black-tailed deer. One's life is greatly enriched by such things, and we will all be infinitely poorer if we let greed, carelessness and ignorance destroy them.

Too many people believe that if a tract of forest is levelled for a development project, the animals and birds that were fed and sheltered there will simply move on to some other green place.

But it doesn't work that way.

Even the smallest songbird must have its bit of territory. Larger animals such as deer and bear require many acres of space. Level this habitat and most of its creatures will perish, because the nearby territories are already fully occupied by others.

The Mountain/Cove Forests are rich in wildlife. Close to 100 species of wild birds have been recorded there, including some relatively rare ones such as the barred owl, pileated woodpecker and Pacific-slope flycatcher.

From tiny hummingbirds and bushtits to great horned owls and bald eagles, the variety is notable. Among the smaller mammals are the rare Pacific water shrew, several species of bat, chipmunk, Douglas, gray and northern flying squirrels, Pacific jumping mouse and southern red-backed vole. There are coyote, red fox, raccoon, marten, spotted and striped skunks, snowshoe hare, bobcat, black bear and deer.

While, all the time, the healthy, growing forest constantly cleans and oxygenates the air and prevents flooding by slowing and retaining runoff water.



Ancient veteran Douglas fir in Mountain Forest

future of the reserve lands. He is sure that this will show strong support for preservation of the forests "and thus avoid the need for further ongoing discussion and expense..."

Among the reasons Cuthbert gives for his stand are these:

- The forest areas offer irreplaceable, high quality recreation opportunities, such as hiking, mountain biking, horse riding, nature study and appreciation, photography, cross-country skiing, jogging and picnicking.
- The Mountain/Cove Forestlands provide vital winter habitat for deer and other wildlife, plus many species of birds.
- More than \$100,000 in federal money and countless hours of volunteer work went into building the trail networks that make the Mountain/Cove Forestlands easily accessible to everyone, regardless of age, fitness or income, whether residents of North Vancouver or elsewhere in the Lower Mainland.
- Additional traffic congestion problems related to vehicles associated with the projected 2,150 new dwellings in Mountain/Cove Forests (if the reserves are developed) appear unacceptable to the majority of Seymour area residents.

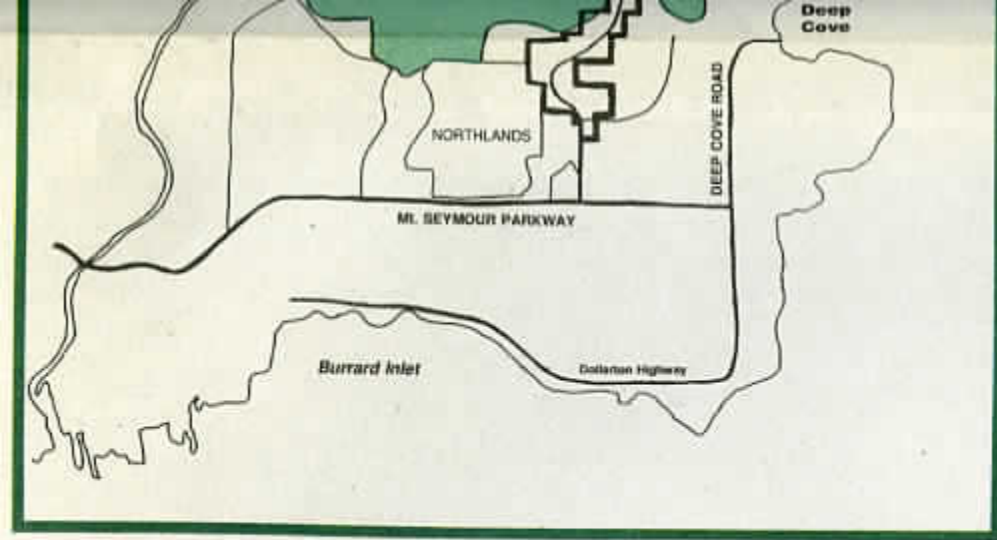
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MOUNTAIN FOREST



**DON'T
LET
MOUNTAIN
FOREST
AND
COVE
FOREST
BE**



FOREST BE DESTROYED BY URBAN EXPANSION!

Urban sprawl in Coquitlam

COVE FOREST



- There has been a high rate of residential development over the last five years: Parkgate Manor, Mountain Terrace, Burrardview Cooperative, The Classics, Raven Woods, Nahance Woods, The Legend, Wind Song, Winchester, Strathhaven Estates, Northlands Place by the Course, Tiffany Pines and more.

These residential developments have added thousands of people to the Seymour area, outstripping the District's capacity to provide for basic services.

- The proposed Mountain/Cove Forestlands development would intensify the problems of support services lagging behind population growth. For example, a number of schools have been badly overcrowded since 1990, and the Seymour area lacks such basic community services as a skating rink, recreation centre and gym.

