

Hidden Grove Legacy: Key Points

- Because the Hidden Grove is such a small area compared to other Sunshine Coast “parks” (Tetrahedron, Mt. Richardson, Spiipus), you have to wonder why the MoF seems determined to hang on to it in spite of shared jurisdiction.
- A District of Sechelt (DoS) mapping change in 1986 included the Hidden Grove area. This separates it into a different category from most provincial forest land which is sought for parks. Unofficial word from the Forest Practices Board is that the MoF does not like to openly challenge municipal land use decisions.
- The MoF, Powell River office, appears to be the only ministry against this project. Which political or non-political person could convince Greg Hemphill, District Manager, to cooperate in this effort?
- At the recent LRMP meeting the importance of co-sponsoring a proposal with First Nations was emphasized. Although the SIB sent us a letter supporting the Hidden Grove Legacy (see Plan), the Steering Committee would like to work more closely with the Sechelt Indian Band on the planning of Hidden Grove Legacy as a joint cultural effort. Perhaps we could repackage the proposal as co-sponsors.
- We believe it is not necessary to pay for this area as it is already crown land within the district of Sechelt, but we do believe we have a reservoir of donors who would fund park development (economic diversity) if it were to receive permanent protection from logging.
- MoF maintains they cannot support Hidden Grove’s removal from the “working forest”, but would go along with it if the new Ministry of Agriculture and Land (or other ministry) gives it the go ahead. Could MLA Carol James have insight into breaking a logjam between ministries? We feel an urgency, since the Community Forest proposal might go ahead soon, which would put the Hidden Grove Legacy back under a community logging tenure, with MoF still in the picture.

Hidden Grove Plan

Steering Committee

February 18, 2004

The Honorable George Abbott
Minister of Sustainable Resource Management
PO Box 9054, Station Provincial Government
Victoria BC, V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Abbott:

**Re: Acquisition of Crown Land within its borders by the District of Sechelt
for recreation/tourism (“Hidden Grove Legacy”)**

This committee was created by the Mayor and Council to continue the work already begun by the District’s Planning Department toward gaining permanent control over a parcel of land (see map attached - DL 3006, western half) incorporated within the District in 1986. The District of Sechelt applied to Land and Waters BC in December 2002 for transfer of the Hidden Grove to the District of Sechelt. That application was not approved due to some negative referral responses.

After talking with your Assistant, Christy Van Eck, our Steering Committee is hereby requesting a meeting with you regarding disposition of this crown land, which has already been declared Park and Open Space in the Official Community Plan in 1999 under Bylaw 290-12.

Issues:

Please note that the following changes have occurred since the application.

Due to budget restraints in the mapping department of the Ministry of Forests, the parcel was not recognized as lying within the District of Sechelt on forest cover maps until July 2002 when International Forest Products, at the request of the Forest Practices Board, changed their map of the area to show the correct boundary. We have a copy of the above request.

Subsequently, in August 2003, Interfor informed our committee by letter that even though they had proposed a cutblock in the Hidden Grove in 2001, they no longer have any interest in the area “for the foreseeable future” and have ceased operations in the Hidden Grove vicinity.

In 2003, the Sechelt Indian Band Chief and Council reversed their initial negative response and informed our committee by letter stating their “full support of the Hidden Grove Plan”.

The Sunshine Coast Ministry of Forests District Manager has remarked, in phone conversations, that he would respect whatever decision Lands and Waters BC would make, but that MoF would have difficulty changing their position at this point.

**REPLY: Mail – c/o SHCA, 5866 Deerhorn Drive, Sechelt, B.C., V0N 3A4
Email: hiddengrove@sechelt.net Web Site: <http://hiddengrove.info>
Phone: 604-885-5766**

The Forest Coalition was also initially opposed the Hidden Grove in their referral response. However, during later consultation with a committee member and their representative, stated that their members would be good candidates to build amenities (such as handicapped trails and shelters, etc.) should the area receive a new designation.

In summary, two referral respondents have removed objections, and the remaining two would accommodate a change in management.

We would appreciate your assessment of this situation since it has, in our view, much improved. Our grass roots committee has worked on this project for four years, and during this time we are pleased to have the full support and encouragement of the Councillors and Mayor of the District of Sechelt to continue our search for the right path to completion. Our community association (The Sandy Hook Community Association) also supports our work as does a wide representation of local people and off coast visitors. With this mandate we are pursuing the project which now leads us to your office.

