

## wood not waste



### THE BENEFITS OF THE LOG SALVAGE PROJECT

- ▶ Protect and restore vital habitat in the Fraser River Estuary
- ▶ Create direct and indirect jobs in the forest sector
- ▶ Provide a unique opportunity for public education
- ▶ Reduce the amount of wood debris fouling beaches and public shorelines
- ▶ Generate increased funds for debris control and marsh clean up efforts

Stray logs are destroying marshes in the Fraser River Estuary. Useable wood is going to waste. Our green business project will help clear debris, restore marsh habitat, utilize otherwise wasted wood, and create ongoing employment.

### THE FRASER RIVER ESTUARY

## An ecological jewel in danger

**THE** Fraser River has the largest and most biologically productive estuary on the Pacific Coast of North America.

This ecological jewel provides critical habitat for millions of waterfowl and shorebirds, and over 20 species of birds of prey, which all congregate at the mouth of this river at various times of the year. Every year up to 800 million juvenile salmon migrate down the Fraser — the largest salmon producing

river in the world. The salt marshes in the estuary provide critical habitat for young fish as they acclimatize to salt water.

However, less than 30% of the original marshes have survived urbanization. Many of these remaining wetlands are severely degraded by accumulations of wood debris – the number one threat to these ecosystems. Every year thousands of cubic metres of logs are left to drift on the Fraser, piling up on

beaches and marshes in a sad testament to a log salvage system that simply is not working.

Stray logs can also be killers. In February of 2004, two boaters off Tsawwassen narrowly avoided drowning when their fishing boat capsized after striking a deadhead in the water. The Canadian Coast Guard reports more than 60 docu-

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## About LEAS

The Labour Environmental Alliance Society is a charitable non-profit society with a mandate to protect the environment and to facilitate the creation of green jobs.

Last year LEAS was the recipient of prestigious Pollution Prevention Award, given annually by Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment.

For more information on LEAS, visit our website at: [www.leas.ca](http://www.leas.ca)

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LABOUR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
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mented incidents in BC waters between 1999 and 2003 where vessels collided with stray logs and either required assistance or rescue.

## ISN'T WOOD DEBRIS GOOD FOR FISH HABITAT?

In nature, stable woody debris such as logs plays a vital role in contributing to the complexity of fish habitat. For instance natural logs tend to have a root-wad which typically becomes anchored in a river bank, creating pools and cover for juvenile fish.

## Beachcombers are leaving many logs to drift because they would lose money picking them up

However, most of the logs that accumulate in the lower Fraser are not "stable" because they have cut ends. Without a root-wad, these logs move with boat wakes and tides, crushing and smothering wetland plants.

## WHY IS WOOD LEFT TO DRIFT?

Under existing provincial regulations, permitted log salvors (beachcombers) must only return salvaged logs to a "licenced receiving station". However, since 1954 there has only been one such facility. This lack of competition has led to a situation where the economics of log salvage is currently very poor. Beachcombers who make their living collecting wood are leaving many logs to drift for the simple reason that they would lose money picking them up.

## OUR SOLUTION

We are working with local beachcombers to introduce some much needed competition in the sale of salvaged logs. Through innovative marketing, we can make use of much of this otherwise wasted wood – helping the environment and providing local jobs.

LEAS has helped salvors form a producer co-op called the Western Log Sort and Salvage Co-op. This co-op is now applying to the provincial government for a licence to operate an alternate receiving station

where salvors can deliver recovered wood. If approved, this operation will take logs out of the water, carefully sort them according to end use and sell them through open auction.

Innovative marketing is key to adding value to salvaged wood and ensuring that these logs are put back in the market place rather than going to waste. Revenues from the sale of unmarked logs currently being left the drift will increase the overall funding available for debris control efforts such as the Fraser River Debris Trap.

There also appears to be a strong likelihood that wood sold through this project could be certified under the "SmartWood" program, in recognition of the environmental benefit of removing drift logs from the river. This certification would qualify towards the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standard, which is a building requirement of the 2010 Olympic Games.