



FREE REPORT

BENDOR AND CAYOOSH MOUNTAINS



TRIBAL PARK PROTECTION NEEDED NOW!

BEAUTIFUL LANDS OF THE ST'ÁT'IMC



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Where do I go when I want to see some of the wildest, most beautiful landscapes in the world? Where do I go when I want to experience a place and a culture where people have lived for centuries upon centuries? I go to St'át'imc of course!

Several hundred kilometres to the north of Vancouver, BC lies the mountainous country of the St'át'imc (pronounced Sta-at-lee-um).

St'át'imc communities at Lillooet, Cayoose Creek, Bridge River, Fountain, Pavilion, Mount Currie, N'Quatqua, Seton

Portage, Shalalth, Samahquam, Skatin and Douglas are strategically located on trail and canoe routes that are thousands of years old near some of the world's most productive wild salmon rivers.¹

Within St'át'imc territory are some of my favourite protected areas, including portions of Garibaldi Provincial Park, Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park and South Chilcotin Mountains Provincial Park.

However, two wilderness mountain ranges located in the heart of St'át'imc territory that are critical to the region's ecological and cultural well-being are not yet protected. The Bendor and Cayoosh mountains have amazing flower-filled alpine meadows, extensive old-growth forests, cascading wild rivers and spectacular peaks.

Both the Bendor and Cayoosh mountains have a rich legacy of ancient St'át'imc travel trails and archaeological sites.² Hiking through these ranges is like taking a step back in time when trade routes wound through forests and alpine passes to link the tribes to one another.

These mountains straddle the transition zone between the coast and the interior,

which means they have pockets of both types of habitat. Unfortunately both ranges are under threat from proposed industrial developments including logging and a proposed ski resort. So far the rugged nature of the Bendor and Cayoosh mountains and the courageous nature of the St'át'imc people have been able to fend off the worst of the industrial projects, which is why these areas are still so wild and beautiful. But for how long?

The St'át'imc have produced a land-use plan for the northern portion of their territory. The land-use plan was developed using an ecosystem-based planning process, relying on traditional knowledge of the St'át'imc people and supported by scientific research.³

The Bendor and Cayoosh mountains are highlighted in the St'át'imc land-use plan as being very significant for the protection of St'át'imc culture, as well as for grizzly bears, old-growth forests and sensitive ecosystems.⁴ The two mountain ranges also harbour important mule deer habitat, which are an essential cultural food source for St'át'imc people.

These important wild areas deserve protection. It's time that the BC government honour the St'át'imc land-use plan by legally designating the two

proposed tribal parks encompassing the Bendor and Cayoosh mountains. This is an important step forward that needs to be taken, and one that is long overdue. Read on to learn how you can help gain tribal park protection for the Bendor and Cayoosh mountains!

Learn about the St'át'imc people and their land at statimc.net



Photo top: **Headwaters of the Lost Valley, Cayoosh Mountains** (Jeremy Sean Williams), Photo above: **Grizzly bear** (John E Marriott), Photo left: **St'át'imc and Wilderness Committee trail finders in the headwaters of Melvin Creek, Cayoosh Mountains.**



BENDOR AND CAYOOSH MOUNTAINS A WILDERNESS WONDERLAND!

WHAT ARE TRIBAL PARKS?

Tribal parks in British Columbia were designated for the first time by First Nations in the 1980s on Meares Island in Clayoquot Sound, and on Haida Gwaii off the northwest coast of BC.⁵



Photo: Mouth of Nosebag Creek that runs into Carpenter Lake, Bendor Mountains.

Although typically grounded in environmental concerns for nature, such as protection of old-growth forests, endangered species and roadless wilderness, tribal parks also have a dominant social, cultural and spiritual function.

Tribal parks are typically designated by a First Nation within their territory. When they are eventually legally

recognized by the provincial and/or federal government, they are managed by the First Nation in cooperation with the governments, who also fund the operations of the tribal park.

