

MY Story  
March 8, 2017

My family and I used this property every winter, taking a break from demanding jobs we would pack up our girls, come and spend a week enjoying the BC winter.



Within hours, after a 4 day rain, the whole property was destroyed.  
July 11, 1997 forever marked in history.



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The power of the Debris Flow came in two pushes. With the first, icy water waste deep, together with sand & mud flowed into their home.



Mom, in the 4th stage of Parkinson's, sat motionless in this her orange chair. For over 3 hours the ICY water grew deeper and deeper. Dad, stood by her side, vowing not to leave, pledging they would die together. There was no way dad could carry her out. Too much debris and water too deep.





MY Dad, 74 yrs old, facing incredible carnage, still smiling!

The next day revealed the damages, Kitchen table totally buried, master bed pushed out the front wall. The force of the second push evident, seeing the 200 lb. stove pushed like a toy.



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## Our beautiful family retreat



destroyed, unrecognizable!

Dad's 1/2 ton truck floated like a twig, getting hung up in the ditch.



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Where we all gathered every summer, now obliterated.



What we had was gone! Lives changed forever, WHO WILL HELP?



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You cannot imagine  
the pain, the sense  
of loss & confusion!

Imagine

You are 74 yrs old,  
With a heart condition  
Your wife is 72 1/2  
Totally Frozen with  
Parkinson.

Yet, you keep going,  
putting in a garden.  
pruning fruit trees  
doing all the cooking  
and laundry.  
feeding your wife,  
of 52 years, bathing  
her, potting her, and  
Putting her to bed.

When you have time  
you do things you  
love. Build rockery &  
plant flower gardens  
hauling in dirt and  
manure.

Now your world is  
SHATTERED.  
Where do you go?  
What do you do?  
Who will help?



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The summer kitchen, where your grand kids made dozens of jar of pickles, Hundreds of “Blais Burgers”, and corn on the cob served often!



Family traditions, such sweet memories!  
Now only destruction floods your eyes!!



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The cabin you restored, so your kids could come visit. The rockery you built, Dad you were an amazing man.



Notice the thick row of trees between the cabin and the creek.

Notice dad's rockery work

But then, "Carless logging practises" took it all away. Your cabin destroyed, your rockery broken and buried.

Now see Dad's Rockery work, and Imagine the force it took to remove all the trees behind the cabin, then move the cabin until it was stopped by the oak tree and the rocks piling up in front of it.



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Imagine looking at this destruction!!  
Imagine wondering How? Who?  
Why?

Imagine feeling hopeless,  
devistated, sick to your stomach!

Image not one person coming  
to offer you a cup of coffee.

Imagine the government  
Condemning your place, telling  
Crews not to help you?

Why bother helping you, they were  
planning to buying it from you



for a debris basin. Imagine the  
offer never comes in!

You are left with:

NO power,

No wells,

No home,

No Driveway,

No workshop

How do you exist, while you try  
to rebuild.

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Anger sets in. All your family show up to help. Your son and daughter take time off work. Grand children drop everything. What caused this slide?



Was it God?! Like all the neighbours are saying, or was it the Unthinkable, LOGGING?

What to do? YES!!! Rent a plane and go see for yourself. There it is, plainly seen from the sky. Suddenly, the sounds of the choppers fill your thoughts. They knew! They knew that afternoon the hillside had slipped into the creek, but they said nothing. They did nothing. They left you, your wife in that icy water for hours.

Imagine the whole community in harms way. They said NOTHING!!!! Imagine no one wanting to admit blame. IMAGINE Tons of debris blocking a swollen creek. All afternoon they watch the event by choppers and did nothing! Every local heard the choppers, yet they knew zero!



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THIS IS THE SCARP LEFT AFTER THE SATURATED SOIL AND TREES SLID INTO THE CREEK. IT IS BEYOND WORDS.



Starting at a single point, just below culvert #1, 2 plus hecters of mud and trees begin to slide, slipping down the 60% slope completely scouring it. But then the 100 foot sheer drop into the creek below!



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The formation of damn is obvious. The amount of material that left the scarp filled the creek canyon about 30 to 40 feet deep and 100 meters in length, with water piling up behind it like a lake, no where to go!



The sheer magnitude is hard to estimate with the naked eye. The experts say 92,000 Cubic Meters of debris, not counting the water, passed through my yard that day.



Rebuild? WE DID!!!  
Mammoth log piles  
hauled away.

A total of 6 - 40 cubic  
meter bins of Hog fuel  
and one logging truck of  
marketable timber were  
hauled away.



