

## PRESS RELEASE

### FRIENDS OF CATHEDRAL GROVE

Parksville, Victoria (see contacts on page 2)

January 5, 2005

#### **BC Government and Weyerhaeuser reach a Secret Deal to add new stump-field to Cathedral Grove (MacMillan Park)**

The Friends of Cathedral Grove have discovered that Weyerhaeuser and the Campbell government have reached a secret agreement to add about 140 hectares of recently logged land to the world-famous park. This new addition would be withdrawn from Weyerhaeuser's private holdings which virtually surround the park. It would be in addition to the 21-hectare stump-field which the previous government acquired from the giant American logging company for \$1.7 million in 1999. In the latest proposed addition, 75% is also a stump-field.

This backroom deal excludes the old-growth forest remaining in the Cameron Valley that is currently outside the park boundaries and which is slated for logging by Weyerhaeuser. The Friends of the Grove are demanding that some 400+ hectares of standing ancient forest in the Cameron Valley directly adjacent to Cathedral Grove should be expropriated from Weyerhaeuser. Has this government even considered offering the return of these lands to First Nations whose historic stewardship and usage is so clearly in evidence? If not, why not?

During the several weeks before Christmas, survey crews had been seen working in the Weyerhaeuser clearcuts on the south side of the Grove. When questioned by people currently blockading the construction of the Campbell government's proposed 150-slot parking lot, the survey team initially refused to say what they were up to. (The Cathedral Grove marathon blockade is now into its 10th month of 24/7 occupation.) Finally when directly questioned by Friends of Cathedral Grove, they admitted they were surveying "the new addition to MacMillan Park." Island videographer and FROG member, Richard Boyce, was able to snap a photo of the new addition boundaries over the shoulder of the surveyor (see attachment). Richard Boyce says that back-room land deals between government and Weyerhaeuser will continue to leave First Nations and the general public without a voice.

Ingmar Lee, a Friend of Cathedral Grove spokesperson said, "Here's Weyerhaeuser once again trying to flog off a logged-out stump-field to the people of BC for millions of dollars. The land is now useless to Weyerhaeuser and is nothing but a tax-burden to them. The final ancient fir forest still standing in the Cameron Valley must be protected."

Friends of the Grove are clear that this government purchase of a stump-field does not in any way mitigate the negative impacts of the government's current plan to locate a large parking lot on the floodplain upwind of the Grove. They continue to support the more benign alternatives they have presented to the government.

The ancient forests of the Cameron Valley are some of the last remnants of Vancouver Island's once-magnificent Douglas fir forest, 97% of which has been decimated by 150 years of industrial logging. FROG member Krista Roessingh said "Culturally Modified Trees (CMT's) can be found disbursed throughout the old-growth in the Grove. They attest to the careful, sustainable use of these forests by First Nations, and prove their historic tenure and ownership of these lands. We think they should be returned to the true stewards who cared so lovingly for these precious forests for millennia. Why hasn't the Province considered returning the land to them as part of recent land transfers? Weyerhaeuser apparently has no concern for these historic artifacts, as CMT stumps can be found throughout their Cameron Valley clearcuts."

Attachment #1: BC Government map prepared for presentation purposes. The "new acquisition" referred to is the 1999 purchase from Weyerhaeuser.

Attachment #2: Photo by Richard Boyce. Shows air photo map in the hand of a surveyor. Boundaries are believed to show logged area which comprises BC Government's proposed new purchase from Weyerhaeuser.

For more info and pictures: [www.cathedralgrove.se](http://www.cathedralgrove.se)

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