For example, the 110,000 hectare Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park was declared a co-managed provincial protected area in 1995 after a 25 year-long campaign by First Nations and conservationists that sought wilderness preservation and protection of tribal heritage. The Stein River Valley is a very important spiritual place for both Nlaka'pamux and St'at'imc people, a habitat for wild plants and animals sacred to the tribes, as well as an important ancient travel route linking the Fraser River Valley to the Lillooet River Valley.⁶

Another long campaign by First Nations and conservationists eventually resulted in the 147,000 hectare Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site on Haida Gwaii.⁷ It was designated as a

sanctuary for marine and seashore wildlife, as well as a protected area encompassing many ancient villages and spiritual gathering places. It has been managed cooperatively by the governments of the Haida Nation and Canada since 1993.

The proposed Ha'uukmin and Meares Island Tribal Parks in Clayoquot Sound are old-growth rainforest wilderness areas and sites rich in archaeology, where the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation practice restorative justice, and cultural and spiritual training.⁸

In the 2000s, the BC government brought in new legislation to better incorporate tribal parks into the protected areas system. Protected areas, called conservancies, specifically recognize First Nations' rights on the land and provide for economic development opportunities consistent with the protection of nature. In 2007, several of the Squamish Nation's Wild Spirit Places were protected under the conservancy legislation.⁹ Since 2006,



Photo: Enjoying In-Shuck-ch Days community celebration.

over 100 conservancies have also been designated in the Great Bear Rainforest and on Haida Gwaii.¹⁰

The newest tribal park to be declared by a First Nation is 90,000 hectares in size and straddles the Alberta-BC border near Fort St John. K'ih tsaa'dze, the proposed name of the tribal park, means "old-growth area" and was designated in 2011 by the Doig River Nation.¹¹

BENDOR TRIBAL PARK

The 69,019 hectare proposed Bendor Tribal Park lies to the west of Anderson and Seton lakes, and is bound on the north by Carpenter Lake. The proposed tribal park boundaries encompass the eastern portion of the Bendor Mountain Range, which has more of the remaining pristine valleys than the western part of the range, where there has been more industrial development, including logging, mining and hydropower project. The Wilderness Committee

has been working for years with the St'at'imc in the Bendor Range to restore their old trails. BC Timber Sales (BCTS), a taxpayer subsidized, money-losing BC government-run logging company is currently threatening to log a patch of scraggly telephone pole-sized Douglas fir trees along the route of one of the ancient traditional trails in the northern part of the Bendors.

The trail is in a pristine and isolated area with no road access encompassing Upper Whitecap, Nosebag, Tommy and Keary creeks,

about 100 km west of Lillooet near the village of Seton Portage. Now the battle is on to save the trees so St'at'imc youth, hunters and food/medicine plant collectors can continue their age old use of trails for traditional purposes unimpeded by clearcuts and logging debris.

In the southern Bendors, the Wilderness Committee is helping the people of N'Quatqua clear their ancient traditional trails - also threatened by logging - that travel through the D'Arcy, Phelix, McGillivray and Cadwallader creeks

valleys. McGillivray Creek is a popular access for backcountry hiking as well as routes that begin on the roads leading out of the old mining town of Bralorne up Cadwallader Creek.¹²

The Bendor Range is very important habitat for grizzly bears. A recent grizzly study identified 47 individual grizzlies within the area.¹³ This range is an important habitat connector for grizzlies between the South Chilcotin Mountains Provincial Park, the Cayoosh Mountain Range and the Stein Valley Heritage Park.

Genetic testing has revealed that grizzly bear populations in BC's southern Coast Mountains are becoming isolated. Providing for greater connectivity between areas of grizzly habitat is key to the bears' continued survival.

It is also very important to respect St'at'imc culture and management authority of the lands directly to the north of the proposed Bendor Tribal Park to maintain deer and moose populations. This is one of the St'at'imc's primary hunting grounds. Here, poorly planned logging and mining developments are the two main causes of habitat destruction. It's past time to stop destroying these traditional lands.



CAYOOSH TRIBAL PARK

The 54,000 hectare proposed Cayoosh Tribal Park is a diverse mix of high alpine ridges, peaks and valley-bottom old-growth forests. It is a St'at'imc paradise with stunning mountain views and hiking routes that go for many kilometres.

