

# MOUNT ELPHINSTONE FOREST

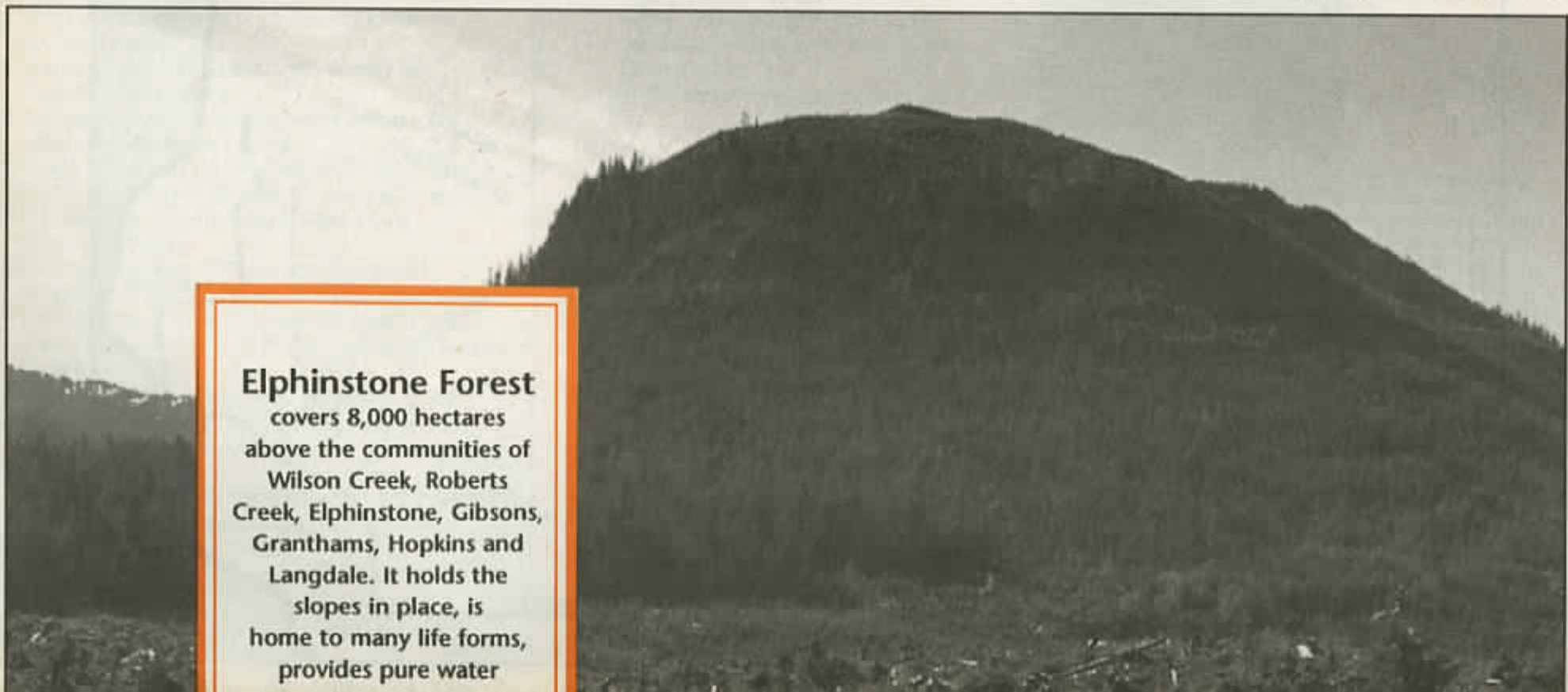
E C O - F O R E S T R Y P R O P O S A L

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## Elphinstone Forest

covers 8,000 hectares above the communities of Wilson Creek, Roberts Creek, Elphinstone, Gibsons, Granthams, Hopkins and Langdale. It holds the slopes in place, is home to many life forms, provides pure water



to hundreds of residents,  
and could provide  
sustainable employment if  
managed according to the  
principles of eco-forestry.



