



October 7, 2013

North Cowichan Mayor and Council
Municipality of North Cowichan
7030 Trans Canada Highway, P.O. Box 278
Duncan, B.C. V9L 3X4
Via Email - council@northcowichan.ca

Dear Mayor Lefebure and Members of Council:

Re: Echo Heights Forest

BC Nature (Federation of BC Naturalists) is the provincial organization for naturalists and naturalist clubs in communities throughout British Columbia. We are writing in regard to a proposal that has been brought to our attention concerning plans by the municipality to develop a portion of lands in the town of Chemainus known as Echo Heights Forest. We understand the municipality has proposed building approximately 50 single family homes on 20% of this 54 acre property which is owned by the municipality. We also understand this project is opposed by a large number of residents of the area, and has been for many years.

The land in question has been used for decades as a wilderness recreation area, though not formally designated as such. It has multiple ecological and bio-diversity values as well as cultural importance for First Nations. These include its status as part of the increasingly rare Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystem; an important wetland providing habitat for birds and animals including the endangered red-legged frog; fragile Camas meadows in close proximity to the lands proposed for development; and its function in protecting the town from wind, agricultural odours, highway noise and serving as an important component of the green space surrounding the town.

We believe it is extremely important to maintain the integrity of these increasingly rare ecosystems, particularly when they are located close to residential areas where they can be enjoyed by local residents and protected under local stewardship agreements. The desire of local residents to protect the whole of this well established second-growth forest is understandable and something we strongly support.

BC Nature respectfully requests that North Cowichan Council protect the whole of Echo Heights natural area.

Yours truly

John Neville, President
Federation of BC Naturalists (BC Nature)

Cc Cowichan Valley Naturalists