



April 11, 2003

Roger Cheetham  
Agricultural Land Commission  
#133-4940 Canada Way,  
Burnaby, BC V5G 4K6

Dear: Roger:

**Re: Proposed Development of Block 71 and DL 185: Raven Group**

Thank you for the referral on the proposed development of the Raven Group site, Block 71 and DL 185.

From an agricultural perspective the site has many advantages.

- The climatic conditions of this property benefit from the moderating effects of the Strait of Georgia. This moderating effect provides more than 225 growing degree days (above 5 Celsius) than sites a few kilometres inland. Lower annual rainfall provides a wider range of cropping opportunities. On average sites in Comox have approximately 270 mm less precipitation than sites further inland.
- The soil profile of this site is very typical of the east coast of Vancouver Island. In the Comox Valley the majority of agriculture is situated on improved class 3 soils. Soils in the class two range are generally already under agricultural production and in relatively short supply throughout the Island and BC.
- Due to the lack of licensed surface water availability most agricultural production relies on groundwater. This site falls within the aquifer known as 408 IIC (13) Comox-Merville. This is a large aquifer rated as currently having low vulnerability. This would indicate that there may be adequate water resources available for agriculture.
- Location of the site is advantageous for farm marketing opportunities. The proximity to Courtenay and Comox plus excellent highway access makes this a very desirable location for direct market or agri-tourism ventures.

The limitations from an agricultural perspective are:

- Urban development is encroaching on this site as it is in many areas of the Comox Valley. Experience has shown that urban developments in close proximity to farm operations have a negative impact on the farm operations.

Garbage, trespass, farm practice complaints are a few of the potential negative impacts.

- A significant problem related to urban development is drainage. This site provides the classic ingredients. Proposed upland urban development in the North, south and west sides of the property draining onto the agricultural areas in the low sections to the east.
- Without significant inputs the lower capability soils are restricted in the range of crops that can be grown. In other parts of the valley these soils are typically used for permanent pasture or woodlot operations. These types of operations, in general, require parcels sizes of 15 ha or greater in order to be viable.

Bearing in mind the above considerations I would offer the following comments on the Raven Group proposal.

Protection of the existing farm operations should be a key priority. These operations should be buffered from the proposed urban development. The resulting water volumes created by non-permeable surfaces has to be managed to prevent flooding on the lowlands and recharge of the aquifer. The class two lands to the southwest should remain in the ALR and available for agriculture.

The proposed golf course to the south of the Lerwick connector road, if designed with adequate screening, would provide a suitable buffer to the existing farm operations. The proposed trail should also be designed in consultation with the adjacent land owners to provide a suitable level of security and avoid trespass problems.

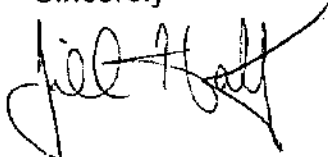
Drainage of the upland development sites has to be done in such a way to minimize the volume of water leaving the site. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Senior Engineer, Ted Vander Gulik, is involved in developing a water balance model to assist in designing drainage systems that minimize the impacts of development on the water regime. The model will likely be available for testing by June 2003 and could be of benefit to meet the needs of both the upland and downstream landowners.

The class two land to the south west of the proposed site should remain part of the ALR. As to the appropriate parcel size, the research is ongoing. However, what have been observed is that larger parcel sizes offer more opportunity for agricultural production. Parcels that are 2 ha or less are of limited use for agriculture. These smaller acreages tend to generate more farm practice complaints particularly when used for livestock production including horses. The parcel sizes outlined in the staff report appear reasonable given the existing farms and agricultural opportunities available.

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If you have any questions regarding my comments on this proposal please contact me directly. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Raven Group Development Proposal.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jill Hatfield', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jill Hatfield  
Regional Agrologist



September 19, 2003

Regional District Comox-Strathcona  
Community Planning Services  
600 Comox Road,  
Courtenay, BC V9N 3P6

Dear Beth:

**Re ALR 8C 03 Raven Forest Products Ltd. Inclusion**

Thank you for the referral on the inclusion application from Raven Forest Products Ltd. This proposed inclusion of land in the Black Creek area is part of an exclusion application on Block (BLK) 71 and D.L. 185 North of Courtenay. Given this situation my comments will compare the inclusion application in view of the future exclusion, although I am aware that the exclusion is not part of your jurisdiction. When a land swap of this nature is proposed I believe the logical approach is to evaluate the proposal in its entirety. I apologize in advance if some of this information is not entirely relevant to your referral.

In 1980 to 19984 the Provincial Agricultural Land initiated a fine tuning exercise to review land both inside and outside the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The East Coast of Vancouver Island was given special attention during this review due to its complexity. This comprehensive review evaluated both parcels in Black Creek. The parcel referred to as Black Creek was not included although adjacent lands were. The parcel referred to as Endall Road was excluded in the fine tuning exercise. Block 71 and D.L. 185 were also reviewed and kept in the ALR.

At first glance the agricultural soil capability profile of all three parcels (Blk 71 and D.L. 185 considered together) appears similar. However by highlighting the soils that are predominantly (more than 50%) class 5 with little ability to improve beyond class 5 the differences are more obvious. For both Black Creek and the Endall Road parcels the majority of the property falls into this category. While the BLK. 71/D.L. 185 has only two small areas on the periphery of the property with class 5 un-improvable soils. The

majority of BLK. 71 and D.L. 185 can be improved from class 4 to class 3. This is consistent with the majority of farm soils in the Comox valley.

The soil capability limitations are consistent between all three properties. Lack of soil moisture and stoniness are the major limitations to production. Soil moisture is a consideration when evaluating the agronomic capability of these parcels. BLK. 71/D.L. 185 are both located above the Comox-Merville Aquifer. This is a large moderately productive aquifer that is considered to have low vulnerability. Land currently farmed in the Black Creek area relies mainly on stored surface water for irrigation purposes.

Climatic conditions in Black Creek and Courtenay/Comox have some differences. Annual rainfall is generally higher, on average 272.3 mm more precipitation falls in the Black Creek area compared to Comox. Growing degree days (above 5° C) is on average approximately 10% higher in Comox than Black Creek. However this is based on differences between the Comox and Campbell River airports and could vary between the parcels in question. Site specific climate data from Black Creek is not readily available.

