

RANDY STOLTMANN WILDERNESS AREA

SAVE IT NOW!

Tony Eberts - special to WCWC

Just a 3-hour-drive from Vancouver (200 km north), touched by the headwaters of the Squamish and Lillooet Rivers, is a stretch of wilderness unique in the world.

Its champions call it the *Randy Stoltmann Wilderness*, in honour of the young mountaineer, conservationist and author killed last year in an avalanche.

One of the last things Stoltmann did was to put together a brief advocating the preservation of a 260,000-hectare roadless area. The Stoltmann Wilderness includes three large pristine watersheds, alpine meadows, glacial lakes, waterfalls, icefields, populations of grizzlies, moose, wolverine, mountain goat and wolf—and the last significant stands of old-growth Douglas fir on our mainland coast.

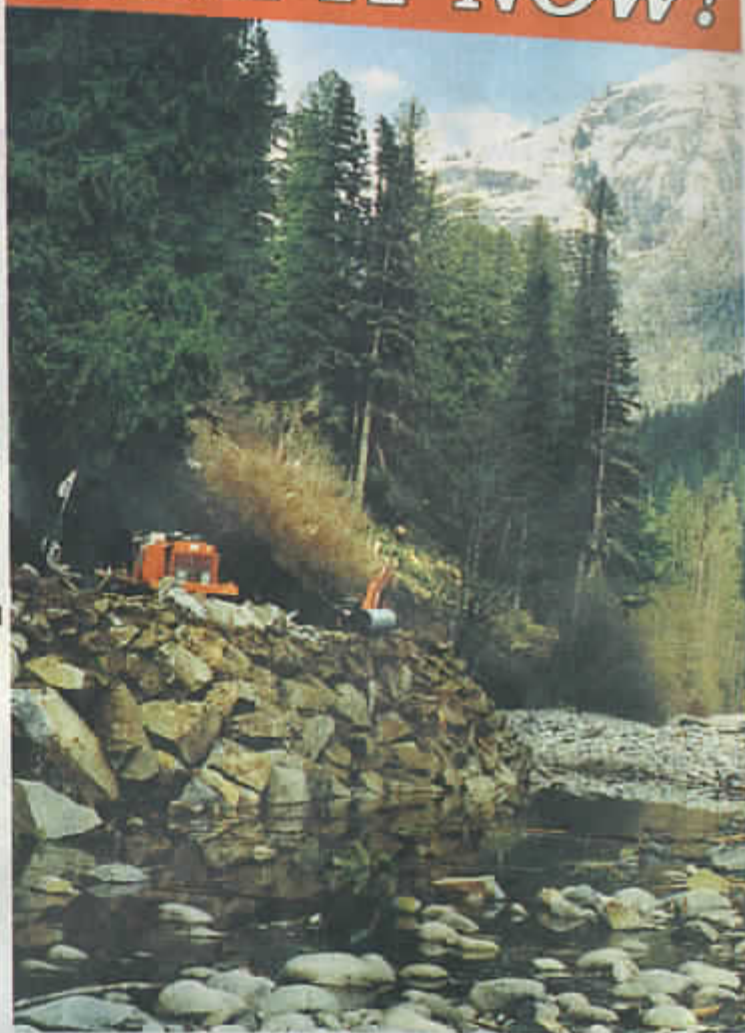
This area is not a Carmanah Valley filled with high value trees. Little more than two percent of this wild, ruggedly beautiful proposed protected area (already known to growing numbers of backcountry skiers, mountaineers and hikers) is commercially valuable timberland.

But plans to blast in logging roads, compromise the wilderness and clearcut the rare remnants of old-growth forest in the valley bottoms are already well advanced.



Fir-cedar forest near the mouth of Sims Creek.

The stands of big trees in the Stoltmann Wilderness are not only worth preserving in their own right; they are vital to the winter survival of animals including



Interfor logging road being built in Sims Creek.



on their own right; they are vital to the winter survival of animals including moose, deer, goats and grizzly.

Nearby Garibaldi Provincial Park has a somewhat similar range of mountainous terrain, but the rapid growth of population in the Lower Mainland is inevitably leading to such heavy use of the park that its wilderness aspect will be compromised. Furthermore, Garibaldi lacks both the herds of big game animals and the big tree wintering habitat to shelter them. Also it's cut off by roads and settlement from other wild areas.

