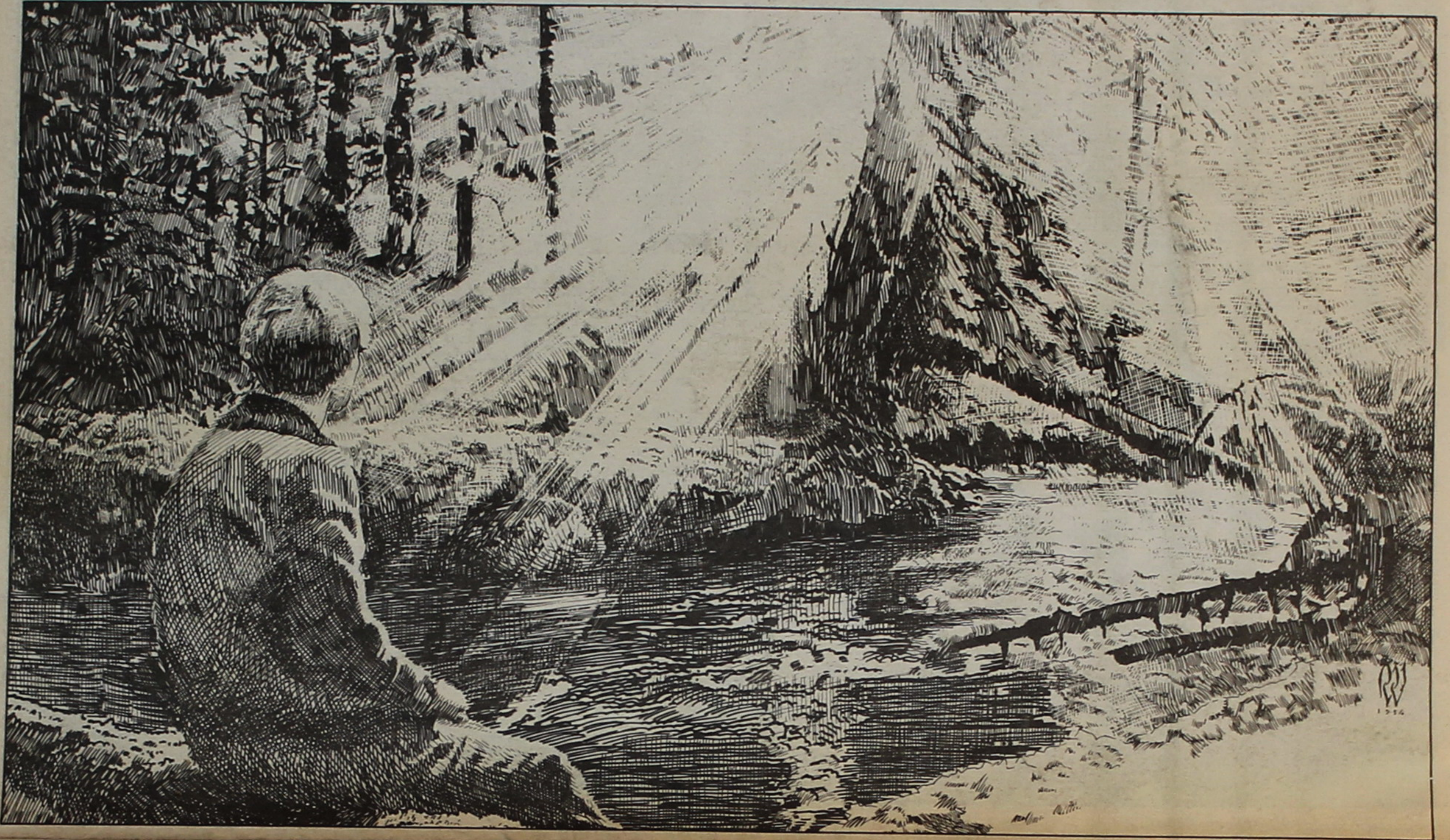


BATTLE FOR *WINDY BAY*

WINTER/SPRING 1987



LAST CHANCE TO SAVE *WINDY BAY*



Virgin Rainforest On Lyell Island
In the Queen Charlotte Islands'
South Moresby Wilderness Area



Logging Poised to Enter
See *Windy Bay Story* Page 2

Haida Build Longhouse to Protect
See *Last Stand on Lyell Island* Page 3



Unnamed Windy Bay Creek Tributary

THE STORY OF WINDY BAY

By Ken Lay, Wilderness Committee Director, who visited the Queen Charlotte Islands for the first time in November, 1986, and spent nine days in Windy Bay.

