

Time to sustain rather than destroy



Aerial photo of Sulphur Passage taken at the beginning of August, 1988 - Adrian Dorst



Confrontation over Sulphur Passage road construction
not just another wilderness preservation battle (see story Page 2)

Sustainable development for stable and healthy communities

• Tofino • Opitsaht • Ahousaht • Hot Springs Cove • Hesquiat •



"My involvement in this issue is native land claims. I have other reasons dealing with the area of Sulphur Passage. I lived there as a growing boy.

I came back from serving with the federal government for 26 years, to see at my back door ...bald mountains just like the face of the moon.

It wouldn't be too bad if they were telling the truth when they go and plant those trees in that rocky side hills. They'll never turn that (mountain side) into a greenery again. Never!

I feel together with the environmentalists: they (the logging companies) are ruining the face of the earth."

- Ahousat Chief Earl George

Carl Martin on left and Ahousat Hereditary Chief Earl George on right being served injunction notices on Sulphur Passage road.

STORY BEHIND RESISTANCE TO CLEAR CUT

Last year a United Nations committee of world renowned business and political leaders, the Brundtland Commission, published a report which proposed a new approach to solving the growing social and environmental crises. It warned that our common future on this planet is bleak if humankind does not immediately adopt a different strategy of development; one that does not damage the environment, thus building sustainable economies for the long rather than the short term.

Canada was one of the first countries to endorse the Brundtland report. Both the Canadian and British Columbian Environment Ministries set up task forces to put into practice the Brundtland preachings. This is not easy to do, for what is required is a profound change in social attitudes and industrial activities.

Nowhere is the need for the change to a sustainable method of development more evident than in the Clayoquot Sound area on the west coast of Vancouver Island. There, the forest is clearly not being managed on an ecologically sound basis.

Massive logging scars tell the story

Massive clearcuts, excessive piles of wood waste and landslide scars tell the story. Clearcut logging in the Clayoquot area is proceeding at a liquidation rate. Even the forest companies themselves predict that in a few decades, after the old growth virgin rainforest is gone, the west coast region will suffer a substantial decline in timber harvest.

The rapid deforestation of the west coast is causing an irreparable loss of topsoil and is damaging fisheries through degradation of salmon spawning streams. It is also foreclosing the opportunity to expand the local tourism industry which, banking on the area's naturally stunning scenic beauty, continues to grow, providing more local jobs and revenues every year.

Forestry operations in Clayoquot Sound are controlled by the two largest logging companies in British Columbia, MacMillan Bloedel Limited, based in Ontario, and Fletcher Challenge Canada Limited (formerly BCFP and Crown Forest), based in New Zealand. Their Tree Farm Licence tenures encompass more than 90 percent of the land area in Clayoquot Sound. Together, in 1987, these two industrial giants extracted over half-a-billion dollars in profits from their B.C. forestry operations.

In the midst of the massive industrial logging operations in Clayoquot Sound resides a large native population of the Nuu-chah-nulth tribe, living on tiny "Indian Reservations". Denied economic access to most of their area's resources, they suffer an unemployment rate of over 85 percent.

Logging is not the only economic activity

Although logging now dominates the scene, it is not the only economic activity in Clayoquot Sound. With the establishment of Pacific Rim National Park in the early 1970 s, the hospitality industry has rapidly grown to service the almost-a-million visitors a year, including sight-seers, kayakers and hikers.

Fishing has always been important in the Clayoquot Sound area, traditionally employing more of the permanent residents than logging and, as well, providing a self-sufficient food supply. The recent development of the mariculture industry (rearing shellfish and salmon) is providing a growing number of stable jobs.

