

Free distribution Western Canada Wilderness Committee Educational Report Vol. 9, No. 11, Nov. 1990

Second class mail registration No. 7980 - Western Canada Wilderness Committee
20 Water Street, Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 1A4 - Posted in Vancouver

WEST VANCOUVER'S



*Ancient
Forest*



REFERENDUM TO DECIDE FATE OF ANCIENT FOREST

On November 17, 1990, West Vancouver voters will decide the fate of a large parcel of public land high on Hollyburn Ridge adjacent to Cypress Bowl. Two proposals for a privately operated golf course on this site will be put to referendum.

This area contains 85 acres of magnificent old-growth forest, with trees up to nine feet thick and 800 years old. This is the most easily accessible remaining stand of ancient cedar-hemlock rainforest in West Vancouver. Few cities in the world still have the opportunity to retain examples of their original forest landscape within their boundaries. One would think that those that did would protect such a heritage forest as a priceless community asset, rather than sacrifice it for a golf course. — Inside we have provided important information so that you can make an informed decision.

Ancient Giants...



Slow-growing giants a product of cool, damp environment

by Randy Stoltmann

The same conditions that make the Hollyburn site questionable for a golf course are directly responsible for the slow-growing ancient trees which make this site special. The abundant rainfall, cool temperatures and frequent fog have kept forest fires in check for as much as 1,400 years, allowing the forest to evolve to the climax stage of shade-tolerant hemlock and cedar. The cool temperatures and short growing season due to the high elevation and heavy snowpack result in slow growth; many of these ancient trees add only a fraction of an inch to their girth each year, yet have attained diameters of up to nine feet.

Core samples taken this fall from the large western red cedars on the Hollyburn site indicate that these trees are 750 to 800 years old, perhaps more. Because the centres of the largest trees are hollow, exact dating is not possible. Both western and mountain hemlock, while not usually over three feet thick, have been confirmed at over 500 years old. At this elevation, seedlings hampered by heavy snowpack and deep shade often take 100 years to reach the size of a broom stick.

This combination of a moist climate which restricts fire and very long-lived tree species is one of the key characteristics of temperate rainforests. The Hollyburn site, with its easy access, is an educational gift for local students. Where else in the world can you leave the city and 20 minutes later stand engulfed by a rainforest with 800-year-old trees?

West Vancouver resident Randy Stoltmann is author of Hiking Guide to the Big Trees of Southwestern B.C. The second revised edition of the book, featuring this old-growth forest, is due on local bookshelves next spring.



Western red cedar in proposed fairway 11.



Taking a core sample with an increment borer from an ancient western red cedar in a fairway of the proposed Cypress Ridge golf course.

"I would strongly suggest that the golf course proposal is not a valid concept for the Hollyburn Ridge site, given both the great value of the existing forest and the number of serious problems inherent in developing a golf course on the site"

— Dr. Keith Wade, biogeographer

or cold, wet golf?

