

# Forestry panel optimistic

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Gazette staff**

**PORT McNEILL**—North Island residents and professional foresters remain optimistic about the future of forestry, still recognizing changes will buffet the industry in coming decades. That view emerged from the Dialogue on Healthy Forests and Healthy Communities, hosted by the Ministry of Forests in here September. It was held as part of the provincial Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Initiative, designed to provide input to policy makers by providing them with information and expert opinion.

The dialogue, held Sept. 15 at the Legion Hall, asked North Islanders for their vision of forestry. Andrew Ashford, manager of the Ministry of Forests local office and one of three panelists, gave a presentation on climate change and projections of changes that are already under way in B.C. forests.

Ashford noted the makeup of B.C. forests, particularly in the interior, have been changing for several years and will continue to do so as species adapt to

changing temperature and sea levels.

From 1895 to 1995, he pointed out, B.C. experienced a mean temperature gain ranging from .5C in the Queen Charlotte Islands to 1.7C in the Northern Boreal Forest. In just the next 40 years, he said, experts predict a rise of between 1C and 6C for the province, with the figure likely to end up at 2C if there're no changes to current trends.

"We can expect ecosystem change and ecosystem disruption," Ashford said, painting a picture of reduced growth and survival rate of trees due to stress and susceptibility to disease and pests.

He said one solution for forest managers will be to put the best possible tree in each habitat, which could even involve bringing in seeds from forests far to the south, such as in Oregon.

Phil Wainwright, who has more than 30 years experience as a registered professional forester, gave a presentation on forest tenures and inventories.

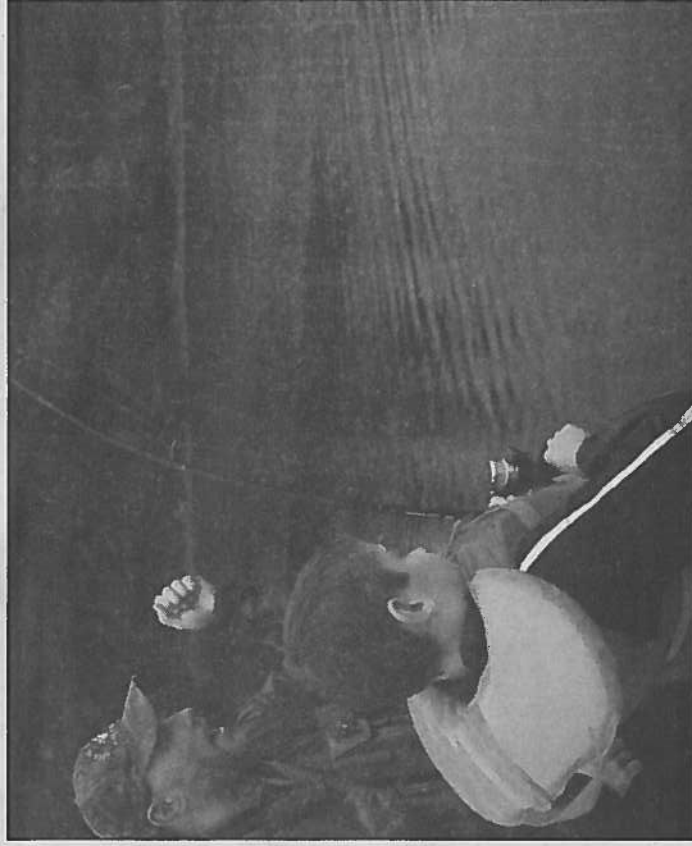
He suggested area-based tenures, including woodlots, will provide the best opportunity for

forestry to evolve and provide stability and sustain area communities to 2050 and beyond.

The third panelist was Regional District of Mount Waddington administrator Greg Fletcher, who addressed the continuity of forestry relative to the provision of services by local government.

Fletcher discussed how critical forestry is to providing services to North Islanders both through its share of the local tax base and through its quality of life contributions, such as logging roads that provide public access to fishing, camping and hiking areas. He envisioned a 2050 where forestry companies become more involved on the North Island, ensuring resources and labour will continue to be available, wood waste fibre is used to produce fuel, and resident employees fully involved in the community replace imported workers.

A discussion followed as the public was invited to provide input. A summary of the discussion will be published and will be available to view at [bcforestconversation.com](http://bcforestconversation.com).



## Fish on!

Eagleview School teacher, Sean Barfoot, gives encouragement to Luke Gage during a recent after-school trip to local waters where six students in the school's fishing club learned the fine art of landing a whopper. Incidentally, the club is looking for donations of rods, reels, lures, flies, fly-tying equipment, and basically anything fishing related. Interested donors can email [sbarfoot@sd85.bc.ca](mailto:sbarfoot@sd85.bc.ca).

Mike D'Amour photo

**THE VILLAGE OF PORT ALICE**