Breathless. Was it the wild beauty or the several hours of hiking in Windy Bay? You don't have to be a professional biologist (I only have high school training), to tell that Windy Bay is an ancient old growth forest. Besides the obvious—giant trees, trees of all different sizes and the absence of stumps with flat tops—there is a raw jungled look about the arrangement of everything. Trees which have grown from the rotting remains of their ancestors, which in turn grew up upon their ancestors, are all placed and shaped just right, naturally fitted to that particular piece of earth.

It's not just ten, twelve, fourteen foot diameter spruce and cedar that make Windy Bay breathless. It's the surprise around every bend of the creek and every moss-draped windfall. Each section of the stream is unique. Here and there are dwarfed and twisted hemlock that have been sculptured by the shifting patches of light missed by the giants towering above. How old was the one I sat under? Thirty feet tall with a trunk only a few inches in diameter; worthless to a logging company. Is it two hundred, three hundred or more years old? Will it ever grow to be a giant?

Questions—the unknown—the irreplaceable diversity and complexity—that's what the wilderness is.

What is the nature of the virgin forest

on the Queen Charlotte Islands; its age distribution, species composition and nutrient recycling rate? Why does the Windy Bay temperate rainforest have one of the largest living biomass, (the greatest amount of living matter by weight per unit area), of any terrestrial ecosystem in the world? How old does a tree have to be to make it more valuable left standing than cut?

These are not my questions. They were posed by Marion Parker, a world-famous tree ring expert. No one knows the answers...yet. Our Committee sent him to the Queen Charlotte Islands a few months ago, the first dendrochronologist to take samples there. In the Charlottes for only a few days, he examined the tree stumps and logs left behind in the clear cuts. He didn't even get as far as North Moresby. But he did find lots of ancient trees. The oldest specimen was a 1,294 year old yellow cedar, now a two year old stump rotting near Yakoun Lake on Graham Island. It survived 52 human generations before, in a matter of a few minutes, a chain saw brought its life to an abrupt end. No one suspected the antiquity of the tree when it was cut. According to Mr. Parker, trees over a thousand years old are extremely rare; they are an irreplaceable and invaluable resource telling us about climate and atmospheric conditions in the past, and relating them to the future as the tree continues to live and grow. How many trees over 1,000 years old live in Windy Bay?

Why did I go to Windy Bay when the days are short and the rains long and hard?



At the edge of a clear-cut at the southern boundary of the Windy Bay watershed.

Our Committee had heard that logging was imminent despite the international acclaim that Windy Bay had achieved. According to an inside informant, all that was left to do before Forest Service approval to log would be given, was for the government Ecological Reserve Unit to "walk on the line" establishing the final boundary of the company leave-strip option "B" reserve. The company plans to push a road along this line in 1988. The road would forever sever the hope that Windy Bay would be preserved whole.

Option "B", according to the company, "protects" ten percent of the valley and most of its biological "values". But it doesn't protect the essence of the valley—its salmon stream. All the time I hiked Windy Bay Creek it stank of rotting fish, remnants of a massive salmon run returning nutrients to aid the next generation, and I saw salmon still struggling up the stream long after the Federal Fisheries

census taker had left. He visited Windy Bay Creek only once to count fish in 1986, on October 6, and found 34,400 spawning salmon.