Can you imagine the work it takes to make  
the above picture turn into the bottom  
picture, when you own no, I mean zero  
equipment. Bobcats are \$40.00 per hour!

So years of burning,  
cleaning, raking, hauling  
rock by wheelbarrow.  
Then buying sand and  
levelling, by hand!  
One site is levelled.



Then the task of  
Rebuilding began.

Hard to believe  
how many fingers  
were smashed.  
How many backs  
were sun burned.  
How many blisters  
were created on  
Hands and feet.

How many lost  
years of memories  
at the beach!

Grandchildren  
grew up working  
every summer!

Devastated land  
Becomes usable  
once again.

Sing alongs  
resume around the  
fire pit.

So many stories,  
we cannot begin  
to record it all!



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## 1997 AFTER THE SLIDE



WE MADE IT INTO THIS!

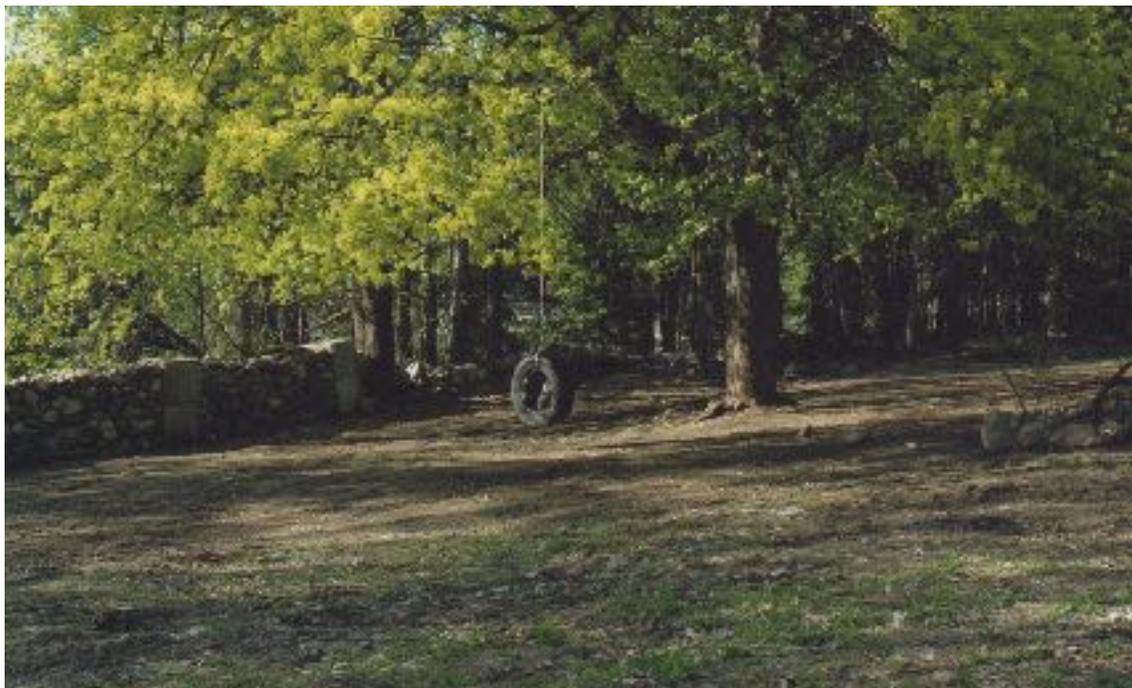


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Working for years, we built a rock wall by hand. 2 Ft thick, 4 feet high. WHY? Well we needed to put the rocks somewhere. How better to do that than do two things at once. Build a fence and clear the land!



And YES!!! It worked, privacy and flat land at last. All the people, who thought no-one owned the land, now got the message. This land is Privately owned!!!



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## BUT THEN 2012 HAPPENED

Highways, Fisheries, & Forestry, left us this



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## Do they look the same? Well look again!

The top picture was taken after the 1997 mega slide. See their new toilet that never got installed, and mom's foot stool, the one she had her feet on the night of the slide, Yep that is it. The bottom picture was taken after 2012, when the creek, during a high water event, cut a new path through our yard. Yes that's the yard, the one we just got finished levelling!!! And then our highway, Yep Gone again. Except they don't have fix it with their money, or during their summer vacation. Do they? Well here is the what the creek looked like after it destroyed us. Looking West towards Mara Lake.



And here is what our roads looked like when an event as minor as 2012 happens!