Opportunities for agricultural development in Black Creek would be primarily associated with the dairy industry. This would include grass, corn or grain production. Location of these parcels does not lend them to commodities that are direct marketed. This however is not the case for BLK. 71 and D.L. 185. Owing to their proximity to Courtenay the opportunities for pick-your own or farm stand products increases significantly.

Proximity to an urban population while increasing marketing opportunities also increases the potential for urban rural conflict. This would not be an issue for the predominantly rural Black Creek.

The main argument for including the Endall Road and Black Creek parcels in the ALR would be the providing a contiguous ALR boundary in this area and thereby a higher level of protection for the future. However given the land is zoned RU1, 20 acre minimum the risk of this land being used for developments other than forestry and agriculture is currently low.

There does not appear to be a strong agronomic argument to include the Endall Road and Black Creek parcels in the ALR. Including land of lower agricultural capability has the potential to devalue the ALR from its original mandate to preserve agricultural land.

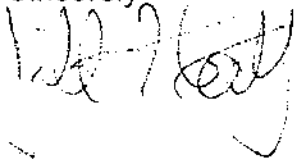
The inclusion application, if evaluated in isolation, may warrant a favorable response from the perspective of protecting the surrounding ALR. I however, support the

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Agricultural Land Commission 1980's decision with respect to the agricultural valuation of these parcels

If you have any questions regarding my comments on this referral please contact me directly.

Sincerely

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Jill Hatfield P.Ag.  
Regional Agrologist

December 17, 2003

Regional District Comox-Strathcona  
Community Planning Services  
600 Comox Road,  
Courtenay, BC V9N 3P6

Dear Beth Rees:

**Re ALR 8C 03 Raven Forest Products Ltd. Inclusion**

Further to my earlier comments regarding the inclusion application for the Raven Holdings Limited properties in the Black Creek area, I wish to direct your attention to their agricultural capability and potential.

The agricultural capability based on the Land Capability for Agriculture mapping (1983) indicates the soils on both the Endall Road and Black Creek parcels are predominantly (more than 50%) class 5 with little ability to improve beyond class 5. The majority of land currently in agricultural production in the Comox Valley falls within class 3 and 4.

The soil capability limitations are consistent between both properties. Lack of soil moisture and stoniness are the major limitations to production. Soil moisture is a consideration when evaluating the agronomic capability. Land currently farmed in the Black Creek area relies mainly on stored surface water for irrigation purposes.

Opportunities for agricultural development in Black Creek would be primarily associated with the dairy industry. This would include grass, corn or grain production. Location of these parcels away from urban centres would limit their suitability for commodities that are direct marketed. On the other hand, urban rural conflict would not be an issue in the predominantly rural Black Creek.

In 1980 to 1984 the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission initiated a fine tuning exercise to review land both inside and outside the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The East Coast of Vancouver Island was given special attention during this review due to its complexity. This comprehensive review evaluated both parcels in Black Creek.

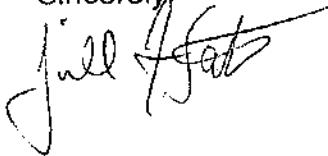
Page 2

The parcel referred to as Black Creek was not included although adjacent lands were. The parcel referred to as Endall Road was excluded in the fine tuning exercise.

The main benefit for including the Endall Road and Black Creek parcels in the ALR would be providing a contiguous ALR boundary in this area and thereby a higher level of protection for the future. The current zoning of RU1, - 20 acre minimum, would suggest limited potential for uses other than forestry and agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application. If you have any questions regarding my comments on this referral please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Hatfield", written over a horizontal line.

Jill Hatfield P.Ag.  
Regional Agrologist

cc: Roger Cheetham  
Provincial Agricultural Land Commission



**DATE:** October 4, 2012**FILE:** 3110-20/ALR 1B 12**TO:** Chair and Directors  
Electoral Areas Services Committee**FROM:** Debra Oakman, CMA  
Chief Administrative Officer**RE:** **Non-farm use in the Agricultural Land Reserve**  
**1821-E Anderton Road (Beaver Meadow Farms 1971 Ltd.)****Purpose**

To obtain approval from the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) under section 20(3) of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* (ALCA) for a non-farm use within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) for the purposes of establishing a seaweed drying business within an existing farm building.

**Policy analysis**

Section 20(3) of the ALCA enables a property owner to apply to the ALC to seek permission for a non-farm use of agricultural land. Section 25(3) of the ALCA states that this type of application may not proceed to the ALC unless authorized by a resolution from the local government.

**Executive summary**

The proposal to establish a seaweed drying business within an existing farm building is supportable. The application is consistent to the broad objectives and policies contained in the regional growth strategy (RGS) and the official community plan (OCP). As the applicants are utilizing an existing farm building, there should be minimal direct impact to the existing farm operation and to the arable agricultural land on the subject property. There will be no irreversible impact on the ALR land given the small “footprint” that will be used for the seaweed drying business. Overall, support for the proposed seaweed drying business can be offered as the RGS encourages the attraction of new business that will protect and enhance ALR lands with the intent to grow and diversify the base of agriculture activities. Based on the above, it is recommended that this ALR application is supported and that the CVRD board authorize the application to proceed to the ALC for final consideration.

**Recommendations from the chief administrative officer:**

THAT the Agricultural Land Commission be advised that the regional district supports Agricultural Land Reserve application ALR 1B 12 (Beaver Meadow Farms 1971 Ltd.) for the non-farm use of the Agricultural Land Reserve for the purposes of establishing a seaweed drying business within an existing farm building on lands known as Lot B, District Lot 220 and 235, Comox District, Plan VIP87916 (1821-E Anderton Road);

AND FURTHER THAT the regional district recommends that the approval of the non-farm use application be tied to the Ministry of Agriculture’s Licence to Process Marine Plants;

AND FINALLY THAT the application ALR 1B 12 (Beaver Meadow Farms 1971 Ltd.) for the non-farm use of property within the Agricultural Land Reserve be forwarded to the Agricultural Land Commission for final consideration.

Respectfully:

**D. Oakman**

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Debra Oakman, CMA  
Chief Administrative Officer

### **History/background factors**

The subject property which is located at 1821-E Anderton Road (Beaver Meadow Farms 1971 Ltd.), is within the Lazo North area, (Electoral Area 'B'). The subject property is approximately 121.0 hectares in area and is zoned rural ALR (RU-ALR) (Figure 1). Beaver Meadow Farms operates a variety of agricultural operations on their land holdings including forage production (hay, wasabi), dairy, beef and a cranberry operation. In terms of built infrastructure, there is a combination of single detached dwellings and a number of farm buildings that are associated with the existing farm business. The entire property is within the ALR and has farm status under the *BC Assessment Act*. The properties to the north, west and east are located within the ALR and are designated as agricultural area in the OCP. The property to the south is zone rural twenty (RU-20) and is currently undeveloped forested land. The property is owned by Beaver Meadows Farm 1971 Ltd. The general topography of the surrounding area is generally flat and consists of pasture land and undeveloped forested land.

