

**FREE
REPORT**

VOL. 24 NO. 1

WINTER 2005

CO-PUBLISHED BY WILDERNESS COMMITTEE AND SETON LAKE BAND

Save Lost Valley



Mike Alexander, who lives in the St'at'imc community at Seton Portage near Lillooet, British Columbia, looks out over Lost Valley.

Lost Valley a Treasure Chest of Biodiversity and St'at'imc Culture

Several hundred kilometres to the north of Vancouver lies the mountain country of the St'at'imc (pronounced Stat-lee-um). Their land is one of the most awe-inspiring places on Earth--encompassing the biggest mountains, canyons, rivers and lakes in southwest BC.

St'at'imc communities are strategically located near ancient transportation routes and salmon rivers in towns and villages such as Lillooet in the east of their country, Mt. Currie in the west, Seton Portage in the north and Port Douglas in the south.

St'at'imc, is both the name of the people and that of their ancient land. St'at'imc have their own history, language, songs and creation stories. They have been blessed with abundant clean water and wildlife such as; salmon, sturgeon, eagle, spotted owl, mule deer, mountain goat, cougar, grizzly bear, wolf and many plants used for food or medicine.

However, the neighboring communities of Greater Vancouver and southwestern British Columbia are putting ever more pressure on the St'at'imc's natural wealth. Hydroelectric dams on the Bridge River have decimated several salmon runs and drowned out critical valley-bottom wildlife habitat. The power line swaths leading back to Vancouver have scarred the landscape. Logging operations have flung clearcuts and roads throughout their territory opening it up to increased hunting pressure and damaging wildlife habitat. The train linking Northern BC to Vancouver occasionally derails spilling pollutants into streams and lakes of the region, and a proposed ski resort in the Cayoosh Range at Melvin Creek threatens grizzly bear and mountain goat populations.

Several years ago the St'at'imc invited the Western Canada Wilderness Committee to come and see parts of their territory that had not yet been impacted by industrial activity.

We were taken to the 10,000 hectare Lost

Valley, the largest unlogged watershed in the Cayoosh Range. The St'at'imc had discovered that BC Timber Sales – a logging operation owned and

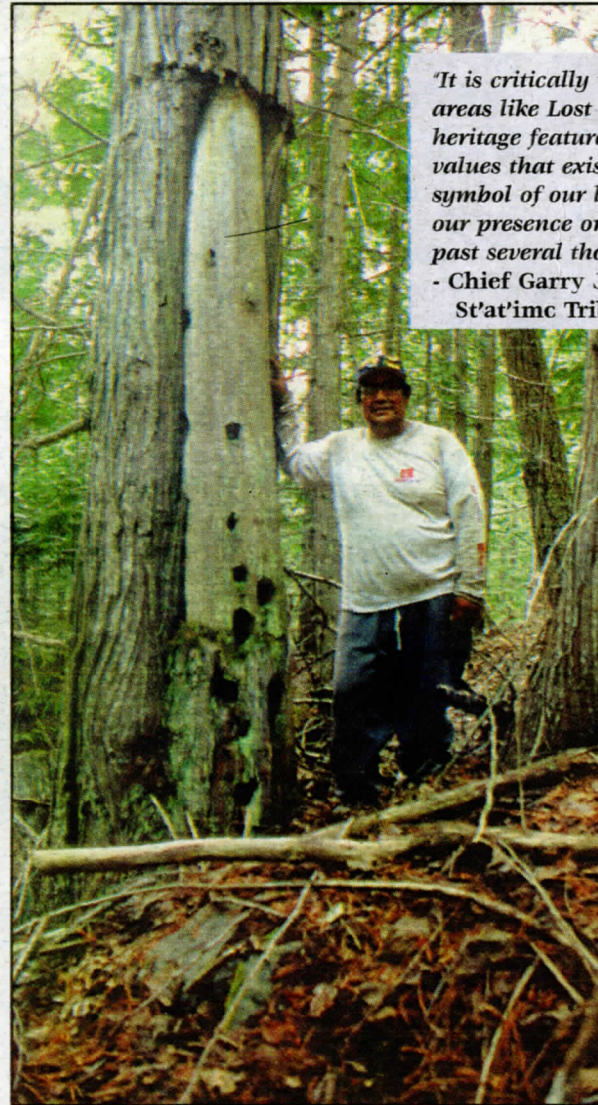
operated by the Government of British Columbia – were planning to log the Lost Valley. What we saw in the valley amazed us. We went away determined to do what ever we could to help protect it from the government's logging scheme.

