

SOLD OUT TO MINING INTERESTS 1987



Cream Lake, Strathcona Provincial Park

STRATHCONA

B.C.'s first provincial park

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**Newsletter co-produced by the Friends of Strathcona Park
and Western Canada Wilderness Committee**

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From lofty principles to resource sellout

75 YEARS OF STRATHCONA PARK HISTORY

1865—Commander John James Buttle led the first exploratory expedition of Europeans into the area from Bedwell Sound where he found Buttle Lake and named it after himself.

1909—Group of Campbell River merchants recommend the area as a “concentrated and comprehensive tourist attraction.”

1911—After an exploratory trip into the Buttle Lake area the previous year, Price Ellison wrote a glowing report which resulted in provincial protection of the area by the *Strathcona Park Act*.

A triangle of mountainous virgin land comprising 524,000 acres was set aside as B.C.'s first provincial park. The park was named after the man who drove the last spike on the CPR, Donald Alexander Smith, the First Baron Strathcona.

1915—The government published *Strathcona the Beautiful*, to advertise the Vancouver Island Alps.

1918—The Act was amended and Strathcona opened up for mineral claims. A few claims existed before this time but between 1918 and 1965 more than 400 additional claims were staked.

1927—The *Strathcona Park Act* is amended again, this time to allow water levels to be raised in Buttle and four other lakes. All five areas were flooded in later years.

1953—The B.C. Power Commission was given permission to build the Strathcona Dam to raise the water level in Buttle



took place in the lower Elk Valley with loss of trees up to 17 feet in diameter and 240 feet tall. Bloedel, Stewart and Welch received cutting rights in the Ash River area.

1957—The *Strathcona Park Act* was repealed and the area re-established as a class A park.

1961—Western Mines, later called Westmin, got permission for open pit mining in the park and to build a 22 mile long access road which cut across the landscape and along Buttle Lake.

1962—Portions of the lower Bedwell Valley was logged by MacMillan Bloedel which agreed to exchange Strathcona timber for company holdings in Pacific Rim National Park, and such areas as Shawnigan and Bowron lakes.

1965—The park was reclassified to Class B status to allow further exploitation except for a small nature conservancy area.

1966—Pamela Creek and Burman River areas were exchanged for Rath Trevor Beach near Parksville.

1967—The B.C. government granted Cream Silver Mines permission to explore and drill in the park resulting in more mineral claims being staked around Cream Lake over the next three years. Forbidden Plateau is added to the park.

1969—Gretchen Creek, Ranald Creek and Oshinow Lake areas were handed over to be logged in exchange for Cape Scott being left unlogged. Raven Lumber received 5,260 acres of Strathcona forest for 576 acres of the northern tip of Vancouver Island in what the government called “a fair swap.”

1973—A moratorium is placed on further industrial development of the park. Westmin received permission to dump mine tailings into Buttle Lake.

1985—Permission was granted for damming of Jim Mitchell Lake for additional electrical power for Westmin. An eyesore of a road was built up to the lake. Deputy Parks Minister Vince Collins signed park use permit number 1363 which gives Westmin sole and exclusive right for 25 years to 6249 acres of land in Strathcona for a paltry \$60 per year.

1986—Strathcona Park celebrates its 75th anniversary. Westmin Mines was fined \$80,000 for destruction of fish habitat. The B.C. government's Wilderness Advisory Committee (WAC) recommends that 87,500 acres be deleted from Strathcona Park and that 20,000 acres be added. It also recommends the central portion be reclassified as “recreation area” so that exploitation would be uninhibited.

1987—The government accepts most of the Wilderness Advisory Committee report on parks without public input as recommended in the report. An order in council by cabinet opens huge new areas of Strathcona Park to mining and logging.



Della Falls, Canada's highest at 1500 feet, could be adjacent to a newly created mining area soon, now that the provincial government has removed the area from park protection.

Mine's acid waste threatens Campbell River

Recent studies indicate that sulphuric acid and heavy metals mine waste could wipe out aquatic life in the Campbell River watershed. This environmental time bomb is a major threat to valuable salmon stocks, the basis of much of the area's economy.

Westmin Resources Limited has been operating a mine and mill at the south end of Buttle Lake in the centre of Strathcona Provincial Park for more than 20 years. For the last three years the company has been using a system called subaerial disposal for high level sulphur wastes. This method has not been used successfully in preventing acidification in other mining operations and Westmin has no backup system.

The company processed one million tons of high sulphur ore last year. With a reserve of about 15 million tons, Westmin could walk away from its Strathcona Park mine in 15 years or less. The big problems begin once the mine closes. By the year 2000 Westmin's tailings will have the potential to produce 300 million tons of toxic sludge. Maintenance of the waste dumps will need to be continued for many hundreds of years.

The lack of a proven safe primary waste treatment system and no secondary system whatsoever has many people worried, including waste management officials. No one would speak openly about the danger because the subject is a political hot potato.

Physician John Ross of Campbell River said last month that he had always feared this type of environmental breakdown. He said he would be pushing even harder now for a public inquiry into mining in Strathcona, particularly when the government is planning to open the park to a new mine at Cream Lake. At the Westmin

mill, metals are extracted from the crushed rock, clay sized particles are pumped to tailings ponds for subaerial disposal and sand goes back to worked out mine shafts.

Some of these tailings are pumped to overburden rock dumps near Myra Creek which are already producing acid and heavy metals leachate. In theory, surrounding the rock with sludge should eventually prevent oxygen and bacteria from turning the sulphites in the waste rock into sulphuric acid.

Until 10 years ago, millions of tons of waste rock from Westmin's 20 year old open pit mine was causing acid and leached metals such as zinc, copper, mercury, cadmium, cyanide and lead to enter Buttle Lake. Westmin now catches this leachate, neutralizes the acid with lime and pumps the toxic sludge to tailings ponds.

Once a sulphite ore rock dump or tailings pond begins to produce acid, an ideal environment is created for bacteria which release even more sulphur dioxide and resulting sulphuric acid, escalating the process exponentially until there is no practical way to reverse it. Engineering studies are split on whether or not Westmin's system, which puts only clay sized particles in tailings ponds, will work. Other subaerial systems have allowed sand to be deposited with tailings, so that oxydation takes place. If it doesn't work an environmental disaster of unparalleled magnitude will result, poisoning everything from Buttle Lake through to the Strait of Georgia.

In a paper on acid mine waste released last month, mining engineer Dr. Andrew Robertson of Vancouver, an expert in this field, said that "one tonne of sulphides may produce 70 tonnes of wet sludge... "Often these sludges are... a potential long term source of contaminants. They

in turn must be carefully stored and protected. In the long term, the containment of the sludge may be a considerably more difficult task than the alternative methods of acid mine drainage abatement."