The property owner's agent (Jonathan Biley) has applied for a non-farm use in the ALR to operate a seaweed drying business within an existing farm building. The seaweed drying operation is currently licensed through the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to harvest beach *Mazzaella japonica* (also known as Irish moss) between Deep Bay and Qualicum Beach. *Mazzaella japonica* is an introduced species that originated from Japan and currently can be found on the west coast beaches of British Columbia (Figure 2). Once harvested in the designated areas, the *Mazzaella japonica* will then be transported to the subject property to be processed. The proposed drying facility is intended to dry and bale the *Mazzaella japonica* to be shipped overseas. The seaweed is a mid-tidal range algae that is high in carrageenan, which is used in food and cosmetic products. The harvest occurs between October and January in the designated harvested areas. The seaweed drying will operate during the winter months and will allow the farm building to be used for the existing agricultural operations during the summer and fall months. A brief summary written by the agent provides insight into the proposed business (Figure 3).

The seaweed drying business will be located in an existing farm building, which is 627.0 square metres. The farm building is located at the southeast corner of the subject property (Figures 4 to 6). The farm building consists of two levels. The first level was used for dairy operation (stalls) and the second level was used for storing and drying hay (Figures 7 to 8). According to the agent, the second level of the farm building will be solely dedicated to receiving and processing of *Mazzaella japonica*. A small area on the ground level will be used for storage and the remaining portions of the ground level will not be used.

Given the unique nature of this application (i.e. seaweed drying is a new industry in the west coast), planning staff was advised by the ALC that the proposed seaweed drying business does not meet part 2 (permitted uses) of the *Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation*. Therefore, the proposal requires a non-farm use application and an approval from the ALC under section 20.3 of the ALCA.

### **Planning Analysis**

In order for the ALC to consider this application, a decision from the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) board is first required. This is intended to provide local government with a latitude to consider and weigh the local community interest of each application in relation to the RGS, OCP and zoning. Should the regional district forward the application to the ALC, the information and recommendation offered by the regional district will be taken into consideration by the commission.

### **Regional Growth Strategy**

The RGS designates the subject property as agricultural areas and relevant policies within the RGS are included below:

Goal 3: Local Economic Development “*Achieve a sustainable, resilient and dynamic local economy that supports business and the region’s entrepreneurial spirit.*”

Objectives 3-A: Support local business retention, development and investment “*Support and work with the Comox Valley Economic Development Society in creating a positive business-enabling environment through cooperating on policies and procedures that help to support and retain existing business and attracts new business and investment.*”

Policy 3A-1 “*Encourage responsible expansion of the economic base of the Comox Valley with the intent of enhancing wealth and employment opportunities.*”

Policy 3B-2 “*Protect and enhance ALR lands with the intent to grow and diversify the base of agriculture activities.*”

Policy 3C-1 “*Work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Land and the Agriculture Land Commission to develop strategies and actions to increase the amount of actively farmed agricultural lands, and reduce barriers to agriculture viability in Agricultural Areas.*”

The RGS supports the attraction of new business that will protect and enhance ALR lands with the intent to grow and diversify the base of agriculture activities. The proposed seaweed drying business complies with the RGS objectives and policies.

### **Official Community Plan**

The OCP designates the subject property as agricultural areas. One of the goals in the OCP is “*To encourage economic activities that utilize the resources of the area and which complement the environment characteristics and natural qualities, culture, and geographic setting of Comox Valley.*” The OCP encourages economic activities that utilize the resources of the area and support the expansion and diversification of the local economic base. Therefore, the proposal is consistent with the OCP.

### **Current Zoning**

The subject property is zoned RU-ALR (agricultural and residential use) pursuant to zoning bylaw no. 2781. The seaweed drying business (processing aquatic plants) is not listed as a permitted use in the RU-ALR zone. However, the zoning bylaw permits any use permitted by the ALC through site-specific regulations or order. Should the ALC grant permission to operate the seaweed drying business, a rezoning would not be required to permit the use. Staff notes that the zoning bylaw is silent on the growing, cultivating, and processing of aquatic plants as a specific use. The proposed seaweed drying business does not comply with the *Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation* and proposal is considered a non-farm use.

### **Reasons to support the ALR Non-farm use application**

- The applicants intend to utilize an existing farm building within the main farm yard for the proposed seaweed drying business. The application states no additional buildings are

required or proposed. As the existing farm building is located within the main farm yard, no arable agricultural land will be impacted as a result of the proposed business;

- It is also recognized that the existing farm building is under-utilized. The proposed internal modifications and general repairs to the farm building will help revitalize and prolong the use of the farm building that was built in the 1950s;
- The seaweed annual harvest and the processing will occur during the agricultural “down time” from October to January of any given year. The processing component of the facility will not be utilized beyond this period. The building can be returned back to agricultural use during the summer months;
- Staff regards the proposed use as both appropriate and compatible with the surrounding agricultural activities.

Based on the foregoing, this application for non-farm use to permit the seaweed drying operation in an existing farm building is supportable.

### **Options**

The regional board could either support or refuse this application. Where a local government reviews an application for non-farm use of ALR lands, the regional board has four options:

- 1) pass a resolution to forward the application to the ALC with the comment that it supports the application;
- 2) pass a resolution to forward the application to the ALC with the comment that it does not support the application;
- 3) pass a resolution to forward the application to the ALC with no comment; or,
- 4) pass a resolution to not forward the application to the ALC.

As outlined within the planning analysis section, the proposed seaweed drying business will not impact the current agricultural activity. The comments from the CVRD will advise the ALC that the proposal is consistent with the RGS and the OCP. Staff confirms that the proposal (seaweed drying business) supports the objectives and policies of the RGS and OCP.

### **Financial factors**

Fees have been collected for this non-farm use application in accordance with section 35, “Application fees”, of the ALCA.

### **Legal factors**

This report and the recommendations contained herein are in compliance with the ALCA, regulation and regional district bylaws.

