



BRITISH COLUMBIA'S SPECIAL PLACES



Time to Double BC's Park System



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This year is the 100th anniversary of BC's wildly spectacular provincial park system. When Premier Richard McBride created BC's first provincial park, Strathcona, on Vancouver Island back in 1911, I wonder if he could have foreseen the rising tide of citizen activism that would persist and grow stronger with each succeeding generation. Ever since 1911, with greater and greater determination and passion, people from all parts of the province have worked to improve and expand BC's park system.

Even during the dark days of the Second World War the BC government followed the lead of concerned citizens and designated several huge new provincial parks, including Wells Gray and E.C. Manning.¹

In more recent times it was the Haida Nation that in 1985 designated Gwaii Haanas as a Haida Heritage Site. After a widespread grassroots campaign to see the area protected, in 1988 it was designated by the Government of Canada as the Gwaii Haanas National

Park Reserve. The Canadian government and the Haida Nation now cooperatively manage this world famous protected area off the mainland of BC's northwest coast.

In 2008, after over 10 years of work by the Squamish Nation and conservationists, the Upper Elaho Valley was designated as a conservancy in the Coast Mountains west of Whistler.

These are but a few of the many successful campaigns undertaken over the past century to create and to expand BC's park system. As a result, 14.27 per cent of BC, or 13.5 million hectares, is now protected. This includes national and provincial parks as well as conservancies and ecological reserves.²

BC's park system is now the largest provincial park system in Canada. It's a tremendous accomplishment – but is it enough?

The answer to that question is a resounding no. Scientists tell us that we need to be working towards protecting at least 50 per cent of our land base.³

The growing list of plants and animals endangered by ongoing industrial encroachment on their habitats proves that BC's current park system is not large enough and needs to be substantially expanded before important wild areas are despoiled. That's why there is a growing

list of spectacular wild places that people are working to see saved from logging, mining and hydro developments all across the province.

Let's look to other nations' world class park systems for inspiration. The people of New Zealand, for example, have legally protected over 30 per cent of their

nation – or twice the percentage of BC's protected area system – for the purpose of conserving wild nature.⁴

Read on to learn more about some of the priority endangered wilderness areas being proposed for protection. With your help, we can double BC's park system in a decade.

Photo top: **Purcell Mountains** (Michael Wheatley).
Right: **Lost Valley** (Jeremy Sean Williams). Below: **Northern Saw-whet Owl** (Gordon Court). Bottom: **BC camping and Northern Lights** (John E. Marriott).



PRIORITIES FOR PROTECTION...

1 Taku Watershed

Encompassing over two million hectares, the Taku watershed in northwest BC is virtually pristine. It is the largest intact salmon river system in North America. Rising in the interior boreal forests of BC, the river eventually makes its way through the coastal mountains and across the Alaska panhandle to empty into the Pacific Ocean near Juneau.

None of the Taku is currently protected and it is increasingly under pressure from a proposed mine which would come with a 160 kilometre road through the heart of the watershed. The Taku River Tlingit First Nation oppose the proposed mine road project and have entered into negotiations with the government of BC over a land-use plan for the Taku which is expected to result in extensive protected areas.⁵

Conservationists and the Taku River

Tlingit First Nation are still concerned that the mine road project may yet go ahead. The best solution

for the Taku Watershed and the people, salmon and wildlife that depend on it would be to preserve it all as a conservancy.

For more information, check out the website of Rivers Without Borders, one of the conservation groups working to protect the Taku. (RiversWithoutBorders.org)



Photo above: Marsh and Coast Range peaks in Taku River Valley (Doug Milek). Right: Grizzly Cub (Roberta Olenick).

2 Clayoquot Sound

The name Clayoquot (pronounced "Klak-wot") Sound conjures up visions of ancient forests, emerald islands and surf pounded shores, a 250,000 hectare slice of paradise on Vancouver Island's wild western side around the village of Tofino. Clayoquot Sound, for many, also means successful environmental protest. Many Canadians remember that the largest civil disobedience campaign in the nation's recent history occurred in Clayoquot during the logging blockades of 1993. Over 800 people were arrested for peacefully protesting logging of ancient forests in the area's remaining unprotected pristine valleys. After the massive protests logging companies stopped trying to log in the pristine valleys and began to sell their logging interests to the First Nations whose territories encompasses Clayoquot Sound.