Current logging practices  
are not sustainable. They  
eliminate old-growth  
species and ecosystems,  
lower the long-term  
productivity of the forest,  
and pose erosion hazards  
to communities down-  
stream. But logging need  
not be destructive.  
Ecosystem-based forestry,  
or eco-forestry, can provide  
sustainable jobs and  
ecosystem protection.  
It has not yet been tried  
on public land on the  
Sunshine Coast.



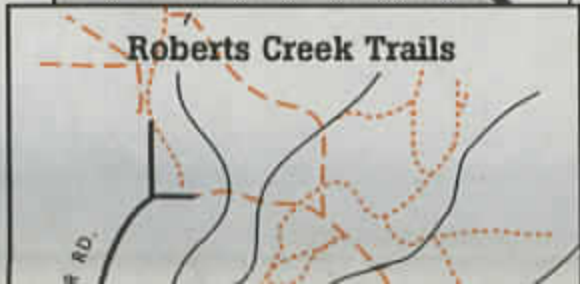
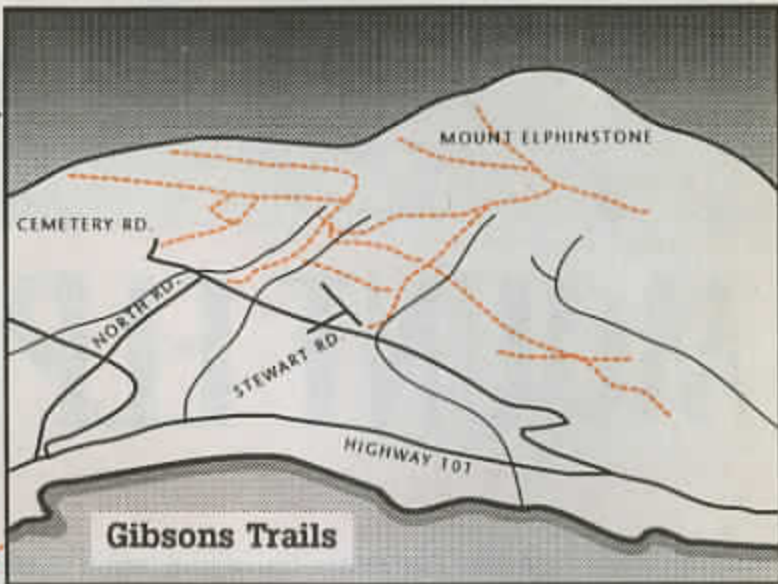
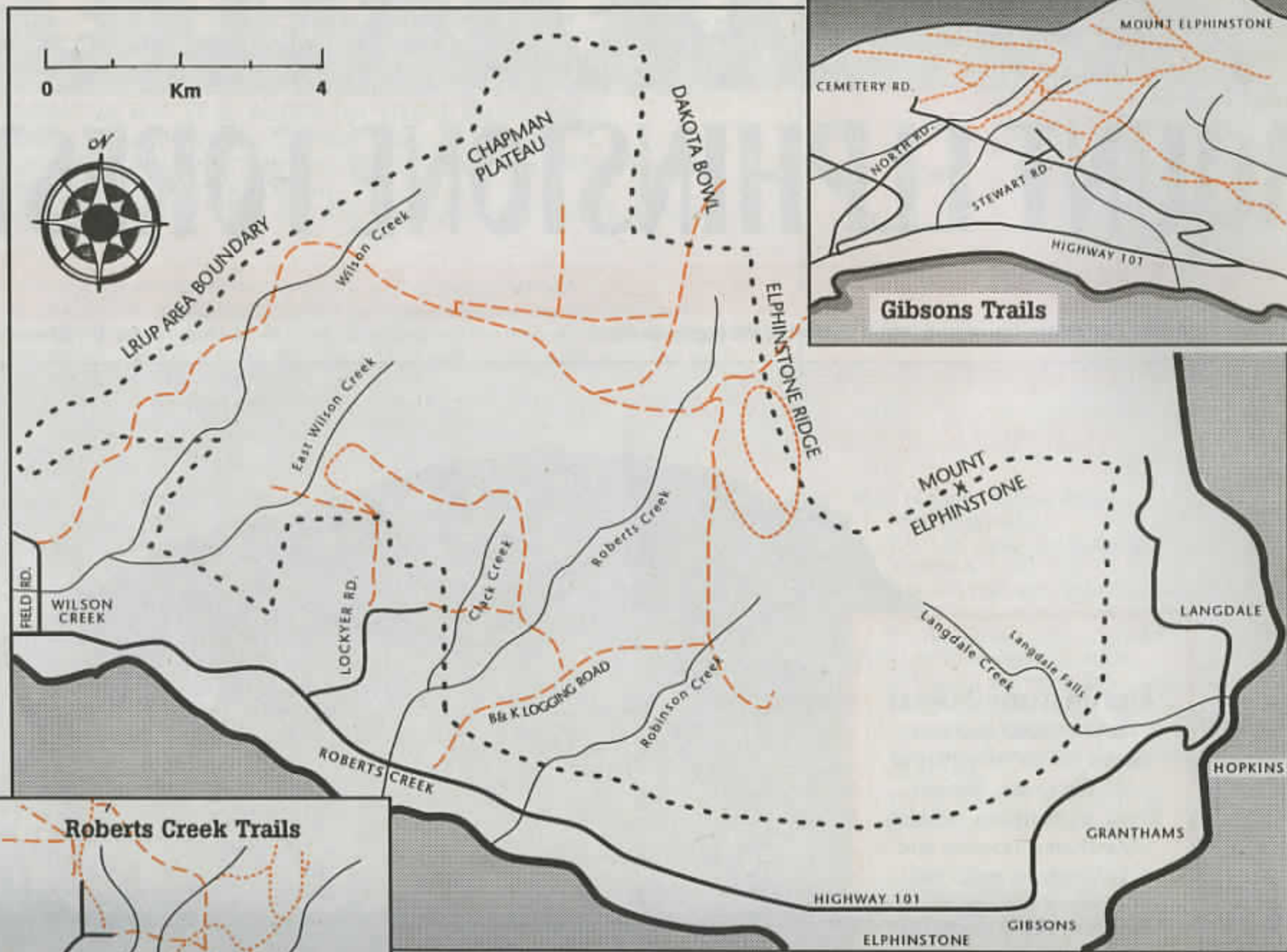
Elphinstone Forest  
would be a good place  
to begin.

