

**Additional information on the logging of the outdoor classroom
at Mount Moresby Adventure Camp**

January 12, 2016

Over the past two years the communities of Haida Gwaii, the camp, the school district, and the Council of the Haida Nation, have worked hard to find a sustainable solution for keeping the outdoor classroom protected, allowing future generations to share in the educational and economic benefits that the camp now provides.

Staff at Mount Moresby Adventure Camp first became aware of the proposed cutblock when they arrived to open the camp for the 2014 spring session and saw that the forest where much of the outdoor curriculum takes place had been surveyed and flagged for logging. The off-island logging company was apparently unaware of the importance of the youth camp to Haida Gwaii.

TimberWest Forest Corp.'s proposal would destroy the majority of those areas within the outdoor classroom that are extensively used and enjoyed by youth, also endangering the remaining and adjacent areas. Under their license, TimberWest could relocate their cutblock to anywhere within the Haida Gwaii Timber Supply Area. The 16 ha outdoor classroom represents a tiny fraction of the area within the Timber Supply Area that is currently suitable and available for commercial forest harvesting operations.

Now, almost two years later, with no consensus, the permit to cut may be approved within the week.

Mount Moresby Adventure Camp uses its outdoor classroom to provide an educational experience to students that focuses on forest stewardship, cultural history and awareness, natural sciences, and outdoor skills including:

- Identification and understanding of native flora and fauna
- The impacts of introduced species
- Identification and occasional harvesting of traditionally used forest products (Cedar bark, licorice fern, mushrooms, etc.)
- Shelter building
- Fire awareness and fire making
- Orienteering
- Hiking
- Trail building and maintenance
- Tall Tree-climbing

In keeping with the goals of our program, our educational activities occur outdoors. The proposed cutblock is the patch of forest that we use for about 80% of our forest-based educational activities. We have an extensive network of trails throughout this area that are maintained by MMAC and used by MMAC as well as by Haida elders and other users. The main trail that we use for forest activities is the trail to the waterfall. Besides being a popular hike and one of the highlights of camp, it is usually used for at least four programs per week. This trail goes through the middle of the proposed cutblock.



We have several other secondary trails that would also be impacted by the harvesting, and they are used for one program per week on average. Besides directly using the area inside the cutblock, we also use this trail network to access various important features that are just outside the cutblock boundary, such as a monumental cedar, a bear den, and a highbush cranberry. (High bush cranberry is a culturally important plant that is endangered on Haida Gwaii)

The communities of Haida Gwaii have invested over \$400,000 in the infrastructure of the camp facility along with thousands of volunteer hours. Annually, the camp contributes approximately \$30,000 in wages to the local economy and over \$10,000 to local farmers and grocery stores.

Additional Quotes

“I have spent several sessions with young people at Mount Moresby Adventure Camp, and we take kids from New Masset and Old Massett area. We just spent the week on the land to learn about how to live with each other without an iPod, without the technology that’s distracting, and we found ourselves in that opportunity. I like to help kids because people have helped me find myself through the outdoors, through the food gathering, through the adventures.”

Marni York - Haida language educator from Massett

“This is the only patch of forest that is easily accessible from the youth camp. It is the location of almost all of our forest-based educational activities. Losing it would be devastating to our program. We have asked Teal-Jones [managing agent for TimberWest Forest Corp] to relocate this one cutblock and leave our outdoor classroom intact for the youth of Haida Gwaii. This particular forest is significant because our understanding of place has grown with it. Our collective body of knowledge from a decade of programming and the transference of that knowledge can only happen here.”

Jo Hager - MMAC Senior Instructor.

“I have honestly witnessed few experiences more relevant and valuable for our students. Mount Moresby Adventure Camp’s Programs are especially well-suited for youth who tend not to apply themselves to the reading and writing activities in our high school classrooms.”

Russ Fleming - SD50, QCSS high school teacher

