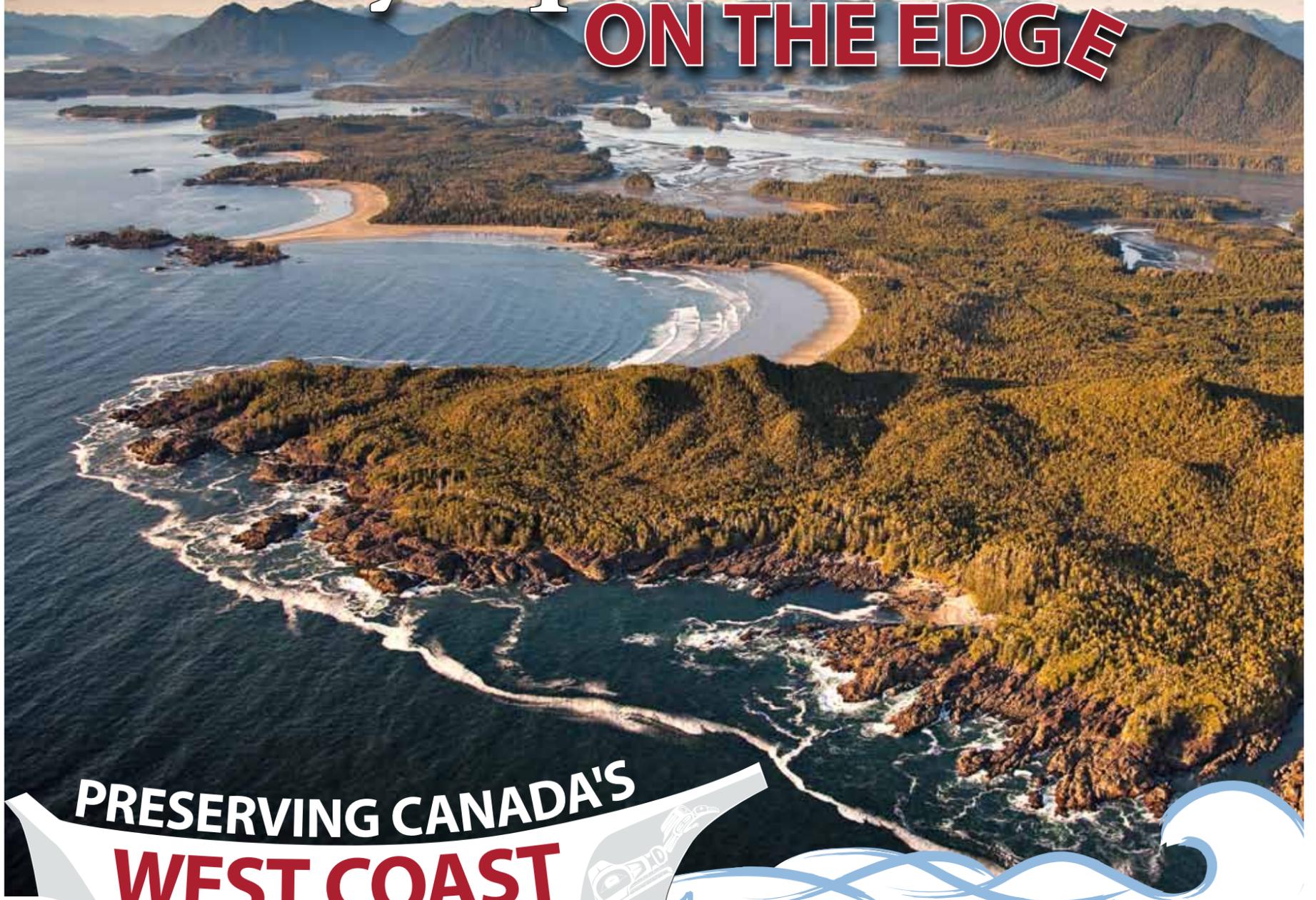




# Clayoquot Sound ON THE EDGE



## PRESERVING CANADA'S WEST COAST

### World-renowned natural wonder at risk



**Torrance Coste**  
Vancouver Island  
Campaigner,  
Wilderness Committee

**T**hose of us  
lucky enough  
to have driven the

Trans-Canada Highway to its western limit at the village of Tofino, BC have found a region of unparalleled natural beauty. Clayoquot Sound (pronounced *Klak-wot*) is, quite simply, one of the most incredible places in the world.

The convergence of the open Pacific Ocean and one of the last ancient temperate rainforests on earth has created a legendary ecosystem.

It is home to vibrant First Nations cultures and rich traditions, and it is also an historic focal

point of the Canadian environmental movement.

