

Valhalla Wilderness Society

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A DAY TO REMEMBER

by Anne Sherrod, Chairperson

Sometimes a rare occasion comes along that is the positive opposite of all that is so discouraging and divisive in society: an event or day that connects people, not just in words, but in smiles, a sense of accomplishment and sheer sunshine.

Such a day was July 1 of this year: Canada Day, as well as the second anniversary of the passing away of our former Executive Director, Colleen McCrory. This was the day chosen for the celebration of the successful campaign to add the "Valhalla Mile" to Valhalla Provincial Park. The celebration was held in Colleen's home town, the small village of Silverton, in an open field within sight of the majestic mountains of Valhalla Park.

As many readers will know, the Valhalla Mile was a parcel of private property within the boundaries of Valhalla Park. It had come up for sale, and the owner could have sought top dollar for this prime lakefront property. Fortunately, the landowner generously agreed to sell the property at a lower price; the BC government pledged half of the purchase price; and the Valhalla Foundation teamed up with The Land Conservancy (TLC) to raise the rest from public donations and other organizations.

This campaign highlighted the difference between the Valhalla Wilderness Society and the Valhalla Foundation for Ecology and Social Justice. Although the Society mostly works on public land, it has a very important interest in what happens on private land. For instance, had the Valhalla Mile not been purchased for conservation, it would have almost certainly been snapped up by developers, who could have put a marina, resort or condominiums on it, smack in the middle of the park. That would have been the end of the wilderness qualities of Valhalla Park, sabotaging this Society's 35-year-long efforts to protect it.

The Society is not set up to hold private land or to raise funds for private land acquisition. However, several years ago, some Valhalla directors set up a separate organization, the Valhalla Foundation for Ecology and Social Justice (VF),



Across the lake, a large parcel of forest in the middle of the photo, along the lakeshore, is the Valhalla Mile. Now it is protected forever.

to complement the Society's work.

The Foundation's fundraising for the Valhalla Mile was organized by a hugely talented volunteer, Lorna Visser. We all owe her a huge thanks for taking on a gargantuan task and doing it so well.

The Valhalla Wilderness Society played a substantial role in the campaign. Many of you made

donations. VWS staff and directors contributed bookkeeping and computer services to the Valhalla Mile campaign, and spent many days of hard labour tearing down and burning the house on the site, to return the land to a natural condition. Helping with the Valhalla Mile was a major part of the Society's work and accomplishments this year.

BC parks have not been totally protected from development since the government brought in the Park Lodge Strategy and an overall bent towards private development. BC Parks land has never before been bound by a protective covenant. In the process of transferring the Valhalla Mile to the government, TLC skillfully negotiated one. However, there was a time deadline, and the resulting covenant needed considerable strengthening. Valhalla directors drew on 30 years of experience creating and defending parks to explain to the parties why the draft covenant, despite the good intentions of everyone, would not protect "The Mile" or the park.

What was at stake was the whole transfer, because the funds had been solicited by telling the public that the land purchase would completely protect the land from development forever. Valhalla directors are grateful for the firm support of TLC and the patience of a few people within government, whose skills finally helped to bridge the gap. The result was a precedent-setting covenant that says the land will never be developed.

The Valhalla Foundation met with residents of Silverton to plan how the community's Canada Day events and the Valhalla Mile celebration could take place at the same location and use the same stage. Thus the day brought together many

VALHALLA MILE CELEBRATION

Slocan Valley residents with people who had travelled from as far away as Vancouver and the U.S. to celebrate the momentous addition of the Valhalla Mile to the park.

Wholeness in nature has always been one of the ideals of the Society. Nature, when it is kept completely intact and undeveloped, has ecological and spiritual values that can't be had any other way. I was amazed at how many people truly understood what this was about, and felt so deeply about it.

