

Board supports swamp savers

805008

*Logette
June 1/82*

Sooke school board declared their support for the Save Our Swamp movement last week.

A presentation by SOS leader Lois Gardner at the previous school board meeting pointed out to trustees that Murray's Pond and the surrounding woodland was a valuable area for nature study and the trails were used for jogging by students.

The area adjacent to Wishart and Dressler Roads, which has now been fenced, is owned by Genstar. Their subsidiary, Construction Aggregates plan to start mining for gravel in the area shortly.

"I would like the board to support the submission so ably presented by Mrs Gardner and a letter should be sent to Genstar mentioning the potential educational value of the area," said trustee Irene Lane.

The motion was supported unanimously by the board. A copy of the letter will be sent to the planning department of the Capital Regional District.

The Save Our Swamp group is attempting to have the area containing the pond acquired as a park by the CRD. Under Construction Aggregates current mining plans the pond will be close to the edge of mining activities and will be drained.

In her presentation Gardner said the area was unofficially used by Wishart and Dunsmuir Schools for jogging, nature walks and pond-water study.

Speaking at last week's board meeting, Dunsmuir principal,

Richard Lloyd, said the woods used to be a popular jogging area for the PE department until a year and a half ago when Genstar asked the school not to use it.

"It has never been used as a study area by the school to my knowledge," said Lloyd.

Wishart principal Bernie Sinclair, said he had never been officially asked by a teacher to take a class into those woods. As it was private property he would have refused permission. "But some of our best pond water samples come from this area," he said.

"As a principal I would really appreciate having a wilderness area next to the school," he said.

A petition is circulating around Colwood, asking that the area, which has been used for recreation since 1920, be kept in its original condition as a park. The woods contain unusual plant and wildlife and the pond is a good example of a geological sink or kettle, formed during the ice age.