



PROTECT URSUS VALLEY

AHOUSAHT TERRITORY



Ursus Valley - rich in salmon spawning gravels.



Towering Sitka spruce line the banks of the Ursus River.

Government and company trying to fast-track logging road construction into the Ursus—one of Clayoquot Sound's last big unlogged, salmon-rich watersheds.

Clayoquot Sound is one of Canada's best known environmental hotspots. First Nations and environmentalists have been working together for over a decade to halt the clearcutting of Clayoquot's ancient forests by two large, multi-national logging companies—MacMillan Bloedel (MB) and Interfor—and to save the region's wild salmon streams and special places.

Located right in the geographic heart of Clayoquot Sound is the 6,567 hectare Ursus Valley, a never-clearcut watershed, blanketed in towering moss-hung trees and rich in wildlife and salmon. This still-wild valley is part of Ahousaht First Nations' Territory. A recent plan by MB to build a road along the Ursus' narrow valley bottom has accelerated efforts to protect this special valley.

In April of 1993, when the B.C. government announced its ecologically unsound and unpopular Clayoquot decision, Premier Harcourt proclaimed that the Ursus Valley would be logged. However, recognizing the outstanding fish and wildlife populations that depend on the Ursus for survival, the government made the area a "Special Wildlife Management Zone". This meant that full environmental studies would be undertaken before any industrial activity would be allowed, to make sure that such activities would not harm the valley's wildlife, especially the Roosevelt elk.

Despite this special designation for the Ursus, MB seeks a permit to quickly build a logging road up the Ursus Valley and across a mountain pass in order to access timber in the neighbouring Bulson Valley. Many believe such a road would hurt the elk and the salmon spawning habitat. The BC government has apparently accommodated MB by speeding-up the wildlife studies in order to clear away any red tape in the way of logging road construction.

In the face of this government and industry initiative, the Ahousaht First Nations have recently begun conducting their own studies in the Ursus Valley. The Ahousaht/WCWC research team discovered that, besides being a major habitat for fish and wildlife, the Ursus is also surprisingly rich in evidence of past aboriginal use—a storehouse of Ahousaht history that spans centuries.

***We are only a small part of, but
certainly not in control of, Mother Nature.***

Chief Louis Frank, Ahousaht



Square "test hole" in redcedar - evidence of aboriginal canoe builders.

Expeditions into Ursus Valley find e

In September of 1994, the Chief and Council of the Ahousaht First Nations sent Roseanne Charlie from their village on Flores Island into the Ursus Valley, a pristine part of their traditional territories. Along with three Wilderness Committee staff members, Roseanne explored and photographed the valley. That expedition recorded towering stands of Sitka spruce and ancient red cedar trees along the river's narrow floodplain and a startling abundance of fish and wildlife. Expedition members reported signs of elk, wolf, cougar, black bear and several species of trout and salmon. The many pools and braided back waters of the Ursus are particularly rich in coho salmon fingerlings. Said expedition leader, WCWC campaigner Joe Foy, "The Ursus is one of the ecological jewels of Clayoquot Sound".

"The Ursus is one of the ecological jewels of Clayoquot Sound."

In December of 1994, the Chief and Council of Ahousaht, alarmed at the rapid pace of preparation for road building and logging plans in the Ursus, launched a second expedition to hunt down evidence of traditional aboriginal use of the valley's forests. Rosealie Thomas, Kurt John and Alex Ostepiuk of Ahousaht village, together with Joe Foy of Western Canada Wilderness Committee's head office and Susan Jones of WCWC's Ahousaht office, constructed a base camp in the Ursus and began a preliminary survey of aboriginal forest use as evidenced in Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs). CMTs are dead or living trees that have been scarred, chopped or cut down through aboriginal use for such purposes as canoe or plank making. Such trees can provide a history stretching back centuries of aboriginal activities in an area.

With the help of experts who joined the expedition—Steve and Matt Lawson of Wickaninnish Island, dendrochronologist Marion Parker and WCWC's mapping expert Ian Parfitt—thirty CMTs were discovered, recorded and mapped. Due to the timing of the expedition, only a very small area was surveyed.

Six of these CMTs were the remnants of canoe-building



Inside of research tent with "Protect Ursus" mural by Rosealie Thomas.