The Randy Stoltmann Wilderness spreads from tidewater at Princess Louisa Inlet, across tributaries of the Squamish to the upper part of the Lillooet River system. Straddling the divide between the Toba and Elaho Rivers, it's true wilderness, yet it's southern border is easily accessible by road.

The person who knows the area best is John Clarke, a dedicated mountain man who has spent much of the last 35 years exploring the Coast Mountains of B.C. from Vancouver to Alaska.

Timber companies and the B.C. Forest Service have been challenged to come up with similar Douglas fir/western redcedar forests on the mainland, but they can't," says Clarke. "The Stoltmann Wilderness has the last of them."

Unless the area is preserved—and quickly—they will be gone. Many animals will be doomed, and so will the wild, fragile wonder of the region.

This year Interfor Ltd. is planning to bridge the Elaho River, main waterway of the upper Squamish, which forms part of the southeastern boundary of the Stoltmann Wilderness. Next year the chainsaws would be into one of the rare Douglas fir/redcedar groves.



Waterfall near Sims Creek.

"Many people think that there's one great expanse of untouched forest all up the coast from the Vancouver area," Clarke says. "They couldn't be farther off the mark."

"As you fly up the mainland coast from Vancouver to Bella Coola, stretched below you is one of the world's grandest and most intricate coastlines. Your eyes search the fiords for an unlogged valley, but until you reach Kwalate Creek in Knight Inlet, every valley running in from tidewater has its system of roads and clearcuts.

"What really makes an impression is the number of logged-out valleys that could still be providing employment if they had been harvested on a sustainable basis.

"Historically, the classic, valley-bottom stands of giant fir and cedar were removed during the railroad and steam-donkey era of the 1920s and 1930s. What followed was 50 years of truck logging that used zig-zag roads to log far up the sides and into the headwaters of these valleys.

-- continued on page four

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PRESERVE THE SIMS, CLENDENNING, UPPER

EXPLORER

John Clarke came to B.C. from his native Ireland in 1958, discovered the craggy wilds of our coastal mountains, and soon built his life around them.

"To me, exploring this part of the world is so fascinating that I don't have time for any other part. We have it all right here," he says with a smile. "I've never been back to Dublin and I've never even travelled in the U.S.

"I'm completely captivated by the wilderness beauty and the challenges. I can hardly wait to get back out there every year..."

In his highly regarded *Guide to Climbing & Hiking in Southwestern British Columbia* (Soules, 1986), author Bruce Fairley describes Clarke as "an enigmatic character...who is indifferent to the goals that motivate most North Americans.

"Certainly Clarke has seen more of the distant alpine corners of southwestern B.C., and has made more ascents, than any other individual."

In the case of the Randy Stoltmann Wilderness, Clarke, stands as a fiercely passionate defender of a mountain paradise threatened by the kind of short-term exploitation he has always scorned.

TRAILBLAZER

Mosquitoes don't bother trail boss James Jamieson. Born in Quebec and raised in Northern Ontario's black fly country, James is currently living in the ancient forests of Sims Creek Valley in WCWC's trail crew camp. "The forests



Randy Stoltmann

Randy Stoltmann, author and mountaineer, and one of the most passionate campaigners for wilderness protection in B.C., was killed in an avalanche while on a ski traverse through the remote ranges west of the Kitlope River in May of 1994.

"For me, sharing a tent with him on his last trek sharpened the tragedy of his death, but also gave me a sense of his vision for the future of wild places," said John Clarke. "His knack for being liked by people on both sides of this argument grew from his belief that this was one divisive issue that ultimately involved everyone. Randy said to me, 'In the long run, we're all in this one together.'"

In April, 1994, shortly before his death, Stoltmann drew up a formal proposal to preserve the Elaho-Upper Lillooet wilderness under the provincial government's Protected Area Strategy (PAS). Only a century earlier, this area was first traversed and described by the legendary explorer Stanley Smith.

In his proposal, Stoltmann quoted from Smith's original report on Clendenning Creek Valley:

"Close to the summit we crossed a glacier (now named Havoc Glacier) which filled the valley. The scenery in many places is very fine, and we found luxuriant vegetation close to the snow. There are falls on this route rivalling Shaffhausen or Yosemite..."

Stoltmann suggested that this wilderness area be named in honour of Smith, but Randy's friends and peers want it named for him, the one who first proposed the entire area be protected.

