

LOCATION:

This is the Western end of Glen Valley, between 252 St. and 264 St. These are agricultural lands that occupy flat land between the Glen Valley Bluffs/Escarpment and the Fraser River. Several properties are lightly farmed, but the land above the escarpment is very heavily farmed. All water used for irrigation and farming in the uplands eventually finds its way down through this area on its way to the River only a few blocks away. The forested lands act as a filter and buffer zone for Western Glen Valley. East of 264 St., Glen Valley has been extensively logged. Trees are few and far between except in a thin band along the River.

This whole area has been given a very high priority status for having environmentally sensitive issues.

THE FORESTS:

These are two Municipally owned parcels of land which are heavily forested and have been untouched for more than eighty years. They are roughly bounded by West Creek and Palmateer Creek and sit squarely on top on a very sensitive aquifer. The forests control and regulate water and water recharge and are highly significant in pollution control.

1. 25 acres of very rare (for Langley or Surrey) conifer forest, at 252 St and 84 Ave. This is named in the Westwater report as McLellan Park. For at least five decades it has been assumed that this is a dedicated park. The Township disputes this.
In the Westwater Report this is #47 – McLellan Park.
2. 25 acres of mixed conifer/deciduous forest between 257A St. and 260 St. These acres border onto Gray Pit – once a gravel pit but now used as a Municipal Waste dump. The area has variously been called “Gray Pit Forest”, or McLellan Park East by the Watchers of Langley Forests (WOLF)
In the Westwater Report this is part of area #48 – McLellan Park Area – Local Aquifer.

These two forests are separated by three blocks of privately owned lands, which also extend towards 264 St and These private lands are lightly wooded with much younger trees and are close to human habitation, but provide enough cover to join the two forests with an almost contiguous wildlife corridor that links the lands above the escarpment making a route to the forests and the Fraser from the uplands above. This is an important wildlife area.

The forests are roughly bounded by West Creek and Palmateer Creek – which also includes their tributaries.

WHY ARE WE CONCERNED?

There are at least three reports which cover the environmental concerns of this area.

1. **The Lower Fraser Valley Streams Strategic Review** identifies West Creek and Palmateer creek as endangered largely because of very heavy agricultural use and water quality problems. They are both salmon spawning streams and the report makes many recommendations for their protection. They are supplied water by the aquifer and the forests sit between them.
2. **The Westwater Environmentally Sensitive Areas Study for Langley** identifies the forests as being part of an area of the highest classification of environmental sensitivity.
3. **The O'Connor Associates Gravel Site report** for Langley Municipality suggested as long ago as 1999 that operations should stop at the Gray Pit and it should be considered for rehabilitation – because of potential environmental liabilities.

WHAT THE REPORTS RECOMMEND:

- Maintain all the existing forested and vegetated lands to protect the local aquifer and minimize pollution
- Control or minimize residential development using septic disposal systems in order to protect groundwater quality
- Prevent water quality deterioration since the aquifer provides local water supplies for West and East Creeks
- Maintain the conifer forest because it is very rare for Langley
- Maintain the forested areas because it is important wildlife habitat
- Improve farm management practices that would affect the aquifer

Not considered in any of the reports is that the conifer forest has great potential historical value. It is a younger version of the vast swathes of forest that covered Langley and Surrey until the latter half 19th Century, when our pioneers moved into the area. Only 90 years of being left alone has produced such a self-seeding, open floored forest. It could not be reproduced by any means. In another 50 years it would be even closer to the original forests and is the only easily accessible remnant in Langley or Surrey. It would be a great legacy for the future - IF IT IS LEFT ALONE.

SELLING THE MCLELLAN PARK EAST LANDS WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE ENVIRONMENT AS THEY WOULD

- Be logged just to gain access
- Have at least FIVE septic systems installed
- Have at least FIVE domestic wells – more if farmed
- If farmed, they would provide more stress on the aquifer
- The owner of an adjacent property, which is not lived on, has just submitted an application for permission to strip topsoil, remove 14,367 trucks of underlying

peat to sell, and replace it with fill. Peat is the other great water regulator and vegetation strip mining should not be allowed. This is also a potential threat to the aquifer and environmental health of the area

All this is being ignored by offering parcels of land for sale. We do not think the sale of these lands to provide the money to buy the Aldergrove Elementary School site is a good choice. Perhaps there are other lands/properties in less sensitive or already developed areas that could be considered as an alternative. Surely there is some other funding mechanism that the municipality can find without destroying such an important environment. This area should not be developed – just left alone, as it has been for the past 80 years.