



**SIERRA
CLUB BC**

301-2994 Douglas Street
Victoria, B.C. V8T 4N4

T (250) 386-5255
F (250) 386-4453

E info@sierraclub.bc.ca
W www.sierraclub.bc.ca

July 10, 2018

To: Premier John Horgan

Cc:

Minister Doug Donaldson, Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations

Minister George Heyman, Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Minister Michelle Mungall, Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

Mayor Jenny Durkan, Seattle

Re: Proposed logging by BCTS in Skagit drainages

Dear Premier Horgan,

Sierra Club BC recently learned of the proposed logging by BC Timber Sales in the Silverdaisy and Twentysix Mile valleys. We ask that you cancel the proposed logging.

Our reasons are both historical and environmental. You will remember that the proposed flooding of the Skagit Valley in B.C. created a wave of strong opposition in both B.C. and the U.S. from 1968 onwards. It was only quelled by the signing of the Skagit Treaty between Canada and the U.S. in 1984, in which B.C. agreed to supply Seattle with power equivalent to that forecasted for the High Ross Dam at a rate consistent with the cost of production from the dam.

This wave of protest was a major reason for the formation of the Sierra Club of BC, now Sierra BC, as a result of the experience gained through liaison with Sierra Club members in the U.S. in opposition to the dam. Sierra Club BC is about to celebrate its 50th anniversary in B.C. as an organization committed to environmental progress and protection in British Columbia.

The Treaty, although signed by representatives of Canada and the U.S., also committed B.C. and the City of Seattle to various conditions, including guaranteeing the delivery of the power and the creation, in Appendix D, of the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC) with a mandate agreed upon by both B.C. and the City of Seattle.

This is an unusual international body, funded by contributions from both Seattle and B.C., with commissioners appointed by the Premier and the Mayor of Seattle, and with a strong environmental mandate for the whole of the Skagit drainage north of Ross Dam. Directions in the mandate relevant to our concerns are:

- Conserve and protect wilderness and wildlife habitat
- Enhance recreation opportunities in the Skagit Valley

- Acquire mineral or timber rights consistent with conservation and recreation purpose

After the Treaty was signed in 1984, B.C. created the Skagit Valley Recreation Area, a designation under the Parks Act, including the Silverdaisy and Twentysix Mile drainages on the western boundary of Manning Park, thus recognizing their environmental, scenic and recreation values.

When the Recreation Area designation for the Skagit was changed to a Class A park, it was decided to exclude from the park the area containing the mining claims known as the Giant Copper property. At the same time, the western boundary of Manning Park was moved eastwards to exclude some of the claims that were in that park on Silverdaisy Mountain. These changes created an area of “open Crown land” between the two class A parks, which came to be known as the “donut hole”. It must surely be recognized that, given past land use designations, if it were not for the mining claims all the land in the donut hole would be in a Class A park.

Should the Giant Copper property be developed, its location adjacent to the two parks would have significant environmental impact on those parks, as the zones next to the donut hole are zoned for wilderness, and also for serious risks to the water quality in the Skagit River. For the long term future of the parks and the river it is clearly best if the mining claims could be returned to the Crown and the donut hole lands incorporated in the two parks.

Achieving a buyout of the claims is a lead mandate for SEEC, which it is currently pursuing, with, we understand, the encouragement of both your government and the prior government. It is therefore a major surprise to Sierra Club BC that BC Timber Sales (BCTS) has plans to log the upland in both Silverdaisy and Twentysix Mile drainages and that access road construction to this area is now actively underway.

Given the sensitivity of this area because of its history and long appreciated environmental and recreation values, Sierra Club BC is astounded that there was no advertisement or consultation effort for this initiative by BCTS. We understand further that BCTS did not refer their plans to BC Parks or SEEC for comment, both entities with a well established interest in the future of the donut hole.

Our conclusion can only be that BCTS deliberately chose not to advance its plans to these agencies or to seek public comment. Such an approach is surely contrary to the mandate of FLNRO and the ethics of your government. Clearly one arm of government is deliberately trying to frustrate the long terms plans of BC Parks and SEEC. It makes no sense for your government to encourage SEEC to purchase the mining claims, while at the same time allowing BCTS to destroy many of the very values the acquisition would protect.

Had such consultation taken place, we can assure you there would have been overwhelming opposition to the BCTS proposal. Sierra Club BC would have been an active participant in this,

given the appeal of both Manning Park and Skagit Valley parks to the public of the Lower Mainland. In addition SEEC and BC governments have repeatedly been advised by Seattle of their concerns in relation to land use in the donut hole.

We ask therefore that you instruct BCTS to halt construction of the road immediately and to cancel plans for further logging in the donut hole, in the interest of maintaining the long term goal of SEEC and BC Parks that the donut hole lands be incorporated in the parks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hannah Askew". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Hannah Askew
Executive Director
Sierra Club BC