

Tree cutting case settled

Trimmer to pay \$12,000 to city for lopping 35 trees in park in 2011

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NORTH SHORE NEWS

A local tree trimmer who was paid to cut a swath of trees in a public park by two North Vancouver homeowners has agreed to pay \$12,000 in compensation to Metro Vancouver but will not have a criminal record.

Jeff Johanen Hoff, 34, reached the cash deal with the regional government as part of an out-of-court civil settlement for illegally cutting 35 trees in Capilano River Regional Park over three years ago.

He will pay the money at a rate of \$400 per month.

In criminal court, Hoff was handed a conditional discharge — meaning he won't have a criminal record — and six months probation March 19 after pleading guilty to a charge of mischief over \$5,000 in North Vancouver provincial court.

The two homeowners,

An arborist hired by Metro Vancouver estimated cost of the damage at about \$60,000.

Hooman Bozorgnia, 42, and Roger Mulloy, 56, paid Hoff to cut down and top trees on a steep slope in the park to improve their views between October 2011 and January 2012.

Some of the tree cutting was done during the day, but some of it was also done at more unusual times — very early in the morning or at night.

Trees cut included red cedar, Douglas fir and hemlock between 20 and 100 years old. Seven trees were cut down at the base, nine were topped and severe trimming damaged others.

An arborist hired by Metro Vancouver estimated cost of the damage at about \$60,000 and said it would take 30 to 40 years for the stand of trees to regenerate.

In December, the two homeowners agreed to pay close to \$70,000 to Metro Vancouver as settlement of their civil court case.

The two men got an absolute discharge from the judge in their criminal court case, who decided the pair had already been punished enough in the court of public opinion.

Hoff — whose family has been in the tree trimming business for generations — also suffered public notoriety in the case, which impacted his business, said Crown counsel Jim Cryder.

Cryder said Hoff was remorseful for what he'd done and had apologized for his actions.



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