

Old-growth trees being harvested from Cathedral Grove watershed

Annette Tanner, spokesperson for the Mid-Island Chapter of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, addresses Tuesday's rally outside Island Timberlands' property in Nanoose Bay.



Brad Bird, Oceanside Star
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A feisty crowd of about 25 environmentalists gathered Tuesday near the Island Timberlands office a kilometre south of Parksville to protest recent old-growth logging near Cathedral Grove Park.

Holding placards and banners, they acknowledged many honks from passing drivers on Highway 19 during the hour-long event.

But they also acknowledged that Island Timberlands is within its rights to log in the vicinity, and most speakers blamed the Campbell government for what they called the lack of a proper old-growth management strategy. Annette Tanner, spokesperson for the Mid-Island Chapter of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, addresses Tuesday's rally outside Island Timberlands' property in Nanoose Bay. [View Larger Image](#) [View Larger Image](#) Annette Tanner, spokesperson for the Mid-Island Chapter of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, addresses Tuesday's rally outside Island Timberlands' property in Nanoose Bay.

Only 5% of Douglas Fir old growth remains in the mid-Island region, said Ken Wu, executive director of Victoria's branch of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, and "most people want the old-growth saved."

"I want to put the main blame on the Campbell government and B.C. government," Wu said. "It is the gatekeeper."

Concerns were also expressed about the effects on salmon runs, spotted owls and drinking water sources for Qualicum Beach and surrounding communities, as Labour Day Lake is in the area.

Wu said he supports the sustainable logging of second-growth forests but is against old-growth cutting.

Last week and into the weekend saws and helicopters were heard near the famous park, which draws visitors from all over the world.

Annette Tanner, spokesperson for the mid-Island chapter of the WCWC, said they saw how helicopters removed one of the last few remaining patches of old-growth forest growing out of the rocky hillside above the park proper.

"This arrogant and aggressive act by such a bold, new offshore company dismisses the community concerns that for over 100 years have been supported by huge public and international outcry to see all of Cathedral Grove protected," Tanner said.

Island Timberlands spokesperson Makenzie Leine confirmed the harvested trees are old growth but insisted no harm was done.

"The province has done a great job of protecting old growth and diversity," she said. "It's quite a distance away (from the boundary) and it's not going to mean any risk to the park," adding that the land is privately owned and the cutting area is a small block being removed as part of the company's regular operations.

She could not identify the exact size of the cut, but did say operations there were almost finished.

The cutting, largely single-tree removal, began a few weeks ago, she said.

"This land has been designated as managed forest and we are managing it sustainably," said Leine, manager of sustainability and community affairs. Company specialists reviewed the cutting site, she said, and had no concerns about erosion or landslides.

However, Colin Frazer, chair of the Port Alberni Council of Canadians, said the park will be affected by windblown trees. "They're coming so close to the back of the Grove that there's going to be wind blowdown," he said.

Berni Pearce, of the Arrowsmith Parks and Land-Use Committee, said she feels frustrated and betrayed because the company said in a letter it had no intention of logging near Cathedral Grove.

Ingmar Lee, a member of Friends of the Grove who traveled from Bella Bella for the rally, said he came to protest the "systematic destruction of Vancouver Island's final primeval fir forest... This is an outrage."

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