



## Geoduck Farming Update: Day in the Life of an Eelgrass Mapper

by Dianne Sanford

It was a glorious sunny day, the mirror-like ocean reflecting the warmth of the afternoon sun, the only sound the steady dip and dribble of the oars. Suddenly there was a scream. “Sharks! We are being attacked by sharks!” cried my companion. Rushing to her side as best I could in a 12-foot boat, I found my assistant mapper peering into the underwater camera monitor, eye to eye with a “mud shark,” or dogfish, as they are commonly called.

There were actually about six of them, varying in length from two to four feet, circling and bumping the camera to see if it was palatable. Deciding the camera could take the buffeting, we

*continued on page 2*

## Coal Burning Still a Possibility at Howe Sound Pulp & Paper

by Louis Legal

Those concerned about the possibility that Vancouver’s garbage will be transported to the Sunshine Coast for incineration and electrical co-generation can breathe easier. It has been learned that the bid by Howe Sound Pulp and Paper (HSPP) on a request for proposals by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (now Metro Vancouver) to incinerate garbage for a fee of \$65 per tonne did not make the short list. The mill’s proposal indicated that it could produce 50 MW of electricity from the garbage, enough to power about 38,000 homes.

Generating power from burning garbage is extremely controversial. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are probably not a major concern, but removing harmful toxins from smokestacks and the residual ash potentially presents serious problems. In Ontario, Peel county has been generating power from garbage for well over ten years. There are both strong opponents and strong proponents of the operation. Toronto has steered clear of the controversy, continuing to truck its garbage to Michigan.

### HSPP Mill Coal Burning Trials

Meanwhile, coal burning at the HSPP mill is still a possibility. A second round of tests has been completed. “We’ll be looking at it again this winter,” said Al Strang, the mill’s environmental manager.

Following the test earlier in the summer, the mill reported that adding coal to the hog-fuel mix did increase combustion efficiency in its boilers. While there were “small increases” in GHGs, there were significant reductions in other combustion by-products. Dioxins were reduced significantly, as was ash. The mill reported no significant change in ni-

*continued on page 2*



Digital Debbi (Debbi Lucyk) interviews SCCA lawyer Robin Gage outside the BC Supreme Court. See page 7 for video Internet details. Daniel Bouman photo

## Roberts Creek Heart Gardens: A Model for a Sustainable Community

How can we as a community learn to become more sustainable and self-sufficient in our food supply, and less dependent on imported produce? That question is being addressed by a local initiative called Heart Gardens. Headed by Delvin Solkinson, the Heart Gardens Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to learning and teaching about native plants, habitat restoration, plant mapping, organic growing, sustainability education, green media, permaculture design and whole earth stewardship.

*continued on page 3*

### Inside This Issue

Permaculture Primer .....	3
LNG Plant for Texada? .....	4
Saving the Eagle River .....	5
Jefferd Creek Protection .....	5
Chapman Ck Backgrounder .....	6
Latest Pan Pacific Update .....	6
Executive Director's Report .....	7
2007 Green Gala Details .....	7

continued from page 1

## Coal Burning at HSPP

trogen oxides, but sulphur dioxides and some particulate matter (PM) emissions increased. The report stated that these emissions were still within their permit requirements.

The continuous burning of 700 tonnes per week would result in extra carbon dioxide emissions of about 50,000 tonnes per year. Some individuals may consider this a small increase, but others would not. The coal burning tests were conducted just weeks after the BC government announced that all new electrical power plants in the province must have zero-net GHG emissions—and that current power plants must reach the same goal by 2016.

Strang stated that he hoped that the mill could reduce its GHG emissions to below pre-trial levels within five years. In the writer's opinion the mill could achieve this goal in a much shorter time frame by modernizing its plant, its processes and its infrastructure.