Westmin is the first company to apply the subaerial disposal method to hard rock mining. It has been used in the eastern U.S. at coal mines with only limited success. Major acidification problems were encountered where sulphur content was only four percent. Westmin's tailings contain up to 35 percent sulphur. A high rainfall area such as Vancouver Island presents further problems because subaerial disposal was used previously only in dryer areas.

Since it is an unproven technology and since people in the industry are split on its effectiveness over the long term, it is imperative that a good backup system be in place should subaerial disposal not work.

Westmin lawyer Ray Hampton said April 24 that the company was operating strictly within the guidelines of its permit. He did admit however that the current waste disposal system was an interim system and that so far there is no abandonment plan. Asked about long term problems, Hampton said that Westmin was responsible if future problems arose, whether these were because of inadequate pollution controls or even if an earthquake should spill the toxic waste into Buttle Lake.

There is a lot of apprehension about future dangers. Once the mine closes in about 15 years for lack of ore, an abandonment bond must be in place to cover maintenance costs for as long as one thousand years which at 1987 prices could easily be more than \$1 million per year. No such provisions have so far been made. Westmin could cease operations at any time in the future and taxpayers would be stuck with paying pollution control costs.

The only thing preventing the whole

However, according to a number of engineers, when the mine closes, acid production will likely begin. Remedial action will have to be taken in perpetuity unless some new technology is invented. Relying on that would put acid mine waste treatment into the same category as temporary nuclear waste disposal. Should acid production begin in the Westmin tailings ponds a gargantuan treatment system would be needed. The alternative is to allow the acid and toxic mineral pollutants to enter Buttle Lake, which would kill the whole Campbell River system.

Can it happen at Westmin? Probably. Waste rock at a nearby abandoned copper mine on Mt. Washington has killed the Sholom River. At the Equity Silver mine near Smithers, acid production is so high, that despite \$3 million spent on pollution abatement equipment, the government is attempting to close the operation before the Bulkley River from Houston to New Hazelton is killed.

Preventing acid production in the first place through placing rock waste and tailings in oxygen free water or bog storage is probably more economical in the long run. Many engineers are now leaning this way. Ironically, the bottom of Buttle Lake is an ideal storage environment from this point of view but returning to lake bottom disposal may not be publicly acceptable.

Additional mining operations could be opened in the Cream Lake area of Strathcona Park if the provincial government approves a park use permit applied for by Cream Silver Mines.

This mine, which would also be extracting high sulphur ore from the same mineralized ore body as Westmin, has the potential to cause acid and heavy metals pollution in a wide area.

Cream Silver is gearing up to go ahead and the government is rapidly removing any obstacles to the new mining operation. Already this year an order in council was passed, putting the high alpine area

The only thing preventing the whole Westmin disposal area from turning into an acid generating pile is the fact that fresh tailings are constantly being added to the surface. The wastes may stay inactive as long as the mine is operating.

Already this year an order in council was passed, putting the high alpine area around Cream Lake into what the government euphemistically calls "recreation area" but which in fact drops all park protection and opens the land to resource extraction.

Faulty research to cost hundreds of millions

An overreaction based on incomplete research by provincial mine and waste management officials in the 1970s is coming back to haunt the environment in Strathcona Provincial Park. Corrective measures which must be taken after the fact will probably cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

A cease and desist order served against Westmin Resources Limited in 1981 stopped the company from continuing to deposit its mine tailings in Buttle Lake. This government action was taken against the mine because zinc levels in Buttle Lake were rising and plankton was dying.

About six months after the order, federal officials took core samples from Buttle Lake and found, much to their surprise, that the zinc was not coming from the tailings. Despite this finding plans to switch to an on-land disposal system proceeded until three years later, tailings ponds were in place.

Later, tests at Myra Creek pinpointed the pollution source. Waste rock from Westmin's Lynx open pit mine being dumped along the creek was producing acid and leaching zinc and other toxic minerals which were draining into Buttle Lake. Corrective action was taken to intercept this leachate.

Last month Dr. Andy Robertson of


Vancouver, a consulting engineer, said that, given what we know today, the bottom of Buttle Lake is still the best place for the mine tailings because oxygen necessary for the production of sulphuric acid is not present at the lake bottom.

How acceptable this would be to the public is unknown. What is known however is that the present method of dealing with mine waste is costly and maintenance will have to continue for at least hundreds and perhaps thousands of years.

