

Help save BC Parks and Wildlife

Liberal Government endangers Beautiful BC

"We look at the twin goals of environmental sustainability and a healthy economy to improve the quality of life for every British Columbian"

- remarks by Premier Gordon Campbell at the opening of Globe 2002 trade show, March, 2002.

In the spring of 2001 the BC Liberal Party took power after winning 58% of the popular vote and 97% of the seats in the BC Legislature. The Liberals campaigned on a platform that promised "a new era of environmental stewardship based on sound science, cleaner air, cleaner water and sustainable practices".

However, instead of following through on its election promises, the government has gutted environmental protection and enforcement legislation and reduced staffing to levels that make it nearly impossible to safeguard the environment and enforce the few remaining laws.

In addition, many provincial parks and Forest Service campsites are being closed and privatized. And now some of BC's finest wilderness parks, like Manning Park and South Chilcotin Mountains Park, are being reviewed as targets for industrial logging.

Meanwhile the number of citizens concerned about the environment continues to rise (see recent polling results inside). So it's clear that the provincial government is not taking its cues from the people who elected it but from self-interested groups like the logging and mining industries.

If you care about and enjoy BC's environment, or if you make your living from an industry that depends on a healthy environment such as tourism and fisheries, the time has come to take stock and take action to reverse these poorly-conceived government policies.

Gutting BC Parks, Hammering Tourism

In September 2001, the newly created Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (a part of what was formerly the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks), released a report entitled 'Economic Benefits of British Columbia's Provincial Parks'. The report gave the Wilderness Committee and other environmentalists reason to stand up and cheer after many years of working to create an adequate protected areas system.

The key finding of the report: "For each dollar invested by government in the protected areas system, there were about \$10 dollars in visitor expenditures." To compare, the government calculates that for every dollar it has invested in its aggressive attempts to attract high or bio-technology companies to BC, it only generates about \$3 dollars in expenditures. The report also asserts:

- Almost one-third of visitor expenditures are made by out-of-province residents, making the provincial parks equivalent to a significant export industry.
- The economic benefits of parks are widely distributed across BC's communities. Over one-half of these benefits occur outside of the Lower Mainland and Victoria regions.
- Overall, the park system is estimated to contribute about \$521 million to the provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- Parks generate about \$219 million in tax revenues for the federal and provincial governments and sustain about 9,100 direct and indirect full time jobs every year.

Yet in Spring 2002, the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (WLAP) defied logic and their own economic arguments to announce significant cuts to provincial parks funding including eliminating parks management staff, interpretation centres, services and enforcement. The government quickly moved to remove bathroom facilities,



shut down interpretation centres and phase out services.

British Columbians are searching for clues as to why their government would gut the heart and soul of BC's parks system and so foolishly undermine the tourism economy on which so many municipalities around the province depend. After all, tourism generates nearly \$10 billion in economic activity annually in the province and employs almost 100,000 people.

Tourists from across Canada and the world will be in for a big surprise when they flock to BC to experience the exceptional parks we are known world wide for. Coming to a halt at a locked washroom and closed campsites will not inspire many repeat visits.

Those that do find campsite space for the night, may end up damaging fragile park ecosystems in the absence of enforcement and interpretive services. Some campers, unable or unwilling to pay for firewood will resort to damaging the surrounding forest and even picnic tables in a search for firewood. We've all seen such vandalism from time to time. And as parks degrade, even more visitors will set off for greener pastures, damaging the tourism industry and hurting local economies from Tsawassen to the Tatshenshini.

The gutting and selling off of our parks is outrageous, especially when the BC Liberals led many citizens to believe that they had more business sense than the former NDP government and thus would be able to deliver on their promise of "environmental sustainability and a healthy economy".

Unfortunately, the BC Liberals' anti-park policies are quite similar to those of their party's main financial supporters (see inside for an up-to-date list of donors). Timber and mining companies are two of the leading donor groups and have a long-standing dislike of parks, seeing them as competition for the province's timberlands and mountains.

Inside, read about ways to you can take action to help protect Beautiful BC!



Many campgrounds from all regions of BC have been closed.

It's the Environment, Stupid!

Do the math! It makes no "cents" to starve BC's supernatural park system of operating funds.

