



**SCHOOL DISTRICT 46
SUNSHINE COAST**

GIBSONS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

TREE REMOVAL AND REFORESTATION PROJECT



SD46.BC.CA

“ *For every tree
removed, at least 10
trees will be planted.*

CONTACT FOR MORE INFO

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**Join us for a virtual information session on
Wednesday, March 2, 2022
6:30 PM**

Register in advance: <https://bit.ly/3t12emo>



BACKGROUND

In recent years, the trees growing around the perimeter of the Gibsons Elementary School property have begun to die. As a result, they pose a risk to student, staff and public safety which means they must be removed. Rising temperatures and extended droughts increase the stress on trees, which in turn invites insects and disease to weaken them further. Humans frequently using this area and over the years this has also led to heavy compaction of the soil. Eventually, all of this stress causes the rooting structures, upper stem and tree canopy to become unstable, posing risk to people using the area and to adjacent properties. This is consistent with other parts of the Sunshine Coast where large cedar trees are dying, as well.

As a school district we value the environment and sustainable practices. The decision to remove these trees has been made with the support of professional expertise and careful consideration, knowing the safety of students, staff and the wider community is a priority. In order to support the process, Gibsons Elementary and the PAC have and will be part of the solution in taking an active role in reforestation and environmental education.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who determined the trees on the Gibsons Elementary School property needed to be removed?

The school district hired a consultant with 40 years of experience in Forest Silviculture and Planning to assess and report on the state of the trees. The consultant is a Qualified Environmental Professional, Certified Arbourist with the International Society of Arbourists (ISA) and is Tree Risk Assessment Qualified (TRAQ) as certified under the ISA.

How many trees will be removed?

The plan is to remove at least 34 high risk trees. Additional falling may be required if the removal of high risk trees creates a hazard or damages other trees on the site.

Why do high risk trees have to be removed?

Thinning of the upper canopy of the trees and evidence of compromised rooting systems have made these trees very unstable. This was determined by digging 30cm to 45cm soil pits and examining the tree roots. Internal boring of the trees' main trunk also exposed signs of internal decay which cannot be observed by the naked eye.

Many of the trees had extensive carpenter ant and termite damage, as well as evidence of sapsucker and woodpecker attack. When birds are seen targeting trees, it is because there is a significant infestation of insects that are a food source for them. These are all indicators of advanced decay.

Will removing the trees pose a risk to students, staff, neighbours or visitors to the school and how long will it take?

The removal of the trees will be scheduled when school is not in session and should take approximately 10 days to complete. The tree removal area will be cordoned off in accordance...

...with WorkSafe BC requirements. There will also be school district and contractor personnel onsite to monitor for safety.

What are the dangers associated with leaving the trees slated for removal?

If the identified trees are left standing, there will be a high degree of risk to the students, staff or anyone using the area due to the continued deterioration of the trees' rooting system and upper structure. The condition of these trees will be exacerbated by windstorms and other weather events.

Many of the identified trees are located close to residential housing along O'Shea Road and the cul de sac at Poplar Lane. A falling tree or limb could potentially strike a house, leading to injury or death of people and damage to property in these areas.

What will happen to the trees once they have been felled?

The trees will be trucked to a dryland sorting ground in Howe Sound where they will be scaled for volume and value. The school district will receive the full net value for this timber and include the discussion of proceeds in its annual budget public consultation process.

Will any other contractors or companies benefit financially from the sale of timber?

The contractor will be paid for their services, not for the value of the timber. The total value of the timber will go to the School District, which will cover the consulting, permitting, removal and replacement costs. Disbursement of any remaining funds will be at the discretion of the Board of Education.



What will happen to the area after the tree removal?

All wood waste will be removed by truck to a disposal site in Howe Sound. The area will then be graded and prepared for tree planting. Re-planting of the forest by Gibsons Elementary students will commence as soon as weather permits. For every tree removed, at least 10 trees will be planted. This will include saplings and some more mature trees where possible.

Will there be an opportunity to educate students about ecosystems, climate change and forest health?

The consultant will work with the school district to involve staff and students in discussions about:

- Tree Health
- Environmental conditions that support or cause damage to trees
- How to identify trees that are at risk
- Identify means of dealing with tree health
- Help prevent trees advancing to a stage where they need to be removed
- How to properly space and plant trees to ensure successful growth
- Steps needed to ensure good tree health in the future

Could the replacement trees also succumb to global warming as climate change continues?

The seedlings selected for reforestation have been sourced from tree stands specifically growing within the same ecological area. Douglas fir has been chosen as the replacement species due to its ability to adapt to increasingly warm temperatures and droughts.

Will there be a public information session to learn more about this process?

Yes, there will be an online public engagement session hosted by the School District with an opportunity for questions from the public. Join us for this virtual information session on Wednesday, March 2, 2022 | 6:30 PM Register in advance: <https://bit.ly/3t12emo>