



*An association of individuals and groups committed to engaging with community, government, and industry to advocate for the conservation and expansion of parks and protected areas within the Mount Arrowsmith watersheds.*

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**Media Release**  
October 24, 2009

## **CONTRARY TO CLAIMS MADE BY ISLAND TIMBERLANDS PRESIDENT, NEW LOGGING NEAR CATHEDRAL GROVE IS UNDERWAY**

The Arrowsmith Parks and Land Use Council, a coalition of 25 community groups who have joined forces to protect Cathedral Grove, was surprised to discover that Island Timberlands is logging again near Cathedral Grove. "We're at a loss to explain it," said Berni Pearce of APLUC. "We received a letter from Darshan Sihota, President of Island Timberlands, in the spring of this year assuring us that 'we have no near term harvesting plans on our lands adjacent to MacMillan Park'."

"Now, without notifying anyone in the community, we discovered by chance this week that harvesting has apparently been underway for some time, said Pearce, "culminating this week in the helicopter removal of previously felled old growth trees from a cliff across the Cameron River from the park. "I watched for more than an hour as the helicopter removed tree after tree from a specific location on the cliff."

In February, APLUC wrote to Brookfield Asset Management, who controls the managing partner of Island Timberlands LP (see attachment), seeking a moratorium on logging in the upper Cameron Valley until a protection plan for the Grove could be worked out. "After years of devastation, a moratorium is a modest request," said Pearce. Since then, APLUC has met with Island Timberlands and reviewed this objective once again. "Judging from their actions, we feel the company is not considering community interests", said Pearce.

"This was not single-stem heli-logging," said Pearce, who watched the helicopter for some time. "The grapple was sometimes able to pick up two trees at a time, so we realize that small clearcuts have been done on the cliff face. We understand several thousand cubic meters of harvested old growth will be moved from the cliff this week. One cubic meter is about equal to a telephone pole," reports Pearce.

APLUC member Gary Murdock, retired forest technician, says "logging on steep slopes brings on consequences a hundredfold more serious than disturbance on level ground – and this is virtually a cliff, the steepest situation where large trees could grow. The worst damage often happens later, when extreme rain and snow events, combined with gravity, bring on slides and, at the least, significant soil loss. And some of that gets to the feeder streams into Cameron River, which controls the water table in the Grove."

Cathedral Grove has been designated as a central part of the protected core areas of the U.N. designated Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve since its inception. Recently the Parks Council has asked the Biosphere Foundation to serve as an honest broker to facilitate a solution to the longterm protection of the already much-damaged Grove. Island Timberlands sits on the Biosphere Foundation board.

"At this point, though they've had opportunities, we have had no indication as yet that Island Timberlands wishes to be a good corporate citizen, friendly to community concerns about Cathedral Grove," said Pearce. "This current logging near the Grove would make one think otherwise."

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**Photo attached: by Scott Tanner** (please use freely)

**BC PARKS BRANCH - Area Supervisor**

Dave Foreman – **250-954-4606** or **Cell 927-1419**

See also attachments to this email:

Letter from Arrowsmith Parks and Land Use Council and endorsers to Brookfield Asset Management dated February 10, 2009.

Letter from President Darshan Sihota, President of Island Timberlands LP, to Arrowsmith Parks and Land Use Council dated March 26, 2009 -- a scanned copy.