Questions and Answers

1. What is being proposed for the Hollyburn Ridge site?

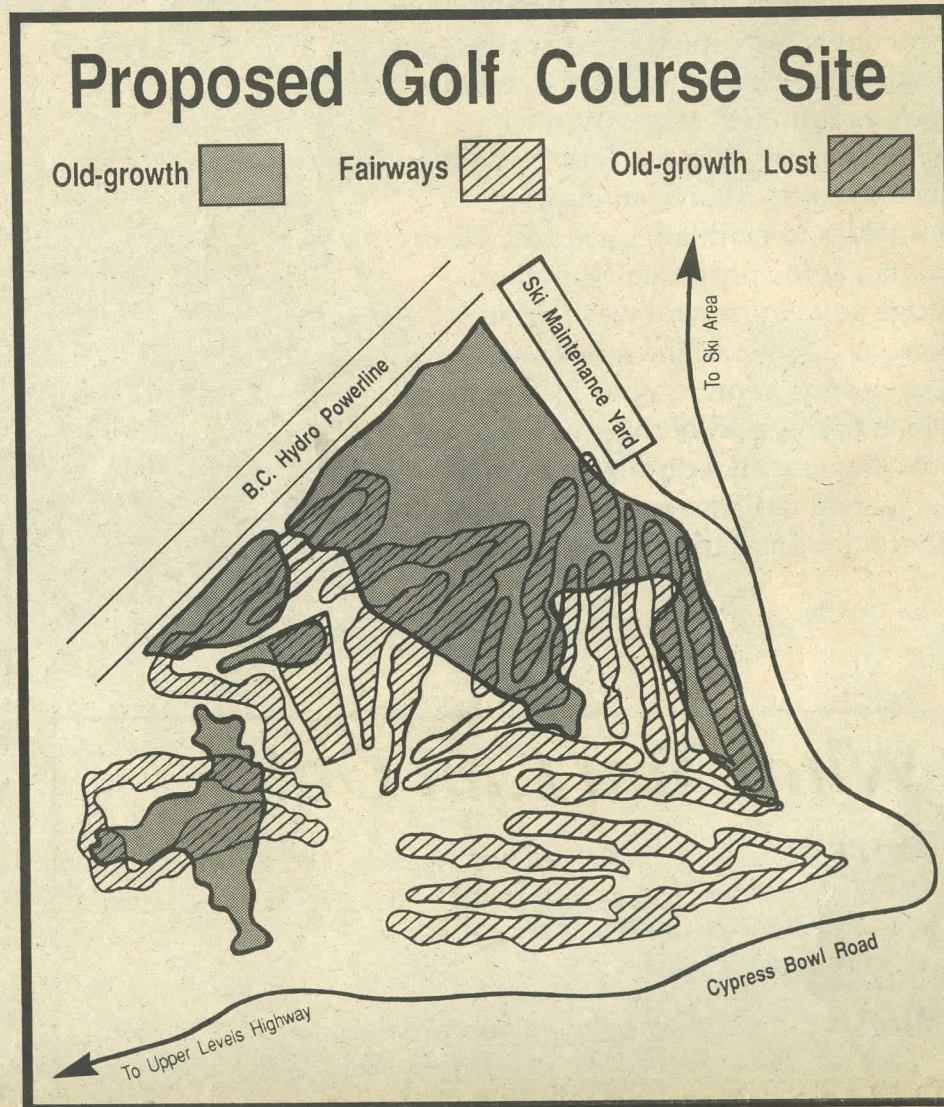
Two developers are competing to lease the site from the municipality for 99 years to build a golf course and private country club. One of the developers, Cypress Ridge Golf Ltd., plans to sell equity memberships for \$30,000. Memberships could be sold afterwards at market value, allowing members to speculate on the real estate value of the 99 year lease.

2. Why are developers willing to spend so much money to build a golf course high on Hollyburn Ridge where snow lies seven months of the year, and the annual rainfall is twice that of Ambleside?

Even though independent consultants claim that on-site sewage disposal is feasible, Cypress Ridge Golf Ltd. plans to invest one million dollars to extend the municipal sewage system up the mountain. This implies an intent to build more than just a golf course.

3. Why not compromise and build a smaller 18 hole course, keeping as many of the old-growth trees as possible?

We agree with environmental experts that the entire site must be protected. Conditions that promote golf course turf are at odds with those needed to maintain a healthy forest. Golf courses require the use of lavish treatments of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and fungicides -- chemicals which poison natural ground cover as well as water quality below. Construction would devastate the site, stripping away the forest floor. Earth movers would alter natural water courses, and tons of sand would have to be trucked in to lay foundations for greens.



4. Q. What's so special about this site? Aren't there plenty of old trees on the mountain?

A. Ethnobotanist Wade Davis has called this site "A Carmanah in our backyard". Nowhere else on the North Shore is there such an easily accessible transition zone old-growth forest with this number and variety of old trees and range of undergrowth. The trailhead is only a few feet from the road.

5. Q. What are the benefits to the public of protecting this forest?

A. By constructing an interpretive boardwalk trail, people of all ages and physical abilities could visit this local treasure and gain important knowledge and appreciation of the value of an ancient forest in these days of declining wilderness. West Vancouver would be conserving a majestic natural heritage and bequeathing these ancient trees to the care of our children. No one can put a price on trees which were already 500 years old when Captain George Vancouver sailed past our shores.

6. Q. Are there other old-growth forests in the area that could be used as an alternative?

A. No. This is the only such site that is only 10 minutes from the road. Its greatest value is its accessibility, making it available to seniors, young children and even the disabled when proper boardwalks are built. This is one of only a few places on Hollyburn Ridge where the old-growth cedar-hemlock forest was not logged.