The First Nations formed their own logging company – Iisaak Resources – and in 1999 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with several conservation groups committing to not log in the intact valleys in return for the conservation groups support of the new logging company.⁶ A kind of peace in the woods settled in at Clayoquot Sound and many thought Clayoquot was saved. It isn't.

About a third of Clayoquot Sound does have

some sort of park protection but, 68,000 hectares of the finest pristine valley ancient forests remaining on Vancouver Island have no formal protection recognized by the province of BC. To help remedy this, the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, one of the First Nations of Clayoquot, have declared their territory off limits to logging in intact valleys by designating two tribal parks – Meares Island and Ha'uukmin Tribal Parks.⁷

However, time is running out. The BC government has just granted Iisaak a logging road permit to access a pristine valley on Flores Island, in the heart of Clayoquot Sound. Iisaak is being pushed into logging the intact valleys to help pay off debt. The province needs to step in now and provide debt relief and economic development funding for the First Nations owners of Iisaak, and grant official protected area status for the pristine valleys of Clayoquot Sound.

The Friends of Clayoquot Sound are the local environmental group which has been working to protect Clayoquot for over 30 years. For more information, visit: focs.ca

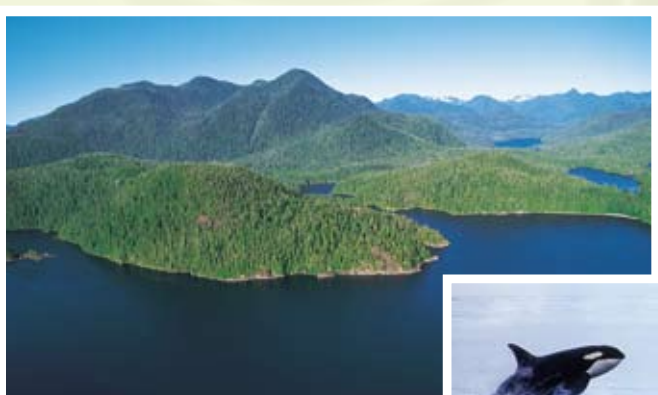
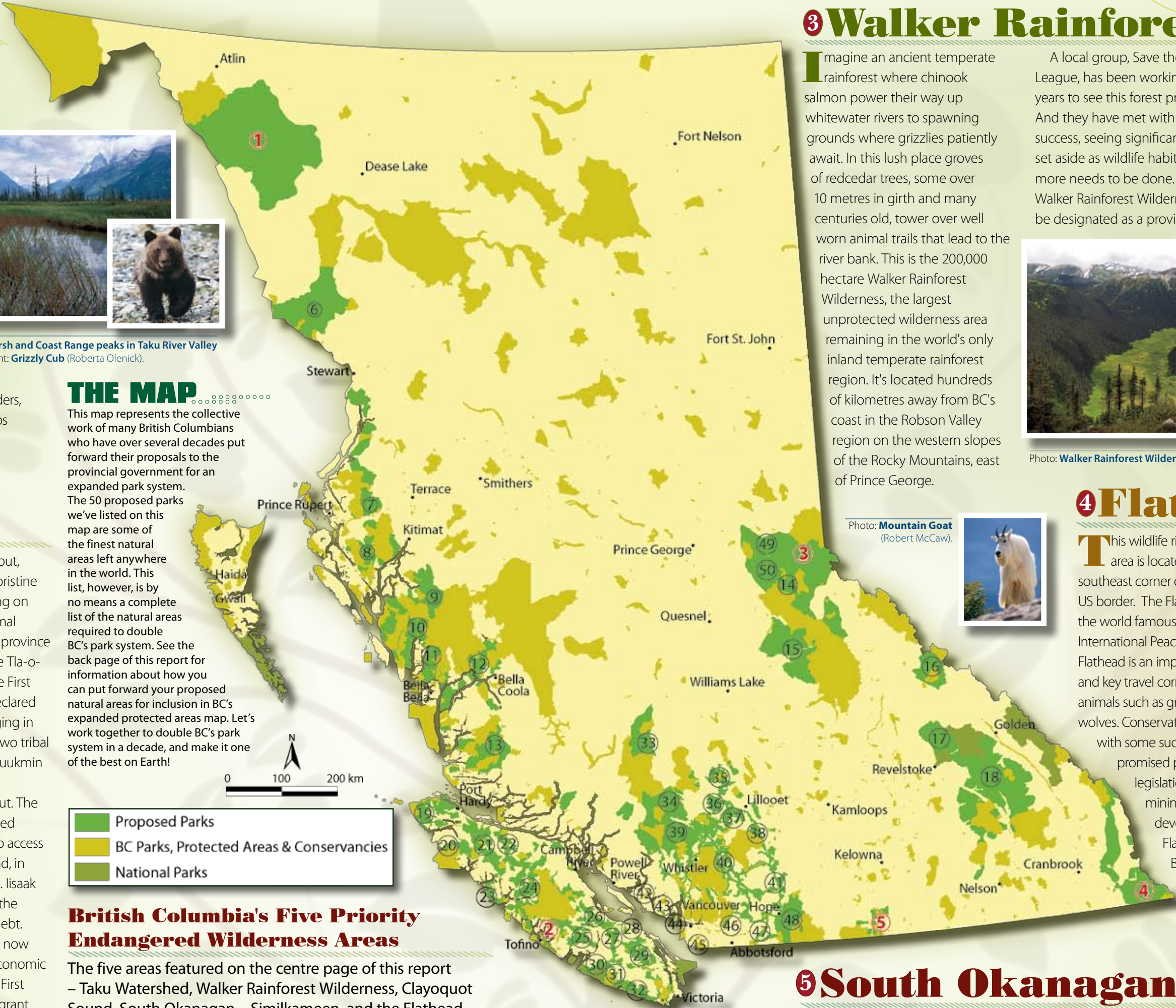
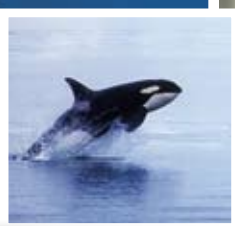