Six of these CMTs were the remnants of canoe-building projects. By taking small, pencil-sized core samples out of hemlock trees which have grown out of the redcedar stumps and logs remaining after canoe construction, Marion Parker was able to determine the approximate time of canoe building. One canoe building site was dated at sometime prior to 1869 and another was dated at prior to 1895. With further research, dates of modification could be obtained for all the thirty CMT sites discovered to date.

More studies will undoubtedly reveal the great extent of aboriginal use of the valley. Every canoe that was made in the Ursus Valley over the past several centuries has left its mark in the undisturbed, slowly decomposing redcedar stumps and logs left behind.

"One canoe building site was dated at sometime prior to 1869 and another was dated at prior to 1895."

For nations around the world that are struggling with problems caused by collapsing fisheries and dwindling forest resources, the Ursus Valley reveals a rare and ancient record of sustainable forest harvest by the ancestors of the Ahousaht First Nations, proven to have worked over time. The Ursus Valley to this day remains rich in fish, forests and wildlife despite centuries of traditional native logging. For the Ahousahts, the Ursus is a natural storehouse of history, a source of both learning and pride.

WCWC Supports Aboriginal Title

Western Canada Wilderness Committee believes that social justice for First Nations is a prerequisite to lasting environmental protection. We support the work of indigenous peoples to safeguard their traditional homelands and ensure the survival of their cultures. We believe that the rights of indigenous peoples to their homelands are inalienable and their traditional stewardship of Earth's resources can serve as an example of how we can live in sustainable harmony with our natural world.

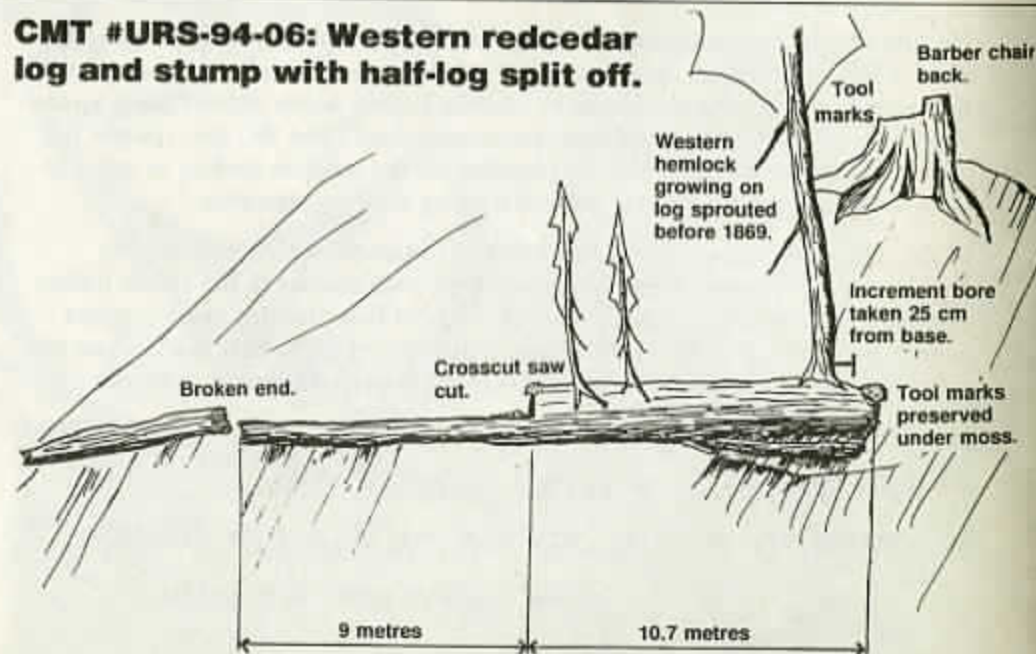


Kurt John measures 2 cm-wide chop marks left by canoe builders over 120 years ago.



Ahousaht Ursus research camp.

CMT #URS-94-06: Western redcedar log and stump with half-log split off.



vidence of intensive aboriginal use



Rosealie Thomas stands beside stump left over from pre-1869 canoe building.

Old growth forests are all we have left. It is a legacy for the generation of young people. We should treat it as our forefathers practiced, in First Nations' spirituality.