We feel that the Hidden Grove proposal lies within the mandate of Sustainable Resource Management since it is coming from the Municipality of the District of Sechelt for residents of Sechelt as a municipal recreation space and a tourist attraction, and not from a purely environmental perspective. (Please see attached documents on sustainable income.) In deference to our respected neighbours, the Sechelt First Nation, we are referring to it as a “Legacy” for future generations.

List of Visitors

Bob D’Arcy, Committee Chair
 Gertrude Pacific, Committee Member
 Michael Davidson, Committee Member
 Gray Waddell, Committee Member

Our visit would be preliminary to a formal communication or visit from our Council, since we have sincerely promised to volunteer all the legwork, and mean to keep our commitment. At this meeting, we would like to know from you how best our efforts should proceed, and in which direction. Also, we hope that input regarding the Ministry of Forests could clear up their hesitancy to recognize the validity of this plan. We note that your Deputy Minister, Jon O’Riordan, has dealt very sensitively with many kinds of land and water use decisions in the past. We hope to hear from your office soon.

Sincerely yours,

For the Hidden Grove Plan Steering Committee

Cc: District of Sechelt: Mayor, Council, Administrator and Planner
 MLA Harold Long
 Deputy Minister Jon O’Riordan
 attachments

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 Hidden Grove Plan

2004

The Honorable George Abbott
Minister of Sustainable Resource Management
PO Box 9054, Station Provincial Government
Victoria BC, V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Abbott:

**Re: Acquisition of Crown Land by the District of Sechelt
for Recreation/Tourism**

After talking with your Assistant, Christy Van Eck, our Steering Committee is requesting a meeting with you or your Deputy Minister regarding disposition of this crown land, (see map - DL 3006 western half) which has been declared Park and Open Space in the Official Community Plan in 1999 Bylaw 290-12. We enclose the Hidden Grove Legacy Plan with this letter.

The Hidden Grove Plan Steering Committee was created by the Sandy Hook Community Association at the request of the District of Sechelt. Our mandate is to continue the work already begun by the District's Planning Department toward gaining permanent control over a 120 acre parcel of land incorporated within the District in 1986. The District of Sechelt applied to Land and Waters BC (LWBC) in December 2002 for transfer of the Hidden Grove to the District of Sechelt (see attached letters). The application was not successful at that time.

Pertinent Changes and Issues: please note that the following changes have occurred since the application was made:

1. Initially, in their referral response, **Interfor** was opposed to a new designation for the land, but did acknowledge that if LWBC granted the land to the District of Sechelt they would not object. (It should be noted here that due to budget restraints in the mapping department of the Ministry of Forests, (MOF) the parcel was not recognized as lying within the District of Sechelt on forest cover maps. Finally, after 18 years, Interfor, at the request of the Forest Practices Board, changed their maps of the area to show the correct boundary). Then, even though Interfor had proposed a cutblock in the Hidden Grove in 2001, in August 2003 Interfor reversed their position and informed our committee (see attached), "Hidden Grove is not in Interfor's development plan now or in the foreseeable future."

2. In 2003, the **Sechelt Indian Band** Chief and Council also reversed their initial referral response and informed our committee by letter (see attached) of their "full support of the Hidden Grove Plan". At the request of the Band Council our committee has also met with the Elders about the Plan.

3. The Sunshine Coast **Ministry of Forests** District Manager referral response wanted Hidden Grove to remain as is, saying in an Email that "Although it is clear that Interfor has no plans for harvest in the area at this time, the area remains in Provincial Forest." But, in phone conversations he also said that MOF would respect whatever decision LWBC would make.

4. In their referral response the **Sunshine Coast Forest Coalition** initially objected to the Hidden Grove Plan, but stated that "local forest workers and the contractor should be hired to do the proposed work identified in the application" if the application was successful (see referral response). During later consultation with a Plan Committee member, a Forest Coalition representative stated that their members are well-trained workers and could build amenities such as handicapped trails and shelters, etc. should the area receive a new designation.

Summary: Two important referral respondents have reversed their positions, and the remaining two could accommodate a LWBC decision in favour of the District of Sechelt. The mapping errors have been updated.

Why approach the MSRM? We feel that the Hidden Grove proposal lies within the mandate of Sustainable Resource Management since it is coming from the Municipality for residents of Sechelt as a municipal recreation space as well as a sustainable tourist attraction, and not primarily from an environmental perspective. In deference to the wishes of our respected neighbours, the Sechelt First Nation, we are referring to it as a “Legacy” (instead of a park) for future generations.