### **Sustainability implications**

Goal 6.1 of the Comox Valley sustainable strategy aims to “*support a diverse and thriving local agricultural system.*” The proposed seaweed drying business is consistent with sustainable strategy Goal 6.1 as it will enhance and diversify the agricultural sector. The carrageenan that is extracted from the seaweed is used predominantly in the dairy industry.

### **Intergovernmental factors**

As part of this ALR non-farm use application, referrals were forwarded to the following advisory group and agency for review and comment:

**A. Ministry of Agriculture (regional agrologist)**

On September 24, 2012, the regional agrologist outlined her support for this non-farm use within the ALR application in order to allow for a seaweed drying business (Appendix A). The regional agrologist suggested that an approval of the non-farm use should be tied to the applicant's provincial license. Staff concurs with the suggestion that should the license lapse, or terms are not met, the non-farm use approval would be rescinded. Staff has incorporated this language into the recommendation.

**B. Agricultural community advisory panel (ACAP)**

As part of its September 26, 2012, conference call discussion, the ACAP provided the following motion (Appendix B).

*“We defer making any recommendation on this application pending clarification from the ALC on non-farm-uses on the ALR land.”*

As an information item, this staff report has been sent to the City of Courtenay because the lands about the northern boundary of the City along Anderton Road. The regional district is aware that the City of Courtenay has applied to the province for an application for municipal boundary extension for the subject property (Beaver Meadows Farms/Beaver Meadows Cranberry Corporation).

**Interdepartmental involvement**

This proposed non-farm use application has been referred to strategic and long range planning, engineering, parks, fire services, emergency services, building services, and bylaw compliance and special investigations departments for review and comment.

Strategic and long range planning offered the following comment:

*“The RGS supports the attraction of new business that is a responsible expansion of the economic base of the Comox Valley, and which diversifies agricultural activities. Barriers that reduce agriculture viability need to be reduced. Using the existing farm buildings on the land does not impact the arable farming land on the subject property. The OCP encourages economic activities that utilize the resources of the area and support the expansion and diversification of the local agricultural base.”*

All other CVRD departments outlined that their interests are unaffected by this development proposal.

**Citizen/public relations**

Public notification is not required for a non-farm use application in the ALR.

Prepared by:

***T. Trieu***

Ton Trieu  
Planning Technician

Concurrence:

***A. Mullaly***

Alana Mullaly, MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Planning Services

Concurrence:

***K. Lorette***

Kevin Lorette, P. Eng., MBA  
General Manager of  
Property Services Branch

Attachments: Appendix A – “Letter from J. Hatfield, regional agrologist, dated September 24, 2012.”  
Appendix B – Minutes from the agricultural community advisory panel, dated September 26, 2012.”

