

Newsletter



Perry Ridge Defendants: Offer of settlement

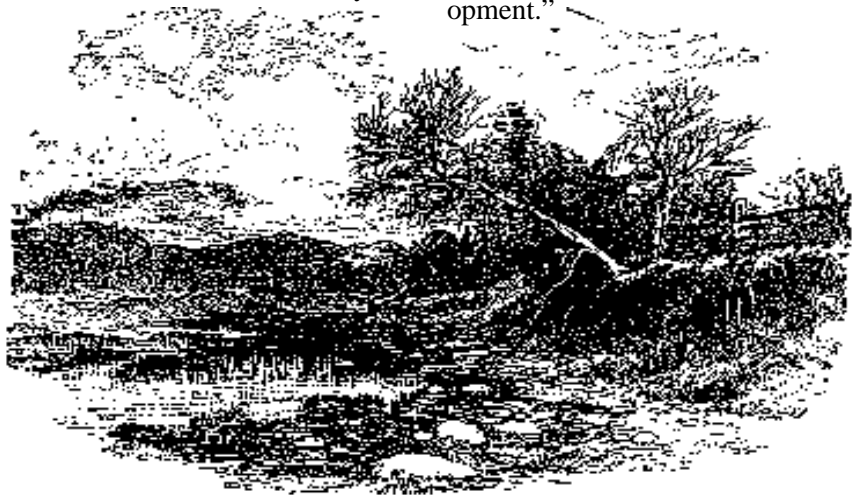
The five named defendants in the British Columbia government's Perry Ridge lawsuit, singled out by the Attorney General out of hundreds of protesters, none of whom were arrested, have responded to the government's offer to drop its lawsuit if the defendants would drop theirs. The Defendants have agreed to drop their counterclaim if the government will establish an acceptable independent, broadly based scientific panel to assess the risks of development of Perry Ridge.

One of the defendants, Gunter Retterath, states, "We have always wanted the best independent scientific information available to assess whether logging on Perry Ridge would affect our lives, property and water. This is why road construction, prior to the decision as to whether logging was even possible on Perry Ridge, resulted in the protests and widespread opposition in the community to the LRUP table, which, nonetheless, continues to plan logging in the absence of adequate independent scientific assessment. Our proposal requires a complete deferral of all logging and road building, including helicopter logging, on Perry Ridge, until an independent scientific panel can study the whole of the issue of risks and

costs".

Marilyn Burgoon, Co-chair of the Perry Ridge Water Users Association states, "Knowing these hazards exist and that the preliminary reports are seriously flawed, Perry Ridge residents want a moratorium on all Perry

Ridge development until an independent scientific panel can make its recommendations. The people at the bottom of the ridge—who will suffer the consequences—want assurance that the best information will be used to demonstrate to the community that there will be no disasters affecting their lives and property resulting from Perry Ridge development."



Risky Business

by Philip Pedini

A standing room only crowd packed Winlaw Hall on March 29 to examine the risks of logging Perry Ridge. This meeting, sponsored by Area H of the Regional District of Central Kootenay, was the first specifically for the public since the Ministry of Forests public process for Perry Ridge (LRUP) began nearly two years ago. Two of the three authors of the Perry Ridge Risk Assessment (PRRA), Dwain Boyer (Ministry of Forests) and Peter Jordan (Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks), presented their report. They consider the destruction of a home, serious damage to multiple water intakes, or serious personal injury to be only of "moderate" consequence. The report divides east Perry Ridge into 32 Hydrologic Units and makes suggestions and recommendations for each unit to mitigate against the increased risk, which accompanies timber harvesting. The option of no logging is never suggested or recommended, even in units with Very High Risk.

Allen Isaacson, an independent hydrologist, then reviewed the risk

Risky Business Continued:



assessment. The Equivalent Clear-cut Area (ECA) model used in the assessment was developed by him and Lee Silvey beginning in 1967. He explained at length why using the ECA in the assessment is not appropriate. "The time table was too short and has been handled in a backward manner. This study started with the activities first, with an assumption they could be put on the landscape. The whole system is flawed and the numbers generated are meaningless. In the Slokan Valley, there are many recent slides in developed areas such as Memphis Creek, Lemon Creek, Airy Creek, etc. Using these watersheds as examples, and

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Our fear of change could destroy all our livelihoods.