Mount Elphinstone



200-hectare clearcut on Chapman Plateau

# Elphinstone Forest Access





## KEY TO MAPS

Roads —————

Logging roads - - - - -

Trails ..... (dotted line)

Streams ———— (wavy line)

# EASILY ACCESSIBLE RECREATION

## SKIING

- The Tetrahedron Ski & Outdoor Club was formerly the Elphinstone Ski Club.
- Their early activities centred around an A-frame cabin on Elphinstone Ridge.
- Elphinstone ridge and peak often keep their snow cover until June.
- The terrain provides skiing and snowshoeing from beginning to advanced levels in a very small area.
- Elphinstone Ridge affords excellent views up and down Georgia Strait and across Dakota Bowl into the back country.
- Easy road access makes Elphinstone a good destination for a family outing.
- For information on hikes and skiing, contact Tetrahedron Ski Club Snow Phone, 885-9167.

## WALKING

- The efforts of Fred Inglis and the Gibsons Landing Heritage Society have resulted in the preservation of historic trails in the forest above Gibsons and the community of Elphinstone. Walkers can enjoy the beauty

of Langdale Falls or view the remains of abandoned logging camps.

- Further to the west, a network of trails and old skidder trails gives access to ravines, late-succession plants and mushrooms, and spectacular survivors of Douglas-fir old-growth.
- The trails at lower elevations are snow-free for most of the year.
- Forest Walkers arrange monthly excursions into Elphinstone Forest. For information, contact Pat Ridgway, 886-8820.

## MOUNTAIN BIKING

- There has been an explosion of mountain bike activity on Elphinstone in the past few years.
- A series of mountain bike trails for children has been developed north of Gibsons.
- Elphinstone is becoming a destination for cyclists from off the Sunshine Coast, due to its accessibility and the well-developed network of trails.



