

LOCAL

Real numbers on log exports unclear

By **GRAHAM ANDREWS**
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Following its latest public forum on raw log exports, the West Island Woodlands Advisory Group is doing more homework on the amount of logs being shipped out of the Alberni Valley and trying to find more ways to keep them here.

Michelle Colussi, facilitator of WIWAG, said the group will be considering more options for value-added opportunities without banning raw log export altogether.

If raw logs were to be exported

completely, she said, job numbers in the TFL 44 area would decrease rather than increase.

"The question is, how can we increase our capacity to process logs locally," Colussi said.

"We're going to look into the value-added sector and access to that sector."

Colussi said that she hopes to have a representative from the Vancouver Island Wood Manufacturers make a presentation at WIWAG's January meeting.

WIWAG will also be clarifying some of its definitions.

For example, at the Nov. 26 meeting, the question of the definition of export was raised. Colussi said there's some confusion as to whether the term "export" means all logs taken out of the Valley, or only those being shipped to other countries.

"The number of logs coming into the Valley meets or exceeds the number going out," she said.

"Three per cent of the logs get exported out of the country, which is a very small amount."

But that doesn't include the logs being exported by TimberWest.

At the Nov. 26 meeting, the panel making presentations and fielding questions had representation from Weyerhaeuser, the Truck Loggers' Association, Ministry of Forests and IWA, but none from TimberWest.

Colussi said that's because TimberWest wasn't invited to sit on the panel.

Now WIWAG will have to determine what it wants to do about acquiring TimberWest numbers.

"We were presenting the picture of logs going in and out of the Valley," she said.

"The people wanted a bigger picture.

"And that picture includes TimberWest."

WIWAG concerns itself with timber use throughout TFL 44.