

Southern Chilcotin Mountains

Save British Columbia's
"secret, gentle wilderness"



Western Canada Wilderness Committee Educational Report - Vol. 15, No. 9 - Spring 1996



Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake Wilderness... a wildlife haven and a recreationalist's heaven



Conservationists who dream big, envision protecting B.C.'s *Big Chilcotin Wilderness*—a two million hectare roadless area spanning the entire Chilcotin Plateau. It's a secret, gentle wilderness of rolling grasslands, oldgrowth forests and alpine meadows, bounded by rugged mountains and the Fraser River. It's big country that needs big conservation.

If protected, it would guarantee a wilderness corridor from Tweedsmuir Park on the north to the Kitlope on the west to the 260,000 hectare Stoltmann Wilderness on the south.

Sections of the Big Chilcotin Wilderness are already protected in parks—Chilko Lake (Ts'yl-os Park) as well as parts of Churn Creek and Big Creek. But most of it still needs protection, including its heartland, the 100,000 hectare Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness surrounding Spruce Lake.

The B.C. government's current goal of protecting only 12 percent of B.C.'s land base from industrial development bars the way to ecologically wise land use. Twelve percent

protection will not preserve wildlife and wild ecosystems over time. It squashes the dream of a big park from the Fraser River to the Pacific Ocean centred on a Big Chilcotin Wilderness.

The government's 1994 Chilcotin land use plan left unprotected, as part of the 88 percent of the land base allocated to industry, the heart of the Big Chilcotin Wilderness: the Spruce Lake-Southern Chilcotin Mountains region. This is astonishing given the fact that the Southern Chilcotin is B.C.'s longest-running wilderness issue. Protection was first proposed for the Southern Chilcotin Mountains in 1937!

Located in the lee of the coast mountains, the Southern Chilcotin's gentle terrain is a mecca for wildlife, supporting grizzly and black bears, black tailed deer, lynx, wolverine, bobcats, beaver, wolves, mountain goats and California bighorn sheep. Resident bird species include peregrine falcons, osprey, eagles, hawks, loon and ptarmigan.

Extensive old growth spruce and pine forests
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The Southern Chilcotin Wilderness around Spruce Lake is an outdoor recreationalist's heaven. This gentle, pristine wild area offers world-class hiking and backpacking, horsepacking, mountaineering, fishing, cross-country skiing, mountain-biking and hiking.

Seven watersheds comprise the Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake Wilderness: Relay, Tyaughton, Gun, Taylor, Leckie, Slim and Upper Nichols Creeks. They are studded with cerulean lakes, austere peaks and contain a wealth of wildlife and diverse geology. Four lakes, Spruce, Warner, Hummingbird and Trigger, are known for their trout, and make excellent destinations for hikes into the backcountry.