- BC Parks Service recorded 23 million visits to BC parks in 2000 and 2001.
- Our provincial park system serves the same number of visitors per year as Canada's national parks, yet even before recent cuts, received only one-tenth of the funding.
- Approximately six in ten residents of British Columbia use a provincial park each year.

Inside this Issue:

- ▶ Cuts Bleed Environment
- ▶ Where the Ax Falls
- ▶ Services to be Withdrawn
- ▶ Liberals Increase Liability for Environment and Health Risks



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FREE ISSUE - PASS IT ON!



Interfor has already slashed out and marked their proposed logging road location in Manning Park.



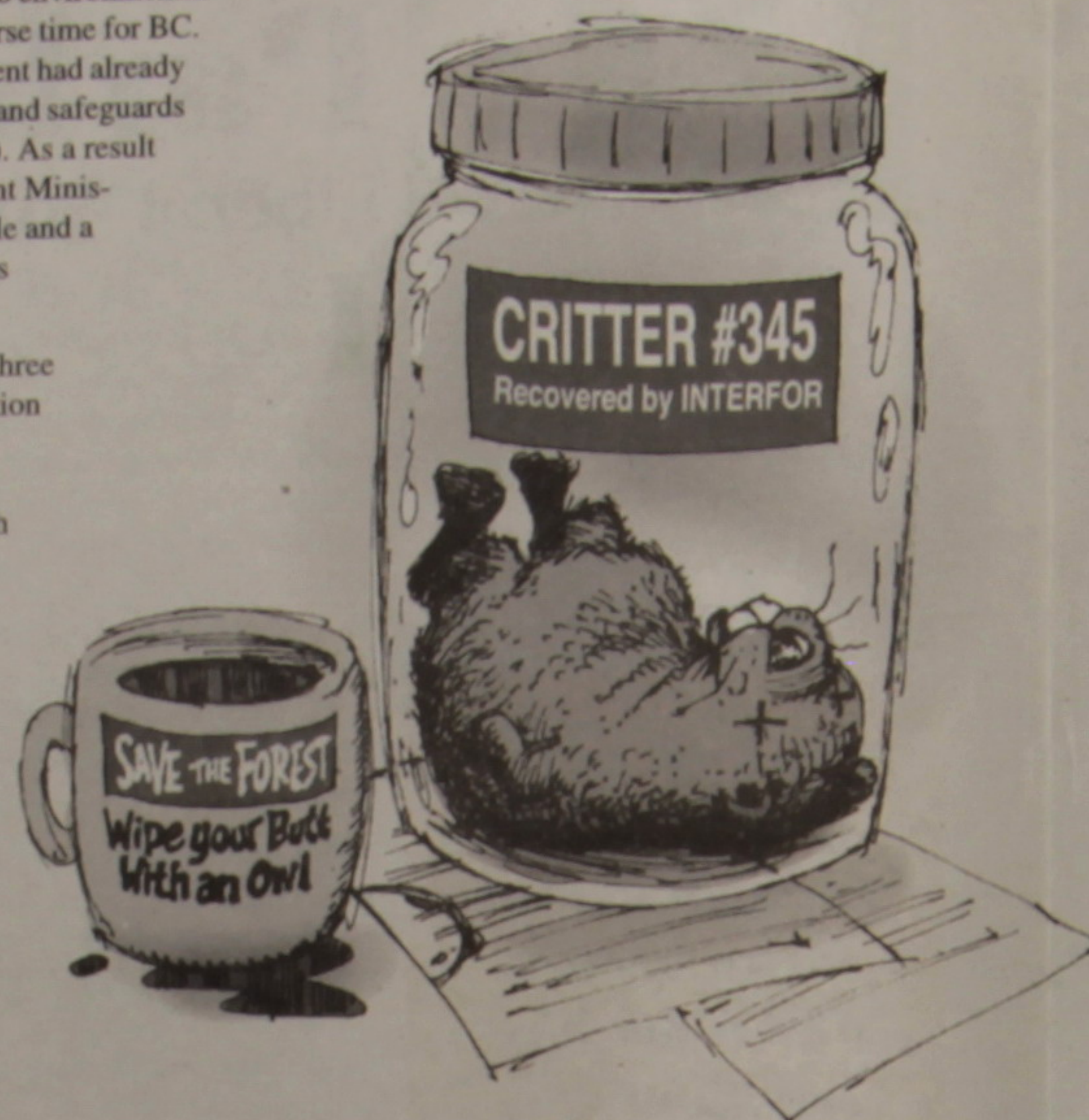
Do you know what's going on in your water supply area? Behind locked gates logging companies and other industrial users have free run of the watershed.