You can help save Strathcona Park

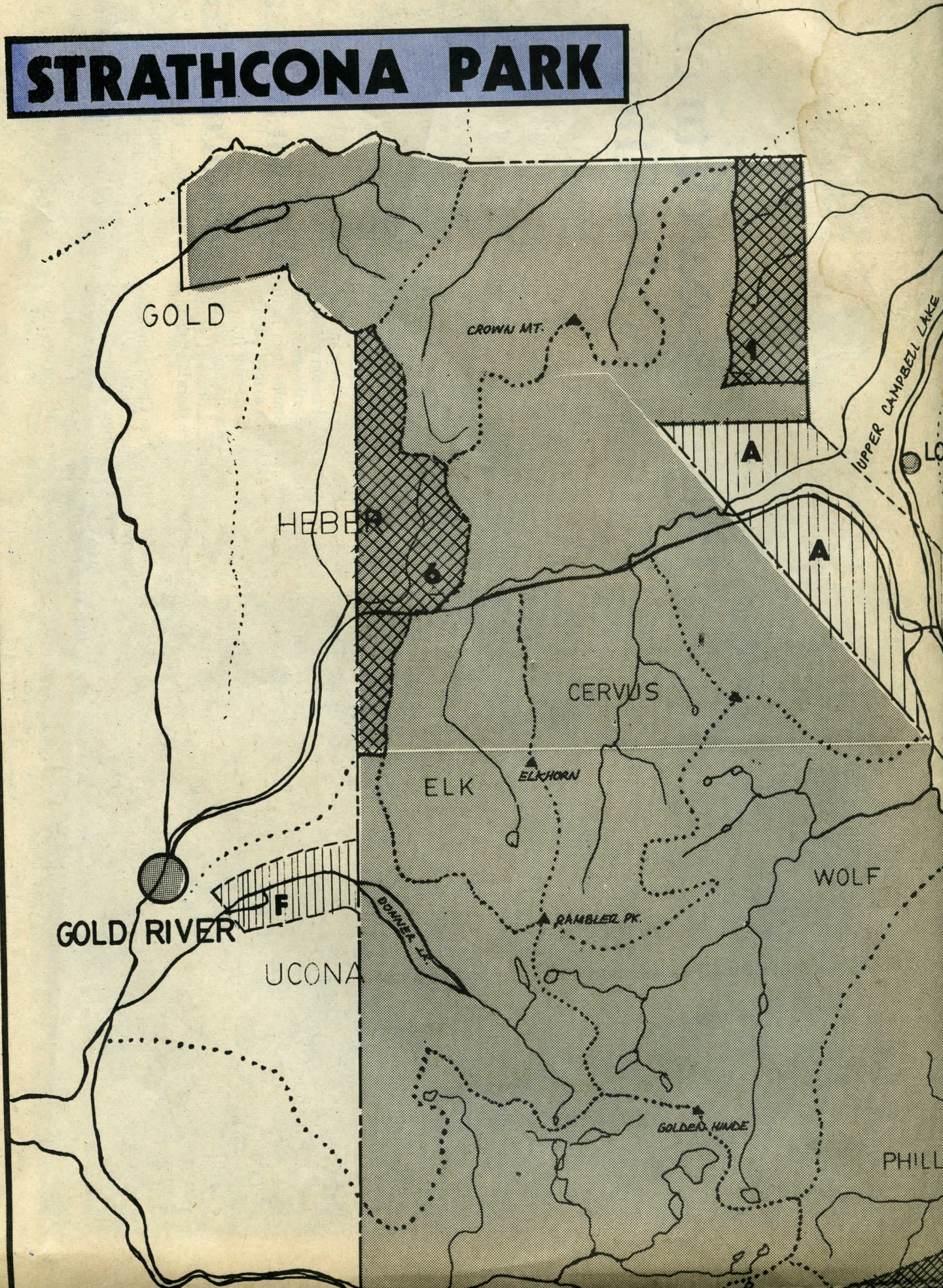
Everyone in B.C. concerned about recent government decisions affecting Strathcona should write to their local MLA, Premier Vander Zalm and Environment and Parks Minister Bruce Strachan. Copies of these letters should also go to the NDP opposition.

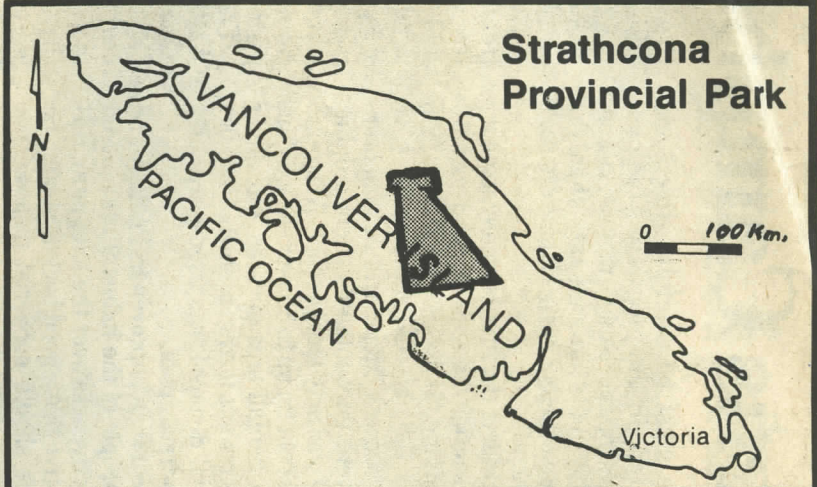
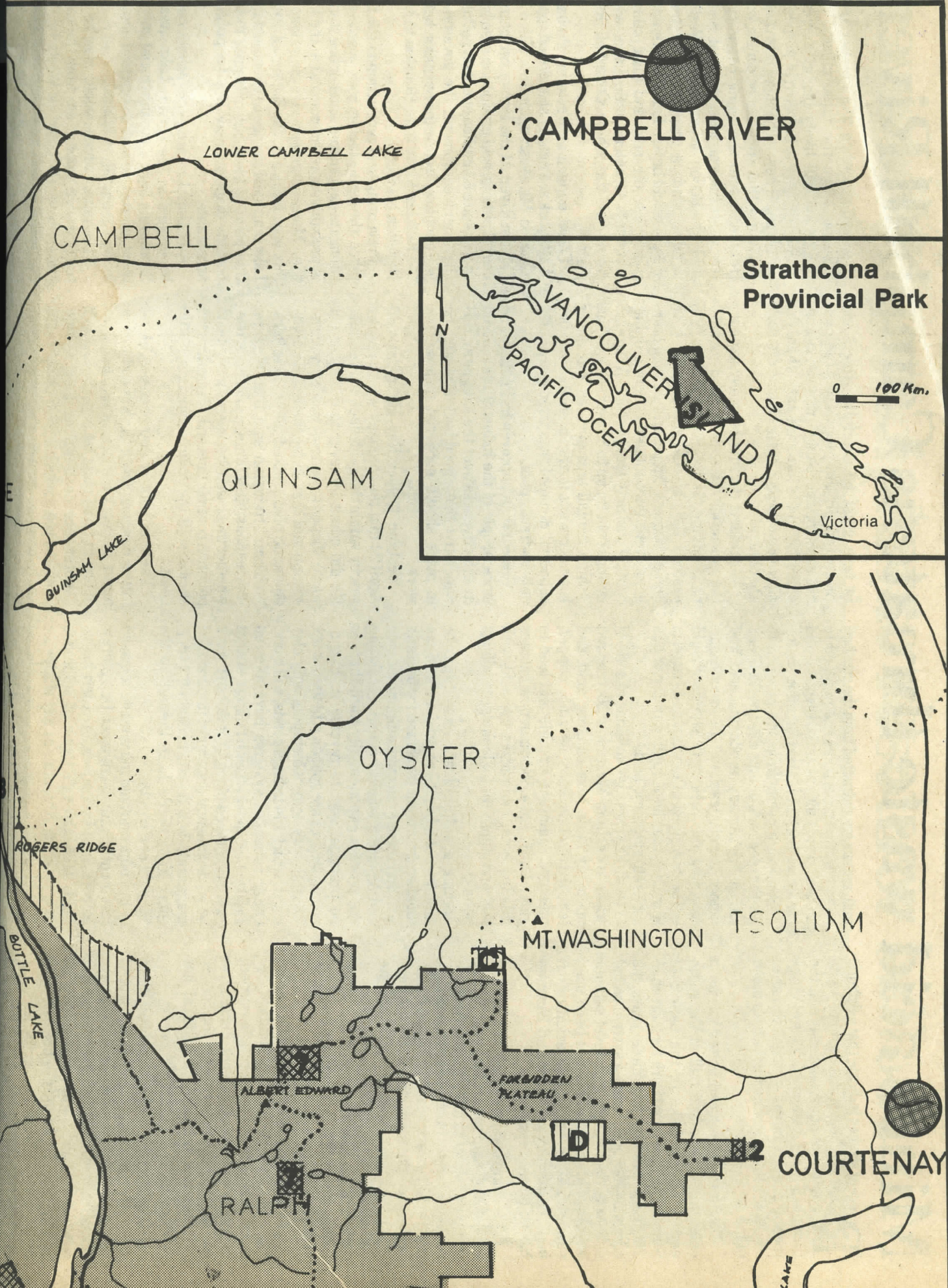
Everyone should let their political leaders know how strongly they feel about passing on to future generations a beautiful British Columbia heritage.

