INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Forests

CENTRAL COAST MAN CONVICTED OF TIMBER THEFT

VICTORIA – The provincial court in Port Hardy handed down a six-month conditional sentence for timber theft following an investigation by Ministry of Forests Compliance and Enforcement officers.

John Vos of Comox pleaded guilty to theft of timber valued at more than $18,000. The theft occurred on Crown land in the Fish Egg Inlet area of the Central Coast in September 2001.

Compliance and Enforcement officials from the North Island – Central Coast Forest District in Port McNeill began the investigation as a result of information supplied by the public. The investigation included the seizure of 66 cedar logs that had been offered for sale to a dryland sort near Beaver Cove. Mr. Vos claimed that the timber was legitimately salvaged from below the high tide mark. However, officials located timber theft sites above the high tide mark near Fish Egg Inlet, and were able to match the stumps on those sites to some of the seized cedar logs.

Vos' conditional sentence is similar to house arrest, and includes a prohibition on the possession of any wood-cutting equipment outside of his property.

Compliance and Enforcement officials routinely patrol coastal areas to detect and deter timber theft, which can have a major impact on provincial revenues.

Compliance and Enforcement staff are responsible for enforcing forest management laws and combating forest crimes such as theft, arson and mischief. Officials conduct more than 16,000 inspections a year to assess compliance with forest laws. Where there is evidence of a contravention, an investigation is conducted, which may lead to the issuance of a violation ticket, penalty or other enforcement action. The most serious forest crimes are prosecuted through the court system.

If you think you have any information about a forestry contravention or crime, call your local Ministry of Forests office, or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (all callers may remain anonymous).

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