A Thousand Cuts Bleed Environmental Protection

The current Liberal government's cuts to environmental protection could not have come at a worse time for BC. The previous NDP provincial government had already severely cut environmental protections and safeguards during their ten-year reign (1991-2001). As a result of all the NDP cuts, a 1999 Environment Ministry staff survey reported very low morale and a great loss of confidence in the ministry's ability to protect our environment.

Here is a brief summary of staff views three years before the Liberal cuts. The situation is much worse today and continues to decline:

- 88 % said they did not have enough operational funding and support needed to effectively protect the environment.
- 90 % did not have enough support, resources and time to do proper fieldwork.
- 91 % said that on the ground staffing levels for enforcement and monitoring of fish and wildlife are poor or very poor.
- 90 % said logging permits are not adequately inspected, monitored or endorsed.



BC's Citizens clear on Protecting Environment

Protecting the environment is one issue that the majority of citizens can agree on – British Columbians are clearly concerned about government's ability to protect the province's natural environment. It's a breach of trust for the provincial government to now back down on its stated commitment to environmental protection.

- 90% feel strongly that nature is crucial to human survival.
- 76% are concerned about species loss.
- 88% have a great deal or fair amount of concern about environmental problems.
- 81% agree that the clean up of the environment will, in itself, contribute significantly to the growth of the economy. (Environics Aug. 2000)
- A solid majority, 64%, believes that not enough is being done to protect the quality of the environment in BC.
- 68% believe a poor job is being done of balancing the need for economic growth with the need to protect the environment. (Angus Reid Fall 2000)
- 81% believe that protecting the environment so the ecosystem will produce clean air, clean water, and a healthy food chain is highly important.
- 61% believe the provincial government should spend more money on environmental protection. (IMPACS April 2001)

Liberals Increase Liability For Environmental & Health Risks To All Citizens

A recent report from the Sierra Legal Defence Fund describes how all British Columbians now face increased health and environmental risks as a result of the government eliminating monitoring staff and relaxing environmental regulations. *False Economy* identifies that in many cases these responsibilities are being put on private corporations who are legally required to make a profit for their shareholders above other considerations. The report also describes the hidden costs and vulnerability of the BC public to these Liberal government policy changes. As it's the government's responsibility and not that of for profit corporations to safeguard the public, the government may be found liable in cases where lack of enforcement and monitoring results in loss of human life or injury, as was the case in Ontario's Walkerton tragedy. A full copy of the report can be found at www.sierralegal.org

Walkerton-Type Water Quality Disaster Now Much Closer In BC

Under the guise of deregulation, the BC Liberal government recently passed Bill 35, shifting protection of water quality away from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection and giving more power to the Ministry of Forests. The result is that forestry activity in drinking watersheds, along with other industrial activities, can now proceed without interference or public scrutiny.

Coupled with other recent legislative changes that gut environmental protection and monitoring, and the government's determination to sell off public resources to the highest bidder, there is now a significantly heightened risk for degraded water quality and water-borne disease outbreaks to communities throughout the province. Victoria and Greater Vancouver have a 99-year lease to protect their drinking watersheds. No other BC municipality has such protection. All British Columbians deserve the same rights of Greater Vancouver and Victoria citizens to protect their watersheds and drinking water quality from the effects of logging and other industrial activities.



Do you know what's in your drinking water?



Campers searching for firewood have already destroyed this Forest Service picnic table. Expect much more of the same as a result of Liberal cost-cutting in the parks system.

Where the Ax Falls on...

BC's Parks

- Closures of campgrounds in every region of the province announced; increased fees for parks, coupled with a decrease in services including interpretation & maintenance; elimination of access passes to parks for disabled persons;
- Leaked government plans show big push to privatize provincial parks.

For the first time in 20 years, government is considering industrial logging and mining in parks. An International Forest Products' (see list of Liberals top donors) logging road through Manning Park is under consideration. The road would make access for planned logging in endangered spotted owl habitat in 18 and 20 Mile Valleys, just beyond Hope. Near Lillooet, Ainsworth Lumber Co. is pushing the Liberals to allow them to log in areas designated for park protection, such as the South Chilcotin Mountains Provincial Park.

