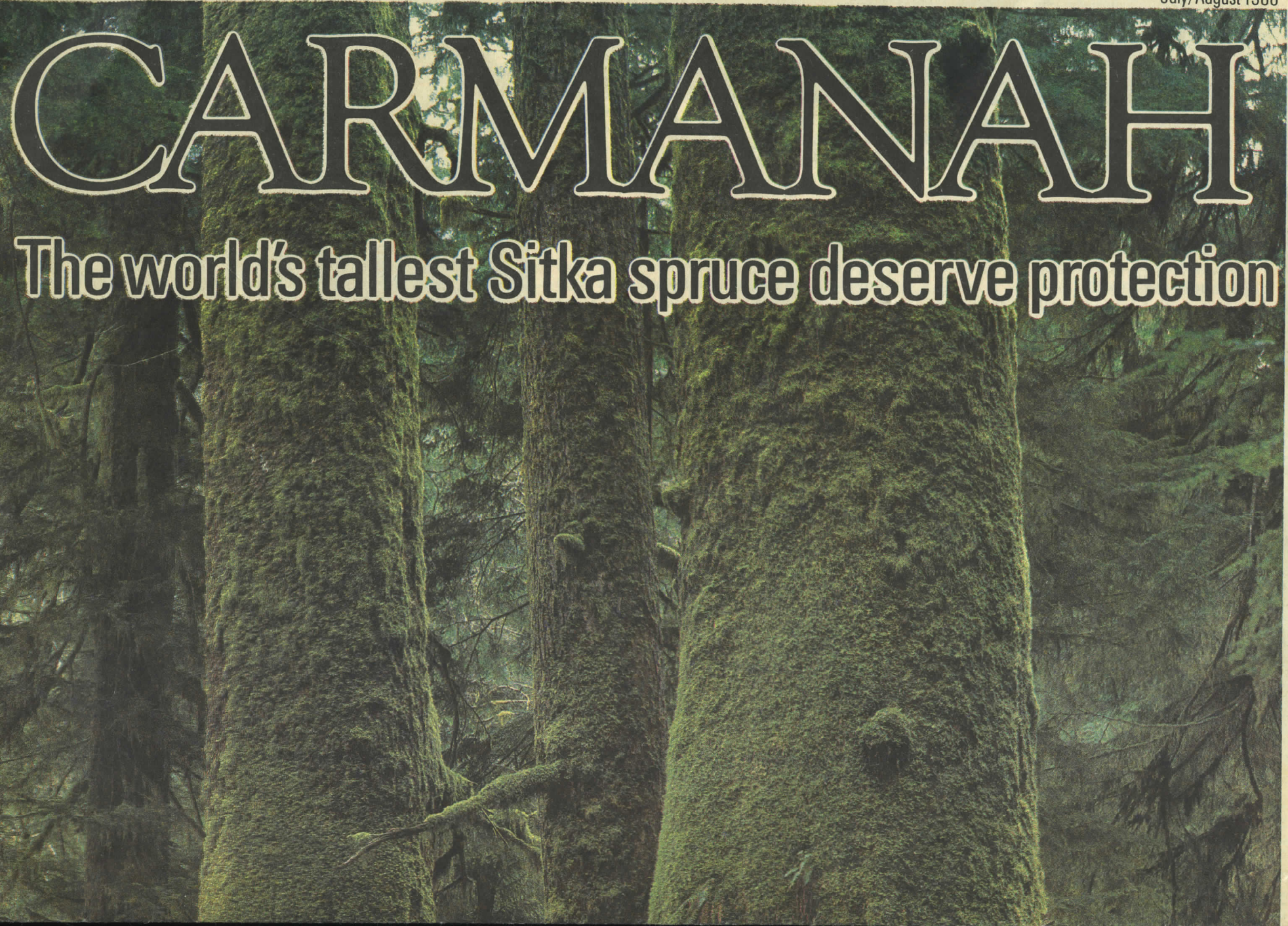


CARMANAH

The world's tallest Sitka spruce deserve protection





Judge refuses request to block WCWC trail building

Carmanah Valley is renowned as the location of Canada's tallest trees and the world's tallest Sitka spruces. Now it is also famous as the place where British Columbia citizens legally affirmed their right to access and recreationally use provincial Crown land.