Picture this: Lost Valley Creek thunders through an awesome gorge in its lower reaches before spilling out into Anderson Lake only four kilometres away from the St'at'imc community at Seton Portage. The creek contains some of the purest fresh water to be found anywhere in the province. Lost

Valley Creek's headwaters rise in the high alpine of the Cayoosh Range, home to rare wildlife such as the spotted owl, the most endangered bird species in Canada. Other species living in Lost Valley include a population of grizzly bears listed as threatened by the province and several hundred mountain goats that occupy the surrounding peaks and alpine ridges. Located in Lost Valley's middle reaches is a remarkably biodiverse mosaic of wild forests that range from dry ponderosa pine forest to rainforest to subalpine forest all within a few kilometres. Beside the creek the forests regulate, filter and cool the water, ensuring its high quality and predictable flow.

The Lost Valley is about twenty kilometres long, with a history of aboriginal use many thousands of years old. A well-worn footpath can still be followed up the Valley past redcedar trees with the telltale scars of historic bark harvesting and cache pits that hint of past hunting trips.

Will the BC government heed the St'at'imc's strongly held wishes to protect Lost Valley and cancel plans to log the area? Read on to find out more about Lost Valley and how YOU can join the efforts to protect it.



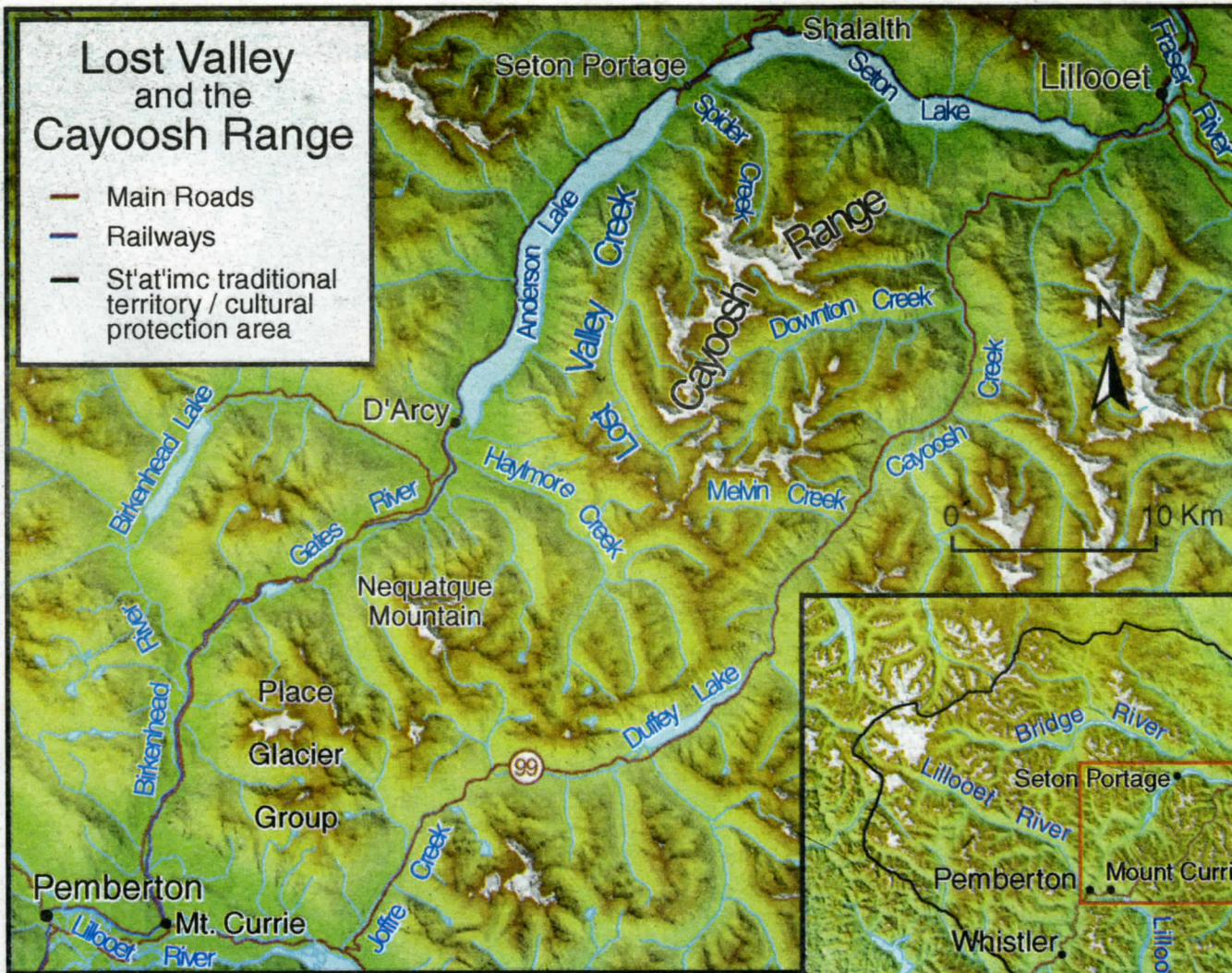
"It is critically important to preserve areas like Lost Valley because the heritage features and archaeological values that exist there really are a symbol of our lands and evidence of our presence on those lands for the past several thousand years"

- Chief Garry John,
St'at'imc Tribal Council

William Terry Sr. of Lh7us (Seton Portage).

Lost Valley and the Cayoosh Range

-  Main Roads
-  Railways
-  St'at'imc traditional territory / cultural protection area



St'at'imc Territory