The PM10 (particles below 10 microns in diameter) emissions of 129-292 mg/m<sup>3</sup> reported in the trial are also too high and could have serious health consequences. The latest scientific findings indicate that there is no safe level of PM emissions. Jurisdictions in the USA and Canada hope to achieve 24-hour average particulate emission levels below 50 mg for PM10 and/or below 30 mg for PM2.5. The smallest particles, those below 2.5 microns in diameter, appear to be most critical to health outcomes. PM10 measurements correlate less well with

morbidity and mortality than those of PM2.5.

## SCRD Landfill Gas Power Project

On a more positive note, the three levels of government recently announced that the Sunshine Coast Regional District had received \$1.08 million for an innovative gas recovery and power generation project at the Sechelt landfill. It's hoped that the project will be up and running within about two years.

According to the SCRCD's Dion Whyte, this is a small "proof-of-concept" project designed to demonstrate that power recovery from modest-sized landfills is feasible and efficient.

Allowing waste to decompose under reduced oxygen levels produces mostly methane gas, the main constituent of natural gas, rather than carbon dioxide. The landfill gas is captured and then burned to generate electricity. The

heat and power generated is expected to be sufficient for operating the landfill as well as some left over to power the Chapman Creek water treatment plant.

From a climate change perspective this project is a very positive one. The greenhouse gas emissions from the operation should be about the same as if the landfill were left alone, but the power recovered is a definite bonus. Extracting energy from a natural process that would occur anyway makes good sense. This energy can be considered renewable and does reduce our reliance on "grid" power.



*Incinerating Vancouver's garbage to produce electricity is no longer an option for Howe Sound Pulp & Paper, but coal burning is still a possibility.*

*Andrew Scott photo*

continued from page 1

## Geoduck Farming Update

continued to watch in fascination until, realizing it lacked food value, the dogfish eventually went on their way.

Such is a day in the life of an eelgrass mapping crew. Now that I have your attention, I will give a quick summary of how things are going with mapping, and news from the geoduck tenure front.

Data has been collected on eelgrass beds from Port Stalashen to the west side of Roberts Creek (the actual creek, not the community). Although not as extensive as I had hoped, there are beds present, in the form of scattered polygons, with only one area of continuous fringing eelgrass in the Henderson Beach area

of Roberts Creek. Data is now ready for mapping.

As for geoduck tenure applications, the good news is that there was a denial of a tenure application off Quadra Island, for two reasons: one was that the area was marginal for commercial cultivation, but the second, and most heartening, reason was that the area is deemed to have high recreational value. It is significant that recreational use is even a consideration.

The tenure applications for the Wilson Creek and Trail Bay areas are listed as pending: application under review. The Savary Island and Hernando Island tenure applications have been "offered," meaning approved.

Both the Sliammon and Sechelt First Nations have expressed their opposition to those geoduck tenures that affect their traditional forage areas.

continued from page 1

## Roberts Creek Heart Gardens

Heart of the project is Heart Gardens itself. Located in the heart of Roberts Creek, the gardens have 32 plots representing over 200 species and different local microclimates. Many of these are found on Mt Elphinstone, which, Delvin notes, nurtures a rich flora and fauna diverse enough to attract wildlife enthusiasts from all over the world. The emphasis is on plants utilized by First Nations people for food, medicine, tools, clothing and cultural celebration.

Growing native plants creates habitat and encourages the presence of other wild plants, insects and animals,” says Delvin, who is working on a masters degree in permaculture education. “It helps the Elphinstone’s thousand-year journey of succession towards becoming a climax rainforest once again, as it has been for thousands of years of sustainable human settlement. Gardening with native plants also educates people about the hundreds of food plants that grow naturally here, representing potentials to create a more localized food security without the harmful impact of importing foods from far away.”



*Delvin Solkinson, centre, shows visitors around the Roberts Creek Heart Gardens and explains some of the project's permaculture goals.* *poxin.org photos*

The gardens emphasize the importance of maintaining the soil ecology that supports the entire dependent hierarchy of plants and animals. “Creating biodynamically infused soil and organic fertilizer to feed the existing soil, the gardens illustrate simple techniques promoting the conservation and creation of healthy soil habitat,” Delvin explains.

