

SCCA Press Release
December 21, 2001

Interfor's North Jervis Logging Plan Overturned!

The Forest Practices Board, acting on a request and using information from the SCCA, has succeeded in getting Interfor's North Jervis Forest Development Plan (FDP) overturned by an Administrative Review Panel. The reason for the decision is that both Interfor and the District Manager of the Sunshine Coast Forest District failed to comply with the Forest Practices Code Act by not explicitly accounting for the needs of the Marbled Murrelet in the areas to which the plan applies. The Marbled Murrelet is a Red-Listed species, known to occur in the plan area and known to be in severe decline due to a shortage of old-growth nesting habitat.

Since the approval of their 1999-2003 FDPs for this district, Interfor has had sufficient "category A" logging approvals to extirpate this threatened/imperiled seabird from more than half of the land base of the district. In reviewing Interfor's 2001-2005 FDPs last spring, SCCA members noticed 6 new category A proposals in murrelet habitat in the North Jervis area. When the plan was approved in August of this year the SCCA executive decided to request the assistance of the Forest Practices Board. In the end, the FPB agreed to proceed to the Administrative Review Panel on the basis of one category A approval in documented murrelet nesting habitat. Because the approval of one cutblock in the plan has been overturned, the entire plan is overturned, pending remedial attention and resubmission.

There are a number of positive implications to this decision. From now on it is reasonable to expect (and insist) that logging plans explicitly detail how the "forest resource" of murrelet nesting habitat is going to be conserved. Also, foresters and district managers will have to recognize conservation assessments and the information provided by other agencies (like the Wildlife Branch) as "known" information, i.e. "the best currently available scientific information".

During the review process the panel examined arguments from the Forest Practices Board, Interfor and the district manager of the Sunshine Coast Forest District. The position of the FPB (which is a powerful document, available on request) was largely upheld. The arguments of Interfor and the district manager that a) nesting habitat is plentiful, and b) that designation of wildlife habitat areas is the responsibility of other decision makers, were specifically rejected. For now, we have won a significant victory. Interfor now has the option to appeal this decision to the Forest Appeals Commission.

Daniel Bouman, Executive Director, SCCA