

# Carmanah Canadian rainforest



View of Carmanah cathedral spires

# Facts support full preservation

Until a few short months ago, only a handful of people knew about majestic Carmanah Valley. The

Nitinat Indians, who lay aboriginal claim to Carmanah, call the place Khrowbodewah -- *The Beginning*.



Some think Carmanah's days are numbered

Protecting this narrow watershed on the southwest coast of Vancouver Island is a rugged canyon which begins about two kilometres from the open ocean. The canyon blocked early loggers from taking out the valley's prime spruce during the heyday of wooden airplane construction.

Unfortunately, the canyon could not protect Carmanah forever.

In March of 1988 the great spruces of Carmanah came under imminent threat of logging. Two environmentalists, on a weekend trip to explore the valley, discovered massive clearcuts on the edge of Carmanah and a road surveyed into the valley's best spruce groves. The road construction crew was at work, heading into the heart of the valley.

The environmentalists were shocked. Logging, without advance public notice or input, had suddenly been pushed 15 years ahead of schedule.

The race was on to save Canada's tallest trees. At that time no one had any idea of the passion and resources which the logging

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MacMillan Bloedel logging just outside Carmanah, September 1988.

## MB's leave strip doesn't work

It is naive to expect that anyone can place a reserve around the giant spruces in Carmanah's valley bottom and log 92 percent of the watershed without the spruce ecosystem experiencing drastic changes

logging and leave strip plan (research on windthrow by T.P. Rollerson and a hydrological evaluation by R.W. Askin) are largely based on superficial, sketchy and subjective assessments.

MB gives no indication of any studies of wind patterns or measurements of wind speeds in Carmanah and its

hydrology "report", cannot really be considered a report at all. It fails to reference stream flow rates and velocities which are normally part of any hydrological assessment.

In short, MB does not provide the proof that its small reserve would work. Its proposed "sanctuary" for

To suggest that a 70 year-old second-growth forest can have all of the hydrological and soil-holding functions of an old-growth forest which has taken thousands of years to evolve, is the product of wishful thinking. It is not based on experience gained elsewhere in similar situations.

Carnation Creek, further up the coast on Vancouver Island, is the most extensively studied watershed on the Canadian Pacific. Recent reports indicate that soil erosion and sedimentation caused by logging continues for decades after loggers depart.

Elsewhere on the coast, trees have blown down within the "reserves" created to protect them. Tiny sanctuaries and leave-strips inevitably fail to protect gene pools and ecosystems. Only real boundaries, like a watershed's height-of-land, work.

The fact that MB proposes to log Carmanah at a slow rate is irrelevant. Any clear-cut logging will inevitably release Carmanah Valley's "hydrological brakes". Catastrophic floods typically occur when the mantle of old-growth forest is removed from shallow-soiled, steep-sloped, west coast rainforest watersheds.