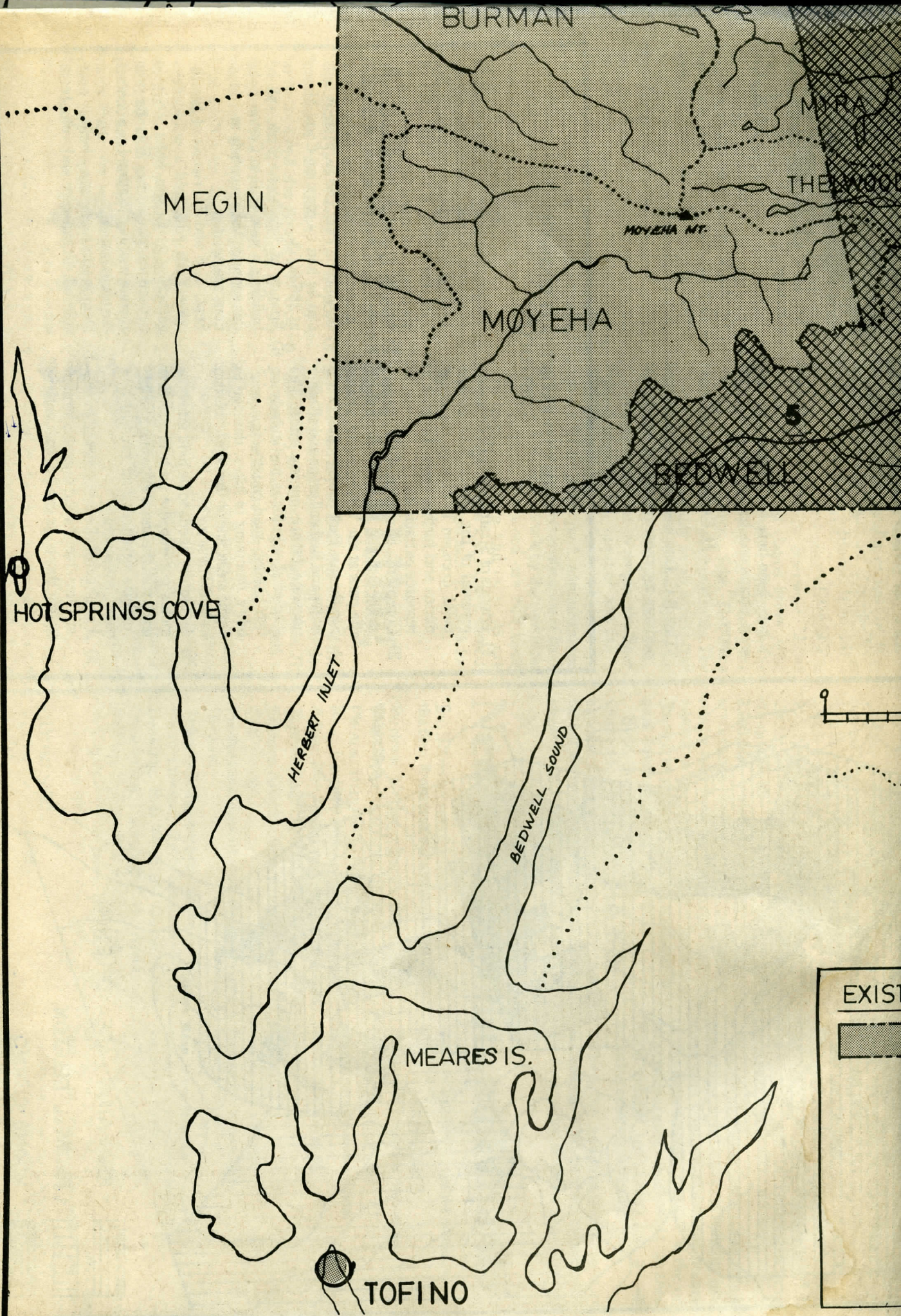


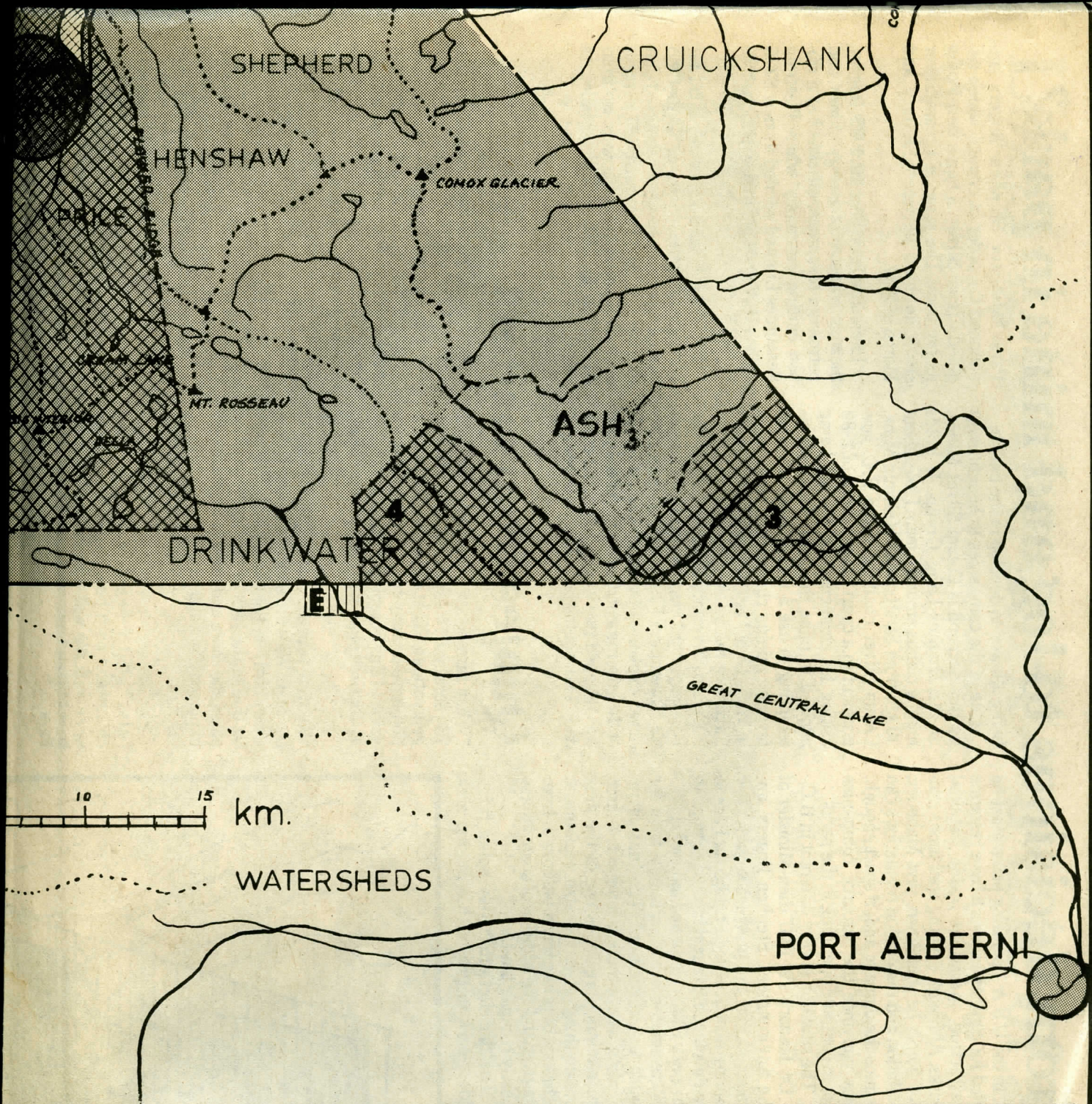
Westmin's mine and mill operation as seen from the Buttle Lake leachate ponds. Acidification of waste rock is causing expensive acid waste problems for the company which is mixing effluent with lime, precipitating out heavy metals in ponds and attempting to neutralize the acidity before the water goes into Buttle Lake.



STRATHCONA PARK









PARK	ADDITIONS	DELETIONS
31,000 Hec.	 8,000 Hec. (3½%)	 36,000 Hec. (16%)
A ELK MOUNTAIN		1 RANALD CREEK
B ROGERS RIDGE		2 FORBIDDEN PLATEAU
C PARADISE MEADOWS		3 ASH VALLEY
D FORBIDDEN PLATEAU		4 MT. BLUEBY
E DELLA FALLS ACCESS		5 BEDWELL VALLEY
F KUNLIN LAKE		6 CAMEL RIDGE & CREST CR.
		7 RECREATION AREAS

Who benefits from decisions to log and mine in park?

Resource exploitation by mining and logging companies at a rate and in a style unprecedented in any country outside the third world, is taking place inside British Columbia's provincial parks.

In an interview April 15 with Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Tim Mahoney, public lands specialist for the U.S. Sierra Club, said that the west coast of British Columbia has a very high preservation value on a world scale.

Even in the United States with the Reagan administration's notorious lack of concern for wilderness, no parks are being exploited the way that Strathcona is being abused, says Mahoney.

He said that in Alaska, where there were no regulations protecting federal park lands on which mining was taking place, the Sierra Club sued the parks service. The court ruled that all mining operations had to shut down because the parks service was delaying regulations which would have protected the park environment.

In the U S A operating plans must be filed for companies which have resource extraction operations inside national parks. Although existing operations cannot simply be shut down, says Mahoney, pollution and restoration regulations can reduce the damage and, if strict enough, may convince the resource companies not to continue operating in the parks.

The situation is very different in B.C.

On January 29, 1987 then-Minister of the Environment, Stephen Rogers, announced that the province would allow mining claims inside Strathcona Park to be developed. He reclassified regions in the park which contained mineral claims as "recreation areas", a handy term for "open to exploitation". The idea of recreating where there is a mine is a farce since mining precludes use of the area for anything else. He also announced deletions of prime forest oldgrowth from the park and the addition of some areas—mostly cut-over land.