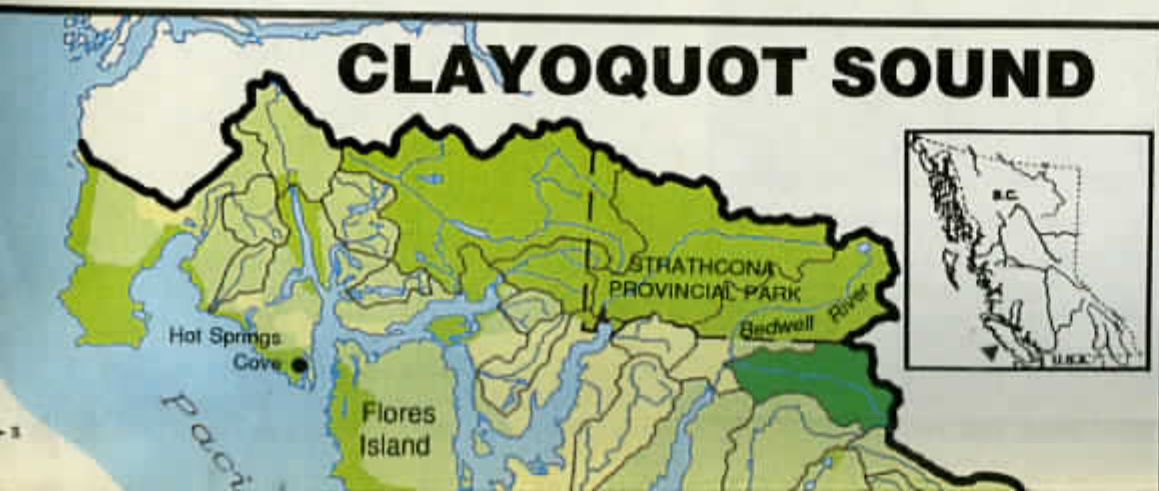
Chief Earl Maquinna George

It shouldn't be construed as a limitation by the B.C. government that we may not have the complete history of the Ursus at this moment...undoubtedly our people view this as a very powerful and meaningful place.

Nelson Keitlah, Chairman, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Central Region



Pulling research camp supplies up the Ursus River.





Roseanne Charlie and river-side bear tracks.

URSUS - RICH IN BEAR, ELK, SALMON & CMTs

More research would strengthen the case for preservation

Valleys like the Ursus are rare in today's world. Less than a dozen large valleys remain unlogged on Vancouver Island, out of 170 originally pristine valleys over 5,000 hectares in size. There are no unlogged valleys as big as the Ursus remaining in the coastal regions of Washington, Oregon or California—they have all been roaded and opened to industrial development. In places where wild valleys have disappeared, the eagle, elk, wolf and salmon have greatly diminished, and so too, we believe, has the human spirit. That is why people who care about the Earth are so concerned. That is why

every effort must be taken to protect the precious few wild valleys, like the Ursus, that we have left.

Some people don't understand why we need to protect our few remaining wild valleys. The Wilderness Committee concentrates its research and education to help people understand the value of these places and convince political decision makers to protect them.

The Wilderness Committee proposes to support three joint Ahousaht/Wilderness Committee studies in the Ursus Valley in 1995 to enhance the knowledge about it and the case for its preservation.

FISHERIES STUDIES — an inventory of young salmon fry and a survey of the range, quality and extent of the Ursus salmon spawning and rearing habitat.

ELK STUDIES — to determine the full range of habitat that these large animals need to survive, as evidenced by their traditional trail systems.

CULTURALLY MODIFIED TREE STUDIES — to determine, to a greater extent the traditional, sustainable aboriginal logging practices in Ahousaht First Nations territory.

CLAYOQUOT SOUND: a CHRONOLOGY of KEY EVENTS

Today, the Ursus Valley is at the centre of the long fight to protect from clearcut logging the natural ecology of the 260,000 hectare region of islands, rivers and valleys known as Clayoquot Sound. Clayoquot Sound contains the largest expanse of low elevation temperate rainforest left in North America. Here is a short chronology of events.

8,000+ BC to Present - Aboriginal First Nations occupied Clayoquot Sound and sustainably used its natural resources.

1778 - Captain Cook "discovers" the First Nations of the West Coast of Vancouver Island and their rich culture based on cedar, salmon and sustainable resource use.

1955 - Newly amalgamated logging company MacMillan Bloedel (MB) granted perpetual Tree Farm License (TFL) with exclusive cutting rights over more than half of Clayoquot Sound.