Will your conscience allow you to stand idle while the livelihoods of workers, the integrity of our valley ecology, our drinking water and our childrens' future are being threatened? **This is an opportunity to stand up for your rights.**

11AM JUNE 1ST AT THE CASTLEGAR MOF OFFICE

Friends of the Valley
call Ricardo Hubbs 226-7307

acknowledging that the east side of Perry Ridge is less stable than the areas already developed, it does not take much common sense to determine that it is foolish to think this area can be developed without damage to downstream values." Mr. Isaacson suggested that a better risk assessment team would be interdisciplinary, with 5-7 members representing appropriate hydrology, wildlife, fisheries, forestry, and planning. Mr. Boyer and Mr. Jordan agreed a wider panel could make a better report.

Next, Frank Baumann, an independent Geological Engineer, presented a review of these four reports: the risk assessment, geological hazards mapping, the stream assessment channel survey, and the total chance plan. Mr. Baumann spoke at length to every engineer involved in these reports before writing his review. This fulfills the engineers professional responsibility to their peers as stated in their code of ethics. In the risk assessment "acceptable hazard is not defined using more widely used standards that have been applied to situations involving life, limb, and property, for example a debris flow hazard that has a return period of more than 1 in 500 years [would be] unacceptable, while the PRRA rates such a hazard as being only very low. Why were more widely used hazard acceptability criteria not used in this study? To relegate what would be serious consequences to only a "moderate" rating may violate the Code of Ethics [of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of B.C.]... information in the PRRA may cause poor,

IF you would like a

copy of either Mr. Issacson's or Mr. Baumann's critique of the Risk Assessment call: 226-7876

If you would like a copy of the Risk Assessment call the Ministry of Forests at 365-8600

up-front decisions to be made."

"The PRRA does not distinguish between voluntary and involuntary risk, and inappropriately compares these two in order to promote a higher level of acceptable risk. Why were the residents potentially affected not asked to provide input as to what constitutes an acceptable risk?"

Questions and comments from the floor followed these presentations. Nick Trace spoke of the "greedy bungling" on Frog Peak in clear-cutting right up to the chute of an old slide to harvest 4 foot diameter spruce. Bill Horswill told of the washout of his road following careful selective logging on his land in Winlaw. The slash from a handful of trees clogged an intermittent creek. Even without a steep slope, and with good planning and an intimate knowledge of the land, an expensive disaster still occurred. It is our water, our property, and our lives at risk.

Shouldn't it be Perry Ridge residents, living down slope of proposed timber harvesting, who decide what is and what is not an acceptable risk?



Letters:

As timber supplies dwindle and the forest industry struggles to survive, I find it ironic that the push in the industry is to more high-production equipment. The logging jobs are going the same route the mill jobs went over the last twenty years—to automation!

As SFP pushes to minimize the number of contractors to a handful of big outfits, the result is that the big contractors have no choice but to go to bigger faster machines to up their production. Hand-fallers are losing their jobs to feller-bunchers; buckermen and chokermen are losing theirs to processors and grapple yarders. The first thing SFP did when they took over the mill in 1978 was to build the sorter and eliminate the green-chain jobs. Since then there's been one move after another to cut back on the work force. Twenty years later we're cutting twice as much timber to sustain less than half the jobs.

Just at the time when the industry should be moving in the direction of scaled-down, more sustainable logging practices, we have this all-out assault to speed things up and get it done. It should be obvious to us what the motive is behind this, and it begs the question as to the long-term commitment SFP has to this valley. If this trend is allowed to continue, I believe our forest industry is doomed.

We need an outfit in here that puts the needs of the community ahead of its own interests and shows some corporate responsibility and integrity.

Nick Trace

**We encourage
critical thought.
Question every-
thing.
Search for the
truth.**



Can't See the Blowdown for the Trees

Large numbers of trees have been left standing. Block 2B looking south

In 1997 a windstorm toppled trees in several areas of the valley including our watershed, the Rice/Richards face of Perry Ridge. The Ministry of Forests proposed in 1998 to log 11 blocks between the north side of Rice Creek to the north side of Jerome Creek. After visiting every house in our watershed we obtained overwhelming support to take a list of concerns to the Ministry of Forests. Some of the concerns included the fact that Richards Creek flows through two cutblocks, and that removal of the timber might affect water quality and timing. At the time, we were worried that logging would take place before the proposed studies were done. Because downed wood is very valuable to water quality and terrain stability we wanted these values considered also.

Unfortunately the MOF and the government sponsored planning table rejected these concerns and approved the logging plan in spring 1998. Since then the governments' own studies have again raised concerns about the extreme instability of this area. These studies have shown that there are significant risks to life/limb, property and water under proposed logging. As this is classified as an inoperable area, we are afraid this might just be an excuse to log where logging would otherwise not be allowed.