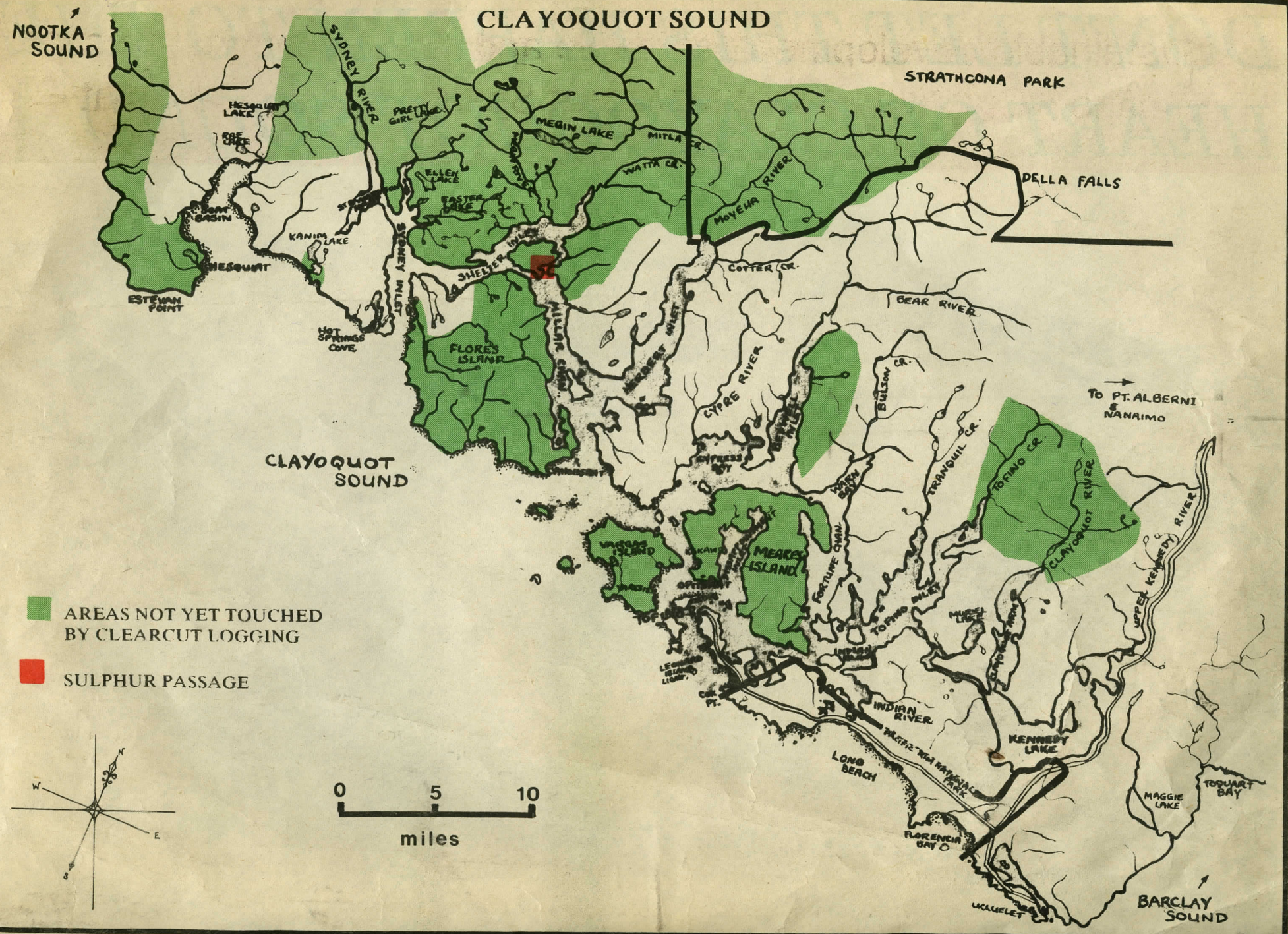
It is possible for all of these industries, including logging, to

develop in harmony with each other and the environment in Clayoquot Sound. But it is not possible under current forestry practices.

Many residents of the area, including members of the local environment group, the Friends of Clayoquot Sound, have long expressed their concern over the bad local logging practices and the need to preserve a greater percentage of the area as wilderness. They are not opposed to all logging operations as has been portrayed by the logging industry. Their concerns and attempts to cooperate with industry in searching for solutions--particularly on the Meares Island Planning Team--have been ignored by both the government and the logging companies. Residents have finally drawn the line at Sulphur Passage.

When, early this year, the Friends of Clayoquot Sound found out about the pending road construction into Sulphur Passage, the largest block of undisturbed wilderness left in Clayoquot Sound they were extremely concerned. The area includes Shelter Inlet and the Megin River. This region of unsurpassed beauty was recently identified by the B.C. Ministry of Tourism as a high priority area for wilderness tourism development.

CLAYOQUOT SOUND



TING IN CLAYOQUOT

A reasonable request - a sustainable plan

The Friends put forward what they thought was a reasonable request. They asked for a six month moratorium on road construction and logging in the area so that a sustainable development plan for that region could be drawn up. Their request was endorsed by the main local business group, the Tofino/Long Beach Chamber of Commerce.

The general concern is that the road through Sulphur Pass is only the tip of the iceberg. In less than two years time, MacMillan Bloedel plans to move their logging operations from the Carmanah Valley area back into Clayoquot Sound and use the road to initiate an unprecedented rate of clear cut.