Cuthbert's views are shared by several other councillors including Ernie Crist, who also is urging the council to end what he calls the "disastrous" policy of using revenues from the sale of District lands to cover current municipal operating expenses.

Instead, according to Crist, any such funds should be used only for legitimate capital projects. He stresses that these funds should not be generated by sacrificing the Mountain/Cove Forests.

Support **GUARD** -Group United Around Responsible Development

Make GUARD's fight to preserve Mountain/Cove Forests your fight!

- **Sign the Petition**
- **Give a Donation**
- **Attend the Public Hearing**

GUARD, the group that's spearheading efforts to save North Vancouver District's forestland came to life less than a year ago. Its formation was sparked by the proposed construction of a new golf course project, Northlands, at the entrance to Mt. Seymour park. Northlands development is destroying nearly 300 acres of forestland.

GUARD, acronym for Group United Around Responsible Development, organized too late to stop the Northlands project, but not too late to begin a winning fight to save the nearly 1,000 acres of nearby Mountain and Cove Forests from a similar fate.

Community response to GUARD has been electric. It took only 10 weeks of effort by the group's founders and many volunteers to garner over 10,000 names on a petition opposing development of Mountain/Cove Forests, and asking the North Vancouver District Council to consider rezoning these Forestlands as "Park, Recreation and Open space."

There was no radical formula or political maneuverings to GUARD's campaign; just long hard hours of volunteer work as members strove to inform North Vancouver residents of the proposed land sellout and forestland-destroying housing scheme. They handed out information sheets in shopping centres and took petitions door-to-door.

GUARD held a rally on June 5, 1995 at a North Vancouver District Council meeting to present the petition. It was attended by over 400 people. At the meeting, Council voted to consider designating the Mountain/Cove Forest as Park, Recreation and Open space, placing the housing development on hold.



Second growth cedar with nurse-stump

Mountain/Cove Forest as Park, Recreation and Open space, placing the housing development on hold.

Before the formation of GUARD, the same council had narrowly approved the idea of selling these municipal reserve lands for residential development projects-- totalling some 2,150 housing units. So the June 5 turnaround was quite a victory.

"We were delighted to be able to show so quickly that the system really can work," says GUARD co-founder Lisa Muri. "It was great to see young people coming

Second growth cedar with nurse-stump

forward to help on the campaign. So many high school students are caught up in all the doom and gloom."

Now GUARD needs even more public support to win its fight because those who would gain by these proposed developments are beginning to fight back. Winning to GUARD means getting the official designation of Park,

Recreation and Open Space for the irreplaceable Mountain/Cove Forests.

GUARD's brochure sums up the group's philosophy: "Thinking globally and acting locally means being responsible for environmentally sound development in our own back yard."

Your attendance will help persuade Council to save Mountain/Cove Forestlands

October 11, 1995 7:00 p.m.

Windsor High School Gym

931 Broadview Street, North Vancouver



CREDITS

This paper is published by the Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WCWC), 20 Water St., Vancouver, British Columbia, V6B 1A4. WCWC is a non-profit, charitable society dedicated to promoting wilderness preservation through research and education.

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I am so committed to saving Mountain and Cove Forests as a park that I will contribute to your campaign. I understand that the District of North Vancouver must change the area's current Urban Reserve zoning to PRO (Parks, Recreation, and Open space).

Here is my tax deductible gift of: \$25 \$50 \$100
 \$500 \$1000 Other

Revenue Canada Tax Reg. No. 0587113-21-28

- I would like to become a member of GUARD. Enclosed is my \$5 membership fee.
- I want to join/renew my membership in the Wilderness Committee. Enclosed is my \$30 annual membership fee. Increased membership strengthens WCWC's voice in protecting urban green spaces.
- I enclose my signed petition for you to forward to council.

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ Province _____ PC _____

Please send donations to WCWC - Mountain and Cove Forests Campaign c/o GUARD, 4391 Gallant Ave., North Vancouver, B.C., V7G 1L1. Thank you for your support. For more info call 986-3413.

Petition to Mayor and Council of North Vancouver

To the Mayor and Councillors of the District of North Vancouver, British Columbia in Council Assembled this Petition of North Vancouver residents and other concerned citizens humbly showeth:

Please be advised that we are in favour of the preservation of the Mountain/Cove Forests and support the motion to amend the bylaws to reclassify these lands from Urban Reserve to PRO (Parks, Recreation, and Open space) and, in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Name (please print) _____ Signature _____

Address _____

Name (please print) _____ Signature _____

Address _____

Name (please print) _____ Signature _____

Address _____

Please clip and send to: GUARD
4391 Gallant Ave, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 1L1