

I am guessing they held your letter for there was much comment on the subject last week - you keeps it open. (or going) Very very busy - still

More letters

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yet this has never been transmitted. WHY?

Recommendation No. 1 of the report is clear and strong that on balance the Pacific Playgrounds access channel-breakwater proposal is not socially desirable and the foreshore lease should not be granted. And yet it has been granted through Mr. Nielsen, and this prior to the report being in the hands of the public who paid for it, before being in the hands of the Regional Board whose hands and minds were therefore tied and had no say whatsoever in the granting of the foreshore lease. WHY?

These are serious questions and they demand answers. To the public, the Regional Board, and to the Legislative Assembly.

Also, the Le Baron Report opposes the Oyster River site in favour of what is referred to

as the (Iron River) Oyster Bay site which is located 2½ miles north of the Oyster River, the one time McMillan Bloedel booming area. This was our proposal on behalf of the Steelhead Society of B.C., presented in brief to the Comox-Strathcona Regional Board, April 30, 1973, in Campbell River. This area provides a natural safety harbour, should have no impact on the environment, and would be truly a public marina and not a privately owned, big-money making institution.

From the Jan. 28, '77 article in the Greensheet it appears that members of the Regional Board have forgotten their original opposition to the development at the mouth of the Oyster River. I suggest they refresh their memories by re-reading our brief which is in their files. Norm Lysne is quoted in the Greensheet as saying that the original opposition had nothing to do with salmon. Norm, it had and has everything to do with salmon. Tracks need not be covered. They are still clear and fresh.

It was the conviction of the Steelhead Society that before the estuary be tampered with in any way an in-depth study be undertaken by Environment Canada over a period of at least 1½ years. Studies have been since then. But had the Steelhead Society not intervened through the Regional Board the test channel would have gone ahead without these studies. I quote from a memo to you, Mr. Redel from H.K. Kidd at that time: "In view of the controversy which has arisen

because of this application it would perhaps be the easiest out for the Department to disallow the application even at this late stage, however, you will note that a great deal of study has been done both by private concerns and our Land Inspector and that the test channels are proposed to establish the desirability of building the proposed channel. In view of the foregoing, I would recommend that the applicants be allowed to proceed with testing. In the meantime, we can approach the parks branch and obtain their comments with respect to the possibility of deleting the small area of the beach which will be crossed by the proposed channel." Mr. Kidd was the Administrative Officer in the Lands Department. Well, at least the Steelhead Society stopped that nonsense.

Mr. Redel, several times-in writing and in person - I have asked you for a record of the original permission to the developers to open up the small channel from the Oyster River into the present boat basin. You could offer me none, no record, nothing. In the current issue of the Greensheet article Mr. Nielson is quoted as saying that the channel (future) would eliminate the need to gain access to the marina via the Oyster River - as now exists-and also stop dredging of the mouth of the river for a sufficient depth of water to accommodate boats using the marina. The real solution is much simpler: simply fill in the present access channel

(for which you can offer me no permission), close the marina. Then there would be no need for the constant dredging of the mouth of the River.

It is so obvious, if money is to be granted for the development of a marina, that this money should go to the development of the proposed marina at the Iron River site, 2½ miles, north, a perfect haven for boats in distress.

Finally, there is no reason why the Pacific Playground channel should be constructed through the Oyster River estuary. Unless, of course promises have been made that we know nothing about. It is true that ecological studies have been made since the Steelhead Society's request for such studies. Mr. Nielson said that these studies have not revealed any substantive reason "Either environmentally or technically for denying" the deep-water channel application. But Mr. Nielson, have these studies revealed anything positive in favor of such a development? The importance of such estuarine intertidal zones such as the Oyster River estuary in maintaining salmonid production is beyond measure: the estuaries provide an environment of extremely high food productivity for all marine life, especially for young salmon; the construction of a 1800 foot deep sea channel through this area, with the proposed breakwaters might well upset the delicate life balance of the area to the detriment of young salmon fry that spend a vital

so
a letter
Upper Island
haven't gotten to the River!

Wednesday, Feb. 23, 1977

part of their lives in the area before moving out to sea. Name me ONE scientist who will guarantee that this delicate life balance will not be upset by the development of this mini-port, ONE! If there is such a chance, even the remotest, let us not take it.

Will the Lands Department be responsible for mitigation if the project proves detrimental to the environment. Who will be responsible? It may take years before such ecological damage can be assessed, and then it will be too late. The luxury hotel may still exist in the midst of an ecological disaster. And that obviously is not the place for me or you.

No, let us take no chances with one of the last remaining, still intact estuaries on the east coast of the Island. Let us not violate the Recreational Reserve set up by Order-in-Council by Parliament in 1937 for the recreation and enjoyment of the public, a violation in that the channel would cut through the very heart of the Reserve.

Why has there never been a Public Hearing on this Development, especially since it has been demanded by almost all of the environmental and natural history groups of B.C. and beyond, by the Regional Board, by countless of the public? Why was the permission for the foreshore lease granted prior to the release of the Le Baron Report? Why has the Le Baron Report been suppressed? Why has the Regional Board had no say in granting this foreshore lease?

Will the Le Baron Report be released?

Sincerely yours,
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