The decision effectively splits B.C.'s oldest park in two, with a mining area

being allowed to develop in the middle.

One of the companies to benefit most by this decision is Cream Silver Mines, of the Hughes-Lang Group. It holds mining claims around Cream Lake, about 10 km from Strathcona's Westmin Mine. Cream Silver challenged the B.C. government in a court case in April of 1986 asking for compensation for not being allowed to mine the area. Although attempting to use a recent court decision favoring mining claims over park rights in Wells Gray Park as precedent, Cream Silver lost the court case.

Cream Silver appealed its loss to the B.C. Supreme Court with a court date set for November of 1986. For some reason never explained by either Cream Silver or the government, Cream Silver's appeal was dropped two weeks before the court date. Two months later, Environment and

Parks Minister Stephen Rogers announced the order in council which enabled Cream Silver to begin developing its ore body. The value of Cream Silver stock doubled between January and March of 1987.

Interestingly, on Sept 20, 1985, Rogers, then as minister of energy, mines and petroleum resources, officiated at a ribbon cutting ceremony when Westmin Resources Limited opened its new \$225 million H-W mine in Strathcona Provincial Park.

Profits have been especially good for Westmin after the expansion. In its 1986 annual report the company reported that its cash flow had increased 485 percent over 1985 and that profits were up from \$4 million in 1985 to \$18.4 million in 1986.

Quotes from visitors

"When Strathcona Park was established 75 years ago it was set aside for all future generations. What right does our generation have to deny future generations the value of this potentially great park?..."

Colin Gabelmann, MLA for North Island

"We were overwhelmed by the beauty of the area. We were shocked by the lack of water birds on Lake Campbell. This may be due to the lack of needed vegetation along the shore and mine tailings allowed to poison the water...."

R. and S. Ellis, USA

"May 1986 I heard of the proposed changes to park boundaries. I was truly sickened! We will lose one of the most beautiful and renown areas of Strathcona Park...."

B. Tipton, Canada

ever at Strathcona Park. We hiked from Cream Lake via Price Creek, traversed the Big Interior massif to Nine Peaks, explored Beauty Lake and retraced our steps... We met some botanist who referred to the Camel Ridge as one of the few remaining areas with completely unknown species of lichen and alpine plants...."