Mistress of Ceremonies Lorna Visser called out thank-yous to an astonishing procession of individuals and organizations that had taken the project under their wing, to unanimous enthusiastic applause. Regional Manager of BC Parks Wayne Stetski, Local MLA Katrine Conroy, and MP Alex Atamanenko were amongst the speakers. Students gave Canada Day speeches, played music, people sang, the Valhalla Wilderness Society sold posters and cards, and local artisan Peter Vogelaar created an amazing sand sculpture of Colleen with mountains in the background. On this day a community experienced its interconnections to a much larger community, and the larger community discovered itself, its shared regard for wholesome values, its public-spirited nature, its power to accomplish big things by linking together, and its love of parks.

You, the members of this Society, were certainly here in spirit. Without your support these many years, there wouldn't be a park to complete. The fact that so many people demonstrated so fervently what the park meant to them on this spe-



Wayne Stetski, Regional Manager of BC Parks: "Valhalla Park, like many of us, is gaining in size and stature as it ages ... Its value as a protected area increases as resource extraction activities expand outside the park's boundaries. Colleen was a major force in the campaign to have the park protected ... She had a special gift for leaving lasting legacies for the rest of us to enjoy."

cial day was a benediction on all your past contributions and support. The legacy that the Valhalla Wilderness Society has left to the world is the legacy you have left. The days when our dreams and labours are suddenly realized are rare, and they must be remembered during the long intervals when we are struggling to expand the legacy.

The organizations that collectively contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to purchase the Valhalla Mile, such as the Columbia Basin Trust, the Regional District of Central Kootenay, and several others — do not contribute to creating major new protected areas. The struggle to save areas from logging and mining would be too controversial for them. Yet preserving large areas of public land is the only way we can save BC's wildlife and all the ecological functions that make our part of the

world liveable.

This highlights another major difference between Valhalla Foundation and Valhalla Wilderness Society. Throughout the Valhalla Mile campaign and ever since, the Society has been — ironically enough — in a severe funding crisis due to current economic conditions. Thanks to all of you who sent in contributions last year, we were able to keep going, but with a skeletal crew of volunteer labour. The spirit of the Valhalla Mile is now very much needed to sustain the organization that has thus far achieved protection of over 1.25 million acres of wilderness.

**Statement of Katrine Conroy,
MLA Kootenay West,
before the BC Legislature
October 28, 2009 (excerpt)**

**"COLLEEN McCRORY AND
VALHALLA WILDERNESS SOCIETY"**

"The addition of the Valhalla Mile to Colleen's favourite park is a tribute to her memory and to her outstanding dedication to the conservation of the natural world ... On July 1 in Silverton a celebration was held to mark this historic event, with supporters in attendance from across the province. It was indeed a tribute to the work of an incredible person and all of the people who are the Valhalla Society."

There are other crucial private properties within Valhalla Park's boundaries, the most important being at the mouth of Nemo Creek, arguably the most beautiful and accessible area. When Valhalla Park was created, the provincial government recognized a responsibility to acquire private inholdings, and the Nemo Creek property was a high priority. Now parks have been virtually gutted of their funding and staff. As preparations were underway for the Valhalla Mile celebration, Valhalla Park lost its two local rangers. These two people who had given years and years of service to the park had to move out of the valley seeking jobs. Please, at every possible occasion, tell the government that you want funding for parks to be restored, and you expect them to be protected from development, including by acquiring private inholdings.

MOUNTAIN CARIBOU RECOVERY PLAN

After a five-year planning process, the BC government has now signed Government Action Regulations (“GAR Orders”) creating partially protected forest reserves for mountain caribou. As predicted, despite the claim of massive amounts of winter habitat protected, there will be very little reduction in the logging of mountain caribou habitat because much of the protected forest is too high or too steep to be logged. Less than 1% of the Timber Harvesting Land Base in the caribou range received partial protection. Some of it is in areas already heavily fragmented by logging, and some of it can still be logged. Since logging is the chief cause of the decline of the caribou, this is bad news.



Director Craig Pettitt is inspecting one of the new mountain caribou reserves — old-growth cedar-hemlock-caribou forest that he worked to protect during the mountain caribou recovery process. This is in the Bremner Creek drainage and was part of the original Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park Proposal. It has been moderately logged, but large slopes of old-growth remain. A short distance up the road, Pettitt discovered mountain caribou tracks.

