

## OYSTER RIVER WATERSHED OF CONCERN

# MacBlo, Steelhead meeting goes well

A preliminary meeting between Steelhead Society members and representatives of MacMillan Bloedel to discuss the Oyster River watershed is being termed a success.

A spokesperson for MacMillan Bloedel said he felt it was a "really good" meeting, and added that the company "quite welcomes" the idea of an advisory body to oversee management of the watershed.

"I have no problems with that," said MB regional general manager Gary Griffith, adding the caution that he still wants to know the proposed makeup of the group and be assured that it is only an advisory body and not able to make final decisions.

"We quite welcome the input and we will have to wait and see the makeup, but I assume a broad spectrum of interest (in the membership)."

Father Charles Brandt who heads a committee of the Comox Valley chapter of the society on the Oyster, said last week he feels the meeting with steelheading representatives was a positive one, although the company rep-

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resentatives made no firm commitments and definite promises.

Griffith said he and his two colleagues at the meeting agreed to look further into a study which the Steelhead Society commissioned on the watershed, and which included a recommendation that the group be formed.

Overall, said Griffith, he and his colleagues are "quite complimentary" about the study.

"There are things that need to be determined exactly what they mean, but on the (general) basis of it, I would be hard pressed to find fault," he said.

And Griffith said that in addi-

tion to legislated public input to forest companies' plans at various levels, there are already similar advisory groups in some other areas where MB operates.

He said MB has promoted similar bodies in a number of other areas and found the process to work well.

Brandt said five members of the Comox Valley chapter of the Steelhead Society, along with consultant Ron Frank, met with three MB officials, and there was an exchange of views and the company's idea of a watershed management advisory group.

The meeting was arranged to discuss various aspects of the study the chapter commissioned from Frank on the watershed, and Brandt said he was "quite delighted" to find the company accepted the report, despite it expressing concern about a number of aspects of the watershed.

And he also said he was pleased that what he termed the "great interest" company representatives indicated in MB taking part in the advisory group.

He added that among other things the meeting also dis-

cussed Pearl Lake, which the society wants to see set aside and preserved under official parks status as the headwaters of the Oyster River.

Brandt said the chapter representatives now hope to meet with personnel from Fletcher Challenge Canada, which has also been sent a copy of Frank's report to study, and he indicated that that may happen as early as next week.

Both Brandt and Griffith indicated they are now looking at the possibility of a meeting in about the first week of November, along with FCC representatives, to hold preliminary discussions on the idea of the management body for the Oyster.