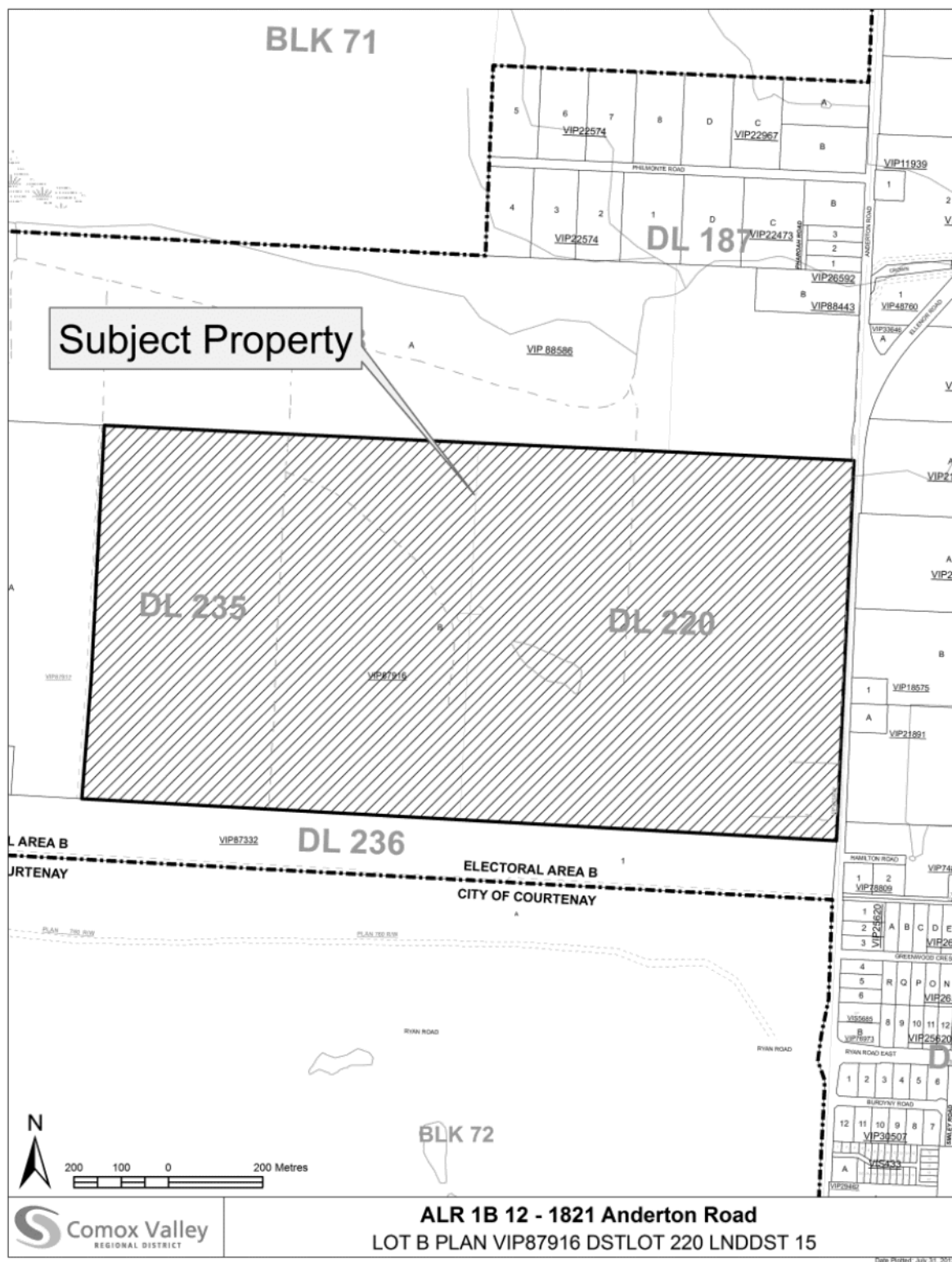


Figure 1: Subject Property

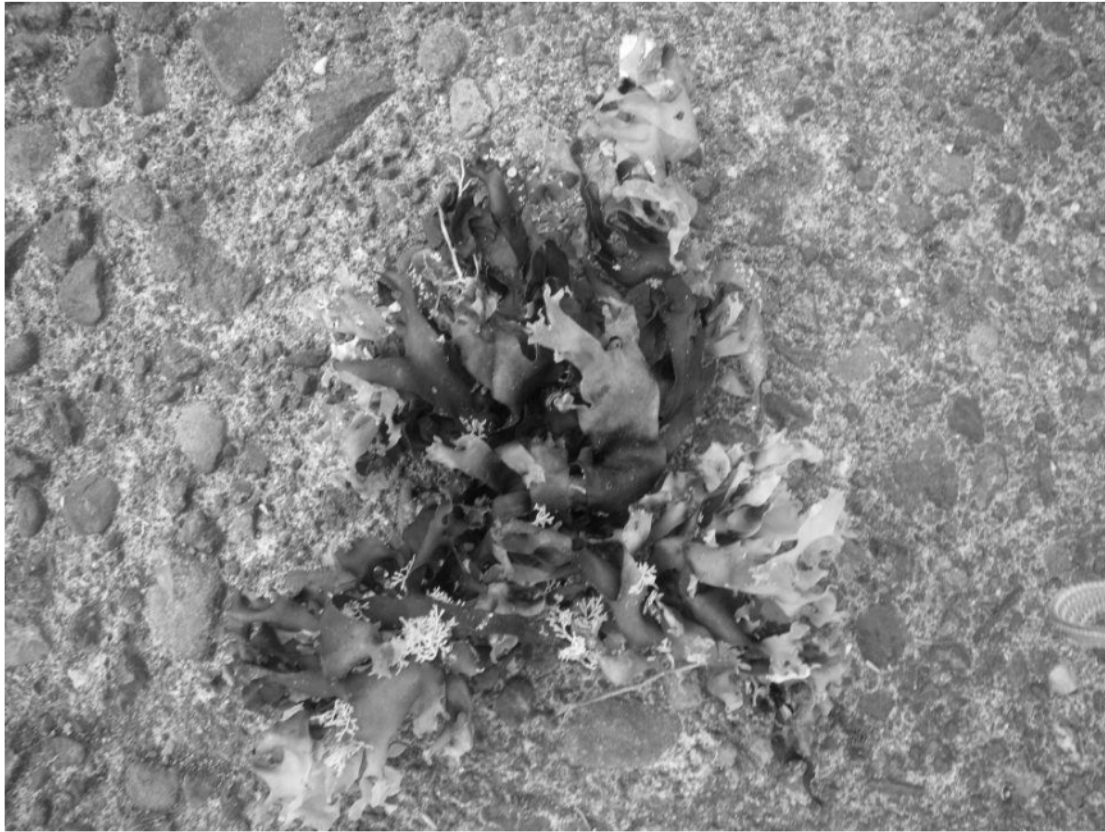


Figure 2: *Mazzaella japonica* (also referred as Irish moss)

Comox Valley Regional District  
**RECEIVED**  
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 To: \_\_\_\_\_  
 JUL 25 2012

**What is Being Proposed?**

The application proposes operating a dryer in an existing and unused structure on the farm, where the dryer will be used for drying seaweed in the winter months and hay in the summer and fall months. We are currently licensed through the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to harvest beach cast *Mazzaella japonica* between Deep Bay and Qualicum Beach. The harvest occurs between October to January.

**Is This Proposed Operation of Benefit to Agriculture?**

Yes. The waste and excess seaweed will be used as both a fertilizer for crops and as a nutritional supplement for the cows, both on this farm. Also, the carrageenan containing seaweed is used predominantly in the dairy industry and we may attempt to expand Natural Pastures product line from cheese to sour cream, ice cream, and chocolate milk. Furthermore, since the seaweed harvest only occurs in the late fall and winter months, the dryer can be used for drying hay on the farm. This also involves the use of a compression bailer, which can also be used to bail hay.

**What Additional Footprint Will Be Created On The Farm?**

None. The structure has existed for many years and is currently not in use. This seaweed drying is a reason to revitalize the structure and bring it back into use, so that it may be used for drying hay in the summer and fall months. The structure was originally used as a wind tunnel for drying hay.

**Can The Structure Be Returned To Agricultural Use?**

Yes. It can be returned to agricultural use at any time and the dryer that we will be using in the structure can be used to dry virtually any type of solid agricultural product. The dryer can be used to dry hay every year, as the hay harvest and the seaweed harvest occur at different times of the year.

**Why Can't This Operation Occur Outside of the ALR?**

Comox Valley Regional District currently does not have zoning for seaweed drying, as it is a relatively new industry to the area. Also the Regional District of Nanaimo zones this as Heavy Industrial, which makes a facility difficult to zone. Also, although the smell of seaweed drying is minimal, we still believe that it is a prudent idea to conduct this away from residential. And in addition, a source of natural gas for drying is difficult to locate in the area, which is generally needed for a conventional dryer. We have a pending patent application on an energy recycling dryer that uses hydroelectricity only, but it is still in the prototype stage.

**Is This Seaweed Harvest of Benefit to the Environment?**

Yes. Anaerobically decomposing seaweed is producing roughly 15 kg of methane per wet ton which equates to 1080 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent over 20 years. Removing the seaweed and processing it actually has the effect of reducing the overall Global Warming Potential (GWP) by about 70% with a conventional operation and as much as 98% with biodiesel and our patent pending dryer and energy recycling carrageenan boiling vessel, using proven heat pump and heat exchanger technology.