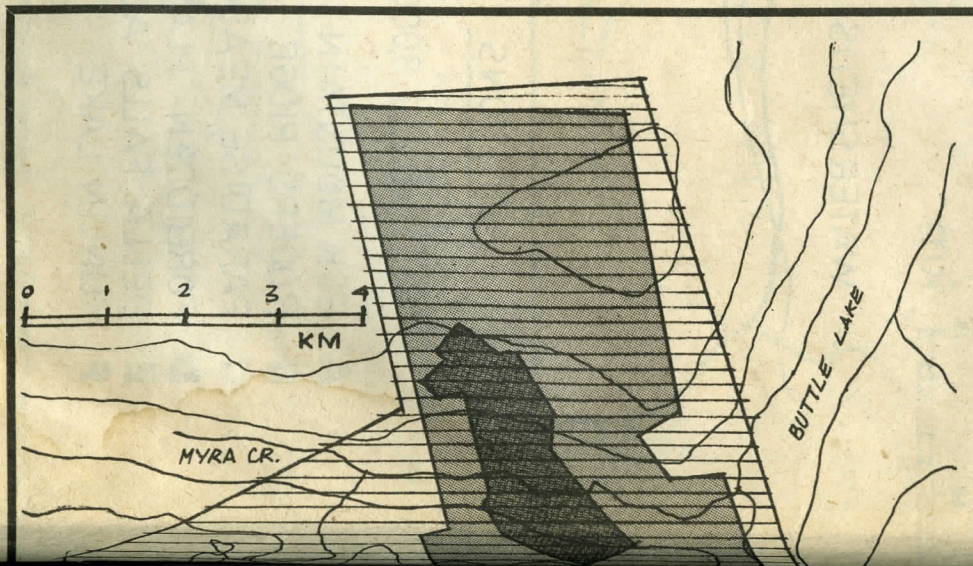
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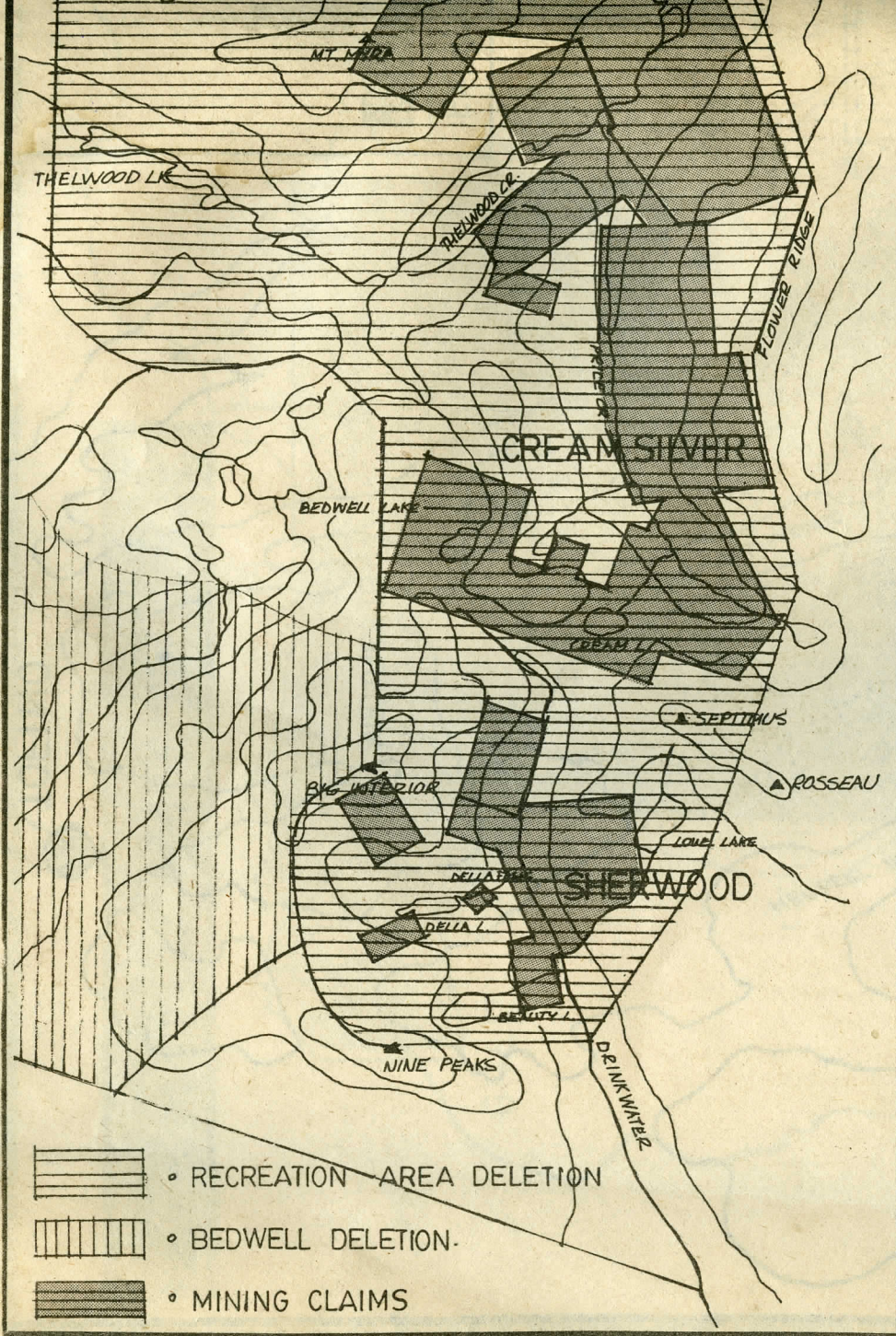
"The New Democratic Party is committed to the preservation of these areas so that we can pass them intact, to future generations..."

Saanich and the Island NDP

"I recently visited this magnificent park area and believe it would be absolutely outrageous to allow it to be desecrated by mining or logging...."

MP Stuart E. ... NDP ...





was awed by the beauty of the park. I could not believe that the government is willing to allow additional mining (Westmin is too much already) in one of the most beautiful wildernesses I have ever seen!..."

Joshua Gordon, USA

"I have been here for 20 years, so have seen Strathcona hacked at and traded away..."

D. Brown, Campbell River

"This B.C. Day weekend I experienced perhaps my most rewarding expedition

not be opened for industrial use but be given Class A status.... Westmin mine exhaust fans disturb the quiet for 10 to 20 miles!..."

I. Brown, Alpine Club of Canada

"You can't sell the world second class wilderness!!"

