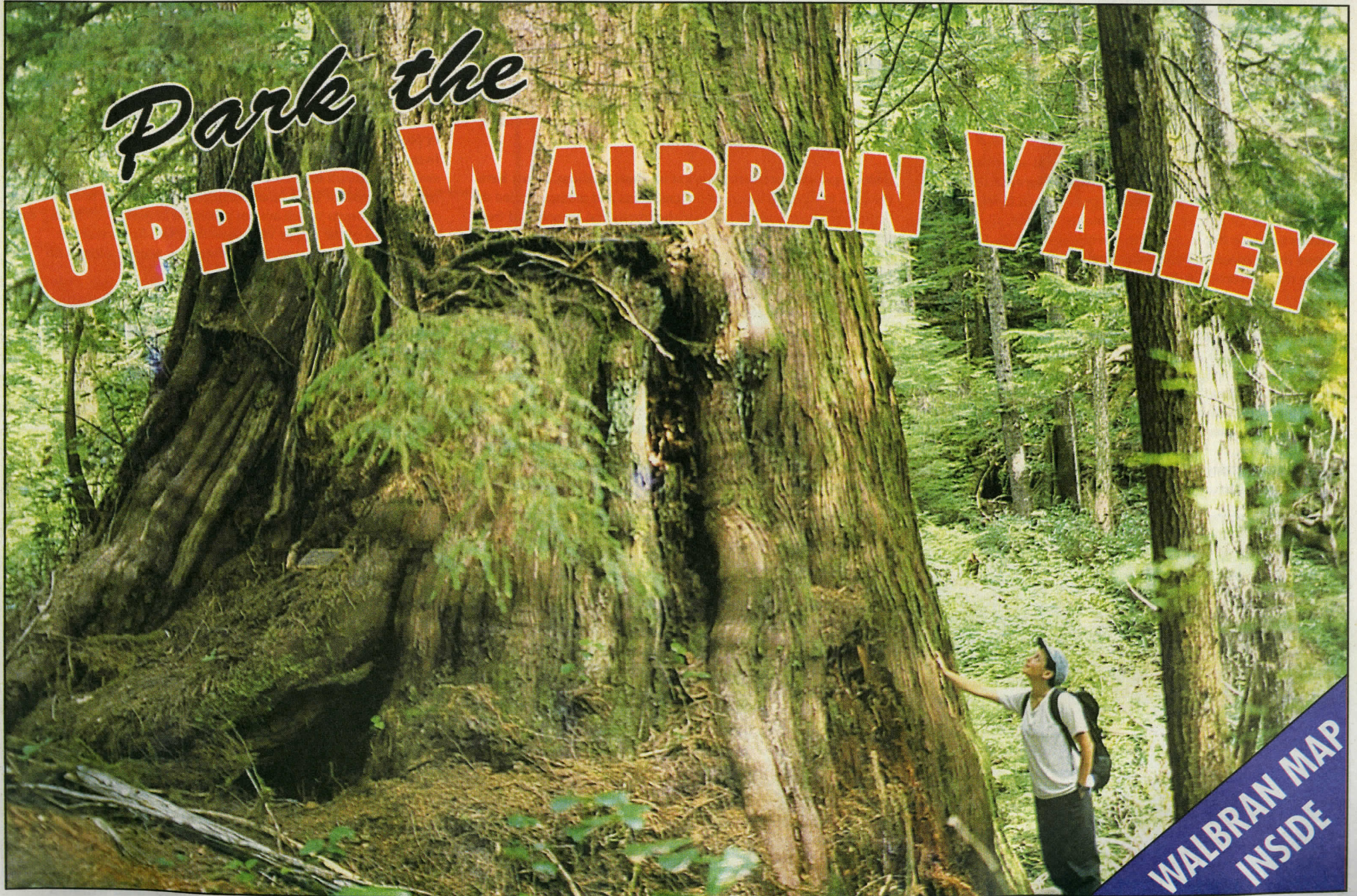


# *Dark the* **UPPER WALBRAN VALLEY**



This near-record-sized five metre-in-diameter redcedar, nicknamed "The Castle", grows in the unprotected Lower Castle Grove within TimberWest TFL 46 lands in the Upper Walbran Valley. Photo by Geoff Huber



# South Vancouver Island's most spectacular ancient rainforest UNPROTECTED and THREATENED

**O**n the southwestern coast of Vancouver Island, only a three-hour drive from Victoria, Canada's glorious old-growth temperate rainforest reaches its most magnificent proportions. In the Upper Walbran Valley, western redcedar, Douglas Fir and Sitka spruce grow to mammoth proportions. It's a home for big trees and it's threatened!