In his PAS submission, Stoltmann points out that part of the Elaho/Upper Lillooet region was proposed as a wilderness area

ancient forests of Sims Creek Valley in WCWC's trail crew camp. "The forests here are so spectacular," says James, "the scenery totally outweighs any discomforts of wilderness living."

James, who holds a B.A. in Economics from Carleton, is currently a student in the Capilano College Outdoor Recreation Program. This summer he is field managing the Wilderness Committee's Sims Creek summer trail project. Volunteer WCWC trail builders are clearing a simple "snip and hike" trail up Sims Creek so that average person can see the big-treed forests, glaciers and waterfalls in the area.

"We aim to save the Randy Stoltmann Wilderness Area by letting people directly experience and contrast it with nearby clearcuts. The results will be a massive public outcry," says James.

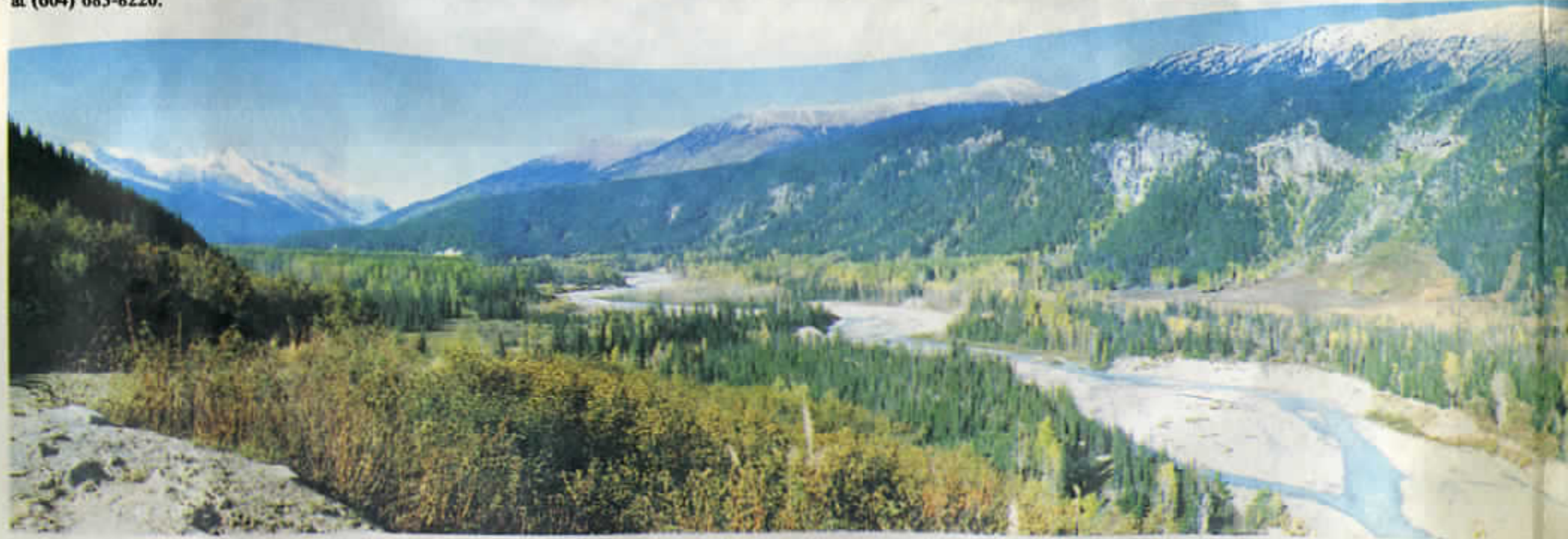
To volunteer for trail building, phone the Wilderness Committee office in Vancouver at (604) 683-8220.



out that part of the Elaho/Upper Lillooet region was proposed as a wilderness area through the Parks and Wilderness for the 90s process by the B.C. Ministry of Forests—"an official recognition of its special values," he wrote.

"The wilderness values are dependent on the protection of these undeveloped valley-bottom to mountain-top landscapes which make this area special compared with the surrounding region where virtually all major valleys have been roaded and at least partially logged."

Stoltmann tells of his painstaking exploration over a 12 year period of the mountain country within 200 km of Vancouver. "I feel qualified to rank the Elaho/Upper Lillooet wilderness as the most important unprotected wilderness area in the Eastern Pacific Ranges in terms of variety of special features, backcountry recreation opportunities, remoteness and overall wilderness conservation values."