Water conservation is also a priority, and rainwater collection and storage methods are utilized in the gardens.

To assist in the education process, an information centre, called Elfinhome, has recently been opened to explain bioregional ecology, native plants and permaculture, and to offer a self-guided tour of the gardens.

“The intention,” Delvin explains, “is to educate people about how they can practise conservation and create habitat, reduce their ecological footprint and help our community, culture and civilization move to a more sustainable relationship with the plant.”

Although the project has broad local support from individuals and organizations, Delvin says financial contributions are still needed for its maintenance and growth.

For more info, visit the website at [www.heartgardens.com](http://www.heartgardens.com).

## Permaculture Primer: Design System and Lifestyle Ethic

According to Wikipedia, the word permaculture, coined by Australians Bill Mollison and David Holmgren during the 1970s, is a portmanteau of permanent agriculture as well as permanent culture. Through a series of publications, Mollison, Holmgren and their associates documented an approach to designing human settlements, in particular the development of perennial agricultural systems that mimic the structure and interrelationship found in natural ecologies.

Permaculture design principles extend from the position that “the only ethical decision is to take responsibility for our own existence and that of our children” (Mollison, 1990). The intent was that, by rapidly training individuals in a core set of design principles, those individuals could become designers of their own environments and able to build increasingly self-sufficient human settlements—ones that reduce society’s reliance on industrial systems of production and distribution that Mollison identified as fundamentally and systematically destroying the earth’s ecosystems.

While originating as an agro-ecological design theory,



permaculture has developed a large international following of individuals who have received training through intensive two-week-long “permaculture design courses.” This “permaculture community” continues to expand on the original teachings of Mollison and his associates, integrating a range of alternative cultural ideas, through a network of training, publica-

tions, permaculture gardens and internet forums. In this way permaculture has become both a design system as well as a loosely defined philosophy or lifestyle ethic.

# The Powell River and Northern Sunshine Coast Report

## Texada Island LNG Proposal has Strait-wide Implications

by Eagle Walz

WestPac LNG, an Alberta company, wants to build a liquefied natural gas (LNG) conversion plant on Texada Island. The project includes a port with storage tanks and a 600 to 1200-



The LNG plant is proposed for Kiddie Point on Texada Island, just west of the Blubber Bay ferry terminal and limestone quarry, shown here.

Andrew Scott photo

megawatt natural-gas-fired electrical generating plant.

This power would be fed into the Cheekye-Dunsmuir transmission line that crosses the island. Natural gas, surplus to power-generation needs, would be routed into a Terasen Gas

pipeline for distribution on the provincial grid with its US connections. The gas would be imported (for purported future provincial energy self-sufficiency) from Australia, Southeast Asia, Russia and China. Supertankers three times the size of a football field would travel every week through Juan de Fuca Strait and the Gulf Islands to unload the frozen cargo for liquefaction at the plant. The property being considered for the

facility, owned by a limestone mining company, is located at Coho (Kiddie) Point near the Blubber Bay ferry terminal, the gateway to this still rural island.

In September over 150 residents—TAN (Texada Action Now)—met to express their concerns about the environmental impact, safety and potential benefits of the project. Spokesperson Chuck Childress called for a Texada Island referendum on the issue. The Powell River Regional District director for the area, Dave Murphy, was asked to take the community's request to the regional board. He did so, but directors balked at the idea of a referendum, agreeing instead to hold a regional district meeting on the island at some time in the future.

The matter has also been taken up by the Powell River Roundtable. The Sierra Club, Council of Canadians, Take Back the Power and COPE Local 378 hosted a public information meeting on October 1 in Powell River with Rafe Mair as moderator (see [www.texadalng.ca](http://www.texadalng.ca), [www.texadalng.com](http://www.texadalng.com), [www.westpaclng.com](http://www.westpaclng.com)).



Scenes from the Chapman Creek watershed campaign: at the UBCM conference, Vancouver (left); at the Gibsons parade (right).