Experts believe that the Walbran Valley, like the adjoining Carmanah, has one of the highest amounts of biomass (organic matter) per hectare of anywhere in the world and more than in any other place in Canada. Here, ample year-round rainfall and very mild winters thwart fires and maximize year-round photosynthesis. The Walbran is the southern-most large tract of lowland, big-treed, old-growth forest left in BC...and very rare! About 87 percent of the ancient forest south of Barkley Sound on Vancouver Island has already been logged.

The Walbran is the traditional territory of the Pacheedaht First Nation. Their ancestors have used this valley's ancient cedars, salmon, and wildlife to sustain their culture for millennia.

## Whole valleys not half valleys make ecologically viable parks!

In 1994, at the conclusion of the Vancouver Island Commission on Resources and the Environment (CORE) land use process, the BC government added Upper Carmanah Valley to the already protected lower valley to provide park protection for the entire Carmanah watershed. Ignoring the call for protecting the entire Walbran watershed, it protected the Lower Walbran but left the 5000-hectare Upper Walbran Valley open to industrial logging. Conservationists didn't give up and the fight to save the whole Walbran continues today.

TimberWest and Weyerhaeuser are, cutblock by cutblock, steadily clearcutting the Upper Walbran. With every heavy rainfall, silt from the new clearcuts and logging roads is washing into the salmon-bearing Walbran Creek. This logging increasingly affects the park downstream and it fragments habitats of endangered species. It makes complete ecological sense that the entire Walbran watershed be protected as a park.

About 25 percent of the Upper Walbran (15 percent of the entire

watershed) has been clearcut to date. While the campaign to protect the Upper Walbran has dragged on for seven years, its spectacular forest has diminished. The BC government must protect it now...or it'll be too late.

## Logging will destroy ecotourism gem

Next to the Pacific Ocean, a narrow corridor including the mouths of the Walbran and Carmanah is protected in Pacific Rim National



Timberwest continues to liquidate the Upper Walbran's ancient forest with its "variable retention" logging such as shown in this photo, which is virtually identical to clearcutting. April 2000

Park's West Coast Lifesaving Trail. It's one of the world's premier hiking destinations. Unfortunately, this National Park protects only a very narrow strip of land—in many parts not even a kilometre wide. Hikers often hear the roar of chainsaws and machinery through the thin strip of trees as logging encroaches on the park's boundary. Pacific Rim National Park is not viable on its own as a recreational paradise or as a protector of biodiversity. Saving the entire Walbran Valley is key to this Park's survival.

## TimberWest: greedy or shrewd Multinational Forestry corporation?

TimberWest's holdings in the Upper Walbran are, according to current land use plans, part of a so-called 'Special Management Zone' (SMZ), which calls for the retention of some "mature" and "old-growth targets." However, these old-growth "reserves" do not have to be located in the ecologically vital valley bottoms and lower slopes where the big trees grow. In fact, they can be moved around in the SMZ when cutover lands become "mature" which is defined by the Forest Service as being 125 years of age. Simply put, the SMZ leaves most of the Upper Walbran's ancient forests open to logging.

TimberWest acts ruthlessly towards its own workers. The Youbou sawmill at Cowichan Lake operated for 73 years until TimberWest shut it down on January 26, 2001, laying-off 220 employees. The Youbou mill had in recent year been retooled to handle smaller second-growth logs. Closing the mill has not reduced TimberWest's rate of logging. Now the logs are being shipped elsewhere for processing. TimberWest is, in fact, BC's largest exporter of raw logs.

