



South Moresby, Queen Charlotte Islands

News – Summer 1985

Misty Wilderness Gem of the Canadian Pacific

FAMOUS CANADIANS TEAM-UP TO SAVE SOUTH MORESBY

A National Committee to save South Moresby comprised of famous Canadians formed this Spring. With nearly 20 members and growing, here's what some of them have to say:

Robert Bateman, Artist Naturalist — May 1985

"There are many reasons for setting aside South Moresby as a natural area. Scientific reasons are important but aesthetic considerations are also crucial. In our rather unsophisticated and hard-headed society, aesthetics are often written off as airy-fairy frills. In actual fact, billions of dollars are spent annually on the arts, music and the appearance of things. The economics of aesthetics deserve much more serious attention in the management of our urban and rural landscape.

Certain areas must be maintained so that they present a total environment, a harmonious whole. South Moresby does this now. The ecological connections of air, water, land and life are among the most lavish on the planet. The overlay of the Haida Culture and its remains is the human touch that enhances the totality.

Therefore there must be a generous area set aside with no logging or modern disturbance whatever. There must be no visible blight on the natural landscape. Preserving bits and pieces is not good enough. It is like preserving a stately historic building and surrounding it with parking lots and apartments. You must be able to look in all directions and move through the landscape with a total harmonious view.

I have flown the length of the Queen Charlottes to the tip of South Moresby. The logging reminded me of the sheared heads of Concentration Camp

inmates. Tree cutting is necessary in certain areas, but it is ugly. There is no way to disguise it. It is even uglier than it might be because of the snatch and grab logging methods, employed often on steep erosion-prone slopes. Some areas will never return to a natural state.

Future generations will cast shame upon our short sightedness if we bring this ugliness to a world class beautiful natural heritage."

Farley Mowat, Naturalist, Author — April 1985

"South Moresby is the first of the last remaining regions in Canada that have not been desecrated by the blind avarice of modern man. It *must* be saved, not just for our time, but for all time. It *will* be saved if a shred of honest morality still exists in Canadian society."

Bristol Foster, Zoologist, former head of B.C.'s Ecological Reserve Unit — April 1985

"Having seen the wild parts of over 50 countries I conclude that South Moresby's biological and cultural richness, combined with outstanding scenery, makes the area very special. The protecting of such a small area as South Moresby as a permanent outdoor research laboratory should not be missed. Only by saving significant samples of our natural diversity is there a chance to learn from our mistakes thereby helping to make development — particularly in forestry and fisheries — sustainable for eons to come.

We are the last generation to have an opportunity to set aside significant wilderness areas; let us not squander this rare opportunity."

Jim Fulton, Member of Parliament, Skeena — May 1985

"A South Moresby Park offers the world a unique opportunity to witness the natural environment at its most beautiful and dynamic. As a resident of the Queen Charlotte Islands, I view the region as a prime example of our natural heritage that must be passed on, in all its splendor, to succeeding generations. The world awaits our decision to create this park."

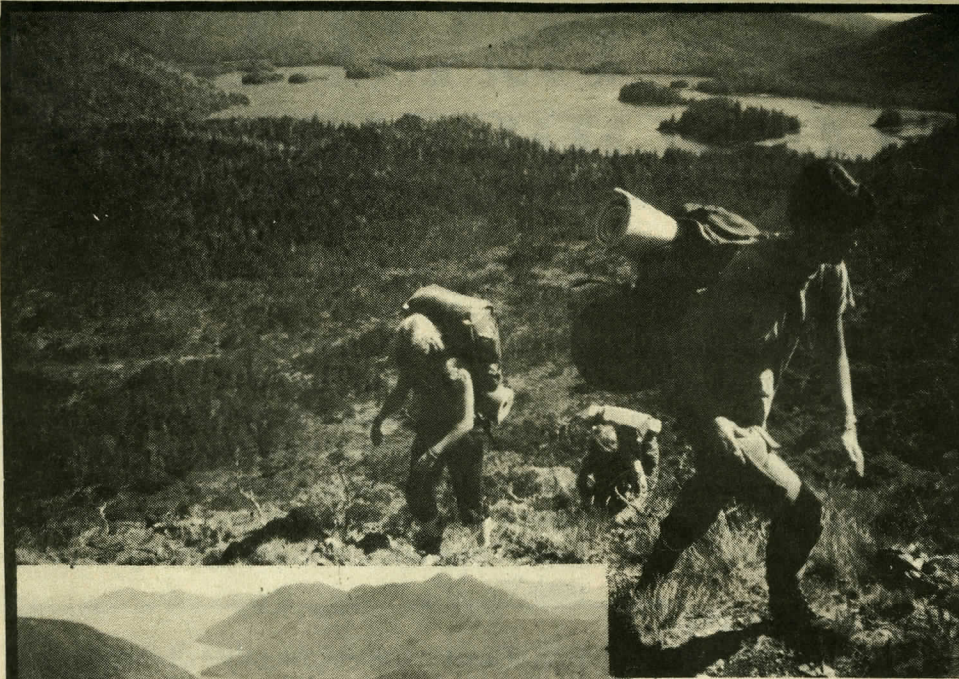
Hon. Charles Caccia, Member of Parliament, Davenport, former Minister of the Environment, current environment critic