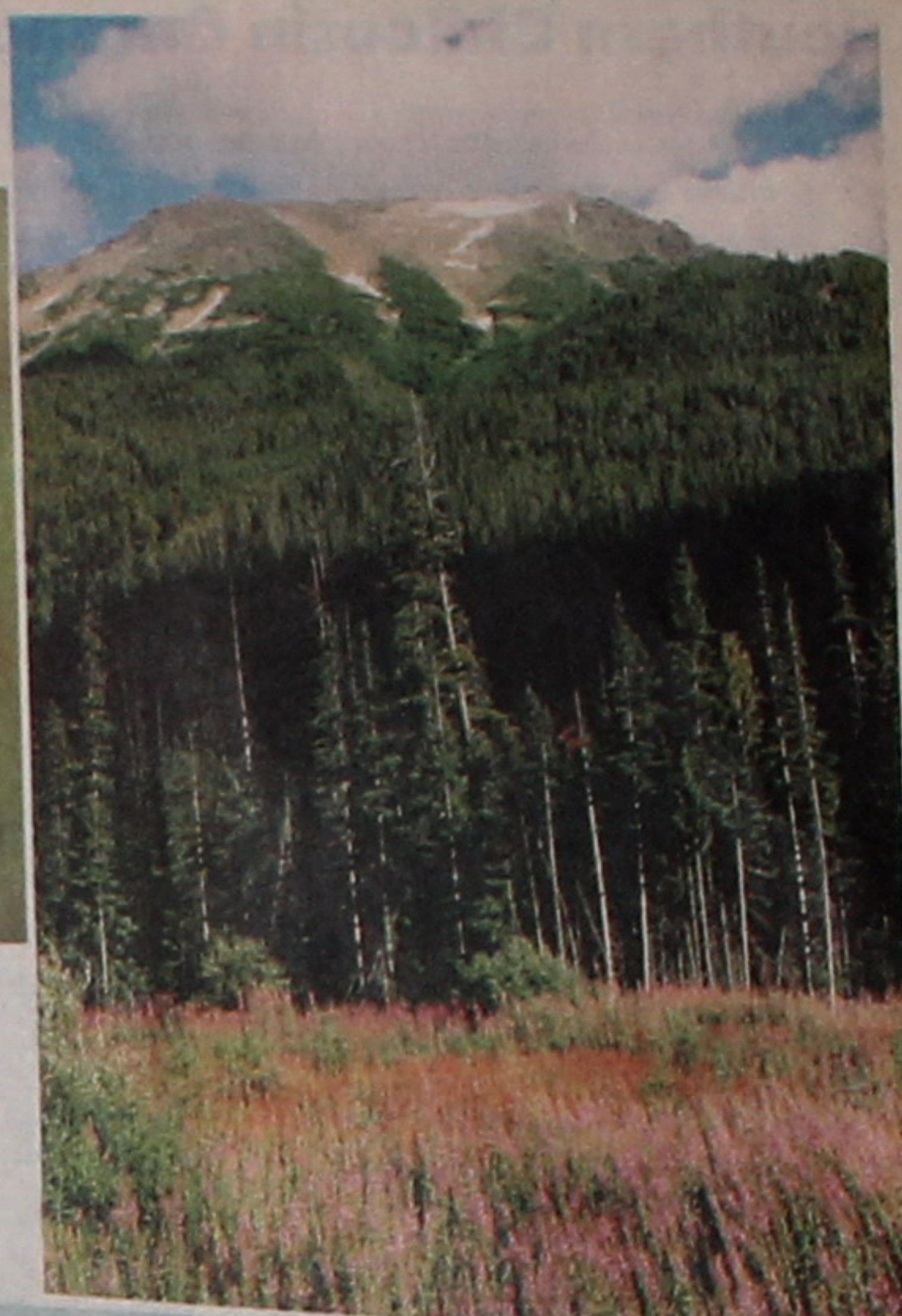
The Southern Chilcotin's seven watersheds are connected by a system of world-class trails that, in summer, traverse gentle mountain passes and meander through lush alpine grasslands infused with flowers. In July purple lupines dominate the meadows. The fragrance at the height of the bloom can be detected from several kilometres away. Retired University of British Columbia professor and famed botanist Dr. Burt Brink, who first explored the Southern Chilcotin 60 years ago, says, "In my view, it is the most exceptional wild flower show going."

The main trailheads leading into the Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake Wilderness are only a four-hour drive (200 km.) from Vancouver, a 2.5 hour drive from Whistler via the summer-only Hurley Forest Service Road or a two-hour drive (80 km.) from the town of Lillooet on the Fraser River. Historical trails bear the marks of travel by early prospectors and aboriginal peoples.

The Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake Wilderness is a place in the heart of nature, wild and untamed, awe-inspiring in its beauty. Let it take a place in your heart. Help protect this gentle wilderness and don't let industry take its soul.