The St'at'imc are the original inhabitants of the territory which extends north to Churn Creek and south to French Bar; northwest to the headwaters of Bridge River; north and east toward Hat Creek Valley; east to the Big Slide; south to the island on Harrison Lake and west of the Fraser River to the headwaters of Lillooet River, Ryan River and Black Tusk.

The St'at'imc way of life is inseparably connected to the land. Our people use different locations throughout our territory of rivers, mountains and lakes, planning our trips with the best times to hunt and fish, harvest food and gather medicines. The lessons of living on the land are a large part of the inheritance passed on from St'at'imc elders to our children.

As holders of one of the richest fisheries along the Fraser River, the St'at'imc defend and control a rich resource that feeds our people throughout the winter, and serves as a valued staple for trade with our neighboring nations. The St'at'imc can think of no other better place to live.

Tsuwalhkalh tmicwa (the land is ours). The St'at'imc hold title, rights and ownership to our territorial lands and resources. Ucwalmicwlhkalh (the people of the land). We

are a nation, not an interest group. As proclaimed by our ancestors in the Declaration of the Lillooet Tribe, May 10, 1911: We claim that we are the rightful owners of our tribal territory and everything pertaining thereto. We have always lived in our country, at all times have we



Lost Valley home to

“pocket rainforest”

Few visitors would expect to find a coastal rainforest in the rainshadow of the Coast Mountains near Lillooet, where dry pine forests and grasslands predominate. But countless generations of St’at’imc have relied on hidden pockets of rainforest for sustenance, full of coastal wildlife and plants that occur in high mountain hideaways throughout their territory. Here one can find a source of redcedar bark and medicine plants as well as other rainforest products that are rare in the dry interior part of their territory.