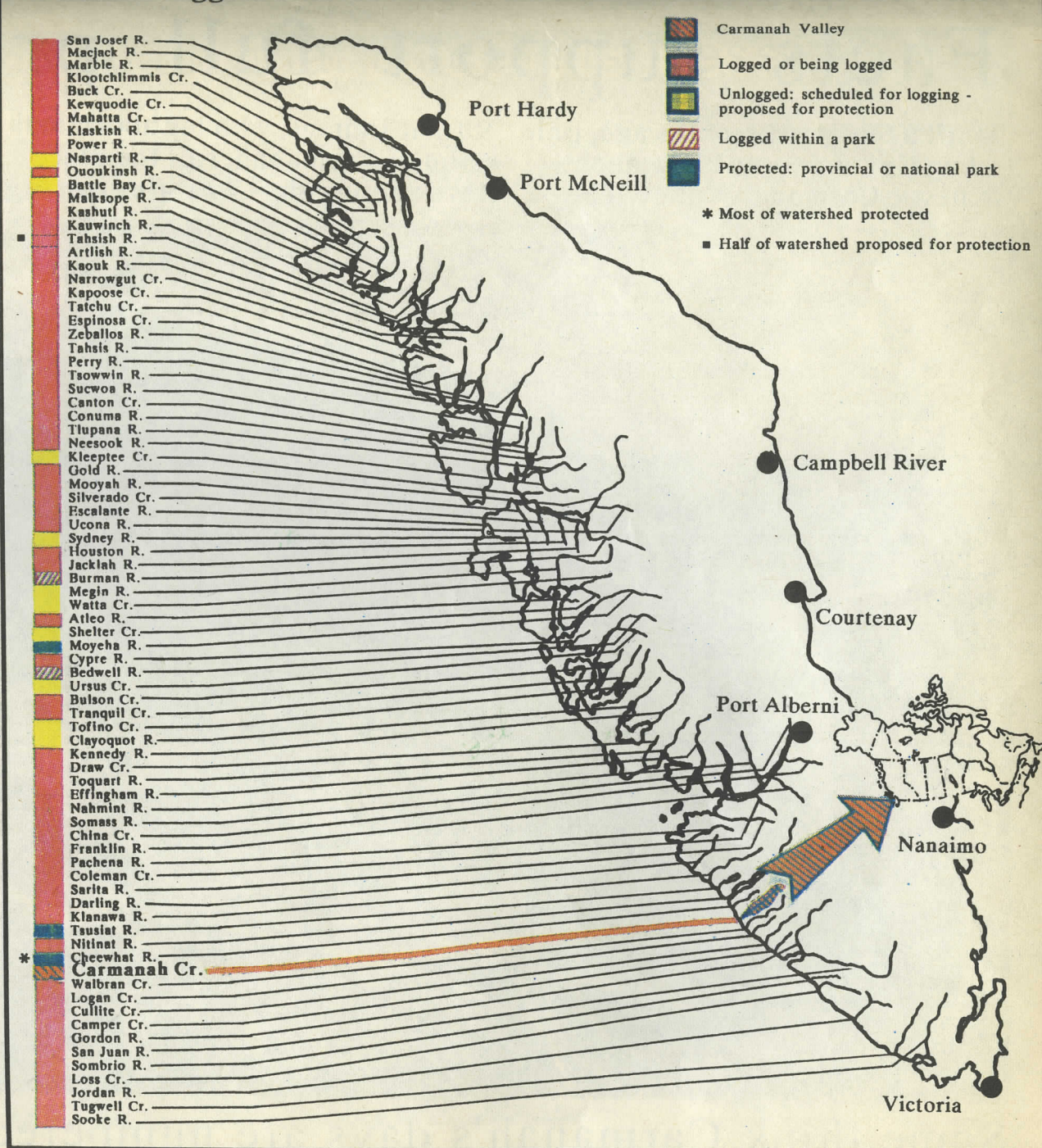
Carmanah's spruce flats will be inundated with gravel to a depth of perhaps one to two metres. This will have the effect of suffocating many of the great spruces. As the flooding frequency and intensity increases, the width of the river will grow, washing out the side banks and undermining the great spruces which grow beside the stream.

The increased erosion will also wash away the spruce giants of the future--the smaller spruces growing on the gravel bars that have formed in the last few centuries.

It is the natural instability of the river that produces the shifting gravel bars that become future spruce habitat. But too much instability would very likely convert the river's spruce beds to alder/cottonwood habitat, as has happened in many other logged-out west coast drainages.

We have no guarantee of spruce habitat protection if Carmanah is logged. Two of the key elements of background research that MB relies on to support its

Few unlogged watersheds left on Vancouver Island's west coast





**In the heart of Carmanah. MB plan calls for clear-cutting of hillsides in centre of photo.**

Carmanah's giants, if adopted, will become their tomb.

Although it's not really possible to "preserve" the giant spruce in Carmanah—only pickles can be preserved—you can preserve the Sitka spruce ecosystem itself by letting it remain in dynamic equilibrium with the rest of the valley.

## Chronology

**Before white contact till the present day** - Native Indians use the resources of the valley on a limited basis, their activities leaving no significant impact on the natural landscape.

**1905-1907** - For a few hundred dollars, the trees growing on 30 percent of Carmanah are bought and held as timber licences.

application and establishes for the first time the public's right of access to Crown lands under TFL tenure. WCWC continues to build trail to the *Carmanah Giant*.

**July 26** - In the face of increasing public outcry, the B.C. Forest Service requests that MB prepare a revised logging plan for Carmanah Valley.

# NO JOBS LOST saving Carmanah

Current forestry practices, which maximize short-term profits, have already put thousands of B.C. residents out of work. From 1977 to 1987, direct employment in the B.C. forest industry dropped by 15,000. If continued, the wasteful and ecologically-unsound liquidation of old-growth forests will mean unemployment for thousands more.