In May of 1988, a determined group of Western Canada Wilderness Committee volunteers and directors began building trails in Carmanah Valley, despite verbal and written requests to cease and desist from the largest forest company operating in British Columbia. (continued page 2)



Court upholds public right to use Crown lands

(continued from front)

MacMillan Bloedel Ltd's (MB) Tree Farm Licence (TFL) 44 includes the entire Carmanah drainage. The company, which currently makes more than \$1 million per day in profits, obviously did not want the public to see Carmanah's virgin forest, which is one of the most spectacular in the world. It wanted to quickly clear-cut log the best stands of trees there before the public became aware of what it would lose.

In two months with lots of hard work from volunteers, the Wilderness Committee built 8 km of trails winding from grove to grove in the valley's mid section. A route was also scouted to the 95 metre tall Carmanah Giant, the tallest known Sitka spruce which grows near the boundary of Pacific Rim National Park.

MB, realizing that the Wilderness Committee was becoming successful in its campaign to draw public attention to the Carmanah forest, first offered to save two areas with big trees totaling 99 ha. Conservationists pointed out that this 1.4 percent of the valley was totally inadequate to protect the spruce ecosystem. Even the few big trees MB intended to spare within these reserves would be undermined by erosion and blow

stop the Committee's trail work. After two days in court, MB's case failed on all points of law. For the first time since Tree Farms were established 30 years ago, the British Columbia Supreme Court ruled that the public has the right to enter and enjoy Crown lands under TFL tenure. These exclusive licences to harvest timber currently encumber nearly 30 percent of the B.C.'s land base.

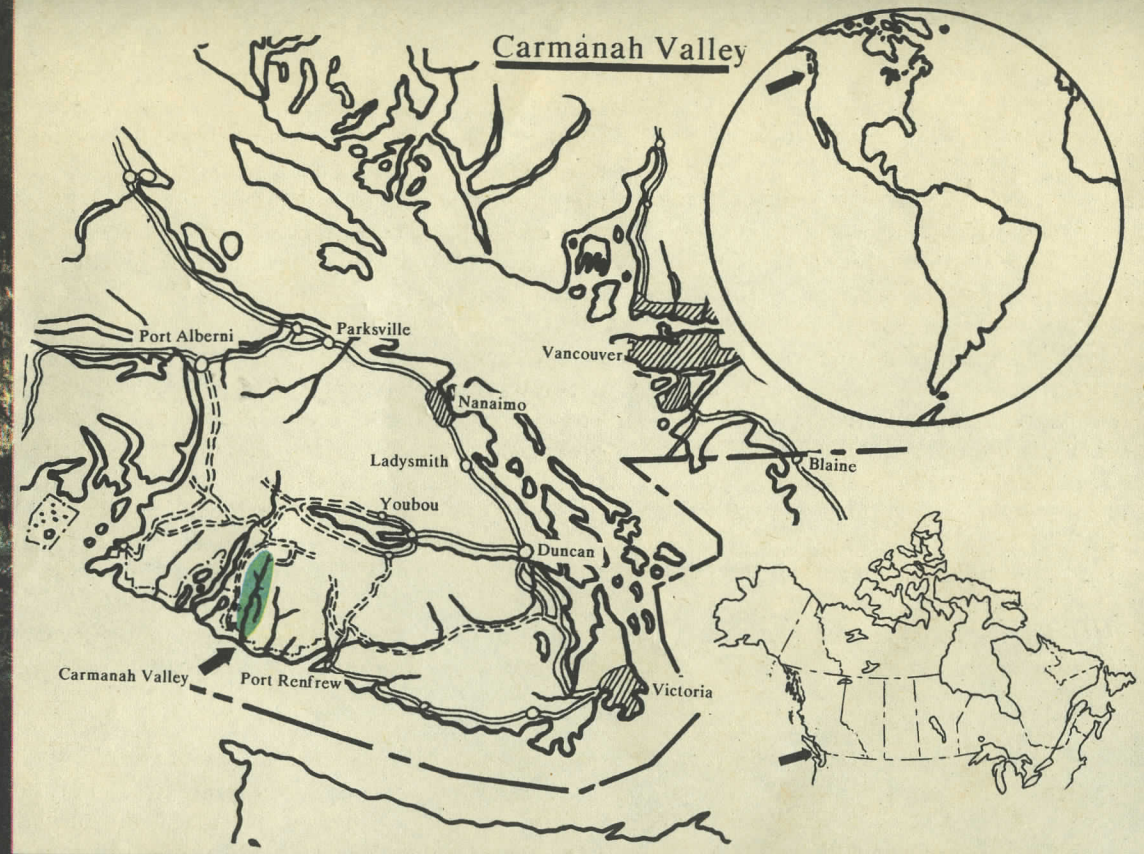
"We are at a critical point in our efforts to save the entire Carmanah Valley," said Ken Lay, a WCWC director. "We have three important tasks on our plate. Over the next few months we must continue to defend our legal rights on Crown land. We must conduct needed research on Carmanah's forest ecology. Most importantly, we must complete our trail system in Carmanah Valley to national park standards. The main thing holding us back is the lack of money."