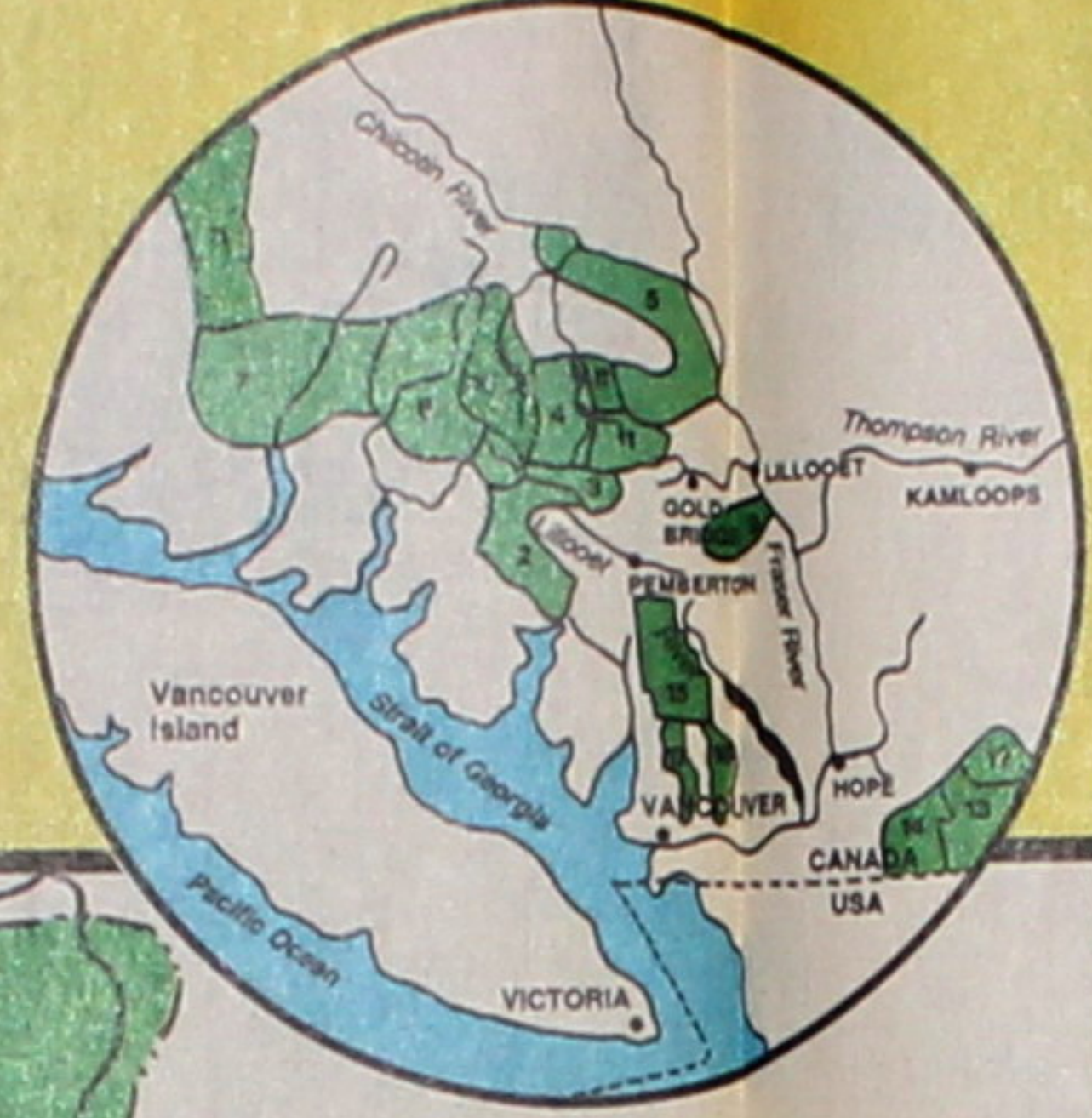
Save the entire SOUTHERN CHILCOTIN MOUNTAINS - heart of a BIG CHILCOTIN WILDERNESS



Big Chilcotin Wilderness and Connecting Corridors

- Proposed Protected Areas**
1. Southern Chilcotin/Spruce Lake
 2. Stoltmann Wilderness
 3. Upper Bridge River
 4. Taseko Lakes
 5. Chilcotin Grasslands National Park
 6. Tatlayoko Lake
 7. Klinaklini River

- Protected Areas**
8. Southern Chilcotin/Big Creek Prov. Park
 9. Stein Valley Heritage Prov. Park
 10. Chilko Lake Prov. Park (Tayl-o)
 11. Tweedsmuir Prov. Park
 12. Cascade Recreation Area
 13. Manning Prov. Park
 14. Skagit Prov. Park
 15. Garibaldi Prov. Park
 16. Golden Ears Prov. Park
 17. Pinecone/Burke Prov. Park



"The Southern Chilcotin area is still largely undiscovered. It hasn't yet been burned into the public consciousness like other higher profile wild places. We want to see the area protected as a park otherwise we will lose its wilderness values."

Michael Pitt - President of The Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society.



Can you tell which of these photos taken in the Southern Chilcotin/Spruce Lake wilderness feature lands recently cut-off from the proposed park and opened up to resource extraction? (Hint: more than half.)



Southern Chilcotin Chronology

1937 - Vancouver Natural History Society advocates designation of a Provincial Park in the Southern Chilcotin Mountains (called the "Charlie Cunningham Wilderness").

1975 - Government initiated a Chilcotin Park study.