Option "B" reserve won't even protect the trees left in the leave-strip around the mouth of Windy Bay Creek. I hiked to the edge of the clear-cuts which now surround Windy Bay watershed and saw the blow-down, hundreds of trees at the edge of the clear-cuts pushed over by the wind. If it is already happening at the edge of the watershed, it is certainly going to happen in the proposed leave-strip reserve. Giant trees which have grown their centuries-old lifetime in the shelter of other trees just don't have the root or limb structures to withstand the southeastern storms, reputed to have the highest winds of any in Canada.

Windy Bay Story continued on page 4



LYELL ISLAND - 1974. Windy Bay, only thirteen years ago.



LYELL ISLAND - 1986. Landsat photo imagery clearly shows Windy Bay surrounded by clear-cuts.

DATELINE

1930-1940's—Windy Bay watershed escapes high grade logging of its valley bottom because of poor access and lack of a safe log-booming area in its shallow exposed harbour.

1954—Area is placed in Tree Farm Licence No. 24 without public consultation or hearing.

1974—Islands Protection Society, a Queen Charlotte Island environmental group, proposes that all of Southern Moresby, including Lyell Island, become a protected Wilderness Area.

Active clearcutting begins on Lyell Island; Powrivco logging camp established on northern Lyell Island.

1978—Ecological Reserve Unit of the Provincial Environment Ministry accepts Windy Bay-Dodge Point as an Ecological Reserve candidate.

1979—Provincial government establishes South Moresby Resource Planning Team to study Windy Bay Ecological Reserve and South Moresby Wilderness Proposal as two separate issues.

1983—Planning team recommends that all of Windy Bay become an Ecological Reserve. The only dissenting vote is the logging company which supports their

option "B"—a leave-strip along the ocean and the lower banks of Windy Bay Creek.

1985—Haida take action to temporarily stop logging on Lyell because of the provincial government's failure to live up to their word to negotiate a settlement of the Haida Land Claim and because the government shows no intention of curtailing logging in South Moresby.

March 1986—Provincial government appointed Wilderness Advisory Committee which, after a three month consideration of 16 proposed wilderness areas, recommends that the logging company's option "B" Ecological Reserve be established in Windy Bay and that only

the area south of Lyell Island become a National Park.

September 1986—Provincial and Federal governments agree to "fast track" negotiations for a South Moresby National Park with a September 1987 deadline established.

November 1986—Haida build longhouse in Windy Bay.

December 23, 1986—Provincial government Forestry Ministry approves a five year cutting plan for Lyell Island which includes logging in Windy Bay in 1987 and no slow down in the liquidation of the old growth forests left on Lyell.

LAST STAND ON LYELL

Ignoring warnings from provincial government officials that their activities were illegal, the Haida Nation constructed a longhouse in Windy Bay last November. While digging the corner posts into the ground, one of the workers found a carved stone hammer. Not surprising. Not so long ago, and for thousands of years, a Haida village thrived on the very same estuary site.

The 24 square foot all-cedar post, plank and beam house, built in the traditional style, is part of the Haida's long-term, islands-wide re-inhabitation program. Contrary to what the history books say, Windy Bay village was not abandoned. According to a Haida spokeswoman, their ancestors were forced to leave. In one year, small pox, a "white man's disease", killed over 75 percent of all the Haida living on the Queen Charlotte Islands. It wiped out the Windy Bay villagers.

Now the new longhouse, evidence of continuing use and occupancy of the land, is a shelter for Haida who go there to gather food. It is open to others who come to see what is reputed to be the "most

spectacular temperate rainforest left unlogged in the world".

Windy Bay continues to have everything nature provides: the best salmon stream in the South Moresby region, a good landing beach and prime cedar for canoes, longhouses and totem poles. One hundred years ago, Windy Bay was the site of the biggest village on Lyell Island—a reflection of the watershed's plentitude.