VWS’s aim in the process was to achieve increased protection for low- and mid-elevation old-growth forest. Besides being critical spring and early winter habitat for mountain caribou, this is high-biodiversity, Interior Cedar-Hemlock forest (ICH). It includes rare inland temperate rainforest loaded with hundreds of species of lichens. It is high biomass forest that stores very high amounts of carbon to combat global warming. Unfortunately, this is where the majority of the Timber Harvesting Land Base is located, and government would not make any significant deductions from the logging companies to protect the endangered caribou.

How much cedar-hemlock was protected?

- ◆ 82.9% of the caribou reserves are high or very high elevation spruce-balsam forest — caribou winter habitat.
- ◆ 12.8% of the reserves are low- to mid-elevation Interior Cedar-Hemlock forest (ICH) - spring and early winter caribou habitat.
- ◆ Only 6.9% of the total ICH in the Inland Rainforest Region is captured in the reserves.
- ◆ The rainforest part of the ICH fared better: 15.78% of the wet and very wet rainforest type is in the new reserves.*

Further analysis is needed to determine how much of the ICH in these reserves is too steep to log and too steep for mountain caribou, and how much has been clearcut, burned or fragmented by roads. There are areas of extensive clearcutting in the new reserves. Mountain caribou need intact old-growth at least 140 years old and gentle to moderate slopes.

* All these figures come from Baden Cross of Applied Conservation GIS, based upon forest cover maps created for the Valhalla Wilderness Society.

What were the positive aspects of the plan?

There were locally significant gains for two out of eight caribou herds, and in both cases in the area of VWS’s park proposals. We estimate about 70% of our proposal for the Quesnel Lake Wilderness is now “protected” from logging and roads, and much of that is prime inland temperate rainforest. About 50% of our current proposal for a Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park also received this quasi-protection and also made gains in cedar-hemlock protection.

How well protected are the new caribou reserves?

They are protected from logging and road building, but the regulations contain numerous exceptions that could allow logging and roads. They are not protected from mining, hydro or tourism development. If any of these industries, including logging companies, want to do more than the regulations allow, they can apply for an exemption and expect a decision by the Regional Manager of the Ministry of Environment within 14 days — no time even for careful consideration, much less public input.

How permanent are the new reserves?

In some planning units — the central and south Selkirks and the south Purcells — the government has stated outright that if the caribou herds don’t increase, the protection will be reconsidered and the areas may be returned to logging. The Council of Forest Industries is now lobbying hard to log in all our parks and conservation zones, claiming that the mountain pine beetle has killed so much forest that mills will have to shut down if we don’t log these areas.

Caribou Recovery Plan, continued

Minister Pat Bell supported this view in the newspapers. There was an outcry, and Bell backed off, saying the parks would not be sacrificed. But that obviously leaves the caribou reserves and other conservation zones. Nothing offers stable protection for forest in this province but parks. However, the government is determined to legislate areas for logging so that they can never be made into parks.

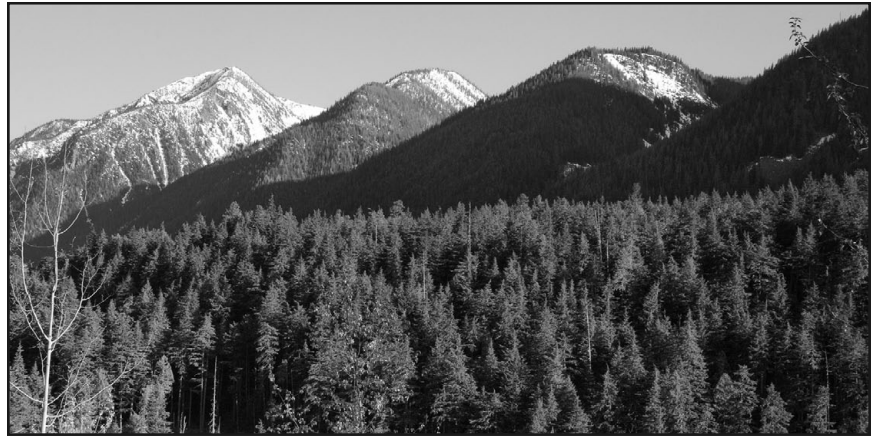
What about snowmobiles and heli-skiing?