During the four years our grass roots committee has worked on this project we have enjoyed the full support and encouragement of the District of Sechelt Mayor and Councillors, our community association, and a wide representation of local people and off-coast visitors. We are happy to report that at one of our meetings with Sechelt Chief Feschuk, he explained that he was pleased to be approached by a community group and it was one of the reasons why he supports our plan.

List of Possible Visitors

Bob D’Arcy, Committee Chair	Gertrude Pacific, Committee Member
Michael Davidson, Committee Member	Gray Waddell, Committee Member

Your assessment of this project would be much appreciated since its viability is now much improved. We anticipate that our meeting with you or your Deputy Minister would be a fact-finding one preliminary to a formal communication or visit from Sechelt District elected officials. Convincing the MOF to allow removal of the Hidden Grove from the provincial forest is definitely part of the solution, so we would like to know how best our efforts should proceed. Suggestions which could gain your approval of this plan are most welcome. We invite you to visit our comprehensive website (address below) and hope to hear from your office soon.

Sincerely yours,

For the Hidden Grove Plan Steering Committee

Cc: District of Sechelt: Mayor, Council, Administrator and Planner
MLA Harold Long
Deputy Minister MSRM Jon O’Riordan
Lloyd Manchester, BCEN Parks and Wilderness Caucus
Tom Brown, Ministerial Assistant, Minister George Abbott
Attachments



Province of
British Columbia

Legislative Assembly

GOVERNMENT CAUCUS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Harold Long, M.L.A.
(Powell River-Sunshine Coast)

Legislative Office:
Room 201, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
Phone: 250 356-3066
Fax: 250 387-9104
e-mail: harold.long.mla@leg.bc.ca

Constituency Office:
4595 Marine Avenue, Powell River, B.C. V8A 2K7
Phone: 604 485-0651
Fax: 604 485-0655
or
PO Box 2519 Sechelt, B.C. V0N 3A0
Phone: 604 740-8944
Fax: 604 740-8949

March 15, 2004

Hidden Grove Legacy Plan Steering Committee
Davidson & Pacific
5823 Skookumchuk,
Sechelt, B.C.
V0N 3A4

Dear Gertrude,

Since I last walked into Hidden Grove with you and Michael Davidson, in 2001, I note that the Hidden Grove Legacy Plan Steering Committee have been very busy overcoming their many challenges.

I realize that local governments, the Sechelt Indian Band, stakeholders and the community have participated toward a common goal. Hidden Grove would certainly fit nicely into the tourism picture of the Sunshine Coast, and I look forward to walking in that pleasant forested area again.

You have my support, and I wish you success with your forthcoming endeavours.

Yours truly,

Harold Long, M.L.A.
Powell River/Sunshine Coast

COUNCIL BRIEFS

Sechelt budget review underway



Sechelt BRIEFS

District of Sechelt staff are in the process of fine-tuning budget numbers and are planning to present their final figures to council before May 14.

Sechelt Mayor Cam Reid said the budget would allow for an economic development increase of \$50,000, which the district can use to bring in an additional person or put towards consulting services.

Once the B.C. Assessment Authority sets current property values, the district will reveal how much property taxes will increase this year. The district has made a long-term political commitment to gradually lower business taxes, which results in an increase in other tax areas, including residential and utilities.

"There is a freeze in commercial and industrial rates," Reid said. "Our goal is to set a multiplier of two times that of residential. We are trying to attract commercial business to our community."

Sechelt finance director Doug Chapman said insurance fees, a seven per cent increase in hydro costs and the hiring of an additional police officer drove the budget up.

Reid said it is the goal of

council to keep this year's tax increase at around five per cent or less.

Some of the major expenses factored into this year's budget include the Norwest Bay Road project, which will cost the District \$850,000. The final upgrading of Sechelt Inlet Road is also slated for completion this year with a price tag of \$700,000.

The district is planning an open house in April for the public to review the budget.

Hidden Grove

The Hidden Grove Plan Steering Committee (HGSC) provided Sechelt council members with an update at Wednesday's council meeting.

The group is requesting a meeting with George Abbott, the minister of sustainable resource management, regarding the disposition of a portion of Crown land.

The Sandy Hook Community Association, at the request of the District of Sechelt, created the HGSC. Their mandate is to continue with the District's planning department initiative to gain permanent control over a 120-acre parcel of land incorporated within the District in 1986.

The District of Sechelt applied to Land and Water B.C. in December 2002 for the transfer of the Hidden Grove to the District of Sechelt. The application was not successful at that time.