## Returning the Eagle River to Wildlife and Recreation

by Nadja Hocking

A jewel lies below Eagle (Lois) River bridge. If you stop and look over the edge of the bridge you will see a magical string of canyons, waterfalls and pools. The central falls and pool is a valued community recreation area where families relax and kids dive from steep cliffs. The floor below the high bridge is treed with mossy bluffs and forms one of the few places along the Sunshine Coast where animals can pass unobstructed from the uplands to the estuary.

In 2006, when Island Timberlands indicated that it was about to log around this valued ecosystem, a local organization called the Friends of Eagle River was formed to help establish a protected corridor.

A legal historian suggested that Island Timberlands might not even own the trees. West Coast Environmental Law generously provided Friends of Eagle River with funding to do further research and obtain legal advice. The historical research indicates that certain timber is reserved from cutting and questions whether or not the original recipients of Crown grants applied in good faith at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Those grants created a chain of ownership transfers that Island Timberlands now holds. Friends of Eagle River's lawyer requested a stoppage of all logging until the legal and historical issues were resolved.

The Eagle River is dammed, and Friends of Eagle River is also seeking to end untimely, powerful, habitat-scouring surges when the floodgates are suddenly opened. The organization has developed a good working relationship with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Powell River Energy, who are taking steps to restore a gentler, more constant and higher flow on the river.

## BC Timber Sales now Targeting Jefferd Creek Watershed

by Rita Rasmussen

The Committee for the Protection of the Jefferd Creek Watershed continues to be proactive in its efforts to protect the Jefferd Creek watershed from being harvested by BC Timber Sales. The committee fully supports the local drinking water officer of Vancouver Coastal Health, who has stated that it is possible for "source water to degrade if the proposal were to proceed . . . which could result in the inability of the Stillwater Improvement District to meet requirements of the Drinking Water Protection Act and the Drinking Water Protection Regulations." Funding from West Coast Environmental Law has provided access to advice on legal options available to the group in its efforts to stop industrial activity in the watershed. Water users believe that public health must take precedence over harvesting activities in watersheds, locally and provincially.



View from Mount Troubridge south across Jervis Inlet on a rainy day. Eagle Walz photo



More pix: SCCA executive director Daniel Bouman (left); outside the SCRD offices in August (right). Thanks to Junco Jan for all photos!

## The Contentious History of the Sunshine Coast's Chapman Creek

by Andrew Scott (with files from Linda Williams)

Chapman Creek has provided drinking water for Sunshine Coast residents for many years. As long ago as 1910 it was surveyed by the Royal Society of Engineers as a potential community water source. On June 3, 1929, the BC government designated



Western Forest Products continued its clearcutting in the Chapman Creek watershed in October 2007, as this image shows.

Junco Jan photo

the creek a watershed reserve for long-term water supply (until the year 9999). The Union Steamship Co was granted a water licence on the creek in 1929 to serve its tourism development at Selma Park. In 1937 the Columbia Power Co built a Pelton wheel on the creek that produced electricity for Sechelt until 1952, when the Clowholm Lake hydro facility was built.

In the early 1970s, logging and road-building in the Chapman Creek watershed resulted in many landslides and a deterioration

of drinking water quality. The Sunshine Coast Regional District, formed in 1967, called for a moratorium on logging. In 1974, in response to growing public concern, a watershed reserve under Section 12 of the *Land Act* was placed over local drinking watersheds, including Chapman Creek. (A similar reserve was placed over Gray Creek in 1987.)

In the late 1980s, logging in Chapman Creek and Gray Creek headwaters resulted in sustained public criticism. The SCR D agreed to participate in an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for its area but had to initiate legal action before the Ministry of Forests would agree to a moratorium on logging and road-building during the IWMP process (despite a report by ministry hydrologists that 85 percent of 310 landslides studied in Chapman Creek and Gray Creek were caused by industrial activity). In 1998 a proposed IWMP was brought to public referendum and turned down by 87 percent of Sunshine Coast voters.

