

FRIENDS OF FRENCH CREEK  
CONSERVATION SOCIETY

## Open Letter to Island Timberlands

Mr. Darshan Sihota, President  
Island Timberlands Limited Partnership  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 65 Front Street  
Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 5H9

Dear Mr. Sihota,

It was with great disappointment that we learned that the negotiations to bring Hamilton Marsh under public control had failed. We will continue to search for ways to ensure that the marsh and the surrounding 324 hectares of forestland are preserved in perpetuity. This is not a subject that should require a long study; the need is apparent and immediate.

Our organization is devoted to the preservation and restoration of the French Creek and its watershed. Hamilton Marsh is an important reservoir in the watershed, and the preservation and maintenance of the marsh and surrounding forest is one of our primary goals.

Our Hamilton Marsh Committee under the able direction of Ceri Peacey has been active in raising and maintaining the awareness of the general public in the need to preserve the marsh. The over 2000 signatures that Scott Fraser MLA presented to the legislature is but an example to their continuing dedication. We will not only maintain a watching brief, but do all possible to raise the public awareness, and continue to lobby all involved to take the necessary steps to preserve the marsh and its surrounding forest.

The marsh, as previously stated, is an important part of the watershed. The French Creek watershed is not robust and strong; it is in fact a very fragile system that has been continually weakened over the years by the thoughtless and greedy actions of man. What was once a healthy stream supporting good runs of salmon and a native population of cutthroat trout is now a mere trickle of water in the summer and a muddy torrent following winter rain.

Hamilton Marsh is one of the largest wetlands left on Vancouver Island, and is the largest marsh in the central island. The Ministry of Environment's web page on Wetlands in B.C. notes, "The functional contribution of wetlands in helping to minimize or remediate environmental problems is substantial." Surely we all should be planning to ensure such a fundamental building block in the ecosystem is preserved and maintained.

We are an organization devoted to long-term principles that will not only improve our quality of life, but will have greater impact for our children and their children. Should we not

act now we will greatly minimize, if not destroy, any chance for those who follow to correct our mistakes.

The cooperation your company has provided in regard to clearing the pathways to the marsh following last winter's storms and the support you gave for the Brant Festival tour is greatly appreciated. We can only hope that same spirit will promote the preservation of the marsh and the surrounding forest land.

Your company has an opportunity to make an important lasting contribution. The most fitting contribution you could make would be to ensure that this important area of marsh and forestland is preserved.

You are urged to view the Hamilton Marsh Website at [www.hamilton-marsh.com](http://www.hamilton-marsh.com). That site makes it clear that Hamilton Marsh is an ecological jewel in the centre of Vancouver Island.

**Let us all work towards maintaining the brilliance.**

Yours sincerely,

Original signed by

Robin Robinson, President