The old Elphinstone Ski Club cabin is still found on Elphinstone Ridge.

# ELPHINSTONE FOREST WANTS TO LIVE

## SAVE ELPHINSTONE FOREST'S LAST STANDS OF HIGH ELEVATION OLD GROWTH

- The old growth forest on Elphinstone and the Chapman Plateau is climax forest with trees of all ages. As trees die of accident and old age, they are replaced by young trees in about the same mix of yellow cedar, mountain hemlock and balsam fir.
- Woodpeckers and owls nest in the broken trees and snags.
- There is an understory of shrubs like blueberry and false azalea.
- The forest floor is carpeted with flowers like cloudberry and violets.
- In boggy places we find sundews, orchids, and other rare and fragile plants.
- THERE IS VERY LITTLE OF THIS OLD GROWTH LEFT IN ELPHINSTONE FOREST. Most of it, about 600 hectares, is on the south slope of the Chapman Plateau.
- Over 270 hectares of Chapman Plateau old growth have been logged in the past seven years.
- One clearcut, still being expanded early in 1995, is already more than 200 hectares—one kilometre by two kilometres—in size.
- While the logging plans keep changing, at last count the old-growth cuts planned and in progress for 1995 amounted to over 100 hectares.
- This is the forestry of annihilation, in a forest where the age of the stand is around 300 years, and many trees are much older.

## SAVE AND RESTORE OLD GROWTH CHARACTER IN ELPHINSTONE'S LOW ELEVATION FOREST

- At the lower elevations, Elphinstone Forest has a history of logging followed by fires followed by

## TAILED FROGS

- are small and unspotted, brown or grey or pink.
- do not sing.
- are one of the most primitive known frog species.
- require cold, clear, unsilted, fast-running water.
- are vulnerable to logging.
- are most sensitive to logging on the smallest creeks.
- are on the B.C. Blue List of sensitive and vulnerable species.

## TADPOLES

- are grey or black with a white spot at the tip of the tail.
- can cling to rocks in the fastest moving streams with their sucking mouthparts.
- take about four years to mature.

## MUSHROOM HOT SPOT

- Elphinstone Forest is one of the mushroom hot spots of the Lower Mainland.
- There are rare and uncommon species here, including one species which has not yet been named by science but which has its largest known population on Mount Elphinstone.
- A fungus inventory is being undertaken to catalogue the species richness of Elphinstone Forest, under the direction of Paul Kroeger, Vancouver Mycological Society. Volunteers are needed! Contact Janice Leighton, 886-3541.



W.C.B. regulations require snags, like the nest tree of this hairy woodpecker, to be felled in clearcuts.

# COLD, CLEAR, UNSILTED WATER FOREVER

- Over 200 households have water licences on the creeks of Elphinstone Forest, from Ouillet Creek on Howe Sound to Husdon Creek by the Chapman.
- Many more homes obtain water from wells fed by Mount Elphinstone.
- Chapman Creek.
- Buffer zones along creeks do not prevent increased peak run-off from cleared areas.

## FLASH FLOODS

- A debris flow is a torrent of flood water and

## PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES

- In 1990, local residents blockaded Forest Service attempts to spray herbicides on clearcuts in watersheds from Langdale to Roberts Creek.
- The Forest Service agreed not to use pesticides

- At the lower elevations, Elphinstone Forest has a history of logging followed by fires followed by cedar shake cutting.
- Many Douglas-fir trees lived through all of this, and there is a scattered band of magnificent 400-year-old survivors towering above the 90 to 110-year-old trees around them. These veteran Douglas-fir may be found from Wilson Creek to Soames Hill Park.
- Because the forest was regenerated naturally by fire, the flora and fauna have built back very quickly to an old growth character.
- In Elphinstone Forest we find orchids, pyrolas, pinesaps, and other flowers typical of an undisturbed forest floor under a closed tree canopy.
- The tailed frog has been found in Wilson Creek, Flume Creek and Roberts Creek.
- There is a rich array of mushrooms typical of mature forest, including food species like the pine mushroom.
- All the cuts planned for 1995 in the "Roberts Creek Study Forest" on East Wilson Creek will hurt or eliminate these species.
- Very little low-elevation forest is protected in the Georgia Lowland Ecosession. This small area of high biological value should be allowed to return to old-growth condition.