These small pocket rainforests are not easy to get to. They occur primarily at the lower end of hanging valleys, often perched atop cliffs 500 metres or more above the Fraser River, or Anderson and Seton Lakes.

Regardless of their difficult access, the St’at’imc have used pocket rainforests for millennia as their ancient trails attest. These forests, chock full of harvest and shelter sites are now store houses of archeology. Their natural resources, like cedar and coastal plants, meant that the St’at’imc could obtain many important products without having to trade or make long journeys to the coast. Luckily, many of these pocket rainforests were protected from logging in recent times due to their relative isolation and inaccessibility, or simply because logging companies did not know of them.

Now however, as easily accessible supplies of timber run out, logging companies are building multi-million-dollar government-subsidized roads into these economically valuable, but isolated oldgrowth forests. After the pocket rainforests have been logged, many of the animals that inhabit them quickly perish because they literally have nowhere else to go.

A joint St’at’imc/Wilderness Committee week-long survey of the valley identified 125 plant and 42 bird species including the endangered northern spotted owl. Signs of grizzly bear, cougar, wolf, wolverine, mule deer, moose and mountain goat were also noted by the survey team. The Lost Valley contains amazing pocket rainforests in its lower reaches. One minute the hiker is walking through a dry forest of ponderosa pine and interior Douglas-fir, and then all of a sudden is entering a cool emerald world of redcedar and hemlock. Closer inspection reveals redcedar trees scarred by aboriginal bark and wood harvesting going back generations. An ancient trail winds through the rainforest, past cache pits used by hunters long ago to store their meat prior to their return home, to lodges located in the proximity of where you find the modern day villages of Seton Portage and Shalalth.

We have always lived in our country, at no time have we ever deserted it or left it to others. The source of these rights is St’at’imc law.

www.statimc.net



The rainforest filters, regulates and cools Lost Creek’s waters.



St’at’imc survey team takes a break by an ancient rock shelter in Lost Valley pocket rainforest.

Lost Valley, Slala'xen

(as told by the elders)

In the old days Lost Valley with a creek draining into Anderson Lake three miles from the lake's end was an honored place among the local Tsalalh St'at'imc and by the Nquatqua on the other end. It was a hunting ground set aside by the Scwena7em who came up the valleys from the ocean, and all the ways up the interior. They transformed lands so the St'at'imc can settle and live in the lands. In this way, they set some lands aside for various uses by the peoples who had lived there. Lost Valley, called Slala'xen by the local St'at'imc, was one of the hunting grounds. An Honored place (sacred) that was only accessible through treacherous terrain in the creek valley from the creek's mouth where it drains into the lake. The head-waters of the creek was a basin where the hunting was good. The St'at'imc of D'Arcy and of Seton and Tsalalh hunt there to this day. The south end was the peaks standing high above D'Arcy's south-east, right beside the lake, and paralleling the lake, the mountain ridges cradled the basin, then drained into the lake at Three Mile near the lake's north end. In the old days, the elders would forbid the younger hunters from approaching the grounds from the lake up the hanging valley. It was too dangerous to go up where both sides were steep and there was always danger from boulders that were always rolling down, great big boulders. The Scwena7ems were very concerned about the valley being spoiled by too many peoples entering the place especially with dishonorable intentions, so they made it a hard place to get into, and only honest hunters who had prepared themselves by the native way of cleansing themselves, i.e. g'wezan'tsut, could go there to hunt.

One time at about the end of the 1800's or the early 1900's, an outsider asked a youna N'Kait native to bring him up the



Well worn foot path in Lost Valley.