"The court battle was particularly costly for our committee," said Lay. "We have spent more than twice as much on legal fees as on trail work so far. We need another \$50,000 to successfully conclude our Carmanah campaign."

Confident that the public will respond with

Next the company sought an injunction to

proceeding full steam ahead with research and trail work in Carmanah.





TALLEST SPRUCE DESERVE PROTECTION

NO PUBLIC INPUT

MacMillan Bloedel Ltd. (MB) originally scheduled logging to begin in Carmanah Valley starting in 2003. But, in 1984, at the first hint of interest in the valley by conservationists, the company bypassed the normal public review process and advanced its logging plans by 15 years. These plans were approved by the provincial forest service with no public review or input.

By May 1988, logging roads had reached the edge of the lower Carmanah drainage and were surveyed into the heart of the valley. MB applied for and received permission from the B.C. Forest Service to accelerate the logging even more.

Only the combined efforts of the Heritage Forests Society, Sierra Club and Western Canada Wilderness Committee resulted in Canada's largest forest company halting its road building. MB decided not to build any roads into the valley until the Carmanah's value could be assessed.

Norm Godfrey, the company's Port Alberni region forester commented, "We hope that these trees aren't the biggest or the tallest, so that we can just come in here and log them." MB proceeded to identify 49 sites on Vancouver Island it felt contained comparable trees - 46 of which are scheduled to be logged. Of the remaining three areas, two are small sites in remote Cape Scott Provincial Park. The third, Strathcona Provincial Park's inaccessible Moyeha River, is Canada's only major Pacific coast wilderness drainage entirely within a park and it does not have the same dominate spruce component. In contrast,

old-growth forests in B.C. are of this species.

Sitkas are remarkable in several ways. Flakes of their bark deposited over hundreds of years mound at the base of the ancient trees. For its weight, Sitka spruce is one of the strongest woods. The tight-grained knot-free wood of the old-growth giants, besides being used for airplane construction in the first and second world wars, is still used to make the best sounding boards for pianos and guitars.

BIG TREES OR BIG STUMPS?

According to a spokesman for MB, which has the rights to log the valley under Tree Farm Licence (TFL) 44, each of the massive spruces are worth \$40,000 as a log on the ground. But nobody knows what their long-term ecological and scientific values are; their secrets were born in the twilight of the ice age and carried through more than 10,000 years of evolution.

The licence agreement with the government allows for withdrawal of land representing up to five percent of the allowable annual volume of wood cut. This would easily allow for the preservation of the entire Carmanah watershed. Company claims of massive job losses resulting from wilderness preservation are weak and misleading, considering the fact that Carmanah represents only 1.81 percent of the total productive area of TFL 44. The real threats to forest industry jobs are the company's common practices of over-cutting, wood waste, raw log exports, environmental degradation, and automation in the forest industry.

and lies adjacent to the heavily used West Coast Trail portion of Pacific Rim National Park.