"South Moresby is Canadian heritage of world class and reputation; together with the native peoples we must find ways of retaining it for future generations."

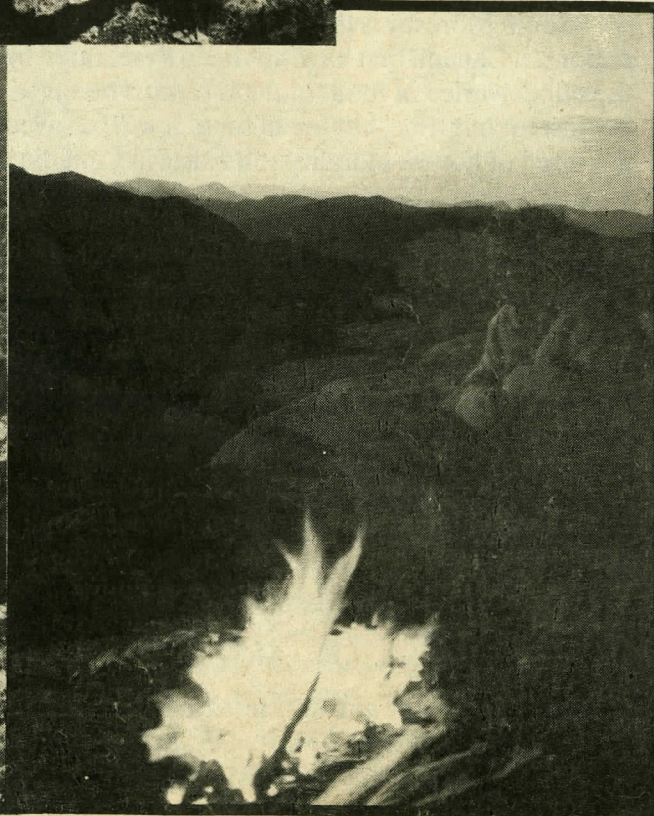
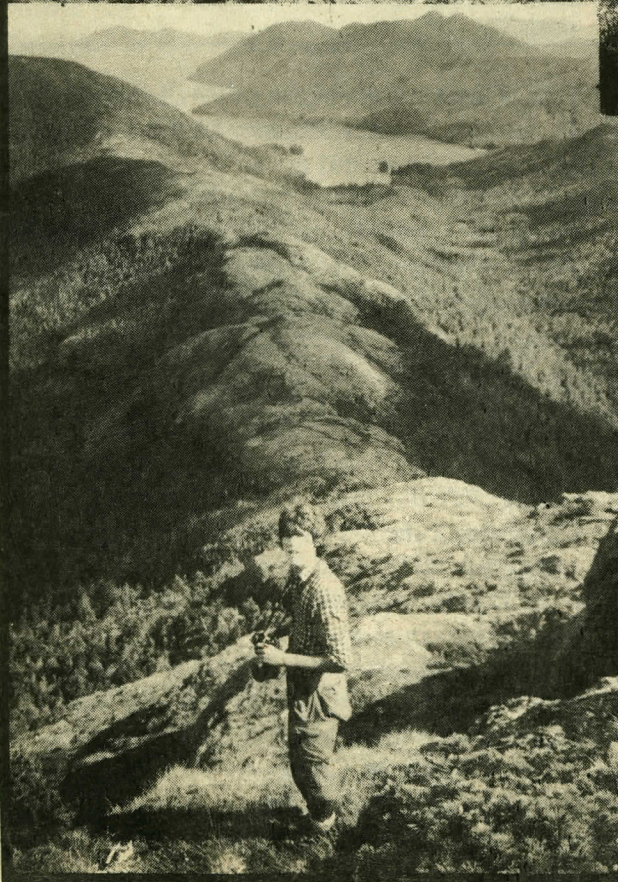
Pressure to save South Moresby has grown steadily since 1974 when 500 Queen Charlotte Islanders petitioned the Provincial government asking that this fjord and island-rich 15% of the Charlottes, called the Galapagos of Canada, become protected wilderness. Now more than 50 organizations representing over a half a million Canadians have joined in support.