Recently TimberWest was one of the logging companies implicated in a "grade-setting" scam, misrepresenting the value of the timber logged from our public forest lands and cheating BC taxpayers out of millions of dollars in stumpage payments for the logs they've taken. The future of our forests and secure jobs for forest workers are not safe in the hands of companies like TimberWest. It's community-controlled forest licenses, local value-added manufacturing and protection of precious places—including the Upper Walbran's remaining ancient forests—that will sustain jobs and local communities in the long run.



# An industrial Tree Farm plantation is not a healthy self-perpetuating Forest

“We replant three trees for every one we cut down!” boast the big logging companies. Everyone has heard this. Assuming that replanting is successful, what’s wrong with cutting down all, or almost all, of our remaining oldgrowth forests, like the big-treed forest of the Upper Walbran? The primary problem is that second-growth tree plantations and old-growth forests provide very different habitats. Here are some of the ways they differ.

Trees in second-growth plantations are even-aged and closely spaced, blocking out the sunlight. In the wild oldgrowth forest, the trees are of different ages. As the giant trees die and topple over, they leave gaps for light to penetrate onto the ground, allowing seedlings a chance to perpetuate an uneven-aged forest. The different living spaces support more kinds of plants and animals, creating more diversity in the oldgrowth forests.

Even-aged tree plantations contain few, if any, large standing dead trees, called “snags,” and no giant rotting logs on the forest floor that are so common in oldgrowth forests. This rotting wood is home to numerous species of birds, bats, salamanders, voles, insects and fungi. In times of drought, rotting oldgrowth logs act as giant water sponges that gradually release their store of moisture for wildlife and plants and to help retard fires.

Second-growth forests have “single-layered” canopies while oldgrowth forests have “multi-layered” canopies. The single-

layered canopies have only one vertical level of needles and branches, because most of the trees are roughly the same age and height. In contrast, the wide range of tree ages and heights in oldgrowth forests create “multi-layered” canopies. Different species, including birds, live in different canopy layers. The gradual release of rainwater through the multi-layered canopies prolongs the time period before moisture is absorbed by the soil, reducing the chance of flooding and landslides.

Second-growth forests that are cut on short rotations do not have the time to develop layers of lichens, ferns and mosses (called the “epiphyte” layer) which grow on the trunks and branches of trees and which are a distinct feature of oldgrowth forests. This is because many of these epiphyte species take hundreds of years to become established and grow. Thick mats of suspended soil build up from centuries of decay on branches. New species are constantly being discovered in this epiphyte soil layer.

University of Victoria entomologist Dr. Neville Winchester’s research in the oldgrowth canopy of the Carmanah Valley has so far discovered over 70 new species of insects and spiders previously unknown to science. He expects to discover another 600 new species from the thousands of samples that have yet to be examined by taxonomy experts. Undoubtedly, the Upper Walbran Valley’s lush canopy, located just a few kilometres from Carmanah, will also yield hundreds of new species – if logging does not

obliterate them before they’re discovered! Some biologists believe that the amazing complexity of the oldgrowth temperate rainforest (the most complex of all the temperate ecosystems) and its multitude of species contribute to this ecosystem’s heartiness, stability and longevity.

BC’s oldgrowth coastal forests support many species that require or prefer ancient forest habitat. Oldgrowth- dependent species living in the Walbran include nesting marbled murrelets, Vaux’s swifts and Keen’s long-eared myotis (a species of bats). Unfortunately, the goal of BC’s forest management system is to replace the oldgrowth forests which are not protected in parks—including the wild forests of the Upper Walbran—with tree farms that are clearcut on short rotation, long before they acquire oldgrowth features.

The rate of cut in BC is currently 71 million cubic metres a year, despite the Ministry of Forests’ own calculations that the long-term sustainable harvest level (which itself is still based on the current short rotation/plantation system of forestry and does not consider more ecologically sound forestry) is 59 million cubic metres a year. It is essential that the BC government drastically reduce BC’s rate of cut and mandate selection logging practices to stop the forests of the province from being transformed into biologically impoverished unsustainable tree plantations.



