

Valhalla Wilderness Society

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Dear Members and Supporters:

I am writing to let you know that Canada has lost one of its greatest environmental activists: VWS Executive Director Colleen McCrory. Colleen died a quick and pain-free death two weeks after coming down with a headache that was diagnosed as untreatable brain cancer. Her sudden passing was a great shock to the directors and staff, some of whom had worked closely with her for 30 years.

There has been a groundswell of mourning and tributes to Colleen from all over the world. The directors' homes and the office have been inundated with letters of condolence and tribute. Innumerable newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations in Canada and the US have carried feature stories about her.

Some of you sent VWS a message encouraging the directors and staff to carry on with the work. With Colleen's brother, bear biologist Wayne McCrory, strategist Richard Caniell, forest technician Craig Pettitt, myself and our dedicated back-up team, we are more than capable of doing so. Of course, Colleen was a champion. However, it remains as true as it always was, that the world's most powerful tool for environmental and social change is people working together — ordinary people. Many important changes have been brought about in this world by groups that did not have a Colleen McCrory.

The directors and staff of VWS have the will to carry on. We will be defenders of the environment all our lives, and we have years and years of experience. But the level at which we can do our work will depend upon funding.

Only a few weeks before Colleen passed away, VWS's chief funder, Toronto businessman Glen Davis, passed away. That means that VWS has lost both its chief funder and its chief fund-raiser.

The current VWS members and supporters are responding generously to our calls for help. As long as that is maintained, VWS's presence as a positive moral force in environmental affairs is assured. However, unless the directors can find funding sources that will replace what the Society has lost, its ability to campaign will be greatly reduced.

Colleen was very active at the provincial, national and international levels. Prominent environmentalists such as David Suzuki, Paul George (founder of Western Canada Wilderness Committee), and Green Party leaders Elizabeth May and Adriane Carr worked on campaigns with her at one time or another.

However, she always came home to the Valhalla Wilderness Society. Colleen was always out there telling the truth that other people did not want to hear and many environmentalists did not want to tell. That truth sometimes threatened the logging and mining industry in ways that caused attacks and intimidation. It also included criticism of other environmental groups that sacrificed critical values to gain a quick and easy success. At VWS, Colleen found a total resonance of principles and ideals, and a directorship and membership that would not shrink from controversy.

Colleen's VWS colleagues are only just now beginning to get a glimpse of how many individuals, organizations and First Nations she helped. The members, donors, volunteers and other helpers of this Society made her labours possible. There is something in all of you that Colleen represented, and your trust and energy gave her spirit. After working

with her for 25 years, I know that she would like to pass on to you a generous portion of the honour that is being bestowed upon her by the world.

Whatever plan emerges for the future, at the present the Society must do what every individual must do at some time or another: discover that there is life after such a loss, that the planet still needs our help, and we can go on giving it. Wayne's coastal rainforest-bear work will continue, but the Society's most intense focus will be on Colleen's project: increasing protection of BC's inland temperate rainforest. Shortly before she passed away, that project came together in a new park proposal called the Selkirk Mountain Caribou Proposal. Wouldn't it be wonderful to fulfill Colleen's last dream and make that park a reality? Read on to see what you can do to help.

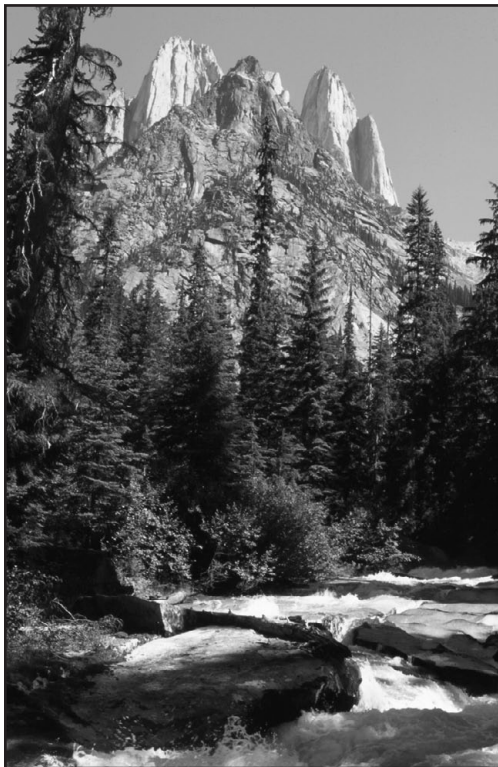
Sincerely,

Anne Sherrod, Chair



Craig Pettitt

Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park Proposal



Gary Diers

This park proposal is the only habitat of the Central Selkirk Mountain Caribou herd. It connects four parks, which will greatly increase their ecological integrity. It is a haven for grizzly bears and black bears. It includes the ancient inland rainforest of the Upper Incomappleux Valley, which has so far yielded 13 species of lichens never before known to science. Lichenologists say that many more will follow. Other valleys in this proposal also have ancient cedar-hemlock forest. Forests in this proposal are critical to protecting key bull trout, Kokanee salmon and Gerrard rainbow trout fisheries. You can find out more at www.vws.org.



Craig Pettitt

Action is what changes the world

Action was the very essence of Colleen's life. If you would like to do something in her memory, there could be nothing better than to take some action to protect the environment. If we all focus our action on the same issue, our collective energy will be very powerful. Please consider sending a letter to Premier Gordon Campbell asking him to create the Central Selkirk Mountain Caribou park. Please mention the importance of saving the Central Selkirk Mountain Caribou herd, the Upper Incomappleux Valley and ALL the old-growth forest in the inland rainforest region. Please send a copy to the Minister of Agriculture and Lands. If possible, send one to VWS as well.

And don't forget to sign up at least one new member.

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All Valhalla Wilderness Society members, donors and supporters are invited to the memorial celebrations for Colleen

Location: Colleen's hometown in Silverton, BC, at the Day Park.

Time: 11 am - 1 pm

August 25: Memorial service for family and the community

August 26: Memorial service for the environmental movement

There will also be other memorial events, including slide shows and hikes.

For further details, go to www.vws.org, or contact the Valhalla Wilderness Society office. On the website you will find a blog that VWS has set up for Colleen, so that people can share their thoughts and feelings about her.