PRESERVATION OF WHOLE VALLEY ESSENTIAL

PRICELESS ECOLOGICAL TREASURE

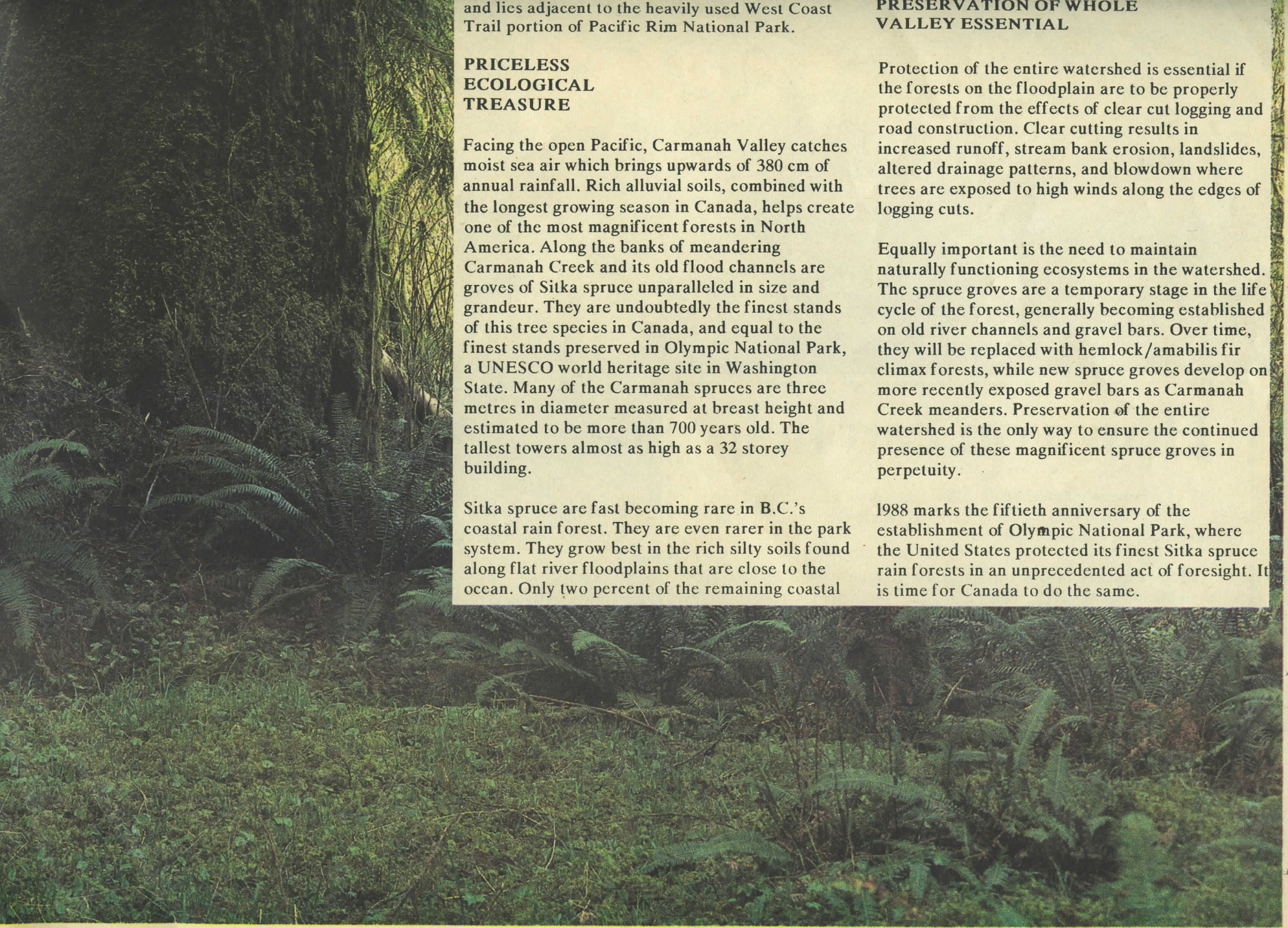
Facing the open Pacific, Carmanah Valley catches moist sea air which brings upwards of 380 cm of annual rainfall. Rich alluvial soils, combined with the longest growing season in Canada, helps create one of the most magnificent forests in North America. Along the banks of meandering Carmanah Creek and its old flood channels are groves of Sitka spruce unparalleled in size and grandeur. They are undoubtedly the finest stands of this tree species in Canada, and equal to the finest stands preserved in Olympic National Park, a UNESCO world heritage site in Washington State. Many of the Carmanah spruces are three metres in diameter measured at breast height and estimated to be more than 700 years old. The tallest towers almost as high as a 32 storey building.