1976 - Result of government study is a recommendation to "...establish a Class A Park or Wilderness area for the headwaters of Tyaughton, Relay and Big Creek" encompassing Spruce Lake and Eldorado Basin to the east."

1979 - Logging activities and mineral exploration increase. Fourteen outdoor groups form a coalition, The Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society.

1980 - Coalition requests that government preserves the core of the Charlie Cunningham Area.

1980 - Ministry of Forests forms Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Planning Committee to develop criteria for compatible extractive resource use and recreation in the area.

1982 - Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) completed. Designates 3 zones of resource extraction based on potential conflicts with wilderness values. In reality the plan condones the eventual elimination of wilderness in the area, as all merchantable timber continues to be included in the annual allowable cut. Coalition did not endorse plan.

1982-90 - Logging starts in Relay, Paradise, Slim, lower Tyaughton and lower Gun and lower Taylor creek valleys.

1990 - Spruce Lake IRMP disbands. Government imposes moratorium on logging, pending park status decision.

1992 - Southern Chilcotins made a Protected Area Strategy (PAS) study area by government. Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE) studies the Caribou Forest Region, including northern portions of the proposed Southern Chilcotin Park. Bridge River Valley Round Table formed by local Goldbridge residents calling for the area's preservation.

1994 - CORE recommends area for protection around Lorna Lake and Big Creek in the northwestern sector.

1995 - Big Creek South Chilcotin Provincial Park created (about one-third of the original Charlie Cunningham Wilderness proposal). Later in year, when announcing the creation of a nearby park (the Stein Valley), government lifts



moratorium over development in key areas of the proposed Southern Chilcotin Park including Bonanza, Taylor and Cinnabar Basins, and Slim, Lower Gun and Nichols Creeks. WCWC and other environment groups protest. Minister of Environment and Parks, Moe Sihota, after viewing *The Southern Chilcotin Mountains: a gift to man from nature - to be respected* video by Terry Jacks about a trip into this wilderness with artist Robert Bateman and photographers Pat and Rosemarie Keough promised that the entire Spruce Lake Wilderness Area will be made a park before the next provincial election.

April 30, 1996 - Election called without park protection declared for the Southern Chilcotin Mountains.



From volcanic cones to fossil beds

The geology of the Southern Chilcotins-Spruce Lake Wilderness is complex. Colourful mineral-stained peaks contrast with verdant meadows presenting a Yukonesque landscape. Past volcanic eruptions have left their mark. Frozen lava flows and glacially-eroded cones, like the spectacular Castle Peak featured on the cover of WCWC's 1995 *Endangered Wilderness Calendar*, are among the area's outstanding features.

While there has been lots of prospecting and staking in the Southern Chilcotins, luckily no minable mineral deposits have been discovered. Limestone outcrops at lower elevations are rich in fossils, particularly in ammonites and bichias, while alpine volcanics possess fossiliferous sandstones and shales.

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remain in parts of the Southern Chilcotin: Bonanza Basin and Leckie, Tyaughton and Gun Creek valleys. Mid-elevation grasslands are common, littered with groves of aspen and meadows that contain over 125 varieties of wildflowers.

Some of the Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake area apparently escaped glaciation during the last advance 10,000 years ago and provided refuge to plant species. This is evident in disjunct plant species, some of which grow here and not again for 400 km. These botanical anomalies suggests that, prior to the last glacial surge, bioclimatic plant distribution was substantially different.

Conservation biologists recognize that large, unroaded wilderness areas are vital to wildlife conservation, especially to large mammals like grizzly bears. Most countries in the world have lost their opportunities to protect big wilderness. The new B.C. government should show vision and protect the entire Southern Chilcotin Mountains—the heart of the Big Chilcotin Wilderness...while it has the chance!

Logging the Southern Chilcotin Wilderness is ecologically stupid and economically unsound



In 1990 a B.C. Parks study cited the Southern Chilcotin Mountains as "the single most outstanding area of wilderness not presently protected in the southern interior of B.C.". Why, then, did a government that created almost 3 million hectares of new parkland in B.C. not protect the 100,000 hectare heartland of the Southern Chilcotin Mountains—the Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake Wilderness?

Some say that the Southern Chilcotin Wilderness is the victim of a rivalry between the Ministry of Forests and the Ministry of Environment. The Ministry of Environment wants a Class A Park. The B.C. Forest Service advocates wilderness protection under the Forest Act—a designation that does not prohibit mining roads or mineral exploration.