The HGSC presented council with some of the

changes that have occurred since the initial application was made. Initially, in their referral response, Interfor was opposed to a new designation for the land, but would not object if Land and Water B.C. granted the land to the District of Sechelt.

In August 2003, the forestry company reversed its position and informed the HGSC that "Hidden Grove is not in Interfor's development plan now or in the foreseeable future." Also in 2003, the Sechelt Indian Band reversed its initial referral response and informed the HGSC of its full support of the Hidden Grove plan.

The Sunshine Coast district manager for the Ministry of Forests responded to the HGSC in an email saying, "Although it is clear that Interfor has no plans for harvest in the area at this time, the area remains in Provincial Forest."

The HGSC reports that further conversations with the district manager for forests have indicated that the Ministry of Forests would respect whatever decision Land and Water B.C. would make.

Members of the HGSC anticipate their meeting with Abbott will be a fact-finding mission and a preliminary discussion, with formal communication or a visit from Sechelt District elected officials to follow at a later date.

— Maria Spitale



District of Sechelt

"Heart of the Sunshine Coast"



March 26, 2004

File No.

Ms. Gertrude Pacific
Hidden Grove Legacy Plan Steering Committee
c/o SHCA
5866 Deerhorn Drive
Sechelt, BC V0N 3A4

Dear Ms. Pacific:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence dated March 23, 2004. Council appreciates your committee's commitment on this project and your efforts to keep local government and the public informed about your activities.

If your committee would like to attend a Committee of the Whole or Council Meeting, to provide an update to Council and the community, please contact my Administrative Assistant, Connie Jordison at the District office to make arrangements for you to be included as a delegation on the agenda.

With thanks for your efforts on behalf of Hidden Grove, I remain,

Yours truly,

DISTRICT OF SECHELT



Cameron Reid,
Mayor



*Land and Water
British Columbia Inc.*

A corporation of the government of British Columbia

APR 13 2004

Ref: 14178

Bob D'Arcy, Committee Chair
Hidden Grove Plan Steering Committee
c/o SHCA
5866 Deerhorn Dr
Sechelt BC V0N 3A4

Dear Mr. D'Arcy:

Thank you for your letters of March 1 and 23, 2004, addressed to Honourable George Abbott, Minister responsible for Land and Water British Columbia Inc. (LWBC), regarding a park application in the Sechelt area. The Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf.

Land and Water British Columbia Inc. is responsible for the allocation of Crown land and water resources in the Province of British Columbia. In this capacity, LWBC works closely with government agencies and local governments to support sustainable and environmentally responsible economic development on Crown land.

I understand that the Development and Marketing Division of LWBC is currently in the process of requesting bids to complete an Inventory Development Study that will identify development opportunities on Crown land within the Sunshine Coast Regional District. In addition to identifying development opportunities, I understand that the study will also take into consideration community needs sites including recreational and park areas. Upon completion of the study, it is anticipated that a similar assessment will be undertaken within the District of Sechelt (Sechelt).

.../2



Bob D'Arcy
Page 2

With respect to your request for a meeting regarding the disposition of this Crown land, Minister Abbott has asked LWBC to consider the request on his behalf. I appreciate your interest regarding this parcel of land; however, I believe a meeting at this time would be premature. Until the inventory studies are complete, LWBC will not be in a position to consider an application for the area. Your interest will be considered through Sechelt's involvement in the study.

If you would like additional information regarding the inventory studies, please contact Tony Duffy, Project Manager, Development and Marketing Division, Surrey Service Centre at (604) 586-2890.

Sincerely,



Bill Valentine
President and Chief Executive Officer

pc: George Abbott, Minister of Sustainable Resource Management

Jon O'Riordan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

Harold Long, MLA, Powell River-Sunshine Coast

His Worship Mayor Cameron Reid, District of Sechelt

Tom Brown, Ministerial Assistant, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

Lloyd Manchester, British Columbia Environmental Network
Parks and Wilderness Caucus

Tony Duffy

Hidden Grove Plan

Steering Committee

April 14, 2004

The Honorable George Abbott
Minister of Sustainable Resource Management
PO Box 9054, Station Provincial Government
Victoria, BC V8W 9E6

Dear Minister Abbott:

**Re: Hidden Grove Legacy Plan Steering Committee Receives
Recent Letter of Appreciation from Mayor of Sechelt**

We are happy to send to your office a copy of this letter of thanks for our efforts from the Mayor, Cameron Reid.

We will take up the suggestion (mentioned in his letter) to attend a Sechelt Council Meeting to provide council with your reply to our letter of March 1 as soon as we receive it.