Sitka spruce are fast becoming rare in B.C.'s coastal rain forest. They are even rarer in the park system. They grow best in the rich silty soils found along flat river floodplains that are close to the ocean. Only two percent of the remaining coastal

Protection of the entire watershed is essential if the forests on the floodplain are to be properly protected from the effects of clear cut logging and road construction. Clear cutting results in increased runoff, stream bank erosion, landslides, altered drainage patterns, and blowdown where trees are exposed to high winds along the edges of logging cuts.

Equally important is the need to maintain naturally functioning ecosystems in the watershed. The spruce groves are a temporary stage in the life cycle of the forest, generally becoming established on old river channels and gravel bars. Over time, they will be replaced with hemlock/amabilis fir climax forests, while new spruce groves develop on more recently exposed gravel bars as Carmanah Creek meanders. Preservation of the entire watershed is the only way to ensure the continued presence of these magnificent spruce groves in perpetuity.

1988 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of Olympic National Park, where the United States protected its finest Sitka spruce rain forests in an unprecedented act of foresight. It is time for Canada to do the same.



A MOST SPECTACULAR FOREST HIKE

WCWC began construction of hiking trails in Carmanah Valley in May 1988. By the end of July, more than 500 people had already hiked the trails to visit this spectacular valley.

Starting near the end of the last logging road west of the mid-valley, the Carmanah Trail descends 2 km to Camp Heaven on the valley bottom. From here the trail winds 4 km upstream, combining river views with rambles through the finest Sitka spruce groves in Canada.

The trail south from Camp Heaven, is under construction and WCWC does not recommend that hikers use this portion before it is finished. The trail route is scouted above the canyon which is phenomenally grand and awe inspiring for its size. The trail then will descend down to the 95 metre tall Carmanah Giant, Canada's tallest known tree. WCWC will not build the trail further but eventually hopes that Parks Canada will connect it to the West Coast Trail in Pacific Rim National Park, only 1.5 km away.

Details on how to get to the trail head through the maze of public logging roads, and drive safely on them are available from the Wilderness Committee's office upon request.

Even if you are unable to visit the valley personally, letters to political leaders and newspaper editors expressing your opinion will help you share in the magical spirit of Carmanah.





How you can help

Yes, I believe that Canada's tallest trees must be protected by expanding Pacific Rim National Park to include the entire 7000 ha (27 square mile) Carmanah Valley.

Please let me help save this natural heritage treasure. Here is my tax deductible gift of \$ _____ to your Carmanah Valley preservation campaign.

Enclosed is \$10 to purchase a 26" by 39" full color poster of Carmanah's giant Sitka spruces. Price includes postage, handling and B.C. tax where applicable. All proceeds go to help save Carmanah.

Here is \$12 to buy a copy of your 30 minute VHS video on Carmanah Valley. Price includes postage, handling and tax.

COUNT ME IN. I want to become a member of Western Canada Wilderness Committee. Enclosed is my \$20 annual membership fee.

Please return to Western Canada Wilderness Committee, 103-1520 West 6th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1R2 Canada

Credits and thanks

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We wish to thank everyone who gave so generously of their time and energy to produce this newspaper. Most of all thanks most go to the many volunteers who are building trails in the Carmanah Valley, making this area accessible to the public.