

MYRTLE CREEK

# Island Timberlands begins logging

*Stream matrix identifies sensitive areas and prescribes reserve zones*

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Island Timberlands has started preliminary logging operations on a block through which a portion of Myrtle Creek flows, despite concerns expressed by a variety of community groups.

Wayne French, operations planner, said the harvested area of the cutblock is about 19 hectares, with about seven hectares identified for retention, focused primarily around riparian areas.

Selective removal of fir poles started last week, French said, with the main harvesting scheduled to take place shortly after the poling process is complete, in about two weeks.

Myrtle Creek is almost nine kilometres long, French pointed out, with almost five kilometres above Island Timberlands block and three and a half kilometres below. "There is only 500 metres of the creek that is within Island Timberlands property," he said.

Island Timberlands private lands are regulated by the *Private Managed Forest Land Act*. Company representatives say their plans go above and beyond what the private forest land regulations require.

"We've started looking again at what we could do for stream riparian widths over and above what was legally required for us," said Makenzie Leine, Island Timberlands' manager of sustainability and community affairs. "That was looking at the science behind fish habitat and water quality that we needed to know to find that sweet spot be-



**SENSITIVE STREAM:** Wayne French, Island Timberlands operations planner, and Makenzie Leine, manager of sustainability and community affairs, stand in a reserve area above Myrtle Creek. The company has started preliminary logging in its cutblock.

tween environmental protection and economic value, which is two of the three major things we're balancing in sustainability."

Island Timberlands has done four complete watershed assessments on its private land and is working on a fifth, she said. The company is applying a stream matrix that was developed as a result of its watershed assessments on its whole land base.

For the Myrtle Creek cutblock, the falling boundary is about 40 metres away from the creek. The average for the reserve is about 30 metres wide. "It goes down to about 25 metres in some places, but the concept is we wanted to stay above this breaking slope up on the edge," said Glynnis Horel, a geological engineer who was hired by Island Timberlands. "This is an area where in the stream matrix there would be a stream zone with a high level of retention. With re-

spect to these stream zones, the important thing to realize about the stream matrix is they're not 100 per cent reserve zones. They do allow limited extraction if it can be done without compromising the objectives of the riparian forest."

Myrtle Creek supports coho and chum salmon and cutthroat trout and serves as an indicator stream for wild coho salmon and scientific information on the health of the species.

Esther Dyck, a Fisheries and Oceans Canada field technician who monitors the fish escapement fence on Myrtle Creek, told members of the community advisory group to Island Timberlands at its June 11 meeting that the logging was an impending disaster.

"In the case of a ravine like the one on DL 1649's northern third, where the ground is water-saturated to the crest of the ravine and beyond, it is only com-

mon sense that the trees be left untouched well beyond the crest," she said. "Once DL 1649 is logged, all water, mud and silt will run towards and flow into Myrtle Creek."

Dave Nanson, a Fisheries and Oceans Canada habitat officer, wrote in an email that it is "extremely important that land-use activities do not negatively impact the fish habitat that currently exists within the Myrtle Creek corridor."

The bench above the ravine crest within lot 1649 appears to be "very wet with numerous areas where the water table is perched into ponds," Nanson also wrote. "Trees located on these wet benches may be shallow-rooted and subject to wind throw and disturbance of these areas could result in the discharge of sediment to Myrtle Creek."

For a video of Island Timberlands' position, visit [www.prpeak.com](http://www.prpeak.com).