**Figure 3: Brief Description from Agent**



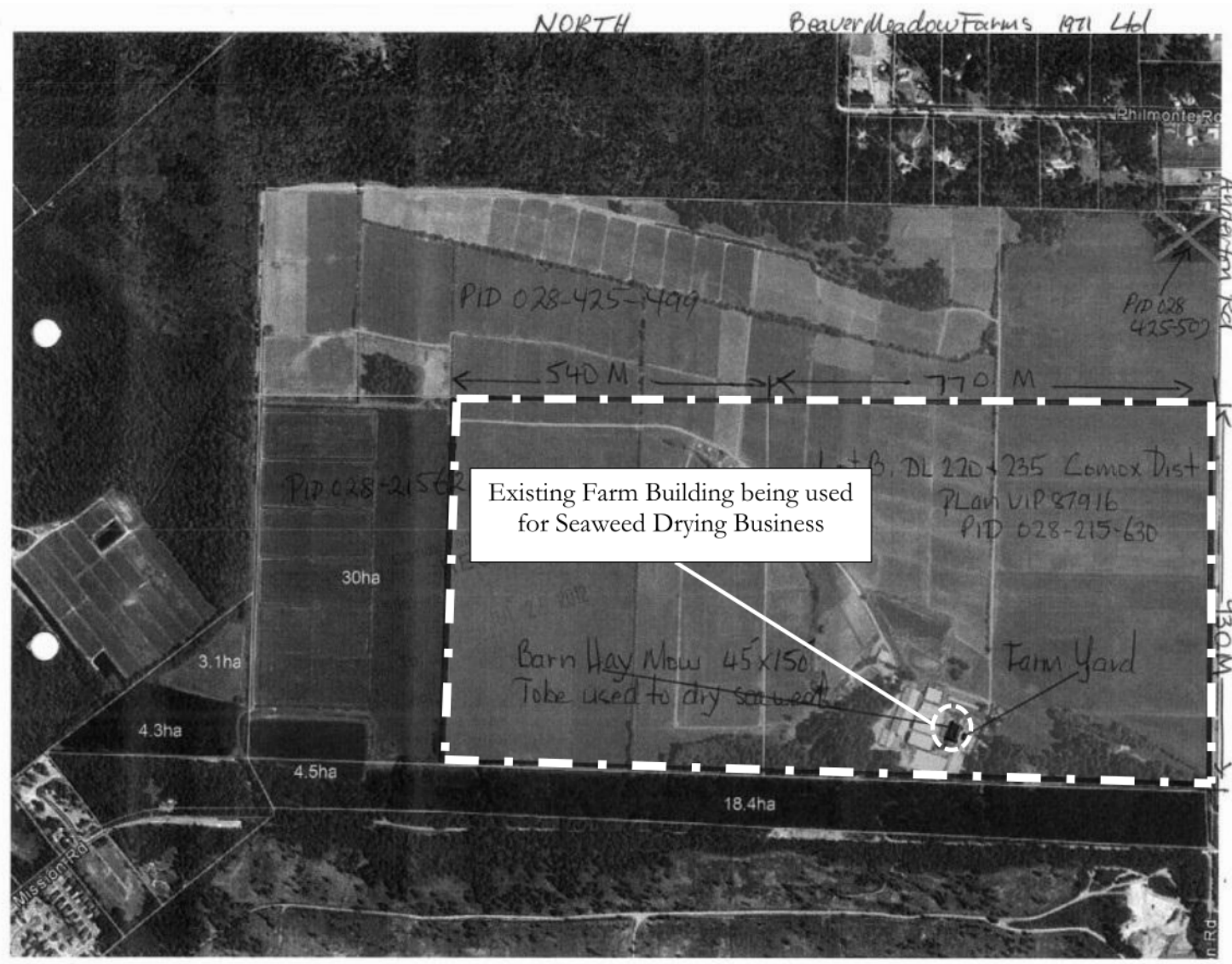


Figure 4: Proposed location for seaweed drying business



Figure 5: Farm building



Figure 6: Ramp to the Second Level



Figure 7: Farm Building- Ground Level

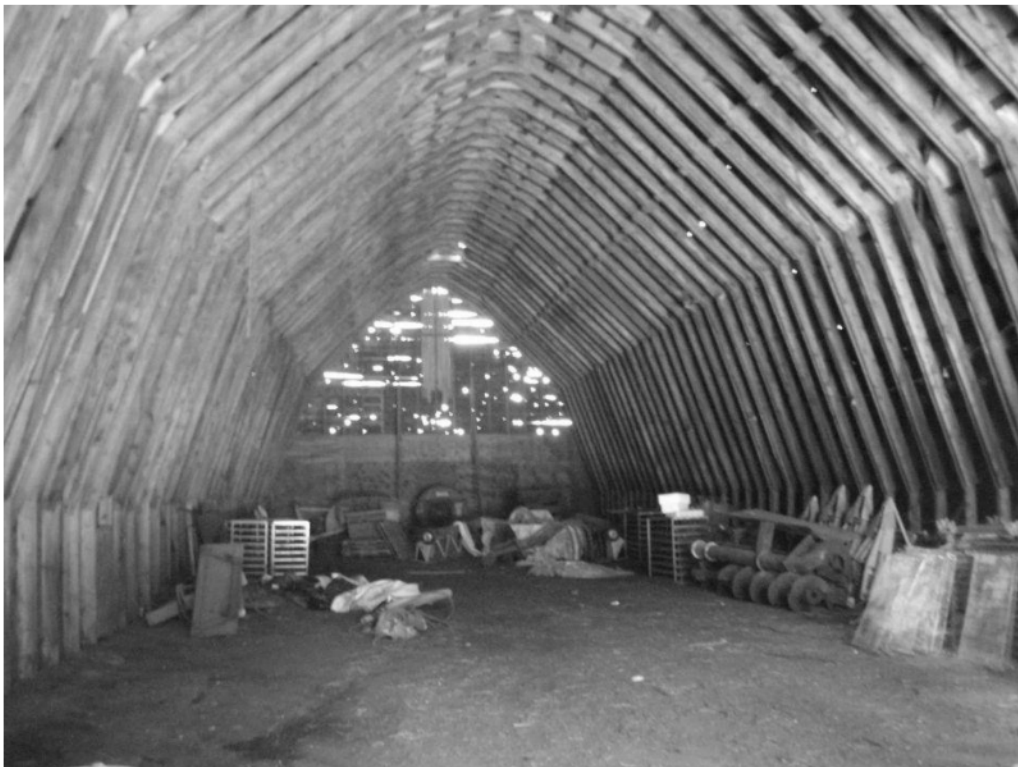


Figure 8: Farm Building – Second Level



September 24, 2012

File: ALR 1B 12

Ton Trieu  
Planning Technician  
Property Services Branch  
600 Comox Rd.,  
Courtenay, BC V9N 3P6

Dear Ton Trieu

**Re: Beaver Meadow farm – Non Farm Use, Seaweed Drying**

Thank you for arranging the site visit with the Agricultural Advisory Committee and myself on September 19, 2012. Please find attached my comments on the application for a seaweed drying facility to be located in the loft of the hay drying barn, on DL 220 and 235, Beaver Meadow Farm.

