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# Op/Ed

Saturday, Oct. 30, 1999

## Your View

# Park plan supported

*Filed for publication with  
the Courier-Islander:*

Dear Brenda Leigh  
Director, District D

The Oyster River:

Enhancement Society at its October meeting voted unanimously to support your important work of preserving the wetlands at Oyster Bay, adjacent to Shoreline Park. This you propose to do by creating a Class "A" Provincial Park there.

The Oyster Bay area is the last undeveloped marine/upland habitat left between Courtenay and Campbell River on the East Coast of Vancouver Island. These wetlands are environmentally significant and precious to our biotic community. We congratulate you on your insight in realizing the dire necessity of preserving in perpetuity this area, which is now up for grabs since MacMillan Bloedel proposes to sell these lands. Indeed, they are on the market.

Apart from the sheer beauty

of the area with its abundance of plant and animal life, three major salmonid-bearing streams flow through this area. Salmonids are dependent on wetlands. Black Creek is a case in point. Last October over eight thousand coho moved into this tiny stream to spawn. It is commonly known that Black Creek goes dry in its lower regions in the late summer months. If it were not for the wetlands higher up in the watershed, the young coho fry that spend a year in fresh water before going out to sea would have perished. And just as Black Creek is an indicator stream for the health of the Coho in Georgia Strait, wetlands are the indicators of a healthy survival in our fresh water streams.

So, we congratulate you in your efforts to preserve this wetlands and wildlife area by bringing it before the Regional Board and to the attention of the Hon. Joan Sawicki, Minister of Environment,

Lands & Park. It takes great commitment on your part.

In closing, we would like to request your commitment as well in preserving in perpetuity Pearl Lake at the headwaters of the Oyster River. This magnificent lake, called a "Little Yosemite", is just 2,000 feet from the Strathcona Park boundary, and somehow was overlooked in the Goal 11 process. Staff of MacMillan Bloedel are willing to swap Pearl Lake and the adjacent lands for forestry lands elsewhere. We would like your commitment to bring such an exchange about.

What a wonderful way to enter the new millennium: the protection of the Oyster Bay wetlands, the protection in perpetuity of Pearl Lake, the headwaters of the Oyster River.

Thank you,

*Father Charles A.E. Brandt  
Chair: Watershed Protection  
Committee  
Oyster River Enhancement  
Society.*