1956 - Cutting rights in almost all the rest of Clayoquot Sound granted to British Columbia Forest Products (BCFP), a newly formed large forest company. Forest Minister of the day sentenced to jail for accepting bribes to grant this license. (License sold to Fletcher Challenge and then in 1992 to International Forest Products - Interfor.)

1960s and 70s - Level of clearcutting in Clayoquot Sound continually increases to more than triple the initial rate of cut at time licenses granted. Evidence of damage—especially accelerated soil erosion—grows.

1981-82 - First Nations and other residents organize to oppose proposed clearcutting of Meares Island.

- B.C. government establishes *Meares Planning Team*.

1982 - Ahousahts oppose MB logging on Flores Island.

Take MB to court to stop MB log booming in Steamer Cove, claiming bark and debris hurting their aboriginal herring roe fishery and shellfish beds. Judge says Ahousahts are right but damage is minimal—rules in favour of MB.

1984 - Government ignores *Meares Planning Team's* recommendation for substantial preservation of Meares and reconfirms allocation of 95% of timber on Meares to industry. Cutting permits issued. First Nations and others block company efforts to log.

1985 - Nuuchah-Nulth granted an injunction to halt MB's logging of Meares to maintain status quo while their aboriginal claim to its forest is before the courts.

- Meares is declared a *Tribal Park* by the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations. (Ahousaht First Nations signed a new revised *Meares Island Tribal Park* declaration in 1992.)

- Wilderness Committee produces an educational report



Cypre River, 1994. Don't let this happen to the Ursus!

representatives of other First Nations and others gather on a logging road in the Atleo River Watershed in Ahousaht Territory in an unsuccessful attempt to stop the clearcut logging destruction of this salmon-rich stream. Logging company gives workers day off to avoid confrontation.

1989 - Premier Bill Vander Zalm announces the formation of the *Sustainable Development Task Force for the Clayoquot Sound Area* in order to decide which areas should be logged and which should be protected.

- Meares Island case begins in BC Supreme court.

1992 - The provincial government of Mike Harcourt established *CORE (Commission On Resources and the Environment)* to decide which lands should be logged and which lands should be preserved on Vancouver Island.

1993 - The B.C. government announces that Clayoquot Sound will not be considered by CORE and that, instead, the Clayoquot Sound Task Force recommendation will form the basis of B.C. government's decision on Clayoquot Sound land use.

April 13, 1993 - B.C. government announces its Clayoquot Sound land use decision. Most of the area's tall-tree forests are to be clearcut, while Megin watershed will be preserved. - Government creates a *Scientific Panel* to recommend how Clayoquot Sound should be logged.

- Local people begin to blockade MacMillan Bloedel logging operations near Kennedy Lake. People from all over the nation come to support them. More than 900 peaceful protesters eventually arrested.

- Ombudsman says Nuuchah-nulth not consulted properly regarding Clayoquot land use decision.

- B.C. Government and Central Region Nuuchah-nulth begin negotiating an *Interim Measures Agreement*.

- B.C. Government agrees to negotiate Meares Island case, instead of continuing fighting in the courts.

- Clearcut logging continues elsewhere in Clayoquot Sound, but at a reduced rate.

- Wilderness Committee begins construction of the *Clayoquot Witness Trail* in Clayoquot Valley with permission of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations and raises funds to support Tla-o-qui-aht construction of the *Big Cedar Trail* on Meares.

- The Wilderness Committee publishes an information report entitled "*Save Clayoquot Valley*".

March 19, 1994 - *Clayoquot Sound Interim Measures Agreement* signed by representatives of B.C. government and Nuuchah-nulth Central Region First Nations.

Agreement gives First Nations right to review all proposed resource developments in Clayoquot and power to stop those they believe harm the environment or native cultural heritage.

Oct. 1994 - Wilderness Committee completes the *Witness Trail* in Clayoquot Valley and begins a joint research project in the Ursus Valley with the Ahousaht First Nations.

January 1995 - The Ahousaht First Nations and the

Meares Island Tribal Park declaration in 1992.)

- Wilderness Committee produces an educational report entitled "Meares Island - Peaceful Protest Halts Logging".

- Chief Earl Maquinna George states he will not allow logging in the Megin Valley.