R ELAHO & UPPER LILLOOET RIVER VALLEYS

ann 1962 - 1994

"The key objective is to protect the complete, functioning natural systems in this area, from valley-bottom to mountain-top, in an undeveloped condition..."

"The measure of success will be in the ability of the Elaho/Upper Lillooet wilderness to retain its wonderfully remote and primitive character."

Stoltmann details some of the natural wonders of the area.

- ◆ Rich volcanic soils in the Manatee and Polychrome Ridge sections have produced flower-covered alpine meadows rivalling those of the Black Tusk region of Garibaldi Park.

- ◆ There are about 100 major glaciers throughout the area, including 18-km-long Lillooet Glacier, and Terrific Glacier which ends in a fantastic 1,200-metre vertical icefall.

- ◆ Highest peaks include Mount Tisiphone, 3,037 metres; Lillooet Mountain, 2,939 metres; and Elaho Mountain, 2,823 metres. The Meager Group is a cluster of ornate volcanic towers, the tallest reaching 2,646 metres.

- ◆ The rare and magnificent Douglas fir/redcedar stands, plus many examples of hanging valleys and cirques, talus slopes, glacial lakes (at least one that's only about 50 years old) and a wide range of unusual plants and wildflowers.

Existing logging roads and rough trails near the northeast part of the proposed wilderness area give access to the superb alpine country of the Lillooet-Bridge River Divide, inviting the use by weekend hikers and backpackers.

On the southern boundary, there is logging road access to part of the Elaho, and John

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.

The Randy Stoltmann Wilderness Area is within the traditional territories of the Klahoose, Lil'wat, Sechelt and Squamish Nations.

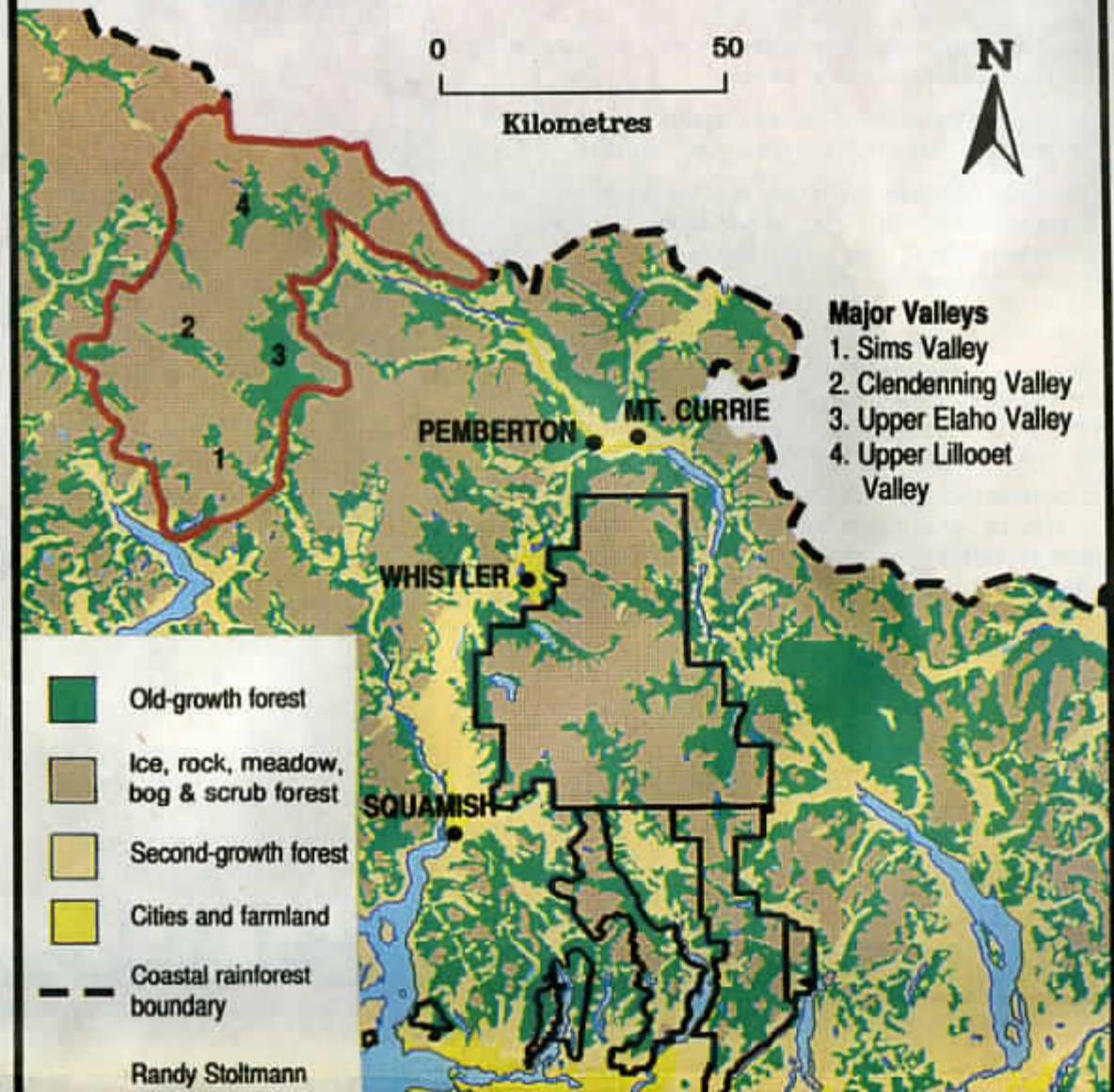
Photo, top left. Ancient redcedar near Sims Creek.