Orchids like this western coralroot will not survive the clearcutting planned for 1995 on East Wilson Creek.

### FLASH FLOODS

- A debris flow is a torrent of flood water and large material—logs and rocks—moving fast downslope.
- Logging in 1942 was associated with a 1947 debris flow down Roberts Creek. This flow is remembered as causing extensive damage.
- Logging in 1978 was found by the Ministry of Environment to be the cause of the Clough Creek debris flow of 1983. This flow caused major property damage on Orange Road.
- THESE EVENTS DID NOT START IN IDENTIFIABLE HIGH-RISK AREAS.
- Debris flows often start on slopes away from the creeks and cannot be prevented by buffer strips, but they can be prevented by using only low-impact logging methods that leave most of the forest intact.

### RISK TO WILSON CREEK

- The 1995 cuts in the research forest are adjacent to an erosion hazard area on East Wilson Creek.
- Other cuts in the Chapman Plateau old growth will affect erosion hazard areas downstream on the main branch of Wilson Creek and on

- watersheds from Langdale to Roberts Creek.
- The Forest Service agreed not to use pesticides on Crown land on the Lower Sunshine Coast.
- The Forest Service has broken several agreements, including an agreement not to act in Elphinstone Forest without the sanction of the Elphinstone LRUP Committee. It needs to be firmly held to this promise not to use pesticides in our watersheds.

### LOCAL MANAGEMENT NEEDED

- As part of the research forest, the Forest Service placed arsenic-treated weirs in Flume Creek, which has over 30 licenced water users.
- Other activities in the watersheds, like logging and especially road-building, will directly affect water quality.
- These activities in the research forest and on the Chapman Plateau are going ahead without the consent of the residents who will be affected.
- The Local Resource Plan (LRUP) needs the power to approve or reject projects in our watersheds. Community representatives on the LRUP are not being informed of activities, and their objections are not being heard by the Ministry of Forests.



A huge clearcut has exposed the upper reaches of Wilson Creek to increased runoff and siltation.

# Holistic logging means never having to say you're sorry

## ECO-FORESTRY, OR HOLISTIC FORESTRY, IS THE FUTURE OF FORESTRY IN B.C. IT IS BASED ON THESE PRINCIPLES:

- Activities in the forest should leave the forest ecologically intact.
- All species and habitats found in the forest before logging should also be present in about the same proportions after logging.
- The capacity of the forest to hold water and release it to streams should be unchanged.

## HOW DO WE CHANGE?

- Current logging plans should be replaced by a community-based plan.
- Some areas, like the remaining old growth at higher elevations, and the Douglas-fir forest with old growth character at lower elevations, need to be protected from activity.
- Erosion hazards, streams and wet areas, steep slopes and critical wildlife areas also need to be identified and protected.
- Before any area is logged we need to decide on the best way of logging it to protect all values: timber, permanent jobs, soils, water, wildlife and recreation.

## THE PLAN

- The Eco-Forestry Institute, based in Victoria, is sending a group of students to help put together a holistic plan for Elphinstone Forest in June.
- Eco-forestry is governed by a code of ethics which specifically bans clearcuts.
- The students will likely plan various forms of natural selection harvesting, or slow-grading, in which the trees most likely to die of natural causes will be cut first.
- Unlike some forms of selection logging, slow-grading tends to increase the value of the standing timber and of each successive cut.

## GREEN TIMBER

- Timber produced in a holistically managed forest will fetch premium prices because it can be marketed world-wide as green timber.
- A green stamp on timber is something like an organic label on produce. Buyers who care are willing to pay extra.
- Because of the nature of slow-grading harvesting, and the excellent growing conditions on Elphinstone, we can expect to produce superior wood here.