Lost Valley and Melvin Creek Valley forests keep the Cayoosh Range alive

Lost Valley and the adjoining Melvin Creek Valley, which are both unlogged, are the green heart of the Cayoosh Mountain Range, providing critical low and mid-elevation forested wildlife habitat for a wide range of species.

The BC Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection estimates that about 280 mountain goats make the Cayoosh Range their home. That's down from the 700 mountain goats back in the 1960s and '70s when sport hunting decimated their numbers and clearcut logging along the Cayoosh Range began to strip away the forests needed to shelter the herds in the winter. Today the goat population is slowly recovering with about 100 of the animals living in the area of the divide between Lost Valley and Melvin Creek Valley.

Grizzly bears also roam the Cayoosh Range. Provincial biologists consider this popu-

lation to the southeast (thought to support about 60 grizzly bears). These big bears need big wild areas like the Lost Valley and Melvin Creek Valleys as refuge and linkage zones as they continue their journey across the landscape to find food, shelter and mates. Unfortunately, carved throughout the Cayoosh Range are logging roads and highways like the Duffey Lake Road (highway 99) that traverses the Cayoosh Valley from Pemberton to Lillooet. It makes travel a hair-raising experience for the grizzly bears that need to cross the roadways.

The Cayoosh Range straddles the transition zone between the coast and interior, which means it has pockets of both types of habitats, where plants and animals from the coastal rainforest and from the dry interior coexist in the same area.

Perhaps the most famous inhabitants of the Cayoosh Range is the small population of northern spotted owls. Since about two dozen



valley from its mouth. When he agreed to go, the elders told him to use the south approach through the high peaks above D'Arcy, but the outsider convinced him to go up from the mouth of the hanging valley. It looked so inviting to approach from such a spectacular way, so they ignored the elders warning. They climbed up the hanging valley and went up. They told the people to expect them back in a few days. After the fourth day the elders began to worry. It could not take that long to go up and back. After a week passed, the peoples gathered a party to go and find them. Mai'ta' (Mike James), Major (Fidale Major), Tom Adrian and Tommy Bull, all experienced mountaineers, went up to look for the lost pair and went by the creek. On their way up they had to clamber over or go around big boulders and dodge boulders rolling down from above. On the second day they come upon the pair. The outsider was dead and the young native guide had a broken leg. After finishing a make-shift grave for the outsider, using a stretcher made of two poles and a blanket, the rescue party lugged the unfortunate young guide out of the valley. It took four days to get him out, and with very much difficulty. Now after that incident and to this day, the valley called Slala'xen by the D'Arcy and Seton Valley St'at'imc, came to be called Lost Valley.

Lost Valley is still a favorite hunting place for the Nquatqua (D'Arcy) natives. One native, Lloyd Peters, loves to go and always goes up through the mountain pass through the peaks above D'Arcy to go and hunt at Slala'xen, the Lost Valley with his friends. Lately he brought some officials up this valley to do research.

Translated from the St'at'imc language by C. P. Alexander. A story told by late elders Francis (Fraser) Paul and David George. With assistance from Mom Shuteet (Christine Shields).

Lost Valley headwaters.



lution to be threatened since there are less than half the number of bears living there that could be supported by the habitat. Some grizzly bears are thought to use the Cayoosh as a stepping-stone wilderness-route between the South Chilcotin Mountains to the northwest (thought to support about 100 grizzly bears) and the Stein Valley region

owls still survive in Canada, all of which are found in south west BC, these Cayoosh Range owls are considered critical to the species' continued survival in Canada.



St'at'imc Land use plan aims to protect their territory from further industrial damage

In July 2004, the St'at'imc released their *Nxekmenlhkalha lti tmicwa*, Part 1 (Preliminary Draft Land Use Plan) for the northern portion of St'at'imc territory.

The St'at'imc produced their own land use plan in response to a land use planning process for the Lillooet region that was initiated by the NDP government in 1997, and which was concluded earlier this year by the BC Liberal government – all without proper consultation with the St'at'imc.