In the 1980s and '90s, logging in Clayoquot Sound sparked the iconic **War in the Woods** – the

forest conservation movement that drew worldwide attention to British Columbia's shockingly unsustainable coastal logging industry.

The connection to this place goes much deeper for Clayoquot's original inhabitants. The Ahousaht, Hesquiaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations have lived and thrived in the Sound since time immemorial, sustainably managing their resources and developing an intimate and sacred relationship to these lands and waters.

Modern conservation efforts are driven by First Nations people, who fight not only for the ecological

integrity of Clayoquot Sound but also for their Aboriginal rights and title.

One of the biggest threats to Clayoquot Sound is the myth that it has been protected.

Despite being designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, and despite having globally significant intact watersheds and some of the biggest trees in the world...much of Clayoquot Sound is still threatened.

Foreign-owned salmon farms and massive mine proposals have joined old-growth logging in putting constant pressure on the environment and the communities that rely on it. These destructive activities also threaten more sustainable industries like fishing

and tourism, and they compromise critical endeavours like cultural continuation, salmon rehabilitation, and forest conservation.

We have the opportunity to make Clayoquot Sound a model for sustainability and environmental responsibility for all of BC, Canada, and the world. Its intact coastal temperate rainforest watersheds are some of the last in Canada and they need to be legally protected forever. Above all, we must respect Indigenous rights and title, and follow their lead in sustainable economic development and land management.

Clayoquot Sound is not only on the edge of Canada, it's also teetering on the edge between lasting preservation and further environmental destruction. But we still have a chance to do the right thing.

**With all of its history and potential, Clayoquot Sound is a true national treasure. It's high time we treasure it.**



**Photo cover:** Aerial shot of Clayoquot Sound (TofinoPhotography.wordpress.com).  
**Above:** Cedar tree in Clayoquot Sound (Paul Morgan).  
**Left:** Pacific tree frog (Jakob Dulisse).



# Industrial Salmon Farming

## Drifting Toward Disaster

While Clayoquot Sound is known for controversial industrial activity in its forests, there is a serious sea-based threat here as well. The **open net-cage salmon farming** industry – characterized by low regulation, huge knowledge gaps, foreign ownership, and regular disease outbreaks – has targeted Clayoquot Sound as a major expansion zone.

These massive operations expose the coastal environment (and wild salmon) to all associated waste, including effluent, feed, medication, and sometimes antibiotics. They also act as breeding grounds for parasites like sea lice that thrive in the factory farm-like conditions, and are plagued by disease or viral outbreaks that may occur at any given site. For these reasons and more, open-net salmon farming is one of the most controversial industries in Canada – opposed by many environmental groups, First Nations, tourism operators, and the beleaguered wild salmon fishing industry.



*Open net-cage salmon farming means that salmon are contained in floating net-pens open to the ocean. Some can be up to four football fields in size, and may contain over 500,000 salmon.*

Right now, there are 21 open-net salmon farms in the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere reserve.<sup>1</sup> The newest operation is the Plover Point Salmon Farm, operated by a subsidiary of Norway-based industry giant Cermaq – a company that culled nearly a million diseased fish in 2012 in Clayoquot Sound alone.<sup>2,3</sup> Plover Point was fiercely opposed by the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, but was still approved by both the federal and provincial governments.

**The Wilderness Committee has called for the removal of all open-net salmon farms from BC's coast, and there is no better place to start than Clayoquot Sound.** The risk this industry poses to wild salmon, a species critical for cultural and economic revival efforts in the region, is far too great. Open-net salmon farms simply do not have a place in a healthy Clayoquot Sound.

### First Nations of Clayoquot Sound

Name	Pronunciation
Ahousaht	A-hows-at
Hesquiaht	Hesh-kwee-at
Tla-o-qui-aht	Ktla-oh-kwee-at



# Logging in Clayoquot Sound

## Battle for the Forest

Concerns over logging in Clayoquot Sound's spectacular ancient forests have sparked many high-profile court cases, protests and blockades in the past. **Over the last 25 years more than six million cubic metres of wood have been logged in Clayoquot Sound, almost all of it old-growth forest.**<sup>5</sup>

Overall, Vancouver Island has lost three quarters of its old-growth forest to logging. Although Clayoquot Sound comprises only eight per cent of Vancouver Island, it contains the largest area of old-growth forest remaining on the island and the island's largest

cluster of coastal intact (pristine) valleys, undisturbed by logging or other development.<sup>6</sup> In the 1980s, logging giant MacMillan Bloedel's plans to log old-growth forest on Meares Island in the heart of Clayoquot Sound caused widespread protest. Clayoquot Sound's First Nations appealed to the courts to stop the logging based on their Aboriginal title and rights. The First Nations

were successful in halting the logging plans, and to this date Meares Island remains a globally significant example of sea-level old-growth rainforest. In the 1990s, a series of anti-logging protests culminated in the famous blockades of 1993 – where tens of thousands participated and a thousand people were arrested

*A cubic metre of wood is equal in size to a telephone pole and 33 cubic metres equals a full logging truck.*



for peacefully blockading a logging road leading to some of Clayoquot Sound's intact old-growth forests.<sup>7</sup> One of the results of this protest was that logging rates in Clayoquot Sound were eventually greatly reduced.