Automated factories and high-grade logging methods have also brought in record company profits. But at what long term environmental and social costs? It's possible for Canadians to have their cake and eat it too! It is possible to save wilderness while keeping forestry jobs by implementing the following:

## HALT RAW LOG EXPORTS

Shipping raw logs abroad, exports milling jobs. Between 1978 and 1987 B.C. logging companies exported more than the equivalent of three entire Carmanah Valleys' worth of timber to foreign mills.

## BAN CERTAIN LOGGING METHODS

High speed, high volume grapple-yarders eliminate jobs. They cause increased log breakage, more soil disturbance, more road-associated erosion, while decreasing the second-growth forests' productivity.

## OUTLAW UNNECESSARY WOOD WASTE

The policy of "taking the best; leaving the rest" increases short-term corporate profits but uses up the old-growth forest more rapidly.

## REQUIRE MORE SILVICULTURE INVESTMENT

Increasing short-term profits by withholding adequate spending on tending second-growth forests is unethical. According to MB's own statistics, an intensive forestry program for logged-over TFL 44 lands would produce an equivalent of seven Carmanah Valleys of wood. This would create 800 logging and milling jobs in the next century while creating more juvenile spacing and commercial thinning jobs today.

MB could easily have afforded to increase its investments in intensive forestry. From 1980-1987, the company made \$719 million in profits.

1955 - The B.C. government grants MacMillan Bloedel a tree farm licence (now TFL 44) which includes Carmanah Valley.

1956 - MB timber cruisers inventory Carmanah Valley. One of them later recalls seeing world-record-sized Sitka spruce.

1984 - MB presents for public review its 1985 to 1989 management and working plan for TFL 44, showing no development in the Carmanah/Nitinat area during that period. Other MB documents available to the public show no logging in Carmanah until 2003.

1985 - Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WCWC) publishes its *Canadian Landmarks* newspaper--the first public presentation of a proposal to preserve Carmanah.

1985 - MB quietly shifts its clear-cut quota from other areas into the Carmanah/Nitinat area and revises its logging plans to include Carmanah. This is done with government approval but without public knowledge or review.

April 1, 1988 - A WCWC member discovers logging roads newly constructed to the edge of Carmanah and roadways surveyed into the heart of the valley's spruce stands. MB's newly revised plans now show proposed logging for 1989 throughout the middle and lower Carmanah Valley, including the best spruce groves.

May 13 - Heritage Forests Society and the Sierra Club present a brief to government entitled *A Proposal to Add the Carmanah Creek Drainage with Its Exceptional Sitka Spruce Forests to Pacific Rim National Park*. It called for the preservation of the entire Carmanah watershed.

May 19 - Due to mounting pressure, MB halts all road construction in Carmanah for one month and begins a study of the valley.

May 30 - Four WCWC volunteers begin building a trail to provide public and video crew access to the tall spruce

June 10 - MB engineers discover the *Carmanah Giant*, a 95-metre-tall spruce as lofty as a 30 storey office tower, growing near Pacific Rim National Park. It is the tallest known tree in Canada and the world's tallest recorded Sitka spruce.

June 29 - MB proposes two reserves; a nine hectare area to protect the Carmanah Giant and 90 hectares encompassing some of the largest Sitka spruces in the mid-valley. The protected areas total 1.4 percent of the 6,730 hectare valley. The rest is scheduled to be clear-cut logged. Conservationists continue to call for preservation of the entire Carmanah Valley, noting the vulnerability of reserves to windthrow and erosion.

July 22 - MB seeks a B.C. Supreme Court injunction to halt WCWC trail building in the valley.

July 26 - The B.C. Supreme Court dismisses MB's injunction

Carmanah valley by the end of September 1988.

September 10 - MP Bob Wenman and Nitinat Indian Chief Peter Knighton officially open the WCWC built Carmanah Valley trail.

October 7 - MB releases another revised plan for Carmanah. It now plans to clearcut all but 2 percent of the valley. The areas MB proposes to preserve are increased to encompass 175 hectares. On the same day WCWC releases its video *Carmanah Forever*, narrated by David Suzuki, explaining why the whole valley must be preserved so that the tall spruce habitat is protected in perpetuity.

November - MB takes its revised Carmanah plan to the people. Open houses and public meetings are held in several communities on southern Vancouver Island and in Vancouver. Hundreds of people attend the meetings and the overwhelming majority stress the need to preserve the entire valley.