The Committee of well known Canadian artists, naturalists and writers to save South Moresby will succeed only if a flood of letters to government from all kinds of Canadian citizens continues to increase. The choice is yours. If you care enough you'll do your best to help save South Moresby.





**DON'T
DELAY
LET
YOUR
MP & MLA
KNOW
YOU
CARE!**



FEDERAL ENVIRONMENT MINISTER ASKS PARK LOVERS TO HELP BUY NATIONAL PARKS IN SOUTH MORESBY

Suzanne Blais-Grenier, Federal Environment Minister, wants private donations to the federal purse to help buy a national marine and land based park in South Moresby. In a letter dated April 30, to Colleen McCrory, a Director of Western Canada Wilderness Committee, the Minister says, "New parks are important" but the Federal Government "cannot afford the burden of paying all the costs." She further states that if the "conservation community" launched a "fund raising concept" to establish National Parks in South Moresby that she would be "most willing to cooperate in its efforts."

Such an idea is not new. In the battle to save the redwoods in Southern California it was the nickles and dimes, the allowances and lunch money of hundreds of thousands of school children that helped place the last of the redwoods in parks.

However the redwoods were on private land not on public (crown) land as South Moresby and most of the other wilderness park proposal areas are in Canada.

The Minister's proposal has provoked a mixed reaction in the environmental community. Some feel that any endeavour to save South Moresby is justified. Others believe this proposal sets a dangerous precedent.

The detractors say that our national and provincial park systems will never be completed if environment groups have to raise millions of dollars to buy each wilderness area. Our park systems presently represent less than half the unique land and seascapes in western and northern Canada.

The country needs several hundred new parks to save outstanding places needing preservation.

Traditionally, non-government organizations educate the public, garnering wide public support which they know is needed to spur government action. Traditionally, Canadian governments do not



act only on behalf of special interest groups who voluntarily raise and donate the most money to the public treasury, money which bribes government action on a particular issue.

Such an idea is counter to our democratic principles.

Colleen McCrory explains it another way, "When the Federal government decided recently to change the Armed Forces' uniforms at a reported cost of \$1,000 per soldier, the Minister of Defense did not ask the veterans groups that lobbied for the change to share the cost, as if they would be the only ones to benefit. Why should we be treated differently? Why should concerned citizens be asked to buy back publicly owned crown land so that all children in the future can behold the splendor of our country's natural heritage?"

PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS SUGGEST PARK WITHOUT PROTECTION

In a series of meetings with Queen Charlotte Island organizations and the Council of Haida Nation, provincial park representatives outlined their 'compromise' solution for South Moresby. They call it option 1A; a plan to allow logging and mining and yet call the area a park.

Since 1974 the number of Canadians seeking protective status for South Moresby has continuously increased. This 500 sq. mile wilderness has become world renowned for its huge trees, rugged scenery, and rich biota. At last, government officials propose to colour it green on B.C. maps like Garibaldi and Manning Parks, but the similarity is only in colour. South Moresby would be a special type of park, a "Recreation Area," with no protection from the ravages of mining and clear-cut logging.

Conservationists call this proposal a complete fraud.

"It's the equivalent of allowing highrises and apartment buildings into Vancouver's Stanley or Victoria's Beacon Hill parks and claiming they still

retain their original beauty and charm. It's totally preposterous. South Moresby is much too sensitive and small for industry and wilderness to coexist," says Paul George, a Director of Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

An extensive traveller in the area, he claims that the government is ignoring overwhelming evidence of the harmful effects of logging and mining. Wilderness recreationalists won't come to see clear-cuts. Not only tourism, the fastest growing economic sector on the Charlottes, but also fisheries and wildlife will suffer under this proposed short sighted solution to the land use conflict.