The collection of seaweed is licensed by the BC Ministry of Agriculture. It is a new industry to the west coast and as such is considered experimental with only a limited number of licenses awarded for this year. Future quotas and licenses will be based on monitoring and evaluation of this year's total harvest of 5000 tonne(s) equally divided by 5 license holders.

The challenge this new industry has is finding a suitable site to dry and bale the *Mazzaella japonica* in the Comox Valley Regional District for shipping overseas to extract carrageenan. At this time there is no land use zone that captures this type of processing. If this industry develops it may be advisable to amend the Aquaculture 4 (AQ4) zone or the Industrial Marine (IM) to include seaweed processing and drying. At this time these zones only appear to include seafood, shellfish and finfish processing.

The proposed site of the facility is the upper level of an old timber barn previously used for hay drying, now storage. The barn was built in the 50's and would require significant repair and modifications before it can be used for the purpose of drying seaweed. The barn is located in the main farmyard with silage bag storage nearby. The location of the seaweed drying is unlikely to pose any additional odour or runoff related problems.

A condition of the license requires that the sorting of seaweed be done at the beach and that only the species on the license be brought to the farm for drying. This would likely mean there would be limited amounts of waste seaweed would require disposal. Water would be a byproduct of the dehydration of the process. The intention is that both waste water and seaweed can be utilized by the farm as irrigation, cattle feed supplement and soil amendment.

I support the application for a seaweed processing, drying and baling operation to be located in the hay drying barn on Beaver Meadow farm. It will be utilizing an existing building and will provide needed

repairs to the barn which could be returned to agricultural use. The seaweed drying process as described appears to be at best complimentary or at least benign to the current uses on the farm.

I would suggest linking the non-farm use approval to the license to Process Aquatic Plants in BC. [http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/fisheries/Manuals/Licensing/gt\\_processing\\_or\\_coldstorage.pdf](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/fisheries/Manuals/Licensing/gt_processing_or_coldstorage.pdf). This is required to dry and bale the seaweed at this location. If the processing license lapses, the terms are not met or if it is not renewed annually then the approval for the barn's use can be rescinded. This would prevent any other form of processing from using the building without another non-farm use application. If you have any questions regarding my comments please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jill Hatfield", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Jill Hatfield P.Ag.  
Regional Agrologist

cc: Gary Caine,  
Manager, Strategic Integration,  
Food Protection Branch, BC Ministry of Agriculture

## Minutes of the CVRD Agricultural Community Advisory Panel

### Conference Call

September 26, 2012 7:30 pm

Subject: Agricultural Land Reserve application ALR 1B 12(non-farm use application, Beaver Meadows Farm, 1821-E Anderton Rd.)

Present: D. Page (chair), B. Whittaker, C. Brown, J. Hamilton, B. Wood, C. Goldsheider

Regrets: D. Thran, G. McClintock

The proposal to utilize an old dairy barn for a seaweed drying facility was discussed at length. The following points were raised:

- The proposal is food related and not strictly industrial.
- The barn is not used for anything else at present.
- Some waste material from the operation could be used as feed supplements or fertilizer.
- Other farm crops could be dried using the facility.
- How is this different from using unused barns for storing RV's?
- With a decline in the number of dairy farms there are lots of empty buildings. Does approving this application set a precedent?
- We don't really know the position of the ALC on this type of use.
- Since this application fits into a grey area and may set a precedent it would be better to refer this application on to the ALC so they can rule on it or clarify their position on non-farm use on ALR land.

A motion was made as follows:

We defer making any recommendation on this application pending clarification from the ALC on non-farm uses on ALR land.

Motion passed by consensus

## Margerison, Elizabeth AGRI:EX

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**From:** Hatfield, Jill AGRI:EX  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2014 11:53 AM  
**To:** 'Ferguson, Erin'  
**Subject:** Exclusion\_Beaver Meadow Farm  
**Attachments:** Exclusion\_Beaver Meadow Farm.pdf

Hi Erin: Please find attached a copy of my referral letter.

Jill Hatfield P.Ag.  
Regional Agrologist  
BC Ministry of Agriculture  
2500 Cliffe Ave., Courtenay BC V9N 5M6  
ph: 250 897-7518  
[smartfarmbc.ca](http://smartfarmbc.ca)



January 28, 2014

File: 3015-20-Beaver Meadows Farms

Erin Ferguson  
Land Use Planner  
Planning Services Department  
City of Courtenay  
830 Cliffe Ave.  
Courtenay, BC V9N 2J7

Dear: Erin Ferguson:

**Re: Application for Exclusion- Beaver Meadow Farms (1971) Ltd**

Thank you for the referral dated January 13, 2014 from Beaver Meadow Farms (1971) Ltd to exclude 3.6 hectare Lot A DL 236 Comox District Plan EP23279, referred to as Lot "A".

Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation: The requirement for application documentation for exclusion by a land owner is laid out in Part 7 — Owner Applications for Exclusion from Reserve, sections 15 through 21. Specific information regarding notification is required by the applicant before forwarding an application for exclusion to the Agricultural Land Commission. The application forwarded to me does not include many of these requirements. In order not to delay the application process they should be part of the application package.

[http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/legislation/Reg/ALR\\_Use-Subd-Proc\\_Reg.htm#sec15](http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/legislation/Reg/ALR_Use-Subd-Proc_Reg.htm#sec15)

Land Capability for Agriculture Mapping: The Land Capability for Agriculture suggests the parcel is rated at 70% class 5 with stoniness and topography limitations and 30% class 5 with topography and aridity limitations. The improvable rating is 70% class 4 with topography and stoniness as limitations, 30% class 5 with topography limitations. This appears to have higher capability than the adjacent area outside the ALR. The parcels outside the ALR are rated at 60% class 5 with topography as the limitation and 40% class 7 with topography as the limitation. No improvable rating possible on this land.

In order to provide as complete a picture of the soil capability as possible I suggest the applicant provide a third party verified site specific soil survey of the parcel proposed for exclusion. This will help substantiate the applicant's claim that the soils of the subject parcel are the same as those of neighboring property (1 plan VIP89215) which were never included in the ALR.