Jim Boulding

"We should preserve all crown jewels of wilderness that we have left, and there aren't too many of them. They are absolutely irreplaceable!..."

R. Barnett, Campbell River

OBJECTIVES OF THE FRIENDS OF STRATHCONA

- 1) Friends of Strathcona Park demand a reversal of the recent B.C. government decision to change the boundaries and further open the park to resource extraction.
- 2) Complete environmental impact studies should be done of mining in the park at the Westmin site, around Strathcona Park Lodge, the Drinkwater and Bedwell areas and all other possible future mining sites. The studies should focus particularly on fish habitat, road construction, visibility, damming of lakes, damage to alpine areas, and on damage to tourism in wilderness areas.
- 3) An inquiry needs to be held into how mines got into the park in the first place with the aim of exposing possible conflicts of interest in present and past governments.
- 4) A coalition of all environmental groups on Vancouver Island must be formed so that this issue can be dealt with in a more powerful way. Representatives of groups should contact the Arrow-smith Ecological Association at Box 179, Errington, B.C., VOR 1V0. A meeting is planned for June 6 and 7.
- 5) May 16, 17 and 18, Friends of Strathcona Park has organized a familiarization weekend to be held at the Strathcona Park Lodge. More details can be had by phoning Carol Meyer at 286-6053.
- 6) Friends of Strathcona Park will be building a new trail to Cream Lake this summer. Volunteer help and donations are needed.
- 7) Sept. 5, 6 and 7, Friends of Strathcona Park will hold a wilderness gathering at Cream Lake. Help is needed to organize this. Volunteers or anyone wishing to attend can contact the organization.
- 8) Demonstrations are being considered. Organizers and volunteers are welcome.

Logging in the park — a tale of giveaways

When Strathcona became a park in 1911, there were already a few timber claims within its boundaries. In the first decade of the 20th century, the B.C. government sold trees in square mile patches, and gave tree purchasers an indefinite amount of time to remove the trees.

One might think it logical that, when

establishing a park, the government would move to purchase the outstanding cutting rights. But it was never done. Until the 1950s, remoteness deterred logging in the park. In the mid-fifties however, logging there began in earnest. The bottom of the Elk Valley and the Upper Campbell Lake area were cleared to make room for the reservoir created by

Strathcona Dam. Today at low water the giant stumps along the shoreline tell the story of a valley where monumental trees once stood and Vancouver Island's largest elk herd once roamed.

By the late '60s and into the '70s when logging companies reached the strait edged boundaries of the geometrically shaped Strathcona Park, some people

thought it was logical to trade off pieces of good timber within the park that were already accessed for pieces of timber elsewhere on Vancouver Island. The trade-offs were used to establish new parks like Cape Scott and Rathtrevor Beach. Strathcona became a reservoir of the last uncommitted timber on Vancouver Island, to be dipped into whenever public demand called for a new park somewhere else.

Analysis shows that the trades were always unbalanced: a lot of excellent timber in Strathcona Park seemed inevitably to be traded for a lot less timber of lower quality somewhere else. It is now presumed that the recent deletion of the whole upper Bedwell watershed from the park was yet another trade, perhaps for the timber along the West Coast Trail and Nitinat Triangle, which were officially included in Pacific Rim National Park a few weeks after the announced Strathcona deletions.

History will judge the wisdom of these park deals in light of the fact that B.C. has only two percent of its forest protected from logging. When it comes to high quality low elevation rainforest, such as the timber traded away in Strathcona, the percentage of preserved forest ecosystem is much lower. Instead of a net loss of protected old growth forest of this type we need increased virgin forest lands especially in the valley bottoms to have a balanced park system.

In order just to maintain the quality of our large wilderness park system, if certain areas are excluded from Strathcona Park such as the Bedwell, other areas such as the Megin should be added. It is not good enough just to add cut over land to the park such as the majority of the recent additions to Strathcona. (see map Page 5 and 6).



Modern logging practice in B.C. results in situations such as this. Many areas inside Strathcona Park have suffered the same destruction and Elk Mountain, due to be added to the park, will be completely logged off first.

Mining in the park — a tale of destruction

Visitors to Strathcona Provincial Park come for a wilderness experience and instead find Westmin's enormous mining complex smack in the middle of the park. Heavy mine trucks roar along Buttle Lake Road disturbing the once tranquil retreat of Strathcona Park Lodge. The Westmin mill and its open pit and underground mines block off the Myra Valley. Confused visitors often ask, "Where is Strathcona Park?"

In the *Strathcona Park Act* of 1911 it was clearly stated that no mineral exploitation could take place. Six months later, despite the legislation, the first mining claims in the park were registered. More claims were staked and registered in 1913.

In 1918 an amendment to the *Strathcona Park Act* "officially" opened the park to mineral claims calling into question the legality of the earlier claims.

Today, mining claims are scattered throughout the park wherever the area's typical volcanic sulphite deposits of com-

bined heavy metals, gold and silver occur. Most of the claims are concentrated in the south central area.

One of the earliest mine operations in the park was run by Sherwood Mines which was granted claims below Love Lake in 1939. Ore was extracted in the forties with access by railway from the head of Great Central lake. The mine was soon abandoned as unprofitable. The rail bed is used today as an access trail part of the way to Della Falls. Old shacks, tools and equipment still litter the area.

A recent attempt to reopen the Sherwood mine in the summer and fall of 1986 was done in defiance of a cease and desist order from park administration. With the January reclassification of lands within Strathcona Park by the provincial government, Sherwood can now apply to legally explore and mine its ore. Sherwood's claims are located directly across from the spectacular 1,500 foot Della Falls.

Many people feel that the biggest current threat to an unspoiled wilderness area in Strathcona is Cream Silver Mines which staked its claims between 1964 and 1966 around Cream Lake. In 1973 Cream Silver offered to sell its mineral claims to the crown for just under \$300,000. Unfortunately the NDP government of the day didn't pursue the matter as it had placed a moratorium on mining in the area and didn't foresee a change in government and a change in park development philosophy.

Even the little bit of protection recommended by the B.C. government-appointed Wilderness Advisory Committee in 1986 has been ignored by the current government. According to the Committee,

claims held by Falconbridge Mines around Gem and Faith lakes should have been bought out. Ignoring this advice, former Environment and Parks Minister Stephen Rogers announced in January that the area around Gem and Faith lakes would be reclassified to allow mining.

Environmental disasters due to acid generation are a distinct possibility in all these park mine developments because of the high sulphite content of the ore. More mines cannot be allowed to go ahead when current technology has no safe pollution controls available.

