

## **Background**

The lack of formal recognition and protection of wildlife habitats in the Sunshine Coast Forest District has been a major focus for the SCCA since 1999. In March 2000 the SCCA filed a major complaint with BC's Forest Practices Board and cited 128 logging approvals in rare old-growth stands, marbled murrelet nesting habitat and mountain goat winter range.

Only three of International Forest Products (Interfor)'s 26 Forest Development Plans in the Vancouver Region were evaluated for this complaint. Despite a finding of the Forest Practices Board (FPB) that many of these approvals were inappropriate, and a subsequent finding from an Administrative Review Panel, Interfor still retains the vast majority of these approvals. Some of these blocks have been logged.

[Failure to Protect Biodiversity Complaint](#) (March, 2000)

Forest Practices Board News Release: [Marbled murrelet habitat needed better protection](#) (December 21, 2001)

SCCA Press Release: [Interfor's North Jervis Logging Plan Overturned!](#) (December 21, 2001)

## **Following a new trail**

In April 2003, the SCCA initiated a new approach to this persistent situation. A [formal complaint](#) challenging Interfor's ISO 14001 Program Certification and Sustainable Forestry Initiative Certification was filed with KPMG, performance auditors, in Vancouver, BC.

Certification systems are intended to provide consumers with independent verification of environmentally sustainable management practices.

In July 2003 KPMG published its [finding](#) on the SCCA challenge. KPMG did not agree that Interfor had engaged in illegal logging but did find several areas of minor non-conformance and opportunities for improvement. One area of non-conformance had previously been recognized by KPMG as a major non-conformance; Interfor does not have a functioning plan for addressing the needs of federally listed threatened and endangered species. Also noted by KPMG was that Interfor's Environmental Management System (EMS) does not have a mechanism for incorporating information from "third parties" such as the FPB or administrative review panels.

The SCCA believes that the non-conformance issues identified by KPMG are major, not minor. In October 2003 [the SCCA appealed](#) the KPMG finding to the Standards Council of Canada and the Sustainable Forestry Board (SFB), which governs the [Sustainable Forestry Initiative](#) .

In December 2003 the SCCA received notice that the SFB Certification Appeals Subcommittee had created an Ad Hoc Certification Task Force to investigate our complaint and review the KPMG finding. The Sustainable Forest Board released its [report](#) on our complaint in August, 2004.

The SFB's reviewing task force found in the SCCA's favour, that Interfor did not have an adequately functioning "Environmental Management System" in regard to wildlife habitat management. The task force declined to actually terminate Interfor's SFI certification on the grounds that they are a company "in transition". Several "corrective actions" were required of Interfor as a result of this complaint. The SCCA has not seen any evidence that these corrective actions have ever been carried out.

## **Disclaimer**

The SCCA does not endorse the ISO 14001 certification program or the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. In using the public complaint provisions of these systems the SCCA hopes to secure protection for critical wildlife habitats that have been placed at risk by inappropriate and destructive logging approvals. It is our position that these issues need to be resolved by a voluntary decision from Interfor to relinquish logging approvals in old growth deficit areas, in the nesting habitat of the marbled murrelet and in the winter ranges of the coastal mountain goat. It is also our hope that Interfor and its employees will accept the necessity of habitat protection as fundamental obligation of professional stewardship.