“We are getting away from this one-sided view that wind-throw is a loss of timber and therefore is something bad.”

Stephen Mitchell, UBC Researcher- 1999

Large numbers of trees have been left standing within these blocks. The MOF has stated that they would need to clear-cut these blocks and possibly enlarge them. In the summer of 1998 we visited several blocks. We noticed that a lot of the wood on the ground was dead pine trees, while a lot of those left standing are much more valuable larch trees. This is part of the natural succession as the forest recovers from the fire that occurred in the early part of this century.

A couple of weeks ago we received a letter about the blowdown from Ian Hamann of Ministry of Forests. He stated, “At this time harvesting plans are being held in abeyance pending further review.” We are not sure what this means but we will continue to monitor the situation.

Scott Frederick and Kathryn Lavis

Avalanche!

One hazard that hasn't received much attention in the recent studies is snow avalanche. In particular the possibility that clearcuts would create new avalanche start zones was not addressed. It is now generally accepted that global warming will lead to increased snowpacks in this area and the increased hazards due to this change have not been considered.

The consequences of this omission could be serious. For example, in early February 1999 there were two avalanches in the Shannon Creek drainage, north of Valhalla park. One slide destroyed many trees over 200 years old and deposited 7m depth of snow and forest debris over a 30m length of Valhalla Mountain Tourings' sno-cat access trail. The other avalanche occurred in an active cutblock and it partially buried logging equipment. Both of these avalanches started above 1230m (4000') in clearcuts.

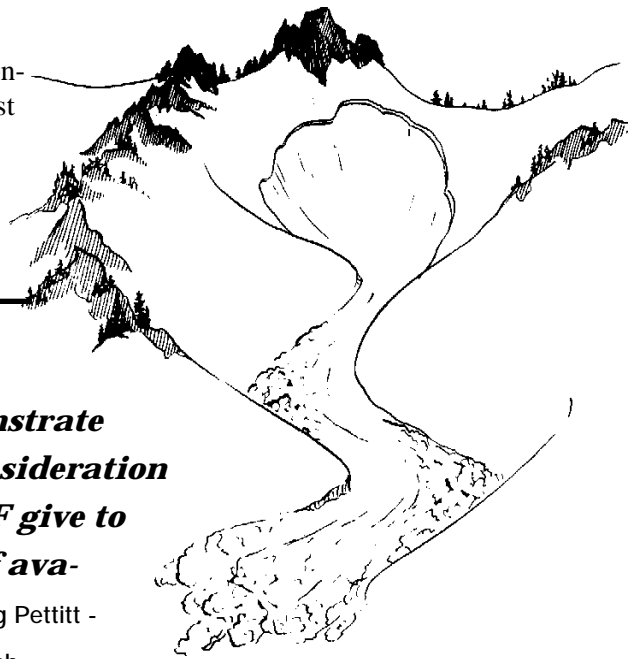
These events demonstrate that the Forest Practices Code does not provide adequate protection from snow avalanches.

"These avalanches clearly demonstrate how little consideration SFP and MOF give to the hazard of avalanches." -Craig Pettitt -

Valhalla Forest Watch

According to the recent Risk Assessment there are two drainages on the East face of Perry Ridge; Draw Creek and Newcomen Creek that have a high hazard of snow avalanches already existing. With clearcuts there is a danger that permanent avalanche tracks could be created in other areas of the ridge as well.

Many experts state that



Slab Avalanche

clearcutting should be banned on slopes greater than 30 degrees because of the danger of creating new avalanche start zones.

Residents of the valley should be vigilant in order to prevent the creation of new hazards on Perry Ridge.

The Perry Ridge Water Users' Association has been representing the interests of water users for 17 years through research and education. We advocate for the implementation of an Ecosystem-Based plan for the entire valley. We propose that logging take place only in areas that pose no risk to life, limb, or property. Our goal is to maintain the quality, quantity and timing of flow of water supplies on Perry Ridge.

The Perry Ridge Water Users' Association Directors

Marilyn Burgoon, Co-Chair	226-7324	Pamela Stevenson	226-7747	Lois Warthe	355-2353
Don Warthe, Co-Chair	355-2353	Laura Tiberti	226-7935	Muffin Benedict	226-7876
Lori Kaufmann	226-7968	Gail Elder	355-2459	Roland Werner	226-7559
Scott Frederick/Kathryn Lavis	226-7935	Philip Pardini	226-7640	Diane Carter	226 7371

PERRY RIDGE NEEDS YOUR HELP: Thanks for your ongoing support.

Both time and money are needed. Send donations to
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phone 226 7324 or 355 2353