BC's Wildlife

- Lifted the moratorium on grizzly bear hunting despite overwhelming public opposition to the grizzly bear hunt and little benefit to province's economy.
- Government's role in protecting habitat, wildlife, endangered species, air and water quality gutted or handed over to for-profit private sector. 13 government endangered species biologists laid off. 85 habitat protection employees laid off by 2005, including 54 in 2002. To replace these monitoring functions, government has asked logging companies, not government biologists, to be in charge of endangered species programs on public forestlands.

BC's Salmon

- Lifted moratorium on ocean-based salmon fish-farms, even though studies show that the farms pose significant risks to BC wild salmon stocks through increased incidence of disease and parasites.

BC's Water

- Placed water rights under jurisdiction of Land and Water BC (LWBC), formerly BC Assets and Land Corporation; LWBC is mandated to increase its revenue through sales and leases of BC's public assets (which now includes water) by 75% this year.
- Large cuts have been made to drinking water quality and groundwater protection at their Victoria headquarters. The groundwater protection section lost six out of nine positions hobbling their already limited ability to protect the public's sources of drinking water around the province.

BC Public's Right to Know and To Say NO!

- Elimination of public input and third-party scientific expertise into forestry planning. The proposed "Results Based Forest Code" will not even require the timber companies to show the public or government where they plan to roadbuild or clearcut on public lands. The ability to view these plans and make input regarding them prior to any logging has been a public right for over 30 years.
- Government's role in monitoring use of hazardous materials, waste disposal, industrial developments and special use permitting gutted or handed over to private sector. All government staff overseeing contaminated sites are proposed to be gone by 2005. The government is considering using private consultants to deal with contaminated sites, perhaps having the developers themselves pick up the costs – a clear conflict of interest.

Who pays the BC Liberal Party bills?

Top 25 Contributors to the Liberal Party - January to May 2001

1. Independent Contractors & Business Assn. Of BC	\$147,550
2. International Forest Products	\$105,350
3. Timberwest Forest Corporation	\$65,150
4. Weyerhaeuser Canada Ltd.	\$54,400
5. Teck Corporation	\$52,700
6. Westcoast Energy Inc.	\$50,500
7. Finning International Inc.	\$50,000
8. West Fraser Mills Ltd.	\$50,000
9. Cominco Ltd.	\$49,800
10. FDG Property Management Ltd.	\$40,000
11. Westbild Holdings	\$36,400
12. Canaccord Capital Corp.	\$35,000
13. Major, John S.	\$35,000
14. Husby Forest Products Ltd.	\$31,400
15. Lignum Ltd. (& Lignum Sales)	\$30,850
16. Bank of Montreal	\$30,000
17. Buron Healthcare Ltd.	\$30,000
18. Canwest Global Communications Corp.	\$30,000
19. Inwest Investments Limited	\$30,000
20. Riverside Forest Products Ltd. (Kelowna)	\$29,000
21. Canadian Forest Products Ltd.	\$28,650
22. Fording Coal Ltd.	\$27,500
23. Pope and Talbot Ltd.	\$27,500
24. Telus	\$27,320
25. Weldwood of Canada Limited	\$26,360

Source:
Data compiled from
Elections BC Web site
www.elections.bc.ca



Data compiled from BC
Parks web site:
<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/>

BC Park Services to be Withdrawn

Boyle Point Park in the Vancouver Island Region - pit toilets closed.

Canim Beach Park in the Cariboo Region - campsites and pit toilets closed.

Chemainus River Park in the Vancouver Island Region - day use area closed.

Coquihalla Summit Park in the Lower Mainland Region - day use area closed.

Ethel F. Wilson Memorial Park in the Skeena Region - campsites, pit toilets, and fire rings closed.

Exchamsiks River Park in the Skeena Region - campsites and day-use area closed.

Finger-Tatuk Park in the Omineca Region - pit toilets and campsites closed.

Fossil Park in the Vancouver Island Region - pit toilets and day-use area closed.

Goat Range (Trout Lake) Park in the Kootenay Region - campsites and pit toilets closed.

Kootenay Lake Marine Park in the Kootenay Region - campsites and pit toilets closed.

Loon Lake Park in the Cariboo Region - campsites and pit toilets closed.