Clearcut logging unsustainable

It is impossible to maintain sustainable logging using clearcut logging methods in the high rainfall and steep slope conditions of Clayoquot Sound. Cutting large areas at a time causes general soil erosion as well as a large number of

landslides. Slash burning of the waste wood left behind not only burns the organic material in the soil, further undermining the future growing capacity, but also exposes the residue of nutrients to erosion. The eroded soil and wood residues enter river systems, harming fish spawning habitat as well as damaging marine deltas where rivers empty into the ocean. Clearcutting also encourages unwanted brush and pioneer tree species to grow and herbicide application which poisons the environment is the commonly attempted solution.

Conservationists and enlightened Foresters promote environmentally benign selective logging, where small patches or even individual trees are cut. This kind of logging, while admittedly is not as profitable as massive clearcutting in the short run, maintains soil quality and, if properly done, does not require the expense of reforestation and herbicide application. Such careful logging also produces more stable, long term jobs in the forestry harvesting sector.

Although the forest industry claims the goals of conservationists, wilderness preservationists and native peoples threaten logging jobs, a much greater threat comes from automation, which has reduced

employment in the industry by over 30 percent during the last twenty years. The biggest threat, however is the forest industry's own logging practices. These include overcutting (logging too quickly to allow the forest to regenerate for sustainable harvesting), excessive wood waste during logging, soil degradation and lack of adequate replanting. Industry's mismanagement of the forest resource up to now has created today's pressure on the last remaining areas of old growth.

The requests by the environmentalists and Chamber of Commerce for a moratorium on further road construction until completion of a sustainable development plan for Clayoquot Sound were rejected by BCFP and the B.C. Ministry of Forests. In June, 1988, a group of local residents initiated a blockade to try to halt road work. They have received the active help of a wide range of people, but have only managed to slow, not stop, road construction.

BCFP has obtained a court injunction to stop the blockade and now police have been called in to remove the protectors, which include Earl George, hereditary chief of the Ahousats, and some local business people. Because some of the blockaders have disregarded the

court order, people are beginning to be arrested.

Discussion and compromise the way to settle disputes

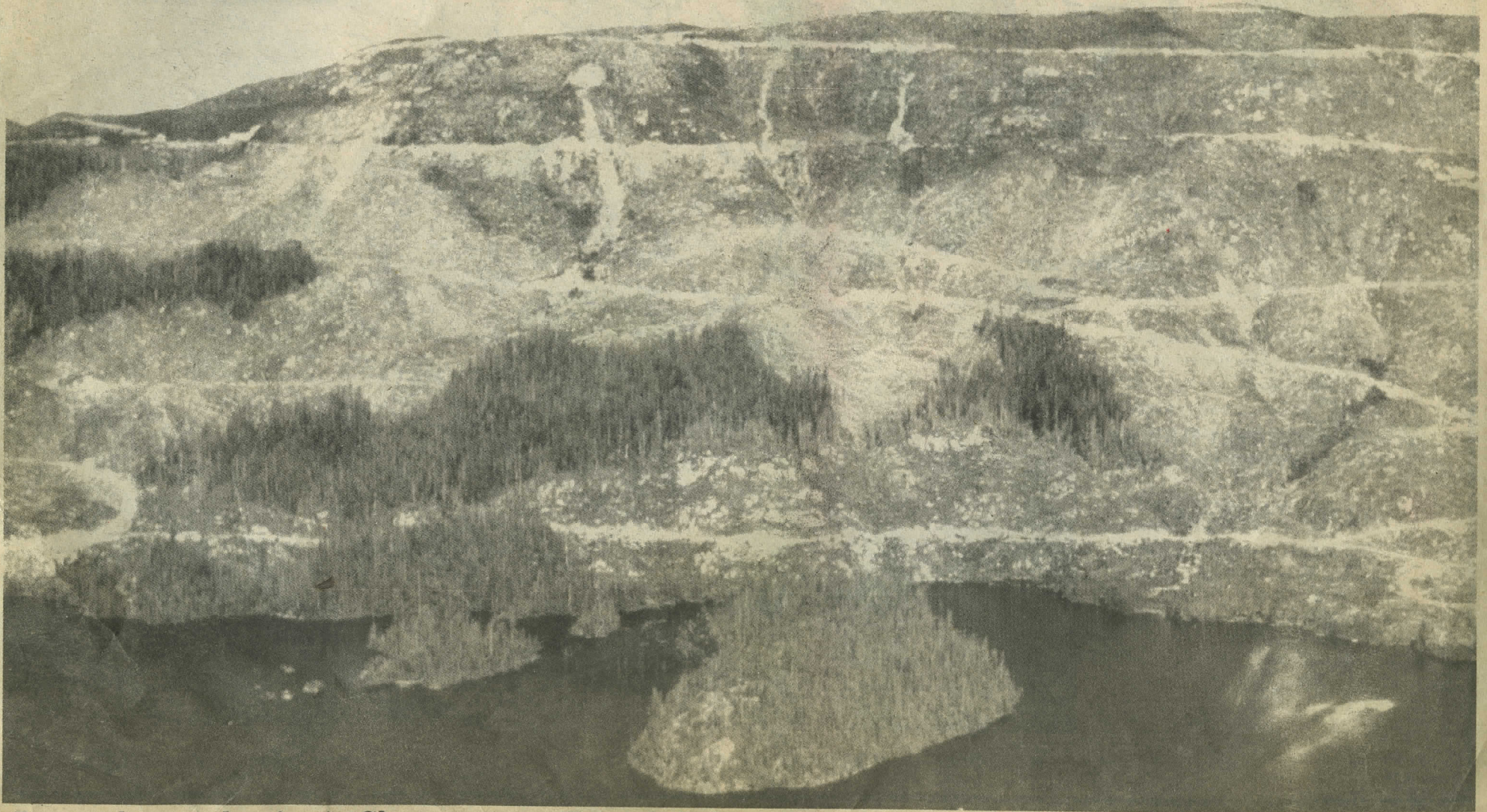
Rational discussion and compromise are the best and the traditionally Canadian ways to resolve conflict. But with that route closed by industry and government, many believe that the only recourse is confrontation.