A dense, dark, uniform even-aged tree farm plantation blocks out the sunlight impoverishing the forest floor habitat. *Photo by Chris Darimont*



This huge Douglas fir snag in the lush Upper Castle Grove is located within a proposed TimberWest TFL 46 cutblock. *Photo by Ron Smid.*



## Walbran Watershed Facts

Status: Crown land - Unceded First Nation's Land	
Walbran watershed's total area	13,162 ha
Area protected in lower valley park	5,568 ha
Area of unprotected upper valley	7,594 ha
Area already logged in watershed	1,950 ha

Cutblocks proposed and approved in the Upper Walbran for the next five years **35**

### Tree Farm Licenses (TFLs) in the Upper Walbran

TimberWest (TFL 46)	2,534 ha = 33.4%
Weyerhaeuser (TFL 44)	5,060 ha = 66.6%

Number of people arrested since 1991 for peaceful civil disobedient acts to save the Walbran forest: Over **60**

## Small parks inevitably become "Islands of Extinction"

Conservation biology studies indicate that small fragmented habitats, which most BC parks comprise, turn into "islands of extinction" as industrial development transforms the ecosystems around them and isolates them from other natural areas. The small breeding populations of animals in these fragmented habitats die off as inbreeding, disease, natural disturbances (e.g. fires, floods, droughts) and "edge effects" take their toll.

The marbled murrelet is a good example of a species requiring oldgrowth forest that is harmed by the "edge effect" in small fragments of habitats. These birds are only able to nest on the wide, mossy limbs high up in ancient trees like those in the Walbran. As clearcut patches increasingly fragment oldgrowth nesting habitat, creating "forest edges", predation on murrelet chicks and eggs by jays, crows and ravens—forest edge-associated species—also increases. The survival of these murrelets is also jeopardised by direct felling of their nesting trees.

Only large, connected protected areas will sustain Vancouver Island's biodiversity over the long-term. Presently, less than 6 percent of Vancouver Island's low elevation oldgrowth forests are protected. Protection of more ancient forests, including the Upper Walbran, is essential for creating a comprehensive, linked network of protected areas based on conservation biology principles.

## Ignoring conservationists' pleas, BC Forest Service decides to eliminate protected wildlife corridors in the Upper Walbran

In Tree Farm Licenses 44 and 46, protected wildlife corridors called Forest Ecosystem Networks (FENs) were set up in 1991 by BC's Chief Forester to connect together key tracts of forest. Today, after nearly a decade of continuous logging around them, these FENs now contain some of the most magnificent ancient forests left on southern Vancouver Island, including the Upper Walbran's spectacular Castle Groves (see back page).

Recently, the Ministry of Forests rezoned the FENs to make them part of the "timber harvesting landbase," zoned for logging. The FENs cannot be logged until the year 2003, when they will legally cease to exist. It is doubtful that the new "Old Growth Manage-

ment Areas" (OGMAs) to be established under the Forest Practices Code in each "landscape unit" or major watershed will protect the old FENs. Why? Because, in order to minimize the impact on timber companies, the BC government has ordered that OGMAs first be placed in areas that are outside the timber harvesting landbase—which means in areas already protected in parks or areas without loggable forests. In contrast the FENS encompass some of the finest commercial forest!

It's the old bureaucratic game to squeeze out more timber. Ignoring the pleas of conservationists, the BC government eliminated the wildlife corridors in TFL 46 and is doing the same for TFL 44.



TimberWest's supposedly "sensitive" logging techniques—like this cutblock "harvested" in the "Special Management Zone" in the Upper Walbran in 1999—continue to trash the ancient forest.



# How to Visit the Walbran

## Driving Instructions to the Walbran

- Turn west off Hwy 1 just north of Duncan onto Hwy 18.
- Head along Hwy 18 through the towns of Cowichan Lake and Honeymoon Bay.
- Roughly 2 km past Honeymoon Bay the logging road begins.
- Go right and continue along the South Shore Road for roughly 25 km. Follow the Caycuse Main Rd where it curves left off the South Shore Road.