7. Q. Won't a golf course save some trees?

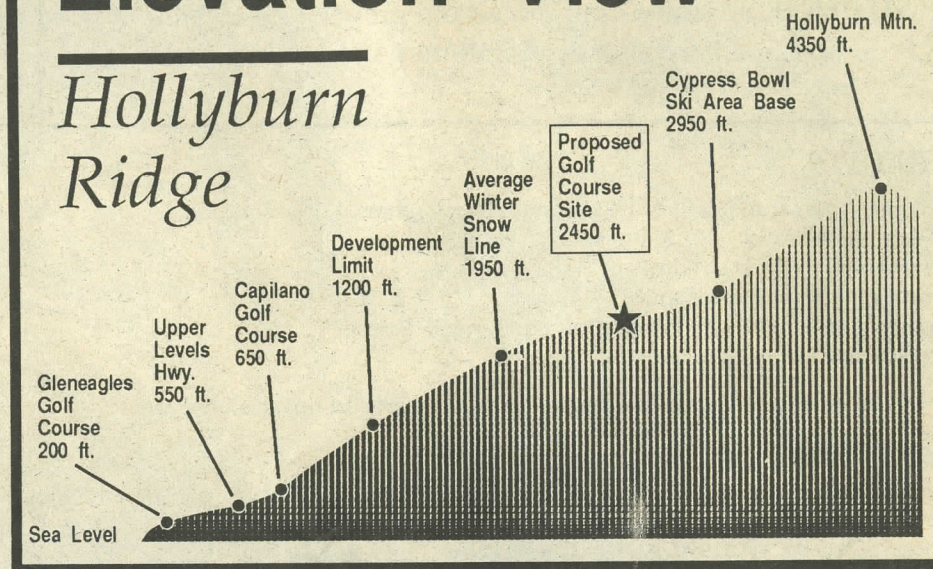
A. The golf course will actually destroy the best attributes of this forest and will affect the remaining trees because of blowdown and dieback. The value in this site is preserving a true old-growth forest not just a few individual trees or a small unsustainable pocket like the 22 acres proposed.

8. Q. Won't more people see the forest if there is a golf course around it than now?

A. Once developed as a nature park, far more people would see the trees than if on a golf course. For example, over 400,000 people visited Capilano suspension bridge last year, whereas a maximum of only 60,000 rounds of golf are available on a 27

Elevation View

Hollyburn Ridge



hole course, representing repeated visits from a small number of golfers.

9. Q. Some people have suggested that approving a golf course will keep out development.

A. This couldn't be further from the truth. As stated above, the developer intends to extend municipal sewers up the mountain, so if the golf course fails, as is highly likely because of the bad weather, this area will already have been cleared and serviced and ready for other development. The golf course would be the foot in the door for future development.

10. Q. Is there any other place to put the golf course apart from this site?

A. There are a number of other locations that would actually be better for the golfers because of the lower elevation and better year round weather. However, the present proponent wants this site because the principle owners are partners in the nearby Cypress Bowl ski facilities.

Pesticides threaten local streams

On October 15, 1990, golf course lobbyists in Vancouver attempted to persuade federal pesticide review authorities to exempt golf courses from federal environmental protection regulations. They claim they need to use excessive amounts of pesticides to maintain good turf. Heavy rainfall at the proposed Hollyburn Ridge golf course will wash these poisons down into the forest and community below. Cypress Creek, which drains part of the area, provides essential pure water for the federal fisheries research laboratory on Marine Drive.

C16 The Vancouver Sun, Saturday, May 5, 1990

Dangers of the 'toxic lawn'

A lawn as lush as a golf course fairway might seem like a worthwhile goal. But according to Seattle Times environment columnist Susan McGrath, some of the lawn chemicals commonly used to achieve that deep green perfection not only zap ornery weeds and insect pests but also kill earthworms, bees, ladybugs and songbirds, all of which are beneficial to a garden's health.

In fact, McGrath says, those perfect golf course grasslands to which gardeners often aspire have been the scene of some of the U.S.'s most blatant examples of inadvertent pesticide poisoning.

She cites the 700 Brant geese that keeled over after grazing on a Long Island golf course just sprayed with its bimonthly dose of diazinon, a common lawn-care pesticide. And then there were the 85 widgeons that dropped dead after dining on a similarly treated Bellingham course.