In 2002, with Interfor proposing more logging in the drinking watersheds, 5,200 Sunshine Coast residents and supporters signed a petition calling for SCR D control of Chapman and Gray creeks and no industrial activity near them. Interfor withdrew its proposals, but the Ministry of Forests, in 2004, invited the District of Sechelt to submit a proposal for a Community Forest licence, and assigned the Chapman and Gray watershed reserves to the licence's land base. Despite overwhelming community opposition to the proposal—and objections from the SCR D, Gibsons and the Shishalt First Nation—the ministry approved the Community Forest licence in 2006.

The Community Forest licences agreed not to log in drinking watersheds during the first five years but made no commitment beyond that. They issued a forest stewardship plan that commits them to the minimum allowable standards for watershed protection, guaranteeing that logging will not have an adverse impact on water flows or human health “unless it unduly reduces the supply of timber”—a clause that is actually included in BC's Forest and Range Practices Act.

## The Great Pan Pacific Ordeal may Finally be Coming to an End

by Daniel Bouman

The saga of the Pan Pacific Aggregates proposal to develop one of “world's largest limestone mines” in the Sechelt area is now coming to a close. PPA has withdrawn from the environmental assessment process, effectively killing the project. Not a moment too soon for the many Sunshine Coasters and groups who have worked hard to put an end to this bizarre idea. PPA still has exploration options, though, and could still do more damage, so we need to continue to be vigilant. As recently as last August, the company carried out unauthorized blasting, which rattled residents around Porpoise Bay. The activity brought a strong reaction from the Sechelt First Nation and regional mining inspector Ed Taje. PPA has been ordered to stop all blasting.

An environmental asset that we have become acutely aware of during the PPA dispute is “karst.” A karst landscape is one that has developed from the action of water on soluble bedrock (usually limestone, dolomite, marble, etc). Sinkholes and caves are often characteristic of karst and can also be unusually productive ecosystems that typically support large numbers of fish.

Dr Paul Griffiths of Malaspina College, an expert on karst landscapes, likes to describe them as “underground wetlands.” Dr Griffiths visited the Sechelt Peninsula twice this summer, at the request of the Friends of the Sechelt Peninsula, in order to tour the Caren Range, make a preliminary assessment of the karst and help local activists understand its importance. Dr Griffiths feels that the karst landscapes of the Caren Range may be some of the best formations on the entire BC mainland coast.

The SCCA, FOSP and other groups will be working with Dr Griffiths in the future to study these unique and distinctive landscapes with a view to their possible protection.

## Drinking Water Versus Logging: The Executive Director's Report

by Daniel Bouman

Hi everyone. The summer weather was cool and wet this year, but considering the overwhelming efforts of so many to defend the Chapman watershed, I'd have to say it was one of the hottest summers on record! We are now waiting for the court to resolve the appeal by Western Forest Products of the regional government's Board of Health order, which strongly restricted logging. For those of you who were unable to attend the hearings and court proceedings, I offer this brief and by no means exhaustive explanation of our reasons for opposing any new logging in the Chapman or Gray drinking watersheds.

**Administrative authority.** The mandate of the Ministry of Forests and Range is to produce revenue from timber harvesting activities. MOFR is not obligated to protect raw water or ecosystem functions. The Sunshine Coast Regional District is the "purveyor of water" supplying 23,000 people with a potable water supply. The SCRDC is accountable and liable for the safety and sufficiency of the water supply. The SCRDC has no authority, under current forestry legislation, to manage logging practices or make land-use decisions in the source areas of water supply. *We believe that the purveyor of water should have authority to manage watersheds in the public interest without obligation to any private interests.*

**FRPA regulation.** The Forest and Range Practices Act only allows measures to protect drinking water that do not restrict timber supply; logs come first, water second (if at all). Also, under the FRPA it is completely legal to clear-cut up to the very banks of the vast majority of streams in a community watershed. Trees can be felled over or into most creeks. Under the FRPA it is acceptable to yard logs over and through creeks. Basically, *the public interest in water is not reflected in appropriate regulations.*