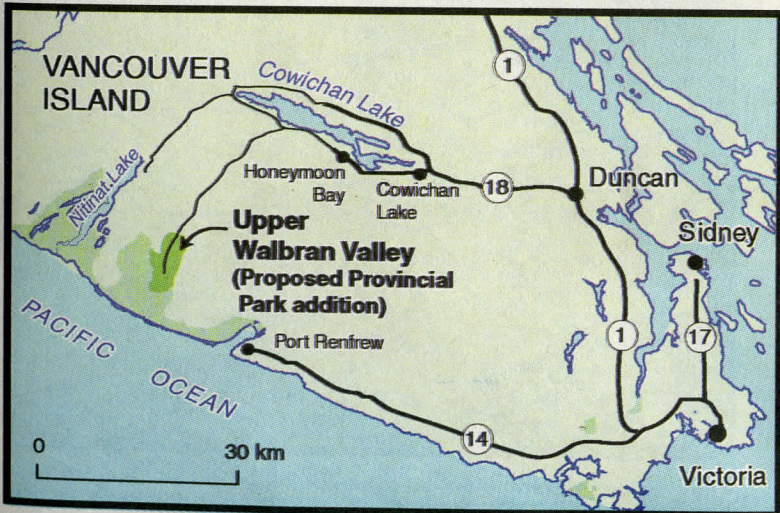
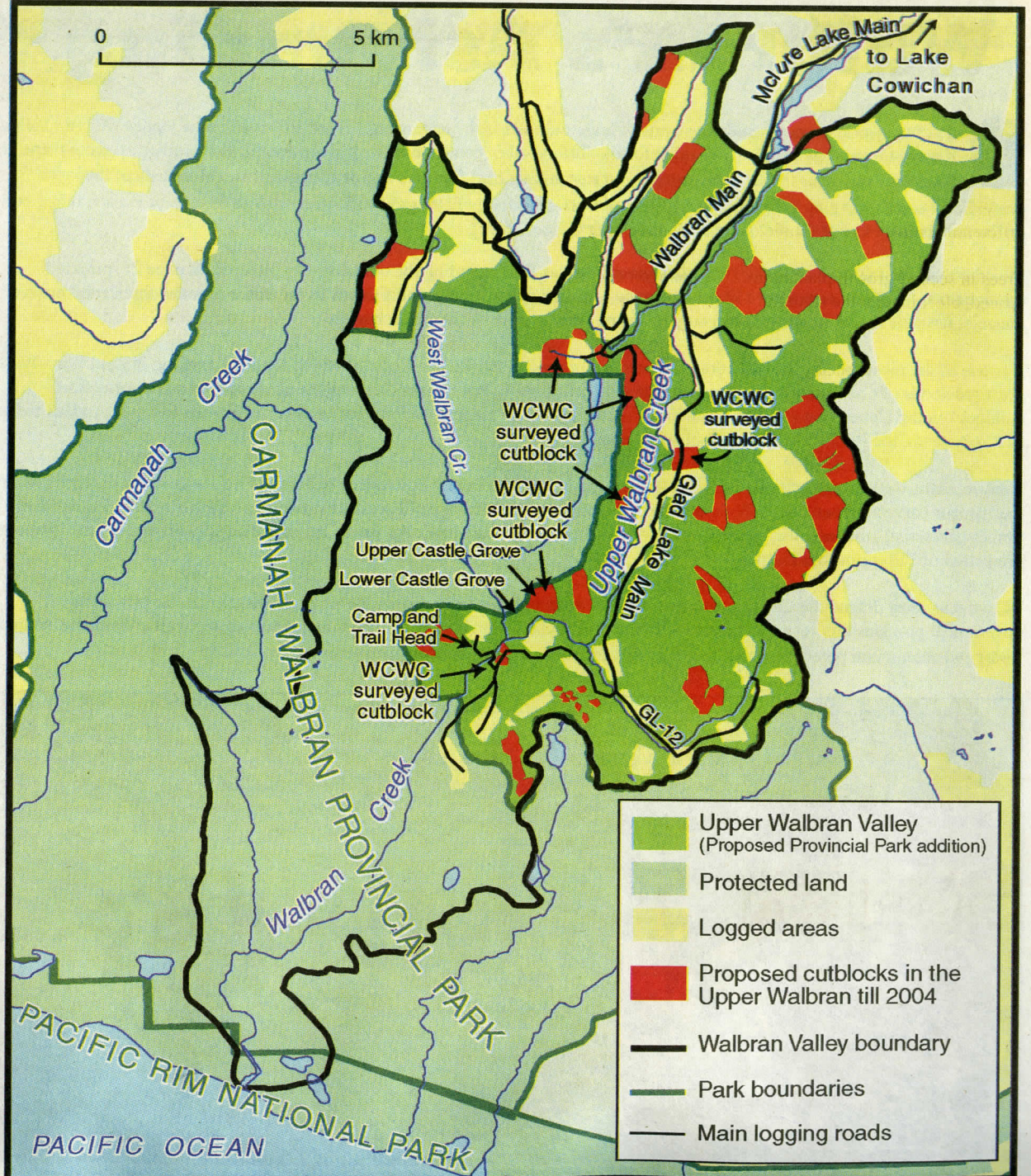
**Now set your trip odometer to 0 km.**

