Proposal to the British Columbia Land Reserve Commission Regarding SW 1/4 of Section 20, Lasqueti Island

Who we are (and why we are in this predicament)

The group of us own the four one-quarter shares of the SW 1/4 of Section 20, Lasqueti Island, under an agreement to focus development (cluster housing) within four five-acre clearings (one per share). Our desire has been to allow up to four houses within each clearing, focusing development in pockets, rather than spread out, thus leaving the remaining 140 acres untouched and intact. This, and our agreement to cap the re-sale price of the land (in order to protect it from speculation), are our group's strongest guiding principles -- aiming to encourage a simple, low-impact existence on this land.

Our plans and visions were made at a time when we, and in fact most people on Lasqueti Island, had virtually no understanding of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Even at the various times that each of us purchased our respective shares, nothing was conveyed to any of us by our various legal counsel about the implications of the fact that part of our land was in the ALR.

When we learned of the regulations of the ALR, one of our members phoned the Land Reserve Commission (LRC) to obtain more information, so that she could make an appropriate decision about where to place her house site. She was told that Lasqueti was of little concern. The diagram that was eventually faxed, at our request, contained no precise details (eg. actual distances or measurements) to help her make that decision. Without excusing our ignorance, we would like to stress that our plans were made in good faith, without any intention to conflict with the policies of the LRC.

Through the process of drafting this proposal we have become intimately familiar with many aspects of our land, which has been an unexpected benefit to us, and are confident of the appropriateness of these proposals.

Given that our land is unsuitable for commercial agriculture, we believe that this proposal will nevertheless benefit agriculture on Lasqueti Island because it will permit the development of a number of small-scale family gardens.

Option 1

We propose to remove the SW 1/4 of Section 20, Lasqueti Island, from the ALR.

In preparing this proposal, we retained the services of a registered forestry professional. Under his guidance, we dug twenty-two holes through the ALR portion of this quarter section to determine its classification, based on the nature of the parent material we uncovered. (See attached diagram.)

Although there was variation in the content of the holes, there was an identifiable overall trend: the soil was sandy with 20 per cent to 50 per cent coarse fragment content. There was also
numerous scattered, rocky outcrops, ranging in size from 10 to 100 square meters. There was only one area (holes 17 and 18) where the contents of the hole had a silty texture and less than 20 per cent coarse fragment content.

Our findings concurred with the Canada Land Inventory and Ability Classification (CLIAC) for British Columbia, except where percentages were assigned. Where our findings concur that the range of the soil is from Class 3 to Class 7, we discovered that 10 per cent of it is Class 3, 70 per cent is Class 5, and 10 per cent is Class 7.

A minimum of 75 per cent of this 1/4 section is rated as Class 5-7 by CLIAC. While land rated Class 4 and 5 may be suitable for grazing livestock in some parts of the province, such use is not feasible on small pockets of land in an isolated location like Lasqueti Island.

The remaining 25 per cent of this 1/4 section is rated as Class 3 and 4. While Class 4 will support a restricted range of crops, our Class 4 land is moisture deficient. In addition to this limitation, it is in small pockets (no larger than 30 meters x 30 meters).

The best land within our 1/4 section is rated Class 3. We found only one isolated pocket, of approximately an acre in size, that fell into this class (and it is not within the area currently designated as ALR).

The remaining Class 3 land is subject to excess water and inundation. It is primarily occupied by two swamps and two streams.

Option 2

If the Land Reserve Commission is unwilling to remove this 1/4 section from the BC Land Reserve, we would like to propose, as an alternative, that all areas of Class 5-7 land, as designated by the CLIAC, be removed from the ALR.

Our professional forester advisor was in agreement with the general descriptions of the ability classifications of the CLIAC as they related to our land. However, the boundaries on the CLIAC maps we have are unclear due to the thickness of the lines with which they were drawn. Therefore, it is not clear whether house sites B, D, E and F fall within or outside of the Class 5-7 boundaries. It *is* clear, however, that they are not on agriculturally viable land. Such a redrawing of boundaries would also promote the development of small-scale family gardens.

Parent material soil findings for specific sites:

Site A:  • sandy gravel with cobbles, dry
Site B1:  • high-quality pure gravel, dry  • small pocket of clay, moist
Site B2:  • clay, moist
Site C:   • outside of the ALR
Sites D1, D2, D3:  • too rocky to dig holes

We would like to ensure that, if the lines designating the ALR portion of this 1/4 section are redrawn, the new lines are situated in such a way that these sites are no longer included within the ALR, since they are clearly in areas that are unsuitable for agricultural purposes.
Location of houses and sites that appear on the diagram:

Site A
There are currently no buildings on this site. The original owners of the share associated with this site have recently sold their share to the remaining co-owners who are holding it, temporarily, until it is re-sold.

Location Y:  
• 120 meters south of the north property line  
• 120 metres east of the west property line

Location Z:  
• 155 meters south of the north property line  
• 155 meters east of the west property line

Site B2
Location Q:  
• 420 meters west of the east property line  
• 250 meters south of the north property line  
(This is the house site of Jeremy Walker (house under construction).)

Site B1
Location F:  
• 275 meters west of the east property line  
• 230 meters south of the north property line  
(This is the home of Lori Ray.)

Location G:  
• 250 meters west of the east property line  
• 250 meters south of the north property line  
(This is the home of Elanne Grose.)

Site C
This site is not in the ALR. It includes the homes of Rick Waines, which is located 60 meters south of the north property line and 120 meters west of the east property line.

Site D
Location T:  
• 325 meters south of the north property line  
• 90 meters west of the east property line  
(This is the house site of Irit Shimrat.)

Location V:  
• 350 meters south of the north property line  
• 90 meters west of the east property line  
(This is the home of Chris Bearchell.)

Location W:  
• 340 meters south of the north property line  
• 20 meters west of the east property line  
(This is the house site of Tim Potts.)