Photo: Pretty Girl Valley (Jacqueline Windh). Right: Orca (Jim Borrowman).



THE MAP

This map represents the collective work of many British Columbians who have over several decades put forward their proposals to the provincial government for an expanded park system. The 50 proposed parks we've listed on this map are some of the finest natural areas left anywhere in the world. This list, however, is by no means a complete list of the natural areas required to double BC's park system. See the back page of this report for information about how you can put forward your proposed natural areas for inclusion in BC's expanded protected areas map. Let's work together to double BC's park system in a decade, and make it one of the best on Earth!

- Proposed Parks
- BC Parks, Protected Areas & Conservancies
- National Parks

British Columbia's Five Priority Endangered Wilderness Areas

The five areas featured on the centre page of this report – Taku Watershed, Walker Rainforest Wilderness, Clayoquot Sound, South Okanagan – Similkameen, and the Flathead Valley – all require action NOW to ensure that they are protected before important conservation values are lost forever.

PROPOSED PARKS

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Taku Watershed 2 Clayoquot Sound 3 Walker Rainforest Wilderness 4 Flathead Valley 5 South Okanagan – Similkameen 6 Iskut River 7 Exchamsiks River 8 Ecstall River 9 Kowesas River 10 Green Inlet 11 Ingram – Mooto Lakes 12 Nusash Creek 13 Nekite – Piper Rivers / Doos Creek 14 Goat River 15 Quesnel Lake Wilderness Proposal 16 David Thompson Heritage Lands 17 Mount Revelstoke – Glacier addition 18 Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park / Upper Incomappleux River/Bugaboo Rainforest/Jumbo Pass | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 San Josef – Macjack Rivers 20 East Creek Rainforest / Klaskish River 21 Nimpkish River 22 Tsitika River 23 West Nootka Island 24 Gold River 25 Nahmint Valley 26 Beaufort Mountain Range / Qualicum – Little Qualicum Rivers 27 MacMillan Park additions / Cathedral Canyon / Labour Day Lake / Cameron River 28 Nanoose Forest 29 Nanaimo – Chemainus – Cowichan Rivers 30 Klanawa River 31 Upper Walbran Valley 32 Pacific Rim additions / Juan de Fuca Trail / Red Creek Fir / San Juan Ridge 33 Brittany Triangle Wild Horse Reserve / Fish Lake 34 Upper Bridge River | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35 Northern Camelsfoot Mountain Range 36 Bendor Mountain Range 37 Lost Valley / Cayoosh Mountain Range 38 Siwhe Creek 39 Stoltmann Wilderness / Sea to Sky Wildlands / Wild Spirit Places 40 East Garibaldi Park additions / Ure Creek / Fire Mountain/Upper Douglas Creek / Lower Lillooet Valley 41 Coast-Cascade Connector / Fraser Canyon / Anderson River 42 Caren Mountain Range - Spipyus Park addition 43 Mount Elphinstone Park addition 44 Bowen Island 45 Burns Bog Protected Area additions 46 Golden Ears Park addition / Blue Mountain 47 Elk Creek Rainforest 48 West Manning / Skagit Park additions 49 Bear Paw Ridge 50 Robson Valley Conservation Corridor |
|---|--|--|