## LOCAL REMANUFACTURING

- One of the highest priorities of community forest management is to provide local employment.
- Wood produced on Elphinstone should be made available to local industry for remanufacturing before it is shipped off the Coast.

## BROKEN AGREEMENT

"Nothing will happen in the Elphinstone LRUP area without the LRUP committee's sanction."

*Russ Hughes, Acting District Manager*

*Sunshine Coast Forest District*

*August 6, 1992*

- According to the Ombudsman's office, the Acting District Manager did have the authority to make this promise.
- Road-building and logging is going ahead in the area, without the sanction of the LRUP committee and in breach of the written promise.
- The Forest Minister has denied deferment of activity in the LRUP area. On one hand, he speaks of obligations to logging companies, but on the other hand, he breaks an obligation to the community.

## How you can help

- ✦ Write or phone Andrew Petter

Minister of Forests

Rm. 128, Parliament Buildings

Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

fax: 387-1040 (free from the Government Agent)

phone Enquiry B.C. (1-800-663-7867) and ask for

Andrew Petter's office at 387-6240

Let him know whether you think :

- All logging and roadbuilding should be deferred in the Mount Elphinstone LRUP area.
- Current logging plans should be replaced with holistic logging in the context of a developing community-based plan.
- Industrial activity should only go ahead with full LRUP approval, as promised in August 1992.

- ✦ Elphinstone Forest Watch needs help in the following planning areas:

• Water • Recreation • Biodiversity • Erosion Hazards  
• Timber supply • Harvesting • Remanufacturing  
and with publicity, fund-raising, and community

- Employment.
- Wood produced on Elphinstone should be made available to local industry for remanufacturing before it is shipped off the Coast.

## THE COMMUNITY FOREST

- Public pressure will be needed to move the government to put the plan into operation.
- While the forest companies know forestry is moving in this direction, they need further encouragement from the local community.
- Ultimately, Elphinstone Forest should be run by a community forest board to ensure that local priorities guide forest management, and that we fulfill our responsibilities to the forest ecosystem.



Value added on the spot: Portable sawmills like this one may soon be found on the slopes of a holistically logged Mount Elphinstone.

### Yes, I want to support the Elphinstone Forest Watch eco-forestry proposal!

Please put my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ towards eco-forestry on Elphinstone.  
To get an official tax receipt, please make out your cheque to:  
Western Canada Wilderness Committee—Elphinstone  
Val McCourt  
RR 1 Bay Rd. Site C78  
Sechelt, B.C. V0N 3A0 Canada

Send to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

All proceeds go to eco-forestry in Elphinstone Forest. Thank you for your support.

- planning areas:
- Water • Recreation • Biodiversity • Erosion Hazards
  - Timber supply • Harvesting • Remanufacturing and with publicity, fund-raising, and community organization. Please contact Forest Watch: Adrian Belshaw, 886-2253, or Janice Brinton, 886-2883.

### COMMUNITY GROUPS ON THE LRUP

You may wish to have input through these groups on the Local Resource Use Plan:

- Roberts Creek Community Association
- Wilson Creek/Davis Bay Community Association
- Elphinstone Electors' Association
- Concerned Coast Residents

## Eco-forestry weekend

- Merv Wilkinson has been practising eco-forestry on his land since 1938.
- He has harvested the full volume of wood he started with, and now has the same volume standing.
- If he had clearcut at the beginning, he would have made far less money.



C. MORRISON

Merv Wilkinson

### Thursday, June 15, Cable 11, (Cable 10 in Pender Harbour):

*Merv Wilkinson and the Eco-Forestry Institute students.*  
Discussion and phone-in 7:00 to 8:00 PM

### Friday, June 16 Coffee House at the Roberts Creek Hall

*Merv and Anne Wilkinson and the EFI students.*  
Fun, entertainment and forestry discussion. Refreshments.  
\$5 adults \$2 children Doors at 7:30

### Saturday, June 17 Eco-Forestry Workshop

*In the forest with Merv Wilkinson and the EFI students.*  
\$20 (9AM to 6PM) Pre-register please.  
Information and pre-registration, contact:  
Janice Brinton, 886-2883.