Photo, top right. Hunsechin Valley, south end of the wilderness area.

Photo, centre. Little Toba Valley, west side of the wilderness area.

Photo, bottom left. Lake at Beacon Pass

Proposed Randy Stoltmann Wilderness Area



- Major Valleys**
1. Sims Valley
 2. Clendenning Valley
 3. Upper Elaho Valley
 4. Upper Lillooet Valley

- Old-growth forest
- Ice, rock, meadow, bog & scrub forest
- Second-growth forest
- Cities and farmland
- Coastal rainforest boundary
- Randy Stoltmann

On the southern boundary, there is logging road access to part of the Elaho, and John Clarke and others hope to see the Elaho crossed by a footbridge, not the major vehicle bridge planned for this year by Interfor Ltd.

There are only three large wilderness areas remaining within easy reach of Vancouver: the Garibaldi complex, the Stein/Upper Nahatlach watersheds—and the proposed Stoltmann Wilderness.

None is fully protected. The Stein System remains threatened by logging, additions to Garibaldi to give it low elevation continuity are pending and all the major valleys of the Stoltmann Wilderness have already been scheduled for roadbuilding this year and logging the next.

There is still time to save these priceless survivors of our natural heritage, but only if members of the public make their wishes known now.

Photo, bottom left.
Lake at Racoon Pass,
west side of the
wilderness area.
Photo, panoramic.
Upper Lillooet Valley,
north end of the
wilderness area.