The plan puts snowmobile closures on areas not much used by snowmobiles, and leaves significant caribou winter habitat open to heavy snowmobile traffic. The winter thrill-seeking goes on in the area around Revelstoke while the Columbia South caribou herd is plunging to extinction with only 13 animals left. Wolves would have no access to mountain caribou in winter if it weren't for snowmobiles creating tracks of packed snow for them.

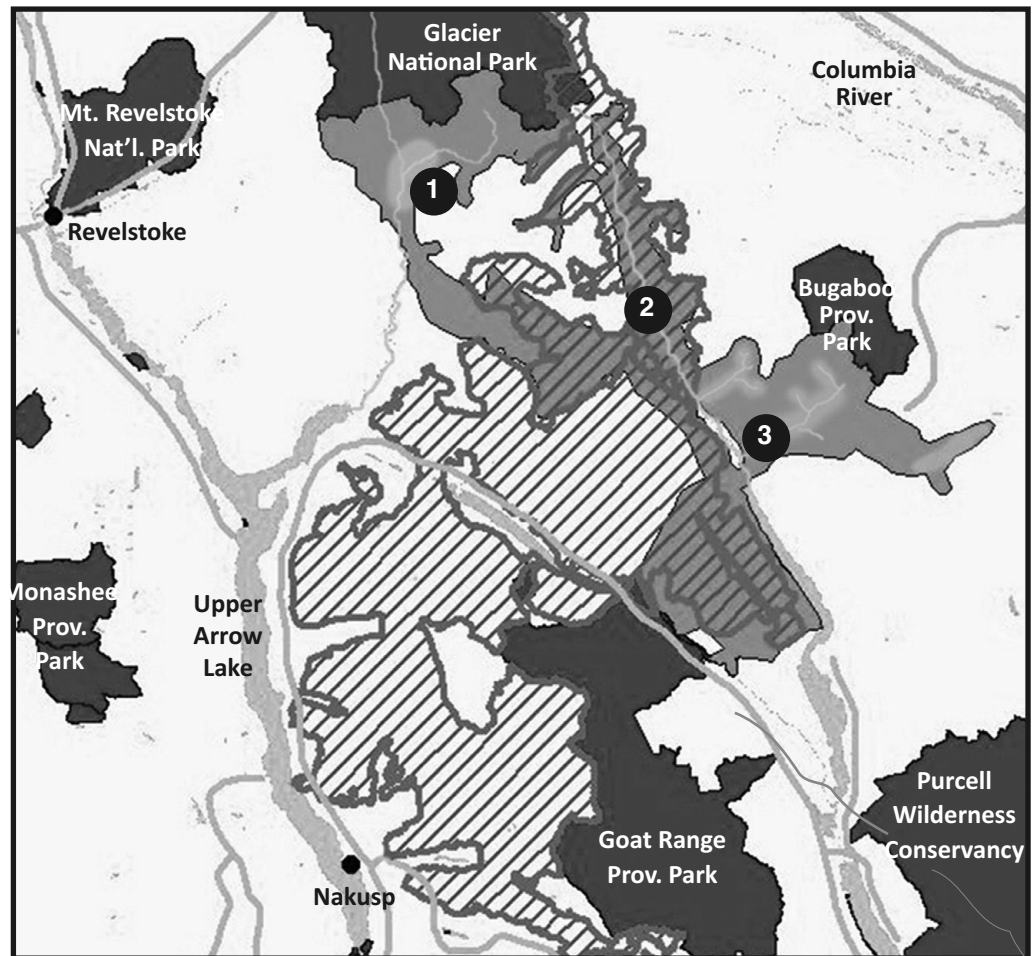
Meanwhile, hundreds of wolves and cougars are being shot and trapped in the name of saving caribou. Some government scientists have now recommended that wolves be SHOT FROM HELICOPTERS. This confirms our earlier warning that the pretense of "selective" removal of individual problem animals or packs would soon turn to indiscriminate slaughter as the cheapest means.

What's the next step?