Although some people undoubtedly feel that the civil disobedience tactics now being used to try to stop the clearcut logging are unacceptable, the call for a sustainable development plan is difficult to fault. If everyone supported the call for this plan by pen and phone there would be no need for the current action -- there would be a moratorium on further road construction until a sustainable land use plan was developed and adopted.

Brighten our common future

Perhaps everyone in their own community should be calling for similar plans to brighten our common future.

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO THE HEART OF CLAYOQUOT SOUND



Recent clear cut logging in Clayoquot near Kennedy Lake.

CREDITS, THANKS AND POLICY STATEMENT

Western Canada Wilderness Committee, a non-profit charitable organization, does not advocate nor participate in acts of civil disobedience. We believe strongly that only through massive educational efforts, will the battle for an ecologically sane and sustainable world be won.

This paper was published with the hope that it will promote a better understanding of the underlying causes of the conflict over construction of a logging road through Sulphur Pass. All too often in civil disobedient protests, in the public's eye, the protest becomes the issue. The media reports the actions of confrontation, the public becomes polarized on the issue of law and order, and the political change the protesters sought to achieve, despite its merit, becomes lost in the push and shove of the situation. We cannot let this happen here.

Editors - Paul George and Adriane Carr Map - Susan Hare
Design - Paul George and Arne Hansen Writing - Friends of Clayoquot Sound
Lay-out - Arne Hansen Press Run - 100,000
Photography - Adrian Dorst Produced and Printed in Canada
Published by Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WCWC), 103-1520 West 6th Ave, Vancouver, BC V6J 1R2 604-731-6716 - Copyrighted 1988 - All rights reserved -
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Name _____

Address _____

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Thank you for sending your tax deductible donation to: Western Canada Wilderness Committee, 103-1520 West 6th Ave, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6J 1R2

WE will not have sustainable communities without a sustainable economy and we cannot have a sustainable economy without a sustainable environment"

United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development, Gro Brundtland (chairperson), Our Common Future, Oxford University Press, 1987.

COME AND CELEBRATE THE PRISTINE BEAUTY OF
SULPHUR PASSAGE IN THE HEART OF CLAYOQUOT SOUND

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE FIRST PROTECTORS'
PICNIC BEING HELD ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 28th, 1988

Boats will depart from the Tofino 1st Street Government
Dock at 10 am and return by 7 pm

As soon as possible, please let us know if you can come.

(clip and return)

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postal Code _____

A donation of \$10 or more to help cover picnic costs would be greatly appreciated. Even if you are not able to attend or get this notice after the picnic is over we will be needing and relying on your continuing financial, spiritual and political support to help us attain a sustainable future in Clayoquot Sound. NO MORE CLEAR CUTS!

Thank you!

Please mail to: Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Box 489, Tofino,
British Columbia, V0R 2Z0