The proposed tribal park boundaries encompass the north-eastern portion of the mountain range, which is drier and known for its open ridge walks. These mountains support an estimated 350 mountain goats.¹⁴ This is also a critically important grizzly bear migration corridor.

Grizzly bear numbers here are lower than in the past, with only

an estimated 24 grizzly bears still surviving in the region in an isolated population.¹⁵ Hunting, logging and highway construction have all lowered the grizzly population over the years. Preserving the remaining wilderness here is critical to their chances for survival and recovery to a higher, stable population in the future.

The low-elevation old-growth forests of the Cayoosh Mountain Range have sheltered spotted owls right up until 2008, but this highly endangered species is no longer found there, due to aggressive logging in surrounding areas. Preserving the spotted owl's habitat will be essential if this species is ever to recover to a healthy population in Canada.¹⁶

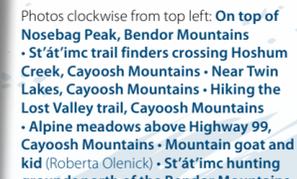
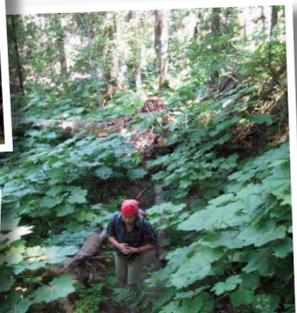
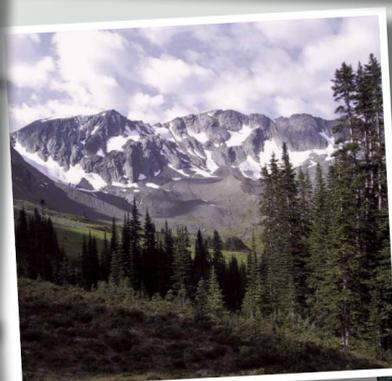
Running for 20 kilometres through the Cayoosh Range from north to south is Lost Valley, the largest unlogged drainage in the proposed tribal park. For over ten years the Wilderness Committee has been working with the St'at'imc to restore their ancient trails through the old-growth forests of Lost Valley, and over the surrounding alpine ridges into the Melvin Creek drainage. In doing so many archaeological sites have been rediscovered including ancient shelters and bark harvesting areas.



Photo: Along the N'Quatqua trail to Lost Valley, Cayoosh Mountains.

Current threats to the Cayoosh Range include an all-season destination resort, which since the 1990s has been proposed for the Melvin Creek watershed. The resort, if built, would threaten the viability of wildlife within the Cayoosh Mountain Range and surrounding area - especially the grizzly bears and mountain goats. Logging has been approved by the BC government for Lost

Valley. In the face of strong opposition from the St'at'imc and conservation groups these harmful industrial projects have been held off so far. Tribal park protection is clearly needed now.



Photos clockwise from top left: On top of Nosebag Peak, Bendor Mountains • St'at'imc trail finders crossing Hoshum Creek, Cayoosh Mountains • Near Twin Lakes, Cayoosh Mountains • Hiking the Lost Valley trail, Cayoosh Mountains • Alpine meadows above Highway 99, Cayoosh Mountains • Mountain goat and kid (Roberta Olenick) • St'at'imc hunting grounds north of the Bendor Mountains



TRIBAL PARKS: THE MISSING LINK FOR WILDLIFE PROTECTION

There is no doubt that a strong conservation argument exists for designating new protected areas in St'át'imc territory. This region is home to many of the last big, wild, unprotected wilderness areas in southwestern BC. St'át'imc territory is also strategically located between the coast and the interior of BC, making it a vital connecting link for wildlife. Simply put, the future of many wildlife populations are dependent on establishing a series of "stepping stone" protected areas linking the coast of BC to the interior.¹⁷

Sadly, the strategic conservation value of creating protected areas within St'át'imc territory is made all the more urgent by the universally poor condition of many wildlife populations. Creating tribal parks in the Bendor and Cayoosh mountains

is only one small piece of a much larger initiative that needs to take place. The designation of an arc of protected areas from the coast through the Bendor and Cayoosh mountains, and then to the Fraser Canyon and Coquihalla Pass connecting to Manning Park, will be essential for the recovery of endangered wildlife populations.