Future land Use: I recognize this property has not been zoned by the City of Courtenay and retains its previous zoning from the Comox Valley Regional District. Given that this parcel could form the boundary of the ALR it could be important that the proposed land use of the subject parcel be identified so appropriate ALR buffering and water management protection could be identified.

I would encourage the applicant to ensure they have provided for all the requirements under Part 7 — Owner Applications for Exclusion from Reserve, Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation. If the applicant has any questions regarding the exclusion application requirements please contact Elizabeth Sutton, Land Use Planner at the Agricultural Land Commission.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jill Hatfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke across the middle.

Jill Hatfield, P.Ag.  
Regional Agrologist

**Margerison, Elizabeth AGRI:EX**

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**From:** Hatfield, Jill AGRI:EX  
**Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2014 3:55 PM  
**To:** 'eferguson@courtenay.ca'  
**Subject:** Beaver Meadow Farms Exclusion Application  
**Attachments:** Letter to City June 2014\_FINAL\_June 23.pdf

Good Afternoon Erin: Please find attached the Ministry of Agriculture referral letter regarding the Beaver Meadow Farms exclusion application.

Jill Hatfield P.Ag.  
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Your File No.: 3015-20-Beaver Meadows Farm

June 23, 2014

Erin Ferguson  
Planning Department  
City of Courtenay  
830 Cliffe Avenue  
Courtenay, BC V9N 2J7

Via email: eferguson@courtenay.ca

RE: Beaver Meadows Farm ALR exclusion application

Dear Ms. Ferguson,

Thank you for allowing Ministry of Agriculture planning staff to participate in the site visit that took place on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014. The below comments have been prepared based on the site visit and the subdivision plan.

In general, the exclusion of land from the ALR increases the speculation on farmland, increases the price of farmland for farming and increases the potential for farm practice complaints. Land of lower soil capability may be able to be used for non-soil based agriculture. Often if a site is able to be developed for residential uses, then the site can be developed for non-soil based agriculture as well. Additionally this proposal does not appear to provide any benefits to farming.

The soils information provided could be improved by providing a methodology for the field investigation, mapping of soil pits dug and greater detail regarding what was found during the field investigation. Measurements of the amount of land slope would also be useful. In conversations held with Ministry of Agriculture staff, these are items are often part of ALR exclusion applications particularly if the basis for exclusion is agricultural soil/land suitability.

In the subdivision plan (date is illegible), there appears to be a proposed linear park that is to follow the perimeter of the development. It is stated in the *Comox Valley Agricultural Plan* that greenways are more of a concern to farmers if they are part of trail network than if they are natural areas. The details of the subdivision plan are rough and it is difficult to determine if a there will be public trail located in this designated park. It is also stated in the *Agricultural Plan* that buffering and fencing be used to reduce the impacts of non-farm uses on agricultural operations.

The City of Courtenay Official Community Plan states the goal that urban development will be directed away from the ALR to minimize conflicts between farm and non-farm uses (Section 4.5.2). If the City is supportive of either or both parts of this subdivision, the Ministry of Agriculture would highly recommend that Policy 4.5.3.4 of the OCP be incorporated. The Policy states that "The City will work towards reducing conflicts between agricultural and other uses by ensuring:

- Fencing and buffering requirements for non-agricultural uses adjacent to agricultural operations:
- Appropriate access
- Increasing setbacks from the ALR boundaries and intensive agricultural operations
- Use of development Permit Area designations to protect agricultural lands.”

It is also strongly suggested that, as per Policy 4.5.3.5.4, public consultation take place as part of this application for ALR exclusion.

If this exclusion proposal for urban development were to go ahead, then the Ministry would recommend that the local government and/or ALC require that the Ministry’s Edge Planning Standard be followed with farm friendly subdivision design, house setbacks from the ALR boundary and un-interrupted 15 m vegetative buffer along the urban side of the ALR boundary. Farm friendly subdivision design includes addressing storm water run-off, directing traffic away from farming areas and eliminating any road endings pointing toward farmland. In addition, notices should be registered with the land titles that notify land purchasers that the land is nearby farmland and those disturbances such as odour, noise and dust should be expected.

Given the proposed extent of upland development on both the Northridge Properties Inc. and Beaver Meadow Cranberry Corp. property and the proximity to the adjacent low lying agricultural land and farms careful attention to storm-water management is encouraged. The City of Courtenay is a partner with the BC Water Balance Model. Any development in this area should utilize the Water Balance Model source controls to maintain the pre-development hydrologic condition avoiding detrimental impacts to surrounding agricultural land.

[http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/stormwater/urban\\_rural\\_land/pdf/61.pdf](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/stormwater/urban_rural_land/pdf/61.pdf)

Any roads that are to be constructed to provide access to the small parcel north of the proposed subdivision should be constructed on the non-ALR portion and should not terminate at the ALR boundary. Road endings at the ALR can give the impression that future development will take place in the ALR. This could be redesigned such that the road ending becomes another lot or a cul de sac.

In the event that the Beaver Meadow Cranberry Corp. (as identified on the subdivision plan) is not developed for residential uses, there is a note in the plan showing a park running between the Northridge Properties Inc. and the Beaver Meadow Cranberry Corp. properties. This park should be located on the non-ALR parcel and, at this time, the subdivision plan shows the park on the Beaver Meadows property (presumably within the ALR).

For additional information for ensuring harmony between agricultural and urban residential land uses, please consider the following resources:

[http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/publications/823100-2\\_Guide\\_to\\_Edge\\_Planning.pdf](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/publications/823100-2_Guide_to_Edge_Planning.pdf) (provides information on buffers)

<http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/publist/800Series/820500-2PlanningSubdivisions.pdf>

<http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/publist/800Series/820500-1Subdivision-A-Guide.pdf>


[http://www.landcommission.gov.bc.ca/publications/buffer/lbs\\_main.htm](http://www.landcommission.gov.bc.ca/publications/buffer/lbs_main.htm)

Other relevant documents can be found here:

<http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Publications.htm#edge>

We hope you find the above information of use. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this proposal further, please do not hesitate to email Land Use Agrologist Alison Fox, P.Ag. at [Alison.Fox@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Alison.Fox@gov.bc.ca) or to call 604-556-3106.

Regards,



Bronwyn Sawyer, A.Ag.  
Land Use Planner



Jill Hatfield, P.Ag  
Regional Agrologist

pc: Alison Fox P.Ag.  
Land use Agrologist, Strengthening Farming Program

Bert van Daltsen, P.Eng.  
Manager, Strengthening Farming Program