

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
May 20, 2016



LAKE COWICHAN WELCOMES BCCFA ANNUAL MEETING

VICTORIA, BC -

More than 100 delegates are expected to attend the annual gathering of the BC Community Forest Association (BCCFA) May 26-28th in Lake Cowichan. The conference is jointly hosted this year by the Cowichan Lake Community Forest Co-operative (CLCFC) and Pacheedaht First Nation.

Community Forest Agreements are area-based tenures that enable communities to more fully participate in the stewardship of local forest resources. These tenures provide communities exclusive rights to harvest timber, as well as the opportunity to manage other resources such as recreation, wildlife, water, botanical resources and scenic views. There are more than 50 community forests operating or in the planning stages in British Columbia.

BCCFA President Erik Leslie commented on the value of the event: "Each community forest is unique. The BCCFA conference is a great opportunity for community forest practitioners and supporters to learn from each other and to see how our host community forest is managed."

The three-day event will be centred in community facilities in Lake Cowichan and will include bus tours into forest operations in the area. Workshops and sessions will cover the technical and policy aspects of community forests. The Pacheedaht will be preparing a traditional feast for delegates followed by an address by Forests Minister Steve Thomson.

CLCFC has been operating the province's first forest co-operative for more than 20 years under a licence that is about to expire. The CLCFC and the Pacheedaht have formed a joint venture called Qul:yit which means "eye over edge of water", to apply for a long term Community Forest Agreement. The area proposed for the community forest is in Pacheedaht territory.

"This is a great opportunity for the Cowichan Valley and the Pacheedaht to showcase the successes we have been achieving over the last 20 years," said Lorne Scheffer, the CLCFC chairman. "And, it's a great opportunity for local businesses."

- 30 -

Contact: Susan Mulkey
BCCFA, Manager of Communication and Extension
250 353 2866
smulkey@bccfa.ca

For more information on CLCFC visit: www.cowichanlake.ca/bus/forestcoop

For more information on the BC Community Forest Association visit: www.bccfa.ca