Just last winter on Lyell Island, an area within the wilderness proposal, logging precipitated a gigantic landslide. The ugly mass of mud and debris wiped out a good salmon stream. It will cost taxpayers over \$150,000 just to clear the log jam at the mouth of the stream. "Everyone including federal fisheries has turned a blind eye. If this happened in the U.S. it would be a crime," claims George.

Behind the scenes the logging industry is exerting pressure to begin logging Windy Bay Watershed. This 12 sq. mile virgin area, home of some of the biggest cedars and spruces on the Charlottes, is the last large completely unlogged watershed on the East Coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands. Part of the wilderness proposal, it comprises about 18% of Lyell Island. The Forest Service promised that no logging will be allowed before the government decides the fate of South Moresby.

Windy Bay became an ecological reserve candidate eight years ago. Then most of the surrounding area on Lyell Island was unlogged. Now Windy Bay is an isolated island of natural integrity surrounded by a clear-cut stumpland of ugly slash and logging debris.

Few are fooled by a park proposal which allows industrial development to continue. But will Canadians be moved to counter the powerful mining and logging lobbies and save this undisputed wonder of the natural world?

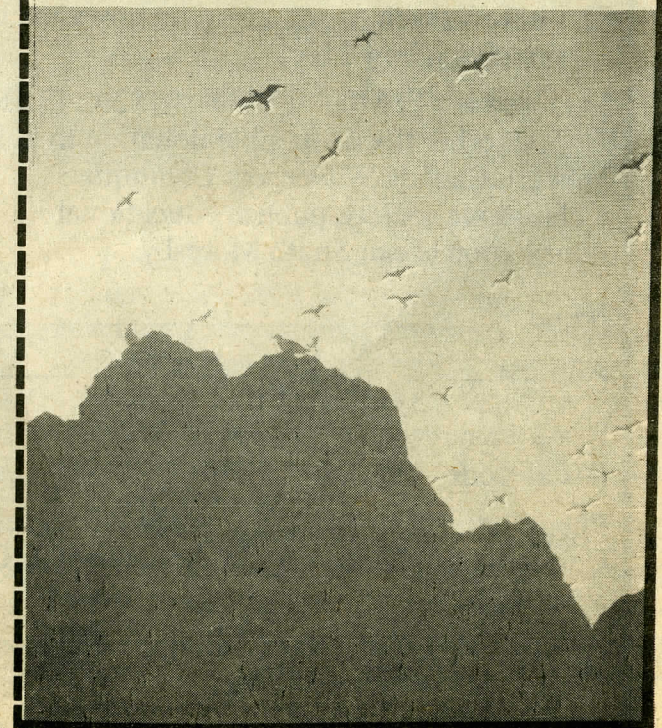
Express your feelings about South Moresby to the decision-makers.

WRITE TO: Your MLA and MP.

WRITE TO: Hon. Austin Pelton
Minister of the Environment
Legislative Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8X 1X4

WRITE TO: Hon. S. Blais-Grenier
Minister of the Environment
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0H3

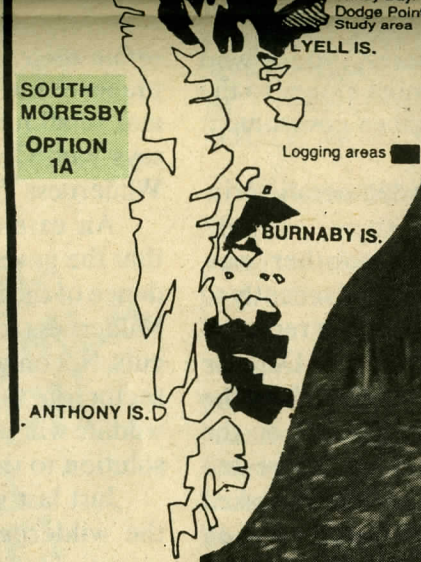
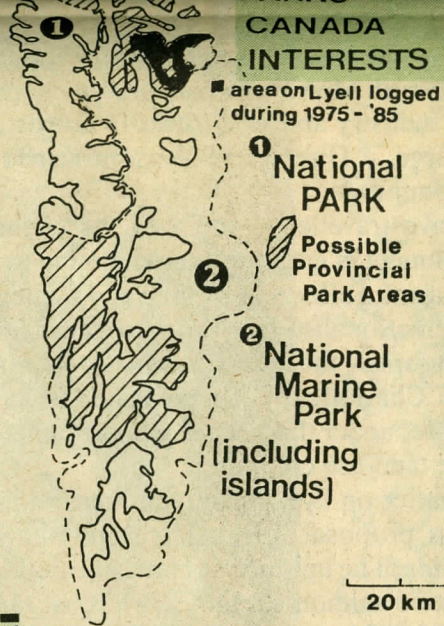
SOUTH MORESBY A WILDERNESS WORTH WRITING FOR