**Note: most roads hve no signposts.**

- At about 10.5 km, take left fork onto McLure Main (Caycuse Main continues on the right).
- At about 26.5 km, just past McLure, take left fork onto Glad Lake Main.
- At about 38.5 km, after the large bend around the steep drop off, go right (the road GL-12 curves left).
- At about 41.5 km, by the Parks Canada "West Coast Trail" sign, turn right.
- From here on "water bar" ditches in the road make it passable only to vehicles with good clearance.
- On the far side of the bridge, park on the side of the road. Campsites and trails are on the right side near the river.

**Note:** A Vancouver Island Backroad Map book is available for \$15.95 at WCWC's Victoria store 651 Johnson St.

**About the Logging Roads:** Always drive with headlights on. Drive with caution. Always stay on the right side of the road when going around curves and pull over to let logging trucks pass. Make sure your spare tire and jack are in good condition.



	Upper Walbran Valley (Proposed Provincial Park addition)
	Protected land
	Logged areas
	Proposed cutblocks in the Upper Walbran till 2004
	Walbran Valley boundary
	Park boundaries
	Main logging roads



# WCWC's research in the proposed cutblocks reveals the presence of several "species at risk"

In the summer of 2000, WCWC researchers and volunteers conducted ecological surveys in six approved TimberWest and Weyerhaeuser cutblocks in the Upper Walbran. These volunteer "Forest Guardians" collected data that impart "ecological identities" for each cutblock - that is, a list of the animals and plants that will be eliminated or will suffer habitat loss as each specific cutblock gets logged...unless the BC government spares them and protects the Upper Walbran.

WCWC will be publishing a full report on the findings in the near future. Here are some of the highlights:

## Species at Risk

**Marbled Murrelets** – This blue-listed (threatened) sea bird nests on the wide, mossy limbs found only on ancient trees. In 1990 WCWC volunteers located the very first nest of this species in Canada in the Upper Walbran. Last summer, in the early morning hours of July, biologists with WCWC documented at least 150 murrelets in the Upper Walbran flying to their nests. Many of these nests were undoubtedly in the proposed cutblocks.

**Queen Charlotte Goshawk** – This large, red-listed (endangered) predatory bird is known to nest in the protected Lower Walbran. They were observed and heard several times in their hunting grounds in the unprotected Upper Walbran.

Other *Species at Risk* found in the cutblocks include the Blue-listed Smith's Fairybell (plant), northern pygmy-owl, and red-legged frog.

The threatened Vaux's swift (bird) and Keen's long-eared myotis (bat) were not observed but are known from previous reports to reside in the Walbran.

## Charismatic Megafauna (large mammals)

WCWC volunteers discovered several Roosevelt elk tracks in the Upper Walbran. This was the first time anyone has seen sign of these animals since they were wiped out from the area decades ago. Roosevelt elk are large, beautiful ungulates that appear to be re-populating their original range on southern Vancouver Island.

Black bears, black-tailed deer, pine marten, and cougar were also recorded, while howling wolves were heard by volunteers camping out earlier in the spring.

## Fisheries

Numerous threatened coho salmon, Dolly Varden char, and steelhead trout fry were caught in minnow traps in Walbran Creek. To date neither the provincial nor federal governments have conducted any significant fisheries surveys here. During a time of heavy rain, plumes of silt from a new TimberWest clearcut were observed washing into important fish habitat. Giant steelhead, an estimated 5 to 6 kilograms in weight were observed jumping in the creek below a proposed TimberWest cutblock.