Mansons Landing Park in the Vancouver Island Region - pit toilets and day-use area closed.

McConnell Lake Park in the Thompson Region - campsites, pit toilets and boat launch closed.

Memory Island Park in the Vancouver Island Region - pit toilet and day-use area closed.

Momich Lakes Park in the Thompson Region - campsites and pit toilets closed.

Prophet River Wayside Park in the Peace Region - campsites, day-use area and pit toilets closed.

Ruth Lake Park in the Cariboo Region - day-use area and pit toilets closed.

Sikanni Chief Falls Park in the Peace Region - closed.

Spectacle Lake Park in the Vancouver Island Region - day-use area and boat launch closed.

Stagleap Park in the Kootenay Region - day-use area and pit toilets closed.

Valhalla Marine Park in the Kootenay Region - walk-in sites and pit toilets closed.

Wardner Park in the Kootenay Region - day-use area and pit toilets closed.

MISSING MINISTER

Have you seen Joyce Murray?

The Honourable Joyce Murray is the MLA for New Westminster and the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection. She was last seen in the early spring of 2002 promising to strengthen environmental protection, stumping for BC Parks, and reassuring citizens that this government would preserve our natural environment.

But now, when her ministry is virtually crumbling around us, she's missing. Minister Murray has been silent as dozens of scientists from her ministry, who previously safeguarded the public interest in a healthy environment, have quietly been laid off. Where has she been while International Forest Products plans to build a logging road through Manning Provincial Park in order to log endangered species oldgrowth forest habitat? She hasn't said a peep about Ainsworth Lumber Co.'s plans to log the South Chilcotin Mountains Park. She has been silent about the threats to our wild salmon stocks posed by expansion of ocean-based fish farming. She is nowhere to be found as public campgrounds are being closed and important park services are axed. **Where in the world is Joyce Murray?**

"The Water, Land and Air Protection (WLAP) ministry's new structure reflects its mandate to reduce environmental pollution that creates risk for human health; to maintain and restore habitat that is essential for natural biological diversity; and to properly manage our protected areas and our wildlife and fish populations so that BC's natural abundance can continue to provide outdoor recreation opportunities for all to enjoy. The ministry's over-arching responsibility is to set and enforce strong environmental standards to achieve this mandate."

— Minister Joyce Murray, *British Columbia Environmental Report*, Spring 2002



"I recognize the incredible importance of parks to people here in BC, and the incredible importance to the international community of this asset, and the importance to tourism."

— Minister Joyce Murray, *Vancouver Sun*, March 2002

Contact Minister Murray today and tell her where you stand regarding government cuts to BC Parks and environmental protection. Democracy works best when you do.

Are you one of 3 million British Columbians who is highly concerned about protecting BC's water, wildlife, and wilderness?

WRITE TODAY

Let the government know what you think about:

- restoring funding for environmental protection of water, soil, air and wildlife
- reversing the cuts to BC Parks
- keeping logging out of our precious park system
- blocking legislation that would remove the public oversight of logging

Do you want your government to stop pandering to self-interested Liberal donors like International Forest Products and start listening to the people who need tourism and a healthy environment for health, community and economy?

Then tell them NOW!

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"I am proud of the fact that this is one of the most livable places in the world. And I'm even prouder of the fact that each local government in each community is looking for plans and tools and a map that will allow them to make their community even more livable, even more sustainable, even"
— Premier Gordon Campbell,
opening remarks of Globe 2002
Environmental Trade Show, March 2002

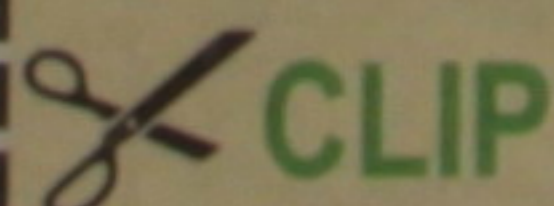
Beautiful BC A Public Trust Economy, Community and our Health depend on it.



(Left) Popular Manning Provincial Park is under threat from International Forest Products who want to build a logging road through its pristine forests. (Below) Water, salmon, wildlife and tourism depend on the monitoring and enforcement of regulations that protect these natural wonders for all British Columbians.



YES! BC needs Friends like Me!



and return to the:
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BC V6B 2K7

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