In the late 1980s the logging rate in Clayoquot Sound was about 29,000 logging truck loads per year. By the mid 2000s the logging rate had declined to less than a tenth of its former level, to 2,100 logging truck loads per year, as logging managers took care to stay out of Clayoquot Sound's intact valleys.<sup>8</sup>

First Nations have gradually gained

control of most of the logging rights in Clayoquot Sound, displacing the multi-national logging companies and making the large clearcuts that had once stripped entire mountainsides a thing of the past.

But the fact remains that some of Clayoquot Sound's amazing old-growth forests continue to be chainsawed down, to the dismay of many who want to see these increasingly rare forests protected. In recent times, proposals to log within Clayoquot Sound's intact valleys have caused great concern. So far all of these logging plans have been put on hold.

Will conflict break out again in the forests of Clayoquot Sound? A lot of people are working very hard to avoid the need for future protest. The race is on to build an economy in Clayoquot Sound that will bring fair prosperity to all the region's communities, while conserving the area's world-famous old-growth forests.

# Mining Proposals

## Digging Up Trouble

Clayoquot Sound is synonymous with forest conservation and the War in the Woods. From international celebrities to some of Canada's most well-known activists, many environmentalists got their first taste of the movement in the early '90s when they stood up for Clayoquot's iconic ancient trees.

Fast forward over 20 years and much of the forest is still without permanent protection. And now, a second wave of heavy industry is

compounding environmental pressures in Clayoquot Sound.

The proposed copper-molybdenum mine project on Catface Mountain in Ahousaht territory and the proposed Pandora gold mine project in the Tranquil Valley in Tla-o-qui-aht territory hold the potential to cause serious damage.

The proponent of both projects is Imperial Metals Corporation, a company behind other contentious mines in North America. Mining is by nature a

high-impact, high-risk activity. The

lasting environmental consequences – and resulting costs – can be seen in communities around the world that are suffering from mining-related water pollution.<sup>4</sup>

**A fragile ecosystem like Clayoquot Sound is the last place anyone should be considering a large industrial mining operation.**

Many people from Tofino and from the First Nations communities in the region have come together to oppose both of these mine projects.

Clayoquot Sound is an ecologically fragile region with immense potential for sustainable alternative development. It is imperative that the government of BC does not issue permits for either of these short-sighted projects.



Photos centre pages (clockwise from top): Pink salmon (Barry Kovish), Meares Island forest (Adrian Dorst), Amanita muscaria mushrooms (Mark Hobson), Wolf (Mark Hobson), Trail building crew at C'is-a-qis cabin (Torrence Coste), Starfish (Paul Morgan), Aerial shot of Clayoquot Sound (Sander Jain), Sea otter (Chris Cheadle), Salmon farm in Clayoquot Sound (WC files).



# Trail Building on Meares Island

## Hands-on Conservation

Clambering over fallen logs in ancient temperate rainforest, stashing food in raised bear caches, and getting caught in epic rainstorms: all in a day's work.

Volunteer trail building is a conservation strategy that has been used by the Wilderness Committee for decades – we believe

that getting people out into spectacular wilderness areas is the most effective way to foster conservation and environmental responsibility. One of our favourite places to build and repair trails is the rainforest of Clayoquot Sound.

The Meares Island trail project is being carried out under the supervision of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, who have declared the island a tribal park and are actively managing it. Last year, Wilderness Committee volunteer crews set out on several trips to clear trail beneath the old-growth canopy.

The trail, now nearly complete, winds through pristine old-growth stands, shore pine bogs, and gorgeous tidal shoreline – an unforgettable hike suitable for one long day or two shorter days. The trail begins at an old campsite in a sheltered cove called C'is-a-qis and ends at the legendary Big Tree Boardwalk Trail, a short loop which features some of the largest ancient redcedar trees in the world.

Tourism operators based in Tofino know that a visit to the Big Tree Boardwalk Trail is one of the must-see highlights of Clayoquot Sound.

In the past years the Wilderness Committee has worked under the guidance of Clayoquot Sound's First Nations to help build spectacular hiking trails in the Clayoquot River Valley, and on Flores Island's wild west coast. All of these trails are part of a growing trend towards eco-tourism in Clayoquot Sound.