After analyzing the new caribou reserves, VWS revised its Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park Proposal. The new park proposal is smaller. Some of the area designated by government as Ungulate Winter Range should be upgraded to park status. The proposal contains three rivers paramount to ecosystem stability: the Duncan, the Incomappleux and the Lardeau. These have been heavily clearcut, but they support fragile populations of threatened bull trout, Gerrard Rainbow, and Kokanee salmon. The remaining old-growth is critical to protect fish, grizzly bears and a population of 90 mountain caribou.



This old-growth cedar-hemlock forest along Fitzstubb's Creek was in the proposed Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park. It has now received partial protection as caribou Ungulate Winter Range (UWR).



-  Existing Protected Areas
-  Proposed Park
-  Ungulate Winter Range - No logging
-  Ungulate Winter Range - Upgrade to Park

1. Antique Inland Rainforest — Upper Incomappleux
2. Duncan River
3. Last remaining intact valleys with ancient ICH in the southern Interior Wetbelt — East Creek and Geigrich Creeks.

LEGISLATORS TOUR THE INCOMAPPLEUX

Our most ancient forests and largest trees, including the magnificent Incomappleux, received no protection under the mountain caribou plan. The Incomappleux is part of VWS's proposed Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park. VWS invited legislators from the Liberal and NDP Parties, as well as the local Green Party candidate, to tour the Incomappleux. The Liberals did not reply to our invitation. But two NDP MLAs — Deputy Environment Critic Michael Sather and Government Relations Critic Guy Gentner — responded splendidly. Bad weather shut down the road, forcing the Green Party tour to be deferred until next year.



Above, Deputy Environment Critic Michael Sather views the Incomappleux with VWS Director and guide Craig Pettitt.

Lichenologist Toby Spribille from the University of Graz, Austria joined the tour to share his research in the Incomappleux. Photo left: Spribille gives an impromptu lichen talk to Government Relations Critic Guy Gentner and MLA Sather. Standing on the left is the owner of the eco-friendly Mountain Hostel in the Incomappleux River Valley.



VWS wildlife biologist Wayne McCrory pointed out grizzly bear rubbing trees complete with grizzly bear hair, and many other facets of the ecology of the area.

Statements to the BC Legislature and Media

**Statement of
Michael Sather, MLA
Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows**
Hansard, October 28, 2009

“I recently had the pleasure of visiting the Incomappleux Valley, a place I will never forget. The upper Incomappleux is an ancient and truly magnificent ecosystem. I stood beside its massive redcedars, 12 feet in diameter and 1,800 years old. I saw western hemlocks as large as those found on the coast. I saw huge white pines, larger than I’ve ever seen in my years as a biologist in BC.

“We walked by trees that had been recently rubbed by grizzly bears, leaving his telltale silvertip hair behind. We searched massive tree cavities looking for early-denning black bears. We followed the trail of the mountain caribou, who feed on the abundant lichens of the forest in early winter....

“Incredibly, probably due to its obscurity, the upper Incomappleux Valley is not protected in any park, protected area or land use plan. The Incomappleux is the Crown jewel of the

inland temperate rainforest. It is not replicated anywhere. To lose it would be unforgiveable. I invite all members to visit this ancient forest. Let’s work together to ensure that our grandchildren and their grandchildren can do the same.”

**Statement of Guy Gentner
MLA, Delta-North**
Valley Voice, October 21, 2009

“I think where we go from here is for the government to open up the tool box and find the appropriate means to protect the ‘caribou rainforest.’ I first thought extending Glacier National Park from the Incomappleux was the way to go, but after studying the VWS proposal, I think a provincial park makes the most sense because it’s practical and encompasses a solution that highlights integral aspects of the ecosystems.”

The tour received major coverage in the *Valley Voice*, *Nelson Daily News*, *Arrow Lakes News*, *Revelstoke Times* and *Island Tides*.