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and this



## THE STORY DOES NOT END THERE.

Here is my dad's eye witness account of that event in 1997.

*"My wife and I were having supper, I could hear the trees popping but did not know what it was. The sound was similar to the sound a semi-truck makes when it is backfiring. The cracking sound was incredibly loud, so loud in fact, the neighbour up the hill called 911, to report a disaster before it happened. Holding the phone outside her kitchen window she told the operator to listen to the noise. A disaster is imminent so send help immediately!*

*Like a freight train, this slide collected more material as it scoured the creek banks from the apex of its start to the highway, and with a force unimaginable, it hit the highway disintegrating it in seconds. I saw a wall of water, filled with rocks and trees, churning above the height of the small cabin. In seconds, it hit the culvert and shoot 50 feet in the air. I watched helplessly, not knowing what was happening to those living below the highway. Miraculously, we were still alive, but then the water came, so fast and so deep. I saw my 1/2 ton truck float down my driveway towards the highway. I ran to close the inside door, but it was too late, so much sand and water had already entered my home, the door was binding on the kitchen carpet and I could not shut it. Within minutes, the freezing water was knee deep, then waist deep, and there sat my wife neck deep in icy, muddy water. Surely help would come immediately. 3 long hours passed until finally our neighbours, the ones that called 911, came to help carry Louise out of the house through the frigid waters to a standing fire truck. Later she was transported to a hotel where they tried to warm her up. I am amazed she did not die that night. She physically lived but she never recovered from the horrors of that event."*

The deviation for 1997 was just about repaired, when in 2012 the creek banks collapsed, and we became part of history again. Not in a good way but in a very devastating way. I could show you 100's of pictures of the devastation and of the 4 more years of work to repair it. I could, but the important thing we are trying to portray is, once logging has destabilized

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the mountain sides, and we know first hand how horrible it is to endure, there is no way to guarantee more slides and debris flows will not follow. I cannot tell you how hard it has been for the past 20 years. All the pain and tears. All the torn muscles, pulled groins, and destroyed knees and backs from all the hard manual labour we had to do. One thing I do know is: I cannot rebuild again! I implore/beg/demand **NO MORE LOGGING IN OUR WATER SHED. PLEASE!!**

If you proceed with your application to log, we will have no recourse but to fight it all the way to the end. Our whole life savings are now invested in our property. We believe we are safe. In other words we do not expect any major problems, like land slippage into creeks, provided no further logging is approved in our watershed. Hence no further increased water flows. "Reach three" is still problematic. Any increased water from Mara Creek will destabilize these banks and will definitely cause another event. The following picture is of Mara Creek where it joins Hummingbird Creek, taken in 2012.



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## Creek banks in reach 3



Below is a picture of the debris from the 1997 event. Still piled high on the canyon wall side, with trees almost covering it. This is directly across Hummingbird Creek, from where Mara Creek joins it.



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One last point I would like to make is, after a disaster you, the logging companies, are not required by law, to come and do the repairs necessary to stabilize the creek. No, the government takes over and spends our tax dollars and does what it deems necessary to fix the problem. This poses some serious problems. The government is never in the wrong, they never admit guilt, they create their own plan of action with seemingly no ability or desire to modify it, and they make it impossible for us to speak to upper management to ask for important changes. Below is an example of this problem. In 2012, the creek eroded the north bank about 300 feet east of the highway. The force was so destructive it carved a trench through our property to the highway exposing the original foundation of dad's garage. This wedge shaped path averaged 20 feet wide and about 8 feet deep, bring up articles that had been buried 15 years. I want you to note how poorly the creek bank was reconstructed after the 2012 event. This is exactly how poorly they were left after the 1997 debris flow too!!



Yep, that is what they said would be a good bank repair. If you are having trouble finding the creek bank, it is the rock ridge on the left of the picture.

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The next 2 picture show you the vastness of the trench! Note in the second picture the articles turned up by this event.



Hours of back breaking work, and thousands of \$\$\$'s spent and we got the front yard level again. But how do you fill a this?!!! all the material was washed down the point to the lake!



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We need the right bank of the creek repaired. There is a huge swath cut by creek in 2012 on the other side of those boulders, 20' wide and 8' deep.

So the battle to get the government to repair the creek bank begins again.



After many hours and many letters the government made this!

I am so very thankful! The government did hear our cries. They did a super job of rebuilding this.



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Please do not proceed with your application?  
Thank you.

Dave and Lois Schurek (Current land owners since 2004)

Extra Photos to show you how much we love our property. In no particular order.



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