The Liberal government's proposed plan gives most of the forests in the St'at'imc's territory to the logging industry. The Liberal's plan also downsizes the South Chilcotin Mountains Protected Area by 20 percent - as a result of lobbying efforts by the mining association, backed by corporate giant Teck Cominco. The BC Liberals are furthermore pushing for the construction of a ski resort city high up in the Melvin Creek drainage. All in all the Liberal plan is a death sentence for the wildlife and wilderness in St'at'imc territory as well as being very damaging to the St'at'imc culture and way of life.

In stark contrast to the government's land use plan, the St'at'imc's land use plan has a very strong conservation theme, identifying large portions of their territory as "Protection Areas" where industrial developments such as road building, logging, mining and mineral exploration are prohibited. Lost Valley has been designated as a Protection Area for the conservation of cultural values, old forests, grizzly bear, mule deer and high quality water.

Within the St'at'imc's traditional territory, areas such as the Upper Bridge River Valley, South Chilcotin Mountains and Melvin Creek Valley have also been designated as Protection Areas. You can read the full St'at'imc Land Use Plan on their web site at: <http://www.statimc.net/>

Premier Gordon Campbell has expressed that before his government decides on a final land use plan, they will enter negotiations with the St'at'imc. Western Canada Wilderness Committee fully supports the St'at'imc Land Use Plan and calls on the government of British Columbia to honour it.



BC Timber Sales the worst logging operation in BC

BC Timber Sales is the logging operation that wants to log Lost Valley. St'at'imc people that have hiked through Lost Valley in the past several years report seeing BC Timber Sales survey flagging, which mark out cutblock boundaries and road locations throughout the watershed.

BC Timber Sales is fully owned and operated by the government of BC, and was formerly known as the BC Small Business Program.

Here's how they work. BC Timber Sales' planners choose where logging is to take place. Then they hire road builders to put in logging roads at the government's expense. Next the surveyed proposed cutblocks are put out to bid with the rights to log being given out to the highest bidder. The trees are logged by the contractor, then trucked to a mill. The lumber that is produced is often sold under another company's logo and the consumer therefore has no idea that they have just bought BC Timber Sales lumber.

What this means is that even the most green-minded consumer of wood products finds it next to impossible to avoid buying lumber from BC Timber Sales because the government-owned logging operation does not properly label its lumber.

Hiding behind this phoney labeling smokescreen, BC Timber Sales has been doing some nasty things to our forest ecosystems in British Co-

lumbia. Several conservation organizations have now identified BC Timber Sales as the worst logging operation in the province. For example, BC Timber Sales is the biggest logger of spotted owl habitat. Logging companies like Canadian Forest Products and International Forest Products have voluntarily ceased logging in core spotted owl habitat, but BC Timber Sales' planners appear to be specifically targeting habitat areas in the southwestern corner of the province for logging.

The same thing is happening in BC's inland rainforest that stretches from Prince George to the Kootenays. In this region, BC Timber Sales is one of the top loggers of endangered Mountain Caribou habitat. Recently Fraser Valley environmental researchers have uncovered a proposal by BC Timber Sales to log a mountain goat winter range forest, which the major logging companies



BC Timber Sales recent logging operation in spotted owl habitat near Hope, BC.

had stayed out of since the 1970s to protect the goats.

The St'at'imc and conservation organizations alike assert that BC Timber Sales must not be allowed to carry out their plans to log Lost Valley.

Check these web sites for further info!

St'at'imc web site - See the St'at'imc's land use plan.