1988 - Local residents oppose road building along the shoreline of pristine Sulphur Pass-entrance to the Megin Valley, the largest unlogged coastal watershed remaining on Vancouver Island. Courts grant injunction to logging company. Thirty-five people defy the court orders and are arrested, including Chief Earl Maquinna George, Joe Martin and Carl Martin. Road building eventually is halted. Wilderness Committee publishes educational newspaper entitled "Time to sustain rather than destroy" about the fight to save Sulphur Pass.

September 1989 -More than 200 Ahousahts,

Clayoquot Sound Area in order to decide which areas should be logged and which should be protected. Environmentalists call for preservation of all large intact valleys and islands in Clayoquot Sound, with "ecoforestry" (single-stem selection logging) to be practised in the fragmented areas.

1990 - Task Force flounders because continued clearcut logging in areas considered prime candidates for preservation compromises the outcome of the process.

- Wilderness Committee produces an educational tabloid entitled "Save the Wild Side of Vancouver Island" and goes substantially into debt to publish a full colour 144 page hard cover book entitled "Clayoquot - On the Wild Side".

1991 - New Task Force formed. Logging in study area continues. Environment and tourism representatives eventually walk off in protest.

Nations.

January 1995 - The Ahousaht First Nations and the Wilderness Committee publish a 45 page report of joint expeditions into the Ursus Valley entitled *Preliminary Investigations of Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs) by Aboriginal Use of the Ursus Valley in Ahousat Territory of Clayoquot Sound* detailing extensive aboriginal forest use in the Ursus.

February 1995 - MB refuses to show WCWC representatives proposed Ursus road and logging plans at its public review of TFL 44 Management and Working Plans in Vancouver.

- MB TFL 44 replacement license referred to the **Central Region Board** established under the *Interim Measures Agreement* for its consideration.

Make the Pen Mightier than the Big Company's Chainsaws!

Write: Both Premier Mike Harcourt and Opposition Leader Gordon Campbell at:

Legislative Buildings, Victoria,
British Columbia V8V 1X4.

• Tell them how you feel about protecting the Ursus Valley. Ask them what steps they will take to protect the Ursus Valley!

Help Protect the Ursus Valley

Yes! I will help fund the joint Ahousaht and Wilderness Committee research work to protect the Ursus Valley in Clayoquot Sound.

☐ Enclosed is my tax deductible donation of ____\$500 ____\$100 ____\$50 ____\$20 ____ other to be used for (circle choices) salmon study, elk survey, or further CMT studies in the Ursus Valley. WCWC's Rev. Canada Tax Reg. No. is 0587113-21-28.

☐ I want to join (renew my membership in) the Wilderness Committee. Enclosed is my \$30 annual membership fee. Members receive regular WCWC education reports and a free copy of the Committee's annual *Endangered Wilderness* wall calendar.

☐ Send me ____ copies of the 45-page, full-colour, illustrated report, *Preliminary Investigations of Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs) by Aboriginal Use of the Ursus Valley in Ahousat Territory of Clayoquot Sound*. (Cost of \$20.00 each includes all taxes, shipping and postage.)

☐ Send me a **KEEP IT WILD! URSUS VALLEY** bumpersticker (\$3.00)

☐ Enclosed is \$15 for an individually signed *The Ursus Vision* (17" x 23") art poster by Ahousaht artist George C. John, Jr. Original (22" x 30") on sale for \$2,500 at Walk The Wild Side's *Arts of Paawac Centre* in Ahousaht. To enquire call 1-800-661-9453.

Name (please print) _____ Address _____

City _____ Province _____ PC _____

Please mail to the Wilderness Committee, 20 Water St., Vancouver BC V6B 1A4



This is paper is a joint publication of the Ahousaht First Nations and Western Canada Wilderness Committee. Writing: Joe Foy, Paul George Editing: Adriane Carr, Susan Jones Design & Layout: Sue Fox-Gregory Map: Ian Parfitt. Photos: Joe Foy, Ian MacKenzie and Adriane Carr Western Canada Wilderness Committee Educational Report Vol. 14 - No. 2 Spring 1995. Posted in Vancouver. WCWC is a non-profit charitable society dedicated to promoting, through research and education, sustainable resource use and wild ecosystem preservation. The Ahousaht First Nations and their ancestors have sustainably used the resources of Clayoquot Sound for millenia. WCWC-Ahousaht Office, General Delivery, Ahousaht, BC V0R 1A0. Main office 604-683-8220. Press run - 130,000 copies. Printed in Canada on recycled newsprint. Written material may be used without permission if credit is given. Please recycle this paper to a friend.