3 Walker Rainforest Wilderness

Imagine an ancient temperate rainforest where chinook salmon power their way up whitewater rivers to spawning grounds where grizzlies patiently await. In this lush place groves of redcedar trees, some over 10 metres in girth and many centuries old, tower over well worn animal trails that lead to the river bank. This is the 200,000 hectare Walker Rainforest Wilderness, the largest unprotected wilderness area remaining in the world's only inland temperate rainforest region. It's located hundreds of kilometres away from BC's coast in the Robson Valley region on the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains, east of Prince George.

Photo: Mountain Goat (Robert McCaw).



A local group, Save the Cedar League, has been working for years to see this forest protected. And they have met with some success, seeing significant areas set aside as wildlife habitat. But more needs to be done. The entire Walker Rainforest Wilderness must be designated as a provincial park

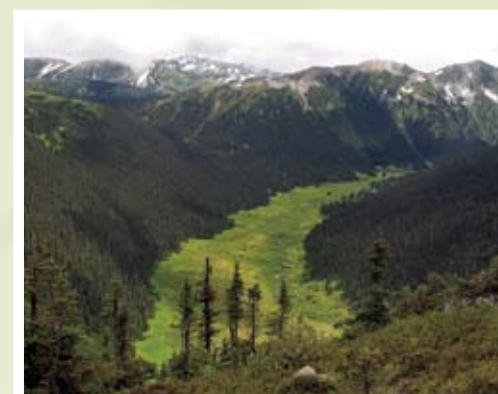


Photo: Walker Rainforest Wilderness (Carol Fairhurst).

or conservancy to put a stop to the industrial logging operations that are fragmenting the forest. Private hydro power projects also threaten the area, unless park protection is gained. This area is home to grizzlies, salmon, wolverines, cougars, wolves, lynx and endangered mountain caribou. It's time to fully protect the Walker!

For more information, visit: SaveTheCedarLeague.org



Photo: Grey Wolves (Grambo Photos).

4 Flathead Valley

This wildlife rich wilderness area is located in the extreme southeast corner of BC, right on the US border. The Flathead adjoins the world famous Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. The Flathead is an important refuge and key travel corridor for large animals such as grizzly bears and wolves. Conservationists have met with some success, including promised provincial legislation to prohibit mining and energy development in the Flathead Valley. But other threats remain, including logging and

trophy hunting. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Sierra Club BC and Wildsight are calling for the protection of the southeastern third of the Flathead Valley as a national park, and for the establishment of a Wildlife Management Area in the rest of the valley and adjoining habitat. For more information, visit: flathead.ca



Photo: Flathead Valley (Garthlenz.com).

5 South Okanagan – Similkameen

British Columbia is the most ecologically diverse province in Canada, with wilderness landscapes including tundra, rainforests, glaciers and wetlands. The South Okanagan – Similkameen region around the communities of Osoyoos, Keremeos and Oliver is a dry mountainous region with some of the province's rarest and most beautiful ecosystems including grasslands and Canada's only 'pocket desert'.

Fully one-third of BC's endangered species live here. Threats including rapid development for golf courses, vineyards, roads, resorts and mountainside housing are

putting the area's rare wildlife at risk. It's little wonder that the area is under consideration by the federal government for National Park Reserve status.

Unfortunately, after years of study,

the National Park Reserve remains a dream. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society is the lead group that is working to see the National Park Reserve become a reality. For more information, visit: cpawsbc.org



Photo left: Chopaka Grasslands (Gwen Barlee). Below: Yellow-breasted chat (Robert McCaw).