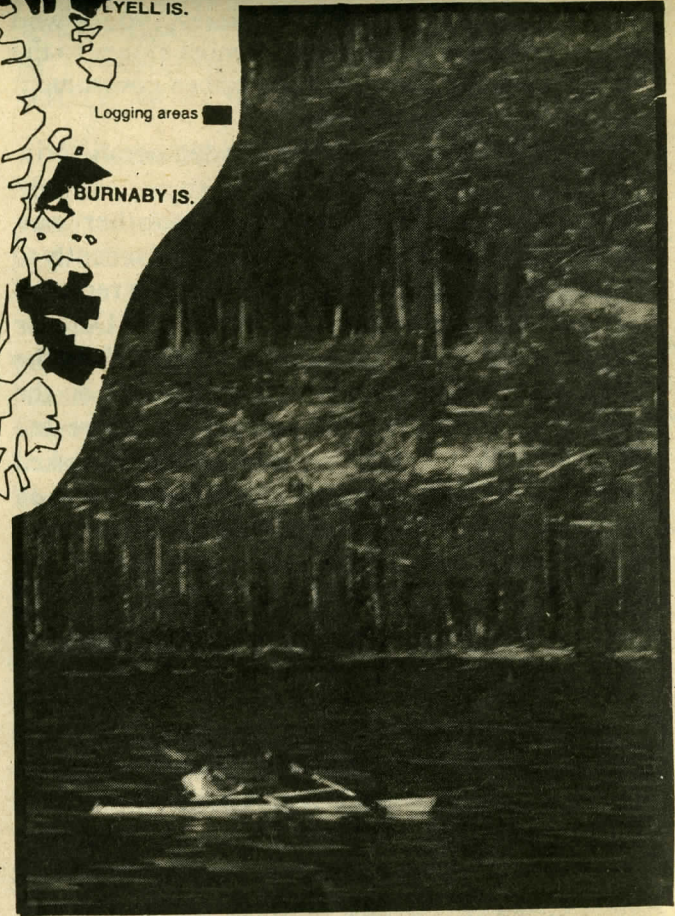
STOP CLEAR-CUTS FROM SPREADING FURTHER INTO SOUTH MORESBY



Thanks to those who helped make this effort a success — Islands Protection Society, Prince of Wales Tree club, Alberta Wilderness Association, SPEC, Sierra Club, Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Earth First, O.R.C., Friends of Ecological Reserves, National and Provincial Parks Association, and special thanks to the National South Moresby Committee members who are actively working to save this fantastic area. Special thanks also to the photographers who donated these pictures. Most of all, thanks to the hundreds who have donated — you have made this publication possible.



20 km



I'm in favour of preserving South Moresby's Natural Heritage.

I have written to _____ in government explaining how I feel.

Enclosed is a \$100 \$50 \$20 \$10 _____ other tax deductible donation to help Western Canada Wilderness Committee, a charitable society, publish educational information about South Moresby.

Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

Please return to: Western Canada Wilderness Committee, 1200 Hornby St., Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2E2

I would like to join the Committee. Enclosed is my \$15 membership fee.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Front Cover: West Coast, South Moresby — Tom Ellison; Back cover top: clearcut adjacent to Windy Bay — Adriane Carr; Back cover right: kayakers pass logging in Gogit passage adjacent to Windy Bay — Tom Ellison; Page 2 top left: Sack Bay — Tom Ellison; Top right: Windy Bay, Sitka Spruce — Rosanne Konrad; Middle: ascending Mt. Yatze, Island Bay in the background — Eric Boyum; Bottom left: Mt. Yatze peak, Burnaby, Huxley and Ramsey Islands in background — Eric Boyum; Bottom right: camping on the ridge of San Christivol Mts. — Eric Boyum; Page 3 top left and right: West Coast South Moresby — Tom Ellison; Bottom: gulls circling South Moresby Islet — Tom Ellison.

Copies of the South Moresby book, *Islands at the Edge*, are still available for \$29.95 from Islands Protection Society, Box 317, Port Clements, B.C. V0T 1R0.

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