## Big, old, and rare trees

Some of Canada's largest western red cedars, Douglas fir and Sitka spruce were found in proposed cutblocks. Several gigantic, healthy western white pines were also found in approved TimberWest cutblocks. Western white pine is an increasingly rare tree in BC, having been both logged out and killed off by an introduced fungal disease. Many very large specimens of the Pacific yew tree, which yielded the first discovery of the cancer-fighting compound "taxol" in its bark just a decade ago, were found throughout proposed cutblocks.



In the summer of 2000, WCWC volunteer researchers and murrelet surveyors used this WCWC Research Tent as a base camp to investigate the biodiversity found in the Castle Grove of the Upper Walbran.



The first nest in Canada of the oldgrowth-dependent marbled murrelet, similar to this nest with a maturing chick photo taken in Washington State, was discovered in the Walbran Valley by a WCWC volunteer in 1990. Photo by Tom Hamer.



# Walbran's Astounding "Castle Grove"

One of the world's most incredible stands of huge old trees is the endangered "Castle Grove" in the Upper Walbran Valley. Known to very few people, it's named for the fortress-like "candelabra" forked tops of the giant cedars growing there. It takes only one hour to reach the grove by an easy hiking trail from the end of a logging road. Hundreds of the most magnificent cedars, ranging between 2 to 5 metres (6 to 16 feet) in diameter grow here in very close proximity to each other, both on the flats (Lower Castle Grove) and the slope (Upper Castle Grove).

In addition to the fabulous redcedars are a few giant Douglas firs (including the massive snag pictured on page 2) sprinkled throughout the Upper Castle Grove like a rare spice. All indications point to this Grove as the home of many threatened marbled murrelet nests. It is also frequented by cougars, bears, deer, goshawks and screech owls.

It is one of the most spectacular cathedral-like heritage groves on the Pacific Coast of North America, ranking in grandeur with the great redwoods of California. It deserves international recognition. But instead TimberWest has proposed an "information cutblock" in the Upper Castle Grove, meaning that they are seeking approval from the Ministry of Forests to log it. And, as stupid as it may seem, the BC Forest Service is about to approve this cutblock!

Until recently, the Lower Castle Grove was afforded protection as a Forest Ecosystem Network (FEN) which was excluded from the "timber harvesting landbase". With the recent directive by the Ministry of Forests that placed all FENs in this TFL into the timber harvesting landbase, the Lower Castle Grove is becoming a candidate for future logging. The "time limit" for the temporary protection of FENs runs out in 2003.

BC citizens must defend the Castle Grove and all the Upper Walbran from further logging and ensure that our provincial government provides this very special area with the park preservation it so badly needs and deserves. Given the Walbran's unique forest and ecotourism potential, protecting it makes economic as well as ecological sense!



Photo below: Ancient Forest Rally in Victoria, September 2000. Only mass citizen involvement and pressure will make the BC government to protect the Upper Walbran Valley. Photo by Jenna Fickes