Others believe that the Southern Chilcotin failed to gain park status because environmentalists mistakenly assumed that it would eventually be protected by virtue of its outstanding qualities, without a big public fight and a lot of publicity.

That might explain why, when the NDP government announced protection of the high-profile Stein Valley in 1995, it simultaneously opened up about one-third of the 100,000 hectare Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake Wilderness study area (under moratorium since 1992) to logging and industrial development. But the government didn't have to trade off the Southern Chilcotin to save the Stein. Its land allocation juggling act is entirely self-imposed—squeezing wilderness and protected areas into 12 percent of the land base in order to appease industry with a guaranteed 88 percent of the land base!

The government's 12 percent ceiling on wilderness protection is ecologically and economically stupid. The 32,000 hectares it released from moratorium in the Southern Chilcotin include some of the area's finest scenery and most needed wildlife habitat. Bonanza Basin, containing the largest amount of timber within the whole Southern Chilcotin park proposal area, was one of the areas opened up to clearcut logging in the NDP's decision. If "harvesting" is allowed to proceed there, logging roads will end only 2.5 kilometres from Spruce Lake—the very centre of the Southern Chilcotin wilderness.

What are the economic trade-offs? According to the government's Lillooet Timber Supply Analysis the reduction of the proposed harvest, should the entire Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake Wilderness become a park, would equal 14,000 cubic metres of wood—about 400 truck loads—per year. The annual loss in logging employment would equal 18 person years.

This job loss in logging would be substantially exceeded by loss of direct employment in tourism and wilderness recreation if logging went ahead. More than 50 people in the area are now employed in a thriving tourism industry.

Every study and planning exercise has noted that the Southern Chilcotin Mountains-Spruce Lake Wilderness area has world class recreation and wildlife values. Any government truly committed to economic sustainability and ecological sanity will make the entire area a Class A provincial park now!

Write to British Columbia's newly elected Premier

(Legislative Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4)

Explain to him how strongly you feel about preserving the entire Southern Chilcotin/Spruce Lake wilderness in a Class A park.



YES! I want to help protect the Big Chilcotin Wilderness with all the Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake region made a park!

I am writing a letter to the Premier of B.C. (Legislative Buildings, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4) informing him where I stand on making the entire 100,000 hectare Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake wilderness, including Bonanza, Taylor & Cinnabar Basins and Slim, Lower Gun & Nichols Creeks, not just a small area around Spruce Lake, a provincial park.

I want to help protect a Big Chilcotin Wilderness with the entire Southern Chilcotin-Spruce Lake area made a provincial park knowing that it involves preserving much more than 12 percent of the region. Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of \$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 other to help you win this campaign.
Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WCWC) Federal Registered Charitable Tax Number 0587113-21-28.

I want a copy of the half-hour video *The Southern Chilcotin Mountains - A Gift to Man from Nature - to be Respected* produced by Terry Jacks. Enclosed is \$18 to cover all costs including shipping and taxes.

I want to renew my WCWC membership become a WCWC Member. Enclosed is my \$30 membership fee.

I would like to be a Sustaining-Family Member. Here is \$52 (\$1 per week for wilderness preservation).

Please upgrade my Regular \$30 Membership to a Sustaining-Family Membership. Enclosed is \$22.

Note: to save time and trees call our toll free 1-800-661-9453 number to donate and become a member!

Also note: WCWC members' dues are not eligible for official tax receipt. Members get WCWC's full-colour Endangered Wilderness calendar.

Name (please print) _____ Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____ Phone _____

Please return this pledge form to WCWC, 20 Water Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1A4.



Credits

Published by Western Canada Wilderness Committee (WCWC), 20 Water St., Vancouver, BC V6B 1A4. Ph. 604-683-8229. Fax 604-683-8229.

WCWC is a non-profit charitable society dedicated to promoting, through research and education, sustainable resource use and wild ecosystem preservation.

Research: Greg Mauser
Writing & Editing: Paul George & Adriane Carr
Design: Layton & Map: Sue Fox
Photos: Greg Mauser, Kevin Bracewell and Sylvia Waterer, Chilcotin Holidays: Pat and Rosemarie Keough and Ann Ziefel

Western Canada Wilderness Committee Educational Report Vol. 15 - No. 3 Spring 1996
Printed in Vancouver, Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement No. 0902547
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Thanks to The Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society for their dedicated work to save the heart of the Big Chilcotin Wilderness. Call or write WCWC to find out how to join The Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society.