We have also been invited to present our Hidden Grove Plan in person to the Sunshine Coast Regional District Strategic Parks Master Plan in May, 2004.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Gertrude Pacific
Hidden Grove Legacy Plan Steering Committee

Cc: Deputy Minister MSRM Jon O'Riordan
Tom Brown, Ministerial Assistant, Minister George Abbott

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'Dim-serd' tries to deal with Liberals' land-use thickets

VICTORIA

After many complaints about the slow pace of decision-making on the use of provincial Crown land, the B.C. Liberals have pulled together an across-government group of officials to try to move things along before the next election.

Heading the exercise is Jessica McDonald, the former operator of a private sector consulting firm, who was hired last fall by Premier Gordon Campbell as one of five deputy ministers in his top-heavy office.

McDonald's firm, Tupelo Consulting Inc., provided advice to the current and to the previous government on land use management. Her clients also included first nations, international agencies and special interest groups.

She was appointed deputy minister for special projects, focusing on land use, environmental and resource development issues.

"We felt that she brought the expertise which was necessary for us to complete some of the tasks that we've laid out for ourselves," Premier Campbell told the legislature recently. "She decided that there were some real challenges ahead of us that excited her and we're glad to have her with us."

McDonald has been chairing a committee of senior civil servants drawn from half a dozen key ministries and agencies.

The new entity was dubbed the deputy ministers' committee on environment and resource development, or DMCERD, known, with government's strange fondness for the pronounceable acronym, as "dim-serd."

"Many issues in our government involve a number of ministries with mandates related to land use, economic development and the environment," McDonald wrote in a memo to senior staff.

"To bring greater coordination to these efforts, DMCERD has been established as a forum to provide a final review and endorsement on key items being advanced by individual ministries to cabinet and cabinet committees."

The committee, she continued, "has placed a high priority on developing a collective vision for



VAUGHN PALMER

VANCOUVER SUN

COLUMNIST

the work across ministries, in recognition of the fact that most initiatives are interrelated... This collaborate focus is of significant benefit in determining priorities, confirming cross-ministry support for the direction taken and evaluating progress as well as actions required to deliver government commitments."

Translated from the bureaucrat-ese, the committee had two purposes. The first was to knock heads together and get moving in an area where the Liberals have generated scant results in three years. The second was to try to reach consensus on land-use plans before they get to the cabinet table, lest ministers retreat to their respective corners and engage in turf wars.

After six months, McDonald and her committee haven't made enough progress, judging from her most recent advisory. For DMCERD has now given birth to a second group of bureaucrats, who will be attached to the first as a so-called secretariat. The seven-member secretariat is drawn from the ministries of energy, sustainable resource management, economic development and water, land and air protection, as well as the premier's office and the Crown land agency.

"This group will provide assistance on key issue areas," explained McDonald, adding that the areas would include "tourism and recreation, alternative energy, species at risk, water management, and financial management of land use plans."

Recognizing that the line ministries might have already tackled those topics, McDonald hastened to assure her colleagues that the object was not duplica-

tion. "It is important to understand that this does not replace or otherwise affect the responsibilities of each ministry," she wrote.

"The secretariat will be identifying opportunities with potential corporate benefits, such as resource efficiencies or outcomes which could not be achieved by any one ministry alone."

DMCERD, she further assured them, would be monitoring the secretariat on "an ongoing basis," to make sure it was making effective use of its time and getting things done.

These days, the word from the Liberals on this file is "optimism." Cabinet minister George Abbott, whose ministry for sustainable resource management has the lead role in land-use planning, said Monday he expects the cabinet will sign off on two plans this summer and maybe another two by the end of the year.

Closest at hand is the plan for the central coast, where years of negotiations have produced a consensus among myriad stakeholders. Key elements in the plan involve a dramatic reduction in cutting rights and substantial habitat preservation for the coastal bear population.

Plus Abbott was returning Monday from a meeting in Lillooet, where he signed an agreement with a local first nation as part of the land-use plan for that region.

Consensus will be harder to achieve in Lillooet, because the debate involves proposals to alter the boundaries for the so-called South Chilcotin Mountain Park, established by the previous New Democratic Party government on what was almost its last day in office.

At this stage in the mandate, some Liberals, who've been clamouring for a decision, will be saying any plan is better than more delays. But they may not say that after they see the outcome.

The rumour mill suggests that, on both land-use plans, the Liberals are moving away from their own development-minded supporters toward a more preservationist viewpoint.

vpalmer@direct.ca