The Wilderness Committee is calling for a doubling of BC's protected area system this decade.¹⁸

In southwestern BC large tracts of all forest types, but in particular low-elevation old-growth forest, have been eliminated by over a century of logging. Spotted owls, mountain goats, grizzly bears and wild salmon have all suffered from the fragmentation of their forest habitats and experienced significant population declines.¹⁹ Spotted owls,

for example, are on the brink of being eliminated from Canada completely, due to ongoing aggressive logging.

The Bendor and Cayoosh ranges meet all the conservation criteria to justify them for protection: they are remote, mostly pristine natural areas that have large low- and mid-elevation valleys with old-growth forests. They still have populations of most of the animals associated with big wilderness, like grizzly bears, mountain goats, wolverines, wolves and mountain lions.

BC has nearly 2,000 species of plants and animals on the province's species at risk list, the majority of which reside in southern BC. Clearly more habitat urgently needs to be protected, and the designation of Bendor and Cayoosh Tribal Parks could be the in-the-nick-of-time salvation for some of southwestern BC's most at-risk wildlife.



Photos above: St'át'imc fish camp near Lillooet • Alpine ridge near Melvin Creek watershed, Cayoosh Mountains • Community art in the St'át'imc village of Shalalth.

Photos left: Peregrine falcon (Gordon Court) • Logging in St'át'imc territory is one of the main threats to the region's wilderness and wildlife • Trail finder's camp in Melvin Creek alpine, Cayoosh Mountains.



TAKE ACTION

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR ST'ÁT'IMC TRIBAL PARKS IN THE BENDOR AND CAYOOSH MOUNTAINS!

Write, phone, fax or email BC's premier Clark now to say how much you want the Bendor and Cayoosh Mountains to be protected as St'át'imc Tribal Parks.

► The Honourable Christy Clark Premier of British Columbia

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Photo: William Terry Sr. of Lh7us Seton Portage, in an old bark stripping site, Lost Valley, Cayoosh Mountains.

MORE INFO & CITATIONS

- http://faculty.forestry.ubc.ca/hinch/Jacob_etal_MASGC_2010.pdf
- http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wildlife/wsi/reports/4159_4159_CAYOOSH_GOAT_SEPO8_RPT.PDF
- <http://www.statimc.net/report/part1.pdf>
- Grizzly Bear info: <http://www.statimc.net/grizzly.html>
- http://wildernesscommittee.org/sites/all/files/publications/2010_meares-island_report_low-res.pdf
- Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park info http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/stein_val/
- Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve info <http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/bc/gwaiihaanas/natcul/natcul1.aspx>
- <http://clayquotbiosphere.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/CSBR-Periodic-Review-2010.pdf>
- <http://www.nativemaps.org/node/2711>
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- http://wildernesscommittee.org/news/first_nations_band_wants_develop_tribal_park
- McGillivray Pass hiking info: <http://bivouac.com/FtrPg.asp?FtrId=623>
- Bendor Mountain Range Grizzly Bear info: Page 33 - http://www.bchydro.com/bcrp/projects/docs/bridge_river/06.W.BRG.03.pdf
- Mountain Goat info: Page 6 - http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wildlife/wsi/reports/4159_4159_CAYOOSH_GOAT_SEPO8_RPT.PDF
- <http://www.bchydro.com/bcrp/projects/docs/05.W.Br.01.pdf>
- Spotted Owl info: http://www.bchydro.com/bcrp/projects/docs/bridge_river/04WBr03.pdf
- BC Species at Risk info: BC Ecosystems and Species Explorer 2011: <http://tinyurl.com/7qwsa45>
- Doubling in a decade BC Parks info - <http://tinyurl.com/6w4b56g>
- BC biodiversity and old growth forest info - <http://tinyurl.com/cm7jlx>

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YES!

I SUPPORT THE WILDERNESS COMMITTEE'S WORK TO SECURE TRIBAL PARK PROTECTION FOR THE BENDOR AND CAYOOSH MOUNTAINS

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