

June 1/82

Trustees support bid to preserve pond

Tuon Pe Fuca News

805007

Swamp Thing is not likely to take up residence in Metchosin, but a small group of local residents would like to at least give him a chance.

Chain saws and bulldozers clearing the ever-widening expanse of land between Metchosin Rd. and Wishart Dr. for gravel pit operations are getting perilously close to a swamp - actually a glacial kettle known as Murray's Pond - that these residents would like to see preserved.

Area resident Lois Gardner took their case to the Sooke School Board recently and last week the trustees threw their support behind the appeal.

Following representations made by the principals of Dunsmuir Secondary and Wishart Elementary schools, the board agreed to send a letter to Construction Aggregates Ltd. mentioning the potential educational value of Murray's Pond.

"It was a popular jogging area for our physical education classes until the owners asked us to stop," Dunsmuir's Rich Lloyd told the trustees, "They were fearful of the consequences of an injury."

Ernie Sinclair of Wishart school said he thought it would be "A

fine gesture" if Construction Aggregates moved to save the pond.

He said he had never been approached by a teacher asking to take a class there and would have denied any such request because it is private property.

"But I would value having this wilderness area available and I think what the residents are asking for is reasonable."

A spokesman for Construction Aggregates, however, doesn't agree.

"It's a non-issue as far as we're concerned," said Terry Johnson, superintendent of the company's Metchosin Rd. site.

The property, he said, is owned outright by the sand and gravel company they just aren't interested in giving up the

acreage.

Genstar Development, the parent company of Construction Aggregates owns 800 acres at that site. Gardner's group is asking that about 50 acres be set aside.

Johnson said he's had a number of residents along Dressler and Cotlow Rds. call him in support of the company's position.

"Fire is a big concern to them and they don't like to see people using that property."

Johnson feels the company has been generous enough to the Capital Regional District in the past. They donated the Albert Head Lagoon site for a wildlife sanctuary, and a couple of acres on the foreshore were given to the CRD several years ago, he said.