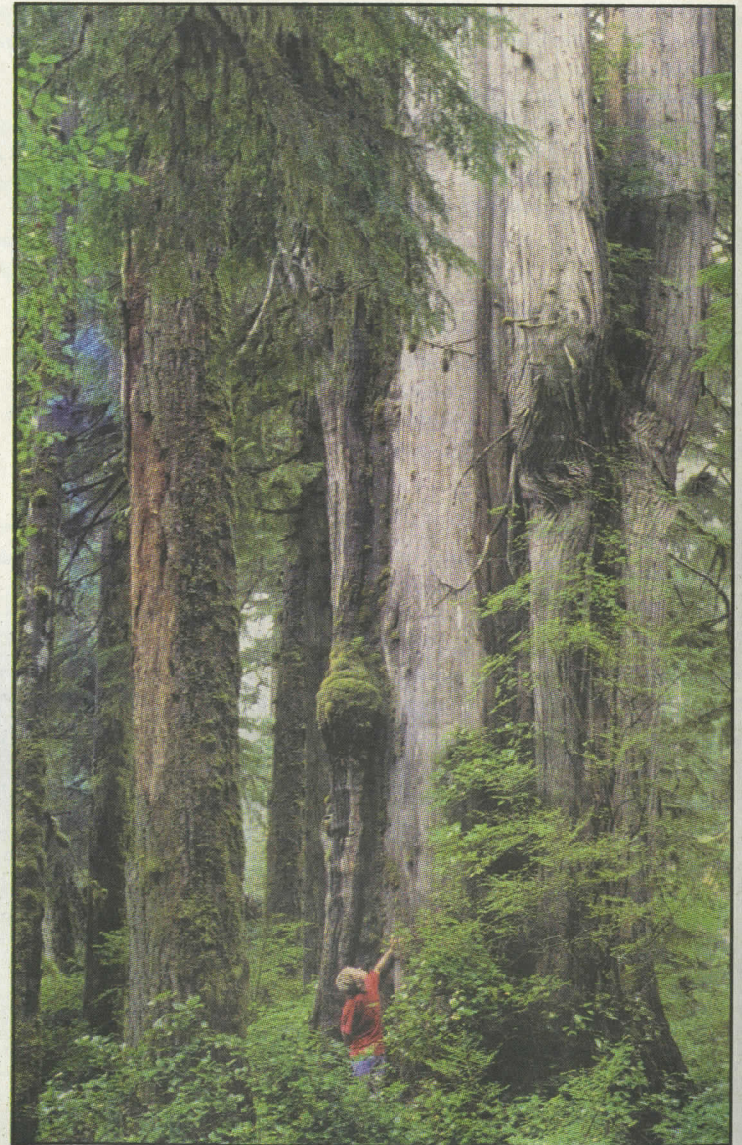


Photo above: Several hundred giant redcedars grow in close proximity to each other in the threatened Upper Walbran's phenomenal Lower Castle Grove.



# Your help needed to save the Upper Walbran ancient forests from the loggers' chainsaws!

## Write

Do letters help? **YES THEY DO!** It is estimated that the letter you write represents roughly another 500 people who feel similar to you but did not find the time to write.

Tell Premier Gordon Campbell whether or not you think they should protect the Upper Walbran Valley through an extension of the existing boundaries of the Carmanah/ Walbran Provincial Park.

There is no way to win protection of the Upper Walbran with the sword. *The only way is with a lot of pens!*

**Premier Gordon Campbell  
Legislature Buildings,  
Victoria BC, V8V 1X4**

In addition, Weyerhaeuser is currently promoting itself as a new, green logging company in BC. In line with this image, it has committed to designating seven percent of their timber holdings into "Old-Growth Retention Zones" that they will not log.

What better candidate for oldgrowth retention zone than their TFL holdings in the Upper Walbran Valley?

Contact them at:

**Weyerhaeuser Corporation  
P.O. Box 9777  
Federal Way, WA 98063 USA**

## Volunteer

WCWC needs volunteers to distribute it's educational literature (including this educational report), help staff our offices, call phone lists, stuff envelopes, and assist in campaign and field work. **Call us in Victoria at (250)-388-9292 or in Vancouver (604) 683-8220.**

## Get Connected

Our e-mail and phone lists connect hundreds of people who we keep regularly informed about the latest news and events. This list is becoming key in our efforts to quickly mobilize large numbers of conservationists at crucial times. **Contact us in Victoria [wc2vic@island.net](mailto:wc2vic@island.net) In Vancouver [info@wildernesscommittee.org](mailto:info@wildernesscommittee.org) if you want to be added to our news/events contact list.**

## Visit our Website

**[www.wildernesscommittee.org](http://www.wildernesscommittee.org)**  
For the latest campaign information and information about our other activities.

## Yes! I support making a PARK in the UPPER WALBRAN VALLEY!

Here's my tax-deductible contribution to WCWC's campaign to Save the Upper Walbran Valley. Fed.reg. #11929-3009-RR0001

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

Please use my donation for your  Walbran Research Station or for  General Campaign use.

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

\$30 Individual Membership  \$52 Sustaining-Family Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_



Please clip and return to WCWC Victoria, 651 Johnson St., Victoria, BC V8W 1M7 Phone 250-388-9292

### Credits:

Writing and Research: Ken Wu  
Editing: Paul George, Steve Canning  
Layout: Sue Fox  
Mapping: Chris Player  
Photographs: All photos WCWC files unless otherwise noted.

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