<http://www.statimc.net/>

Lillooet Land Use Plan - See the BC government's land use plan

<http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/sir/lrmp/lill/>

BC Timber Sales - See how the worst logging operation in BC

Tourists want to see Paradise on Earth

There are probably prettier places than Seton Portage and Shalalth - but we've not seen them. The St'at'imc community at Seton Portage and neighboring Shalalth know that visits by tourists will continue to increase year to year. After all, Whistler is just a couple of mountain ranges away, which is not too far to travel to see paradise on Earth. So the St'at'imc are already

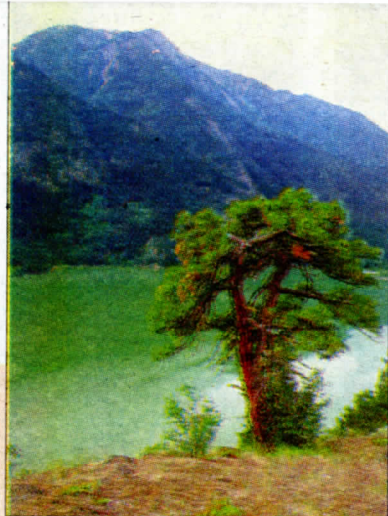
the past several years been relocating ancient trails in the territory as a first step in developing hiking tours for the region. One of the trails they have relocated is in Lost Valley, which is only four kilometres from Seton Portage.

Other plans for a small marina and canoe rentals are the building blocks of a locally control-

planning what kind of tourism industry they want to sustain their economy.

The entire St'at'imc Nation has rejected the industrial tourism ski-city proposed for Melvin Creek as being too destructive to environmental and cultural values.

However, the St'at'imc communities at Seton Portage and Shalalth have embarked on a plan to attract tourists interested in the local culture and ecology. A group of St'at'imc pathfinders has for



...small-scale, sustainable tourism industry that will not blight the landscape while providing jobs in the community.

Its time to stand up and be counted for Lost Valley!

Write to BC's Premier and say how strongly you feel about the need to honour the St'at'imc's wishes and to stop allowing industrial interests from despoiling the Lost Valley and other key natural areas within St'at'imc territory.

Premier of British Columbia
Legislative Buildings, Victoria BC,
V8V 1X4

Email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Phone: 250-387-1715

Fax: 250-387-0087

presents itself

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/bcts/>

CREDITS

Research & Writing: Joe Foy, Andy Miller, Garry John and as noted in bylines.

Editing: Louise Askjaer Pedersen **Design:** Sue Fox

Map: Geoff Senichenko **Photos:** Jeremy Sean Williams, Joe Foy, Anton van Walraven

Western Canada Wilderness Committee Vol. 24, No.1. Winter 2005. Canadian Mail Product Sales Agreement No. 0900567. Posted in Vancouver for free distribution. Printed in Canada on recycled newsprint with vegetable-based inks. Press Run 50,000. © WCWC 2005. All rights reserved. Written material may be used without permission when credit is given.

Distribution: Brian@gold-distribution.com

Co-published by Seton Lake Band

Site 3, Box 76, Shalalth, BC V0N 3C0

T:250-259-8227 F: 250-259-8384

www.statimc.net

With the assistance of

Western Canada Wilderness Committee

227 Abbott Street, Vancouver BC V6B 2K7

T: 604-683-8220 F: 604-683-8229

Email: info@wildernesscommittee.org

www.wildernesscommittee.org

SAVE! Lost Valley

I support the St'at'imc's conservation minded land use plan and their efforts to protect their territory.

Enclosed is: \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

PROV. _____

PC _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Please return with your gift to:

Seton Lake Band

Site 3, Box 76, Shalalth, BC V0N 3C0

T:250-259-8227 F: 250-259-8384



YES! Lost Valley Needs Protection!

Here's my support!

Enclosed is: \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

Fed. reg. charity #11929-3009-RR0001

I want to become a member! Enclosed is my annual fee for a:

\$30 Individual Membership

\$52 Sustaining-Family Membership

NAME _____

PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

PROV. _____

PC _____



Please return with your gift to: the Wilderness Committee, 227 Abbott Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 2K7 CANADA. www.wildernesscommittee.org

We are Canada's largest citizen-funded wilderness preservation organization.