**Who is liable?** Liability is an important issue in drinking watersheds. Under BC's new results-based regulatory regime, if the logging company complies with FRPA and can demonstrate "due diligence," it cannot be held liable for unanticipated outcomes like landslides. In other words, *liabilities for watershed logging rest entirely with the local authorities while private interests are*

*protected against liability. This is fundamentally wrong.*

**Watershed dynamics.** The best currently available scientific information is unequivocal in its conclusion that old-growth forests produce the cleanest and safest raw water. Intact forests moderate stream flows throughout the year and minimize the potential for landslides and other sediment inputs. The removal of forest cover accelerates the movement of water across the landscape and increases the amounts of sediments and organic materials carried by the water. This impact is both immediate and long term. Logging roads concentrate water movement and are themselves an enduring source of sediment. *Forests are one of several scientifically recognized barriers against water contamination and water-borne disease.*

The Chapman and Gray watersheds are heavily damaged by old logging and road building activities. This legacy of irresponsible practices shows itself in still-active landslides and abnormally high peak flows carrying sediments and organic debris that are up to six times the allowable levels under Canadian safe



Many public rallies held in August and September opposed logging in the Chapman Creek drinking watershed.

Junco Jan photo

drinking water guidelines. *There is no potential benefit to the watershed from more logging.*

For more information, check out our Watershed Dynamics Power Point presentation at [www.thescca.ca](http://www.thescca.ca). We have also posted our submissions to the Board of Health and the BC Supreme Court, and many other relevant documents.

## Announcing the 2007 Green Gala

Mark your calendars! On Saturday, November 3, 2007, the SCCA will host its annual Green Gala fundraiser and celebration of conservation on the Sunshine Coast. This year the festivities will be at the Roberts Creek Community Hall, starting at 7:30 pm. The evening will include a great dancing band, a live auction, finger foods and refreshments, a review of the year's conservation activities and a tribute to those who stepped forward to help protect our drinking watersheds and other assets. Tickets are \$15, available at Wind Song Gallery in Sechelt, Roberts Creek

General Store, Gaia's Fair Trade Gifts in Gibsons, Oak Tree Market in Madeira Park and at the door. ☺ Sechelt council gave first reading September 19 to a proposed bylaw prohibiting the use of pesticides for "cosmetic" reasons, a precautionary approach adopted by more than 130 Canadian municipalities and one province. There is a growing body of evidence linking exposure to pesticides with certain types of cancer. For more information, contact John Keates of the Sunshine Coast Clean Air Society at 604-885-4181. ☺ Tune in to a series of brilliant videos on Sunshine Coast watershed issues by independent videographer Digital Debbi at [www.youtube.com/user/digitaldebbi](http://www.youtube.com/user/digitaldebbi).

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Roberts Creek Heart Gardens  
Ruby Lake Lagoon Nature Reserve Society

St Hilda's by the Sea  
Sandy Hook Community Association  
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Sierra Club of Canada, Malaspina Group  
Storm Bay Joint Tenants Association  
Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Society  
Sunshine Coast Clean Air Society  
Sunshine Coast Natural History Society  
Sunshine Coast Water First Society  
Tetrahedron Alliance  
Tuwaneke Ratepayers Association  
West Sechelt Community Association

## Sunshine Coast Conservation Association (SCCA)

PO Box 1969, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0; [www.thescca.ca](http://www.thescca.ca)

"The purpose of the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association is to preserve the natural biodiversity of the Sunshine Coast region for the present and future benefit of humanity and all life, specifically to:

1. Conduct research to inventory and describe our remaining natural areas with the goal of identifying land and waters important for the preservation of biodiversity. All information collected will be freely available to the public.
2. Work to retain such lands and waters in a natural state and make them available for the public enjoyment where possible.
3. Raise public environmental and conservation awareness by sponsoring educational programs and workshops and by building access infrastructure for low-impact recreation."

(Our constitution requires that membership in the SCCA is conditional upon acceptance of the purpose of the SCCA stated above.)

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliate (individual) membership (\$20)  
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