In 1985, the Haida took a stand against further logging on Lyell Island. The reason? The very essence of their heritage was threatened. Today, after 72 arrests of Haida for peaceably blocking roads, several court cases and many convictions, progressive logging of Lyell Island continues without reduction or modification. The only result of the Haida's action was that the provincial government of the day conducted yet another study. Reflecting its biased pro-industry make up, the appointed Wilderness Advisory Committee recommended sacrificing Lyell Island, including 90 percent of the Windy Bay watershed in order to preserve, as a National Park, the rest of the South



Longhouse erected by the Haida Nation on the Windy Bay traditional village site, November 1986.

Moresby Wilderness area.

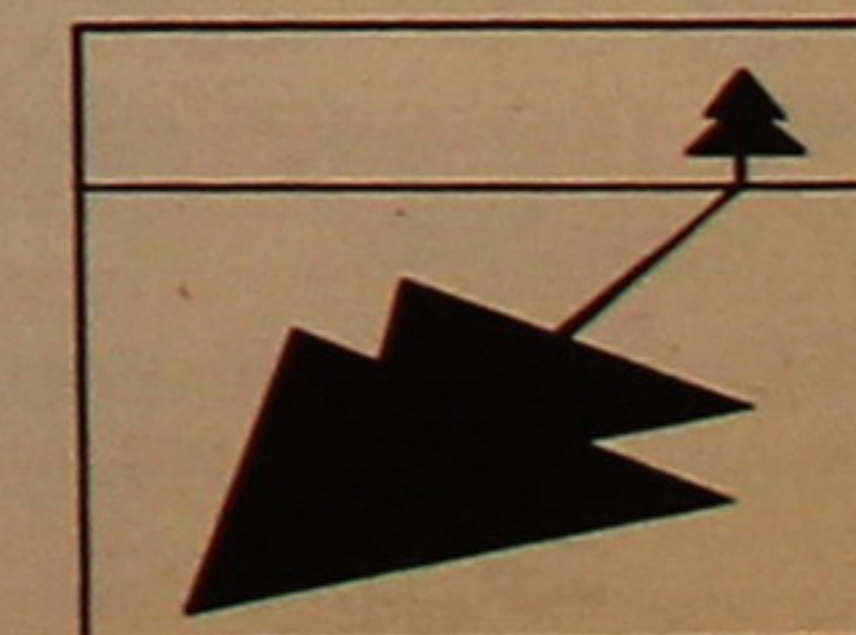
Consideration of native interest in the matter was "not within the mandate of the Committee". The Committee's report, which was rushed to completion in three months, has since gathered dust for nine.

Some ask what good is a longhouse in a leave-strip in front of a logged-out valley along another silted-up stream? "The Haida position will be upheld", asserts Haida Nation President Miles Richardson.

How they are going to stop logging in Windy Bay and the rest of South Moresby remains their secret.

"Windy Bay will not be logged."

—Miles Richardson
Council of the Haida Nation President





Clear-cut abutting Windy Bay Watershed to the south.

WINDY BAY

Windy Bay Story continued from page 2

Despite the recent assertion by the Minister of the Environment, Honourable Stephen Rogers, that "Cabinet approval" is required before logging goes ahead in Windy Bay, I found plenty of evidence that, in fact, the decision has already been made. The logging company must believe that it is going to be logging Windy Bay in the near future, for thousands of dollars worth of engineering work has already been done. Proposed roads were clearly marked with ribbon and blaze marks. The most recent ones were dated September of 1986.

Everywhere I went in Windy Bay there was evidence of Haida use of the forest—especially cedars with test holes in them. No doubt the whole watershed was a

prime spot for taking individual trees for Haida canoes and totem poles. It's a shame that none of this heritage has been documented. The studies haven't been done but the bulldozers and logging trucks are ready to roll.

If there is to be any future for our planet, I believe places like Windy Bay MUST BE SAVED. As a last resort, I will place myself in front of those who are constructing the first road into Windy Bay. I hope reason prevails and it doesn't come to this. But if it does, I know I won't be alone.



Windy Bay lies on the east side of Lyell Island within the proposed boundaries of the South Moresby Wilderness.

CREDITS

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Sun filters through trees, as hiker contemplates the clean-running Windy Bay Creek.

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