Randy Stoltmann
Wilderness Area
boundary

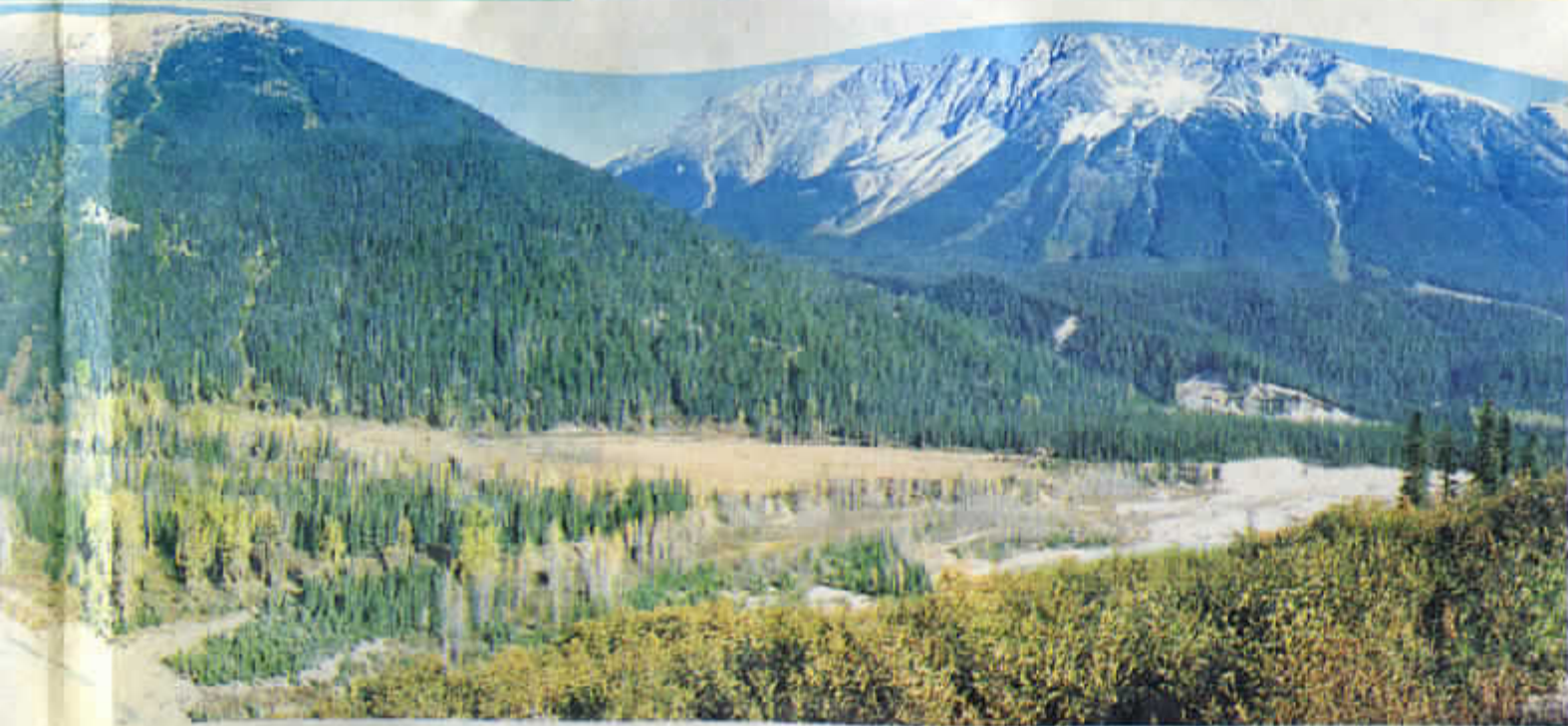
Existing large
park boundaries



The threats are immediate!

B.C.'s two biggest forest companies, armed with Tree Farm Licence agreements giving them exclusive cutting rights to the forest, want to build access roads into the Stoltmann Wilderness and log some of the very last of the big Douglas fir forests left on the mainland coast of B.C.

MacMillan Bloedel is seeking a Forest Service permit to build a road through unstable pumice slopes of the upper Lillooet River to access the fir stands there. Interfor is currently building a road into Sims Creek, blasting rock and debris right into this Class A fish stream. Forest Service approval is pending for further road construction and cut blocks in the Clendenning and Upper Elaho watersheds.



**4000 ft. icefall on Hunsechin Peak,
south end of the wilderness area.**

The roads and clearcuts must stop. Help save Canada's last big Douglas fir forests!

Who's in charge of what happens to the public forests of B.C.? The big timber corporations' P.R. firms and their 'Share' groups want you to believe that the present system works in favour of the ordinary working people in the industry-dependent communities.

Politicians want you to believe that in this free enterprise land a whole lot of companies are competing in a free and open market for 'timber harvesting', with government acting on the sidelines as a sort of referee.

Both views are totally unrealistic, according to *TOUCH WOOD: B.C. Forests at the Crossroads* (Harbour, 1993).

"In reality, the economy is dominated by a very few large corporations which have access unavailable to smaller companies to resources, transportation, and means of marketing goods; and government acts, and has always acted, as a support for these corporations," says contributor Patricia Marchak.

The new highly touted Forest Practices Code changes none of this. In fact, it further entrenches the control of policy by the few big, foreign-dominated timber corporations, hand in hand with the provincial forests ministry.

Corporate propagandists claim on the one hand that everything is just fine in the woods, with plenty of timber in reserve—and, on the other hand, that every valley west of Saskatchewan must be logged as quickly as possible or the industry will collapse.

The simple truth is that the ability of the land to regrow trees has been exceeded for so many years that the industry will indeed collapse—unless it is forced to log on a sustainable basis.

Will the last few remaining untouched valleys with their rare stands of old-growth trees and the animals that depend on them be sacrificed to industrial greed and short-sightedness, abetted by government policies? It is up to you.

People must let the government know that there are more important things to the future of British Columbia than just another shipload of lumber heading for Japan to benefit shareholders who most likely will never even visit B.C.