When the environmental costs are weighed, the wisdom of continued wilderness designation becomes more apparent.

A tribute to Jim Boulding

In 1986, Jim Boulding, founder of Strathcona Park Lodge, was posthumously awarded the prestigious Heaslip Award for his 25 year struggle to preserve the park. The National Survival Institute in Ottawa and the United Nations make four such joint awards each year to Canadians.

The award was announced just three days after Jim's untimely death on May 7, 1986. He was one of the most outstanding environmentalists of our time. Jim fought many battles for park preservation, for a clean Buttle Lake and for protection of Elk Mountain as a gateway to Strathcona Provincial Park.

Jim's vision of Rogers Ridge as a unique ski hill with an alpine village at its foot was idealistic and far ahead of its time.

Jim and Myrna Boulding devoted their lives to teaching survival and outdoor skills to youngsters and adults alike. The couple's holistic teaching honored all aspects of human existence.

Jim was often misunderstood because he was so far ahead of his time. His strong opposition to environmental destruction was not liked by some and he was sometimes feared. He helped to clean up Buttle Lake and another pet project, inclusion of Elk Mountain in the park, is coming true.

Jim Boulding's spirit will live on and the seeds of his teachings have been planted in the many people who visited the lodge, ensuring the planting and germination of more seeds.

Newsletter credits and thanks

Jim Boulding was the inspiration for this, the first Friends of Strathcona newspaper.

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Friends of Strathcona Park has groups in the following towns and cities:
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Tourism — an option with a future

Unparalleled beauty awaits the visitor to Strathcona Provincial Park. Dramatic mountain peaks, lush forested valleys and colourful alpine meadows with incomparable views are

all to be found in this half million acre park.

The value of this experiential resource is not realized by most people. Tourism in Strathcona Park has the potential to

produce much more income over the long term than mining and logging which are currently doing great damage to the wilderness environment.

The highway between the towns of Gold River and Campbell River cuts across the park and provides easy access to numerous roadside campsites and several developed trails. Among these hikes, the Elk River and Flower Ridge trails are the best known. They lead hikers to some of the finest alpine scenery in British Columbia.

These trails are usable for all age groups. By striking out on numerous semi-developed and game trails, the more experienced wilderness explorer can reach the heart of Strathcona with its saw-toothed mountains, heather-clad meadows and pristine alpine lakes.

From the peaks of the island's highest mountains; Golden Hinde, Elkhorn, Colonel Foster and Albert Edward, one can stretch the eyes across the breadth of the island, from the Pacific to Georgia Strait. It is scenery unparalleled anywhere else in the world.

Della Falls, Canada's highest, attract numerous visitors annually as does Forbidden Plateau which is well used in both summer and winter. Another popular hike takes people from Courtenay to Comox Glacier.

An economic analysis by B.C. Central Credit Union in 1983 showed that over the past 20 years 80 percent of all new jobs in B.C. were created in the tourism and service industries. The greatest job opportunities lie not in the forestry or mining sectors which have actually shrunk.

Few people realize that the mining sector directly employs fewer than 20,000 people in B.C., only 1 percent of the work

especially in places where it is most needed. Research shows that the majority of tourists are attracted to B.C.'s rugged wilderness, particularly visitors from the USA, Japan and Europe.

Tourism visits generated more than \$2 billion income for the B.C. economy in 1982. Unfortunately the opportunities for an unspoiled wilderness experience in this province are rapidly being undermined by unsightly logging and mining practices. Now is the time for B.C. to commit itself to a solid economic future by protecting the spectacular wilderness we too often take for granted.

Cream Lake and Della Falls must be totally protected. Both these areas are the highest quality recreation assets and the B.C. government must reverse its ill-advised decision to open these areas up to mining development.

The upper Bedwell River basin, deleted from the park in January because of its "remoteness and being a rain forest" according to the government appointed Wilderness Advisory Committee, must be reinstated into the park. If the Bedwell Valley were to be kept in the park rather than be deleted, Tofino would have the unique opportunity to develop a Bedwell heritage trail into Strathcona with access to Big Interior Mountain, Nine Peaks, Della Falls, Cream Lake and by way of Bedwell Lake and Thelwood Valley, to Buttle Lake. Well planned and developed, this trail could complement the West Coast Trail. It would also bring more dollars into Tofino than continued logging in the Bedwell watershed.

In compensation for areas already compromised in the park, the Megin watershed must be added to Strathcona. There is little high quality timber in this



is on the rise. Mike Horsey, deputy minister of tourism, recently said that wilderness tourism is growing rapidly, es-

need protection and the beauty of Megin Lake combine to make this area ideal for park inclusion.

Recommendations from Friends of Strathcona on park use

From past history it is obvious that we need better protection for the land that is supposed to be protected by law. The parks branch is tied down by restricted budgets and being directed by the ministry that obviously sees parks as land banks. The change to a Class A park

does not carry any value as long as the park is not protected by anything stronger than an order in council. The signature of one minister can change the status or delete parts at will!

Designating park status by statute would at least give full cabinet input.

More representation is definitely needed.

An inventory should be taken of existing park areas and of adjacent land for consideration of inclusion within the boundaries.

A quote from the government produced

Strathcona Park brochure states: "Help us to protect your parkland. Please leave it as you have found it so that future visitors may enjoy the park as you have."

Ironic isn't it?

Support the work — make a donation

Your donations are needed now to help save Strathcona Provincial Park. Please support our work. Tax deductible donations can be sent to:

Western Canada Wilderness Committee

1200 Hornby Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2E2

the government's Wilderness Advisory Committee and the order in council rescinded.

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Some of the other organizations which support the preservation of Strathcona Park: Alpine Club of Canada; Arrowsmith Ecological Association; Arrowsmith Naturalists; Campbell River Environmental Council; Campbell River Hiking Club; Comox District Mountain Club; Federation of Mountain Clubs; Friends of Clayoquot Sound; Hair-Brown Kingfisher Creek Society; Island Mountain Ramblers; Mittlenatch Naturalists; Sierra Club of Western Canada; Society Promoting Environmental Conservation; Skywalk Youth Program; Saanich and the Island New Democrats.

I would like to make the enclosed tax deductible donation to save Strathcona Park and enclose:

___ \$500 ___ \$100 ___ \$50
___ \$20 ___ Other

I want to join Friends of Strathcona Park and enclose \$10 annual membership fee. (non tax deductible)

I want to join Western Canada Wilderness Committee and enclose \$15 annual membership fee. (non tax deductible)

I would like to see public hearings held on park boundary and land use status changes as recommended by



Elkhorn Mountain