Volunteering to Save a Magnificent Ancient Heritage

Despite a number of parks in the southern Columbia Mountains (the Selkirk, Purcell and Monashee Ranges), nothing quite like this is known to exist in them. Huge drainages of inland temperate rainforest — the Kuskanax, the Incomappleux, the Duncan, the Adams River watersheds — have been almost completely pillaged of their old-growth. What's left is very little compared to what used to be; but it is still enough to be critical to the survival of species and of immeasurable worth to the human spirit. And if enough people call for its protection, **THERE IS STILL TIME TO SAVE IT.**



For three years VWS could talk and write about the antique forest of the Incomappleux, but could not take people there because a huge rockfall had damaged a bridge that was necessary for access. This year a number of factors heightened the risk that the Incomappleux, which has five approved cutblocks in the big trees, could be logged. When miners repaired the bridge, it became possible to guide visitors to the Incomappleux who could help bring the situation to the attention of the world. But with the three years lack of maintenance, the road had seriously deteriorated due to heavy rain and snow, and the ingrowth of brush.



The effort to bring legislators and other people into the Incomappleux was made possible only by a crew of volunteers who undertook a massive amount of hard labour to make the road passable and the trail safer. Thanks to Tim Sander, Hank Hastings, Susie O'Donnell, Chris Carter, Dr. Tom Perry, and Rob Farrell. They moved massive amounts of rock, brushed out many kilometres of road, made the log creek crossing safer, and improved the game trail into the big trees. Thanks also to Patrick Pyrz of the Mountain Hostel and Riel Marquardt for critical support services. Director Craig Pettitt tirelessly led the work parties over a period of six weeks. Only because of this abundantly generous, extremely difficult labour was the Incomappleux able to receive important attention by government and media this year. Now the ball is definitely rolling to save the Incomappleux. Many thanks to numerous other volunteers who were involved in other projects for VWS this year.



Protecting Coastal Rainforest and Wildlife

This year, at the urging of VWS, First Nations and other groups, the government designated three grizzly bear no-hunting reserves on the coast, including a large one in the spirit bear area. VWS also helped to achieve closure of black bear trophy hunting on Gribbell Island and the Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy on south Princess Royal Island — the first black bear no-hunting reserves in Canada.

The government's 2006 Great Bear Rainforest decision protected 80% of the Society's Spirit Bear Conservancy proposal, but it failed to protect several key areas of ecological or genetic significance for the survival of spirit bears. So today the Society is working on two new conservancies on the coast. One of them, the 23,777-hectare Green inlet/river valley provides a rich and hidden marine ecosystem where grizzly and spirit bears feast on Pacific salmon spawning amidst towering stands of giant Sitka spruce.

The other proposal, Gribbell Island, is small (20,690 ha), but has the highest concentration of white-phased black bears in North America – up to 45% of its black bear population is white. VWS map studies show that, of six valleys on Gribbell, five have already been heavily clearcut and roaded.

The Valhalla Wilderness Society's 20-year campaign for coastal protection has been led by director and bear biologist Wayne McCrory (photo below). During that time he has been in the field in the Great Bear Rainforest every year, networking with other environmental groups, First Nations and other scientists. This year his work included:

- A 10-day field trip to the central coast that included dis-



The Green Inlet has had some light logging since the Great Bear Rainforest decision, but it remains mostly pristine, a priceless and irreplaceable gem in BC's coastal ecosystems.

cussions with First Nations on protection of Gribbell Island and the Green Inlet and Valley. He also did field assessments of logging on Pooley Island, documenting the destruction of bear dens and the high grading of old-growth cedar.

- A 10-day field trip to the south coast (Phillips River), which included gathering photographs of atrocious logging practices in the Great Bear Rainforest. Surveys were done with several other biologists. They conducted further assessment of logging practices by Western Forest Products Ltd. on their tree farm license.

The Phillips Watershed has been very heavily logged, including extensive high grading of redcedar using heli-cranes in 2007. They photographed logging-related landslides/debris torrents, loss of potential old-growth cedar denning habitat from heli-logging high up on the mountains, debris torrent impacts on the Phillips Estuary and what was

once a pink salmon spawning stream.