The Randy Stoltmann Wilderness is one of them.



Douglas fir & redcedar near Clendenning Creek.

continued from page one

"What remains today in most mainland valleys are patches of forest on benches above cliffs and a fringe of high elevation sub-alpine trees that weren't considered valuable before. Now, even these remnants are being helicoptered off, removing the last trace of integrity that these watersheds still have."

What does all this mean for the Randy Stoltmann Wilderness Area? First of all it means that our best opportunity to keep a classic old-growth Douglas fir/redcedar forest on the mainland is not hiding in an inaccessible fiord up the coast. It is right here, nearby Vancouver! It also means that the forest types in these valleys are now so rare that it's crucial they be protected. Saving the Stoltmann Wilderness means that future generations will have a chance to get a sense of what the great low-elevation forests were like in the old days.

The Stoltmann area was described by Stoltmann himself, after thorough exploration, as a key link in a chain of wilderness regions stretching up the spine of the Coast Mountains from Garibaldi to Chilko Lake and Tweedsmuir Park.

Like the montane ecosystem of the Rockies (from Banff and Jasper Parks in Canada to Yellowstone Park in the U.S.), the Coast Mountains form a migration corridor for grizzly bear, moose, mountain goat, wolf and wolverine. The groves of big trees in the valley bottoms (especially the Douglas fir/cedar forests) ensure the winter survival of these animals by keeping them sheltered from the snow and wind.

Stoltmann Wilderness expert, John Clarke, reports that in the spring the forest floor under the wonderful stand of Douglas fir in the upper Lillooet River is criss-crossed with game trails and covered with animal droppings—clear evidence of its heavy use as an essential winter haven. "Previous logging of surrounding areas has further concentrated the wintering animals into this refuge, so it's a shock to be told that these trees are in the 1996 logging plans," Clarke says.

The mainland coast of B.C. is rapidly going the way of Vancouver Island, where only about one-half of one per cent of the once great Douglas fir forests have escaped liquidation by non-sustainable logging tactics.

Dean Channel, some 450 km northwest of Vancouver, is the northern growth limit for all but stunted, 'bonsai' Douglas fir. Within this 450 km long coastal zone, the



Recent clearcut and slash-burn, Elaho Valley.

This is an election year in B.C... the government better be listening!

Let the government know how strongly you feel about preserving the last of the great Mainland coastal Douglas fir forests in the Randy Stoltmann Wilderness...and how you feel about the road building and clearcutting plans of Interfor and MB to destroy them.

WRITE, CALL OR FAX
Premier Mike Harcourt
Legislative Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
Tel 387-1715 Fax 387-0087

the northern growth limit for all but stunted, 'bonsai' Douglas fir. Within this 450 km long coastal zone, the stands in the Stoltmann Wilderness are unique.

"It's a miracle that these fine old-growth Douglas fir trees still exist, so close to logging operations and so easily reached from Vancouver," Clarke says. "It would be a tragedy to see them destroyed."

The Stoltmann Wilderness mix of forested valleys, high meadows, small lakes, soaring mountains, swift water and icefields adds up to incredible beauty.

"In places you seem to be walking through a series of Japanese gardens," Clarke says. "The lakes show an unbelievable range of colours. Some of the animals, such as mountain goats, have little fear of people."

"When you consider that it's close to 57 per cent of B.C.'s population and has so much to offer in terms of recreation and conservation values, preservation is the only logical course."



CREDITS

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yes! I will be a protector of the Randy Stoltmann Wilderness Area

- Here is my tax-deductible donation of ___\$25___ \$50___ \$100___ \$500___ \$1000___ more! to help save the Randy Stoltmann Wilderness! Gifts of \$50 or more acknowledged with a beautiful trail certificate.
- I want to join/renew (check envelope label for renewal date) my membership in the Wilderness Committee. Enclosed is my \$30 annual membership fee. Increased membership strengthens WCWC's voice and brings you regular WCWC educational papers and WCWC's *Endangered Wilderness* wall calendar.
- Send me a copy of the late Randy Stoltmann's original 1994 Protected Area Proposal to preserve the Clendenning/Elaho/Upper Lillooet region - 32 page cerlox bound booklet, with 7 colour pages of photos and maps. Enclosed is \$20 to cover all costs including copying, binding, postage and all applicable taxes.

Name (please print) _____ Address _____
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WILDERNESS IS ONLY ONCE. The first chance is *the last* to save it!