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counterpunch

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Logging Lackies vs. Canada's Most Endangered Species

Forest-Flipping Frenzy Dooms Marmot

By INGMAR LEE

It's been particularly dog-eat-dog in Vancouver Island's forests of late. MacMillan-Bloedel begat Weyerhaeuser begat BRASCAN begat Brookfield Asset Management begat Trilon Bancorp Inc. begat Cascadia/Island Timberlands which has now been gotten by Western Forest Products. If WFP survives its current bankruptcy proceedings, it will become the biggest logging corporation on the Canadian west coast with nine sawmills, five remanufacturing mills, a pulp mill, 3,700 employees, and annual cutting rights to 6.8 million cubic metres of timber.

Western Forest Products itself recently gobbled the utterly bankrupt Doman Logging empire and now hopes to refinance its massive debt with the help of Tricap Management Inc., another Brookfield subsidiary which has arranged \$310 million in loans to replace Western's higher-interest debt. WFP is poised to become the final forest-consuming behemoth in the 150-year gutting frenzy which has thus far laid waste to 80% of Vancouver Islands once magnificent forests. Forestry, one imagines, is a long term project, but these days giant corporations are flipping island forest tenure like tiddly-winks.

Every flip has serious ecological consequences. For example, when Washington-based Weyerhaeuser wolfed MacMillan Bloedel in 1998, they immediately proceeded to exterminate Vancouver Island's final ancient fir forests which once covered 20% of the island. They also took out the Island's second and even third growth forests down to 30 year-old pecker-pole stands for their annual million cubic-metre raw-log-to-the-USA export business. The worlds largest logging company gutted our islands forests so ruthlessly that forest workers, communities and First Nations reached a collective critical mass of outrage and began revolting. After a seven-year

forest-felling free-for-all, Weyerhaeuser cut and ran away from Vancouver Island in 2005, selling out their steaming stumpfields to BRASCAN, -a giant real estate developer.

But when Weyerhaeuser acquired M/B, they also assumed a dreadful responsibility for the imminent extinction of the Vancouver Island marmot, Canada's most endangered species (there are only several wild-born V. I. marmots alive today). This extinction was brought about by years of unregulated private land clearcutting begun by Mac/Blo and continued by Weyerhaeuser. To assuage its culpability for this extinction Weyerhaeuser threw a few bucks a year at the farcical "Marmot Recovery" project which was set up to quietly observe the extinction process while offering Greenwash services to its logging industry financiers. Logging companies have financed the study of the extinction of the Vancouver Island marmot for more than 20 years while incessantly mowing their way up the mountainsides towards the marmot colony sites.

Turns out that desperate island deer, (now 80% decimated in a decade by over-hunting,) kept moving up the mountainsides to stay ahead of the logging, and were followed close behind by hungry wolves and cougars. And congregating with all the deer and the marmots in the sub-alpine marmot meadows as the forests fell behind them, the predators became a convenient scapegoat for the extinction. (see Marmot Forest destruction slide show at: <http://marmots.org/forest/forest10.html>) Today, without any habitat protection plans, Marmot Recovery scientists are now focussed entirely on laboratory breeding and predator control. Wolves, cougars and even Golden eagles are slaughtered in the stumpfields in the name of protecting the marmot, while captive marmots are [poked and prodded under fluorescent laboratory lamps](#) by hopeful mass-production technicians.

Just like the liquidation/conversion plantation-management scam for so-called 'sustained-yield' logging, the scientists believe that by seeding fresh laboratory-bred marmot pups across the extinct colony sites every year, they might somehow, someday "take." So what's with Weyerhaeuser's commitment to the marmot?

This following is quoted from the www.marmots.org website today:

"Major land owners in Vancouver Island Marmot habitat area are TimberWest, Weyerhaeuser & the BC Government. Recognizing that the Vancouver Island marmot is critically endangered, a partnership has been created between these Major Landowners and the Marmot Recovery Foundation. The Landowners Partners Fund (LPF) provides the Marmot Recovery Foundation with core funding that supports and enables the implementation of the Recovery Plan."

But Weyerhaeuser doesn't own land on Vancouver Island any more. They sold out to BRASCAN which hasn't listed as a "Recovery Partner" on the

Marmot website. Neither has Island Timberlands. Having trashed and now divested themselves of its Vancouver Island holdings, Weyerhaeuser is apparently done with the pesky little rodent. And now even BRASCAN is several companies ago in this sorry saga, so what do they care? And Western Forest Products? What do they know, they had nothing to do with it, eh? So much for 1/3 of the funding of the project. Looks like BC taxpayers are on the hook for a much larger cut of this grotesque hypocrisy.

The other Marmot Recovery partner which must receive dishonourable mention is TimberWest, which is also liquidating the final fir forests in marmot habitat. TimberWest, BC's largest private land owner, and also the proud exporter of a million cubic metres of raw-logs to the USA annually, also assumed a defacto responsibility for the extinction of the V.I. marmot by purchasing Greenwash from its partner, the Marmot Recovery project. The current BC government, of which seven of its top ten election financiers were logging corporations, and which does nothing whatsoever to regulate logging on private lands, and much less, to protect the marmot, is the other partner.

In case anyone out there believes that there might be a hope in hell for Canada's most endangered species, or any other forest-dwelling creature now lined up for extinction on the once exquisitely forested Vancouver Island, look at the credentials of these Logging Lackeys directing the whole Marmot dog-and-pony show:

Marmot Recovery Foundation Board of Directors

[Linda Coady](#), Weyerhaeuser/Mac-Blo careerist,--after 20-years as a logging company executive became Vice President of the WWF's Pacific Region. She now Greenwashes for the Vancouver 2010 Olympics as Vice-President, Sustainability for the games.

Nancy Wilkin, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment (MOE) (According to a Freedom of Information package obtained by me from the British Columbia government, Nancy Wilkin was the highest official in the BC government to authorize the bait-killing of Golden Eagles, -ostensibly to protect the Vancouver Island marmot from predation. It is hard to believe that the eagle-killing went on without the knowledge of then Minister Joyce Murray. The Gordon Campbell government admitted to killing 6 Golden eagles in 2002-2004

John Phillips, Manager, Forestry Programs, [TimberWest Forests](#)

Diane Medves, Registered Professional Forester, Weyerhaeuser and Technical Advisor to the [Forest Genetics Council of BC](#).

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