Pure water from this forest drains into Cypress Creek.

Public forum, November 13, 7:30 pm
West Vancouver Secondary School auditorium,
1750 Mathers Avenue, West Vancouver. FREE admission.

What You Can Do!

VISIT the ancient forest. Tours on Sundays (1:00 - 3:00) until the November 17 election. Simply drive up Cypress Bowl road 11 kilometers until you see the balloons!
Wear good walking shoes.

HEAR the arguments. **Public forum, November 13, 7:30 pm** West Vancouver Secondary School auditorium, 1750 Mathers Avenue, West Vancouver. FREE admission.

VOTE on November 17. Vote based on first-hand knowledge. Make a visit to the ancient forest.

Old-growth is more than just old trees

Old-growth forests are more than just big old trees. These are forests which have evolved to an advanced stage and have distinct ecological characteristics.

- Large quantities of dead nutrient rich wood, both in standing trees and downed logs.
- A wide variation in tree sizes and ages from young seedlings to ancient monarchs.
- Multiple forest canopy (branch and treetop) levels.
- Patches and openings resulting from blowdown or other natural

Avenue, West Vancouver. FREE admission.

VOTE on November 17. Vote based on first-hand knowledge. Make a visit to the ancient forest.

SUPPORT the efforts to protect old-growth forests, join Western Canada Wilderness Committee and/or Friends of Cypress NOW!

CREDITS

Writing - Paul Hundal, Randy Stoltmann, Don Graham, Katharine Steig, Sheena Vennesland

Photography - Randy Stoltmann

Editing - Arne Hansen, Randy Stoltmann

Research - Paul Hundal, Randy Stoltmann, Kevin Kriese

Design and layout - Kelly Pearce

Special thanks to Friends of Cypress for their research and financial assistance

Educational Report Vol. 9, No. 11, Nov. 1990
Published by Western Canada Wilderness Committee
20 Water St., Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1A4
Copyrighted WCWC 1990. All rights reserved
Second class mail registration No. 7980
Published in Canada on 60 percent recycled newsprint



YES! This Small Piece of Paper Can Make a Big Difference

Sign me up. Here's \$25 for an annual membership in the Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

Here's my: \$100 \$65 \$35 Other \$ _____ tax-deductible donation to help preserve ancient forests and our environment.

Name: _____

Street: _____

Town/City: _____ Prov. _____

Postal Code: _____

Please make your cheque payable to:

Registered Charity
#587113-21-28

Western Canada Wilderness Committee
20 Water Street, Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 1A4 Canada



ancient monarchs.

- Multiple forest canopy (branch and treetop) levels.
- Patches and openings resulting from blowdown or other natural disturbance with varying stages of young trees regenerating therein.
- These characteristics result in a great diversity of habitat for insect, animal and plant life.

Outside influences can alter these conditions if the area is too small or fragmented. On the proposed golf course site, shallow soils and poor drainage result in shallow rooting of trees. When exposed, as for example along the edges of fairways, such trees are subject to blowdown. Blowdown, once started, is often an ongoing problem as falling trees damage neighbouring trees in a "domino effect". Evidence of blowdown is present along the edges of old clearcut areas on the site. Evidence such as branch and crown patterns, direction of leaning trees and direction of fallen trees suggests that storm winds blow from the south. Under the proposed plan, the greatest length of exposed forest edge would be on the south side of the largest old-growth patch, directly vulnerable to the storm winds. Increasing the amount of exposed forest edge through the cutting of fairways would introduce damage from wind into larger areas of the forest. Edge effects such as root damage from construction and introduction of species not usually found in deep forest would further alter the natural character of the forest. All these problems could destroy the remnant old-growth forest patches in the long term.

Friends of Cypress — Membership

Please send membership form below to:

Friends of Cypress
994 - 15th Street
West Vancouver, B.C.
V7T 2T2
Phone: 926-7002

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss _____ Phone/Fax _____

Address _____ Postal Code _____

I would like to help with (circle) \$1 \$5 \$20 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____ Rec'd by _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Friends of Cypress is a non-profit organization. The group was formed this year to help protect a uniquely beautiful stand of old-growth forest threatened by future development. We need your support to help us continue this task.