BC's Species at Risk List Continues to Grow: Habitat Protection Needed

It's heartbreaking to watch wild plants and animals become more and more scarce on the landscape. Who hasn't heard of BC's spotted owl population that once numbered in the hundreds, but has now dwindled to less than a dozen due to continued logging in its old-growth forest habitat? How much longer can this species hold on without adequate habitat protection and restoration, no one knows.

But the spotted owl is not the only wild thing under pressure. There are now over 1,900 species at risk in

the province of BC.⁸ Too many of the province's parks and protected areas are in the high mountains and not enough are in the low valleys where many endangered species live. Habitat protection for species at risk is one reason we need to double our parks in a decade.



For more information visit: LastPlaceOnEarth.ca



Respecting First Nations Rights and Title

First Nations have occupied the lands and waters of what is now called British Columbia for many thousands of years. Issues of aboriginal rights and title to most of the province have yet to be resolved. Any establishment of a park should only be done with the agreement of the First Nation in whose territory the lands are situated. The governments of Canada and British Columbia should also undertake conservation funding initiatives with interested First Nations to ensure that they benefit economically from new parks in their territories.

Protected Area Champs

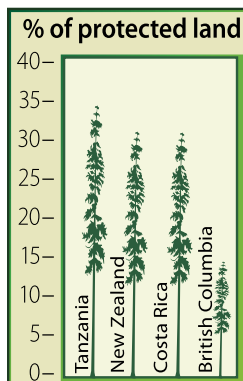
Different nations count their protected areas in different ways, so it's tough to say who is number one in the parks race. But it's clear that these nations are among those leading the pack in the protection of their

special natural places. British Columbia, with its vast natural areas, could still top them all, if we take action now. And we can start by doubling our park system in a decade.

Tanzania
Tanzania has accorded some form of formal protection to more than one-third of its territory – a far higher proportion than most of the world's wealthier nations.⁹

New Zealand
New Zealand has protected more than 30 per cent of their country for the preservation of nature. This includes marine reserves, forest parks, private reserves and UN World Heritage sites.¹⁰

Costa Rica
Over 30 per cent of the country's total landmass is protected in national parks or reserves, and the country is world renowned as an eco-tourism destination. In late 2010 Costa Rica announced a commitment to add another 32,000 acres to its protected areas network.¹¹



Let's Double BC's Parks in a Decade!

BC's most endangered wilderness areas cannot stand any more delay. Clayoquot Sound, the Walker Rainforest Wilderness and the Flathead Valley are at risk from logging. The Taku Watershed is threatened by mining, and development encroaches on the South Okanagan-Similkameen. Tell BC's Premier that you want these areas protected to help secure a wild future.

Take ACTION NOW: Let the premier know that you want to see all of BC's endangered wilderness areas protected in a park system that needs to double in a decade.

► Premier of British Columbia

Box 9041 Telephone: 250 387-1715
Station PROV GOVT Facsimile: 250 387-0087
Victoria, BC, V8W 9E1 premier@gov.bc.ca



Building a Better Park System

Send in your ideas for new parks today. We are building an interactive map on our website at WildernessCommittee.org. Email your new park proposals to newparks@wildernesscommittee.org. Include some information about the proposed park's attributes, a photo of the area and a map showing the proposed boundaries. We will work to incorporate your submission into our interactive BC endangered wilderness map. Let's work together to double BC's parks in a decade!

Photo top: Montage - **Spotted Owl** (Jared Hobbs) and **Robson Valley clearcut** (Paul Morgan).
Above left: **Melvin Valley** (Joe Foy).
Above: **Meares Island** (WC Files).
Below: **Robson Valley clearcut** (Paul Morgan).

Citations

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- http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/aboutBCParks/fact_fig.html
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Yes! I want to help protect BC's Endangered Wilderness Areas NOW!

clip
And return to the:
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Graphic Design and Layout: Perry Sky Jack, Sue Fox.
Mapping: Geoff Senichenko.
Photos: As noted.
Wilderness Committee, Vol. 30, No 3, 2011. Canadian Mail Product Sales Agreement No. 0900567. Posted in Vancouver for free distribution. Printed in Canada on recycled newspaper with vegetable-based inks.
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Published by
Wilderness Committee — National Office
P.O. Box 2205, Station Terminal
Vancouver, BC V6B 3W2
T: 604-683-8220 F: 604-683-8229

