



## Sandy Hook Community Association

5916 Skookumchuk Road,  
Sechelt, BC, V0N 3A4

Web site: <http://www.sandyhookcommunityassociation.ca/>

July 15, 2009

**BY EMAIL** – (mail@secheltgroves.com)

To: Sechelt Groves Society  
c/o 5866 Deerhorn Drive  
Sechelt, BC  
V0N3A4

Dear Sir

Re: Letter of Support for Sechelt Groves Society

I am writing this letter as President of the Sandy Hook Community Association (SHCA) and to encourage the Sechelt Groves Society's request for support. Over 11 years ago members of SHCA and other residents of Sandy Hook started building trails and placing signage in what became Hidden Grove, a natural and ecologically sensitive forest area adjacent to Sandy Hook. In July of 2002, as a result of continuing efforts to protect Hidden Grove, the District of Sechelt asked the SHCA to form a Committee to plan for the future of the Grove. As the Committee developed its plans, it approached the Sechelt Band to ensure its involvement for efforts to save Hidden Grove as well as to understand and incorporate traditional Band cultural practices of plant and bark gathering; these practices also have great potential to bridge gaps in understanding among people through education and demonstration of native skills.

Because Hidden Grove is part of the Sechelt Community Forest, there was not a firm commitment to protect the Grove from logging. The SHCA's Hidden Grove Committee continued to fight to have the District support Hidden Grove and its future as a unique recreational and educational area that would benefit Sunshine Coast residents and visitors. SHCA's leadership and members formed the core of the Committee, which carried out both political action at the levels of the District Council and the Community Forest, while it developed trails, signage, information, and educational programs and tours in the Grove. Trails were created and planned to highlight the unique environment of Hidden Grove and to provide access to all, including the disabled.

The Sandy Hook Community Association continued its leadership of this effort and provided annual funding in its budget to continue the Grove's development and marketing. The results of this work included in 2006 the first 5-year moratorium on any logging in Hidden Grove, but the dangers to the Grove were not over. In 2008 trees in the Grove were marked for logging and efforts were intensified to stop any further possible damage or harvesting. In 2009 Sechelt Community Projects, Incorporated (SCPI), the management organization for the Community Forest, relented and issued a letter of protection for Hidden Grove; this will extend the Grove's protection for 25 years. Improvements to Hidden Grove over the past several years have included new signage, continued trail clearing and development, gravel paving the access road and parking area, printing and wide distribution of brochures and other marketing efforts, web



site updating, and final planning for the accessible (handicap) trail. The SHCA continued support of the Committee through both funding and volunteer assistance.

In early 2011 members of the Hidden Grove committee, with the encouragement of the Sandy Hook Community Association as well as a seed grant from the SHCA, incorporated as a separate organization, the Sechelt Groves Society. SHCA fully supports this step as better enabling the protection, development, and fulfillment of the educational and recreational potential of Hidden Grove and, in the future, other ecologically sensitive and possibly threatened areas in the District of Sechelt. The new Society has adopted its Legacy Plan, and has already been successful in obtaining partial funding for its general support and for development of the accessible trail. It has developed a core group of members and maintains a strong relationship with the SHCA through overlapping board memberships.

As president of the Sandy Hook Community Association, I encourage consideration of additional funding for the Sechelt Groves Society; our Board and members fully support the continued protection and enhancement of Hidden Grove as an educational and recreational treasure for all to enjoy.

Sincerely,



Kirk Exner  
President  
Sandy Hook Community Association