January - MB, reacting to public pressure, releases yet another revised plan for Carmanah which calls for clearcutting all but 8 percent of the valley. The area proposed for preservation is now a narrow 538 hectare strip along the lower part of Carmanah Creek.

February - MB hands over its new Carmanah logging plans to the B.C. Forest Service. This time, the Forest Service takes the plan to open houses in several communities on southern Vancouver Island and in Vancouver. In Victoria, more than 200 people gather in front of the Ministry of Forests and Lands headquarters to demonstrate their desire to see a moratorium on Carmanah logging and a full independent study of the effects of logging on this steep sided valley. Forest Service personnel attempt to defend the company plan at the open houses instead of playing a neutral role.

March 9 - Frank Oberle, federal minister of forests, visits Carmanah as a guest of MB. Awed by the beauty of the spiring spruces, he admits it is hard not to get carried away and want to preserve the whole valley. He notes that the provincial government has not yet invited federal help to save the area.

## Credits and thanks

Photography: Adrian Dorst, Kevin Oke Writers: Joe Foy, Paul George  
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Design: Arne Hansen, Ken Lay Map: Randy Stoltmann

Special thanks to everyone who gave so generously of their time and energy to help build trails in the Carmanah Valley, making this area accessible to the public. Also thanks to the growing number of people who see the wisdom in keeping the whole valley natural.

Published by Western Canada Wilderness Committee, 103-1520 West 6th Ave., Vancouver, British Columbia V6J 1R2 - Printed in Canada  
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## YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW! TOGETHER WE WILL SAVE CARMANAH

- Please use my tax deductible gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for your Carmanah Valley preservation campaign.  
(Revenue Canada tax reg. no. 0587113-21-28)
- Here is \$12 for a 30 min. VHS video, *Carmanah Forever*, narrated by Dr. David Suzuki.
- Here is my \$10 for your 26" by 39" *Carmanah Big Trees Not Big Stumps* color poster.
- Here is my \$10 for your 24" by 36" *Ancient Forests Forever* color poster portraying a young child discovering the magic of Carmanah.
- Here is \$8 for your 27" by 27" *Carmanah Cathedral Spires* color ceiling poster (photo on this cover).
- Here is \$4 to buy a Carmanah road access and trail map, so I can hike the valley myself.
- Count me in. I want to become a member of Western Canada Wilderness Committee. Enclosed is my \$20 annual membership fee. (Note: Note members get a 20 percent discount on purchase of above items)

All prices include postage, handling and tax where applicable.

### ALL PROCEEDS GO TOWARDS CARMANAH PRESERVATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code \_\_\_\_\_

Your cheque or money order should be made out and sent to: Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WCWC), #103 - 1520 West 6th Ave., Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6J 1R2

## Make your letters count

Write your elected officials and let them know how you feel about Carmanah. Democracy works best when everyone participates. Here are some addresses:

*Premier Bill Vander Zalm  
Parliament Buildings,  
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4*

To the same address also write to:  
*Parks Minister Terry Huberts  
and Environment Minister  
Bruce Strachan*

*Brian Mulroney  
Prime Minister  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6*

At the same address also write to:  
*Environment Minister  
Lucien Bouchard*

## Facts support preservation

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company would invest in the fight to assert its right to log Carmanah Valley.

Sitka spruce, the biggest and the tallest trees in Carmanah, grow on the flat alluvial bottom-lands in the lower third of the valley. According to forest inventory statistics, the spruce contribute less than two percent of the wood volume of the entire watershed.

30 percent; and balsam fir, 20 percent. Some grow to spectacular proportions, but because Carmanah Valley is still largely unexplored, no one knows for sure whether or not there are record-sized trees of these species there.

While the Carmanah Giant, at 97 metres, is the tallest known tree in Canada and the tallest known Sitka spruce in the world, it is not the oldest living tree in the valley. The giant is estimated to be less

as tall as the giant but much bigger around) are estimated to be somewhere between 700 to 800 years old.

Even these spruces are not the oldest living trees in the valley. Gnarled cedars, relics from an ancient time, cling to the side hills. Annual growth rings on cedar stumps in adjacent clear-cut valleys indicate that many of the Carmanah cedars must be well over 1,000 years old. It is conceivable that one of these cedars might be nearly twice as old as the

Other species include hemlock at 44 percent cedar, than 400 years old. The biggest of the spruces (not oldest living spruce in Carmanah.

Would you trust the company that made this mess to carefully log Carmanah?



**MB clearcut off Rosander Main near Carmanah.**