# Tribal Parks Preserving Nature and Culture



provincial and/or

One way to protect the economy, ecology, and culture of Clayoquot Sound is through the creation of a network of new tribal parks. Tribal parks have a 30-year history in Canada, and they're typically used to conserve an area's natural and cultural heritage while engaging in low-impact, sustainable economic activities.<sup>9</sup> They are initiated by First Nations, and then

federal governments may add official recognition and protected status, as well as providing funding for management and community development.

One of the first tribal parks in the province to follow this model was **Gwaii Haanas** on Haida Gwaii on BC's north coast, which was originally declared a tribal park by the Haida Nation then designated as a national

park reserve to be co-managed with the federal government. Similar tribal park proposals and partnerships between First Nations and the BC government include the Stein and Elaho Valleys, and areas in the Great Bear Rainforest.

In Clayoquot Sound, Meares Island and Ha'uukmin (the Kennedy River Watershed) have both been declared tribal parks. Meares Island is managed as a tribal park by the Tla-o-qui-aht and Ahousaht First Nations, and Ha'uukmin is managed by the Tla-o-qui-aht. The Meares Island Tribal Park is home to trees as wide as your living room, as tall as a skyscraper, and as old as the castles of Europe. In Ha'uukmin Tribal Park, you'll find thriving salmon watersheds, wolves, and an untouched

ancient forest that extends from mountaintop to shoreline.

By declaring these areas tribal parks, the Nations have successfully protected the old-growth forest within them. While preserving these wild natural areas, these tribal parks are also integral to cultural continuation efforts. Additionally, the First Nations are exploring ways to practice respectful and environmentally sustainable economic activities that are based on traditional teachings rather than the heavy industrial model.

Meares Island and Ha'uukmin Tribal Parks have pointed the way to a new conservation opportunity in Clayoquot Sound – the expansion of a tribal park system to encompass all of the intact old-growth forests.

## Clayoquot Solutions

### The Way Forward

Clayoquot Sound encompasses the largest expanse of old-growth forest remaining on Vancouver Island, and is home to 45 known endangered, threatened, or vulnerable animal species.<sup>10</sup> Its waters are teeming with marine life such as wild salmon, which have supported local First Nations for thousands of years.

With all of this at stake, it's clear that Clayoquot Sound is no place for large industrial mines and open net-cage salmon farms...and these activities should be banned.

To further ensure that this ancient landscape and the communities that

rely on it survive and thrive far into the future, many in the region are working for a solution that couples conservation and community well-being. **The Wilderness Committee and our partners are calling for the intact rainforest areas to be formally protected under provincial law.**

We are also calling on both the provincial and federal governments to provide financing for communities in Clayoquot Sound, which would be used for sustainable economic initiatives, capacity building and for conservation management.

Clayoquot Sound has a wealth

Photos this page (clockwise from top left): Enjoying Ha'uukmin Tribal Park zipline (Joe Foy), Ahousaht dancers (Mark Hobson), Clayoquot river valley (Paul Morgan), Orca whale (Adrian Dorst).



of outstanding economic opportunities including tourism, commercial fisheries, sustainable forestry and the management of protected areas, not to mention the array of secondary industries revolving around these activities. Existing businesses in the region are already showing the way forward and with a little help from the provincial and federal governments, the communities of Clayoquot Sound could realize their full economic and cultural potential.



The Wilderness Committee is part of the **Clayoquot Sound Conservation Alliance** – a group of organizations working to protect the intact valleys of Clayoquot Sound, including:

- Friends of Clayoquot Sound
- ForestEthics
- Greenpeace
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- Sierra Club BC
- Wilderness Committee

## TAKE ACTION!

**Please write** to BC's Premier and the Leader of the Official Opposition and let them know how much you want the province to support ongoing conservation efforts in Clayoquot Sound that aim to protect intact old-growth valleys, shut down open-net salmon farms and reject mining proposals.

### BC Premier

Room 156, Parliament Buildings,  
Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4

☎ 250-387-1715 Fax: 250-387-0087

@ premier@gov.bc.ca

### BC Leader of the Official Opposition

Room 201, Parliament Buildings,  
Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4

☎ 250-387-3655 Fax: 250-387-4680

**WildernessCommittee.org · 1-800-661-WILD (9453)**

# Yes! I want to help preserve Clayoquot Sound

**clip**



And return to the:  
Wilderness Committee  
P.O. Box 2205,  
Station Terminal  
Vancouver, BC, V6B 3W2

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:  
 \$59 Family Membership  \$35 Individual Membership

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The Wilderness Committee is Canada's largest membership-based wilderness preservation organization.



**call**

(604) 683-8220 in the  
Lower Mainland  
1-800-661-9453 toll-free  
elsewhere in Canada

## Citations

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