They held discussions with a representative of the Kwikwaka'wakw First Nations, a Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) biologist, and salmon enhancement people. They learned that there is very little, if any, monitoring, enforcement and prosecution of damage done to salmon and wildlife habitat under the new *Forest and Range Practices Act* and the *Federal Fisheries Act*. In one instance a recent debris torrent, that DFO admitted was likely logging-caused, obliterated part of an artificial channel built by DFO in 1986 to enhance spawning of pink and chum salmon. Nothing was done to enforce the *Fisheries Act* or repair the channel.

- Wayne attended BC Parks management planning workshops in Prince Rupert, BC for the Khutzeymateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary and new inlet conservancies and provided major input into management plan design as well as made a major presentation on the need to regulate commercial and public bear viewing, including the need for zoning of no bear-viewing areas so that warier bears are not disturbed.
- He provided a bear viewing strategy for the Mussell Estuary in the Fiordlands Conservancy area on the central coast as input into the management plan that will be sent out in the fall for public review.
- Valhalla's proposal for protection of Gribbell Island was completed. It has helped to coalesce a commitment by the



continued on the next page

Gitga'at First Nation to protect the unlogged portions of the island.

- Made an appeal to Barry Penner, BC Minister of Environment, that resulted in the *Wildlife Act* being amended to protect all white-phase black bears in BC from trophy hunting, not just white-phased bears in the Kermode coastal areas.

Fifty percent of the old-growth forest on the BC coast has already been logged. Two-thirds of the remainder were sacrificed to logging when the government and First Nations announced protection of 33% of the coast in the Great Bear Rainforest decision of 2006. The two-thirds that were unprotected were to be logged according to Ecosystem-based Management (EBM).

The EBM guidelines were approved by government this year. VWS's assessment, submitted to government, shows that these guidelines do not deserve the name Ecosystem-based Management. They will allow 50% - 70% of ancient forests outside of the protected areas (including spirit bear areas) to be logged. A VWS map analysis shows that large old trees that bears depend on for winter denning and birthing will still be destroyed. There will also be an unrepayable loss of giant trees that are important to climate control and belong to the last remaining intact coastal temperate rainforest in Canada.

SCENIC SLOCAN VALLEY BESIEGED BY BAD LOGGING

Despite input and protests by residents in the upper and lower Slocan Valley over the past several years, clearcut logging by BC Timber Sales and Springer Creek Logging Ltd. continue to cause devastation to scenic, watershed, recreational, wildlife and pine mushroom harvest values. This is all thanks to weak guidelines and regulations under the government's *Forest and Range Act*, and de-regulation to the point that the Ministry of Forests no longer inspects and monitors logging practices in the public interest.

Residents in the lower Slocan Valley have seen their domestic water supplies damaged by roading and their scenery clearcut. Massive road building and clearcutting continues unabated at the north end of Slocan Lake, causing large blow-downs, erosion, scenic degradation and fragmentation of mature and old-growth forests that were supposed to have some protection as part of a major park-to-park wildlife corridor under the Kootenay Boundary Land-Use Plan. Within this corridor, industry is cutting away the last old hemlock forests where people pick pine and other mushrooms for recreation or subsistence money, so important to low income families.

Over the last year, VWS directors Craig Pettitt, a forest technician, and biologist Wayne McCrory walked clearcuts and roads with various community groups. They found that

9th World Wilderness Congress Passes Resolution for protection of spirit bears in BC and white lions in South Africa

VWS and several BC coastal First Nations have been supporting the Global White Lion Protection Trust in their efforts to save the last of the rare white-phased lions in South Africa. The magnificent white lions have been nearly decimated from the wilds by trophy hunting. Through a recovery program the White Lion Trust has been able to re-introduce two founder lion groups into a conservancy area. As a result of a recent presentation supported by the Native Lands Wilderness Council at the 9th World Wilderness Congress in Mexico, a resolution was passed to support protection of white lions, spirit bears and other white, non-albino animals considered sacred by indigenous peoples. WILD9 also called upon the governments and appropriate bodies to take whatever measures necessary to protect these white non-albino animals through appropriate listings under international and national law. The resolution was in response to a presentation prepared by biologists Jason Turner of the White Lion Trust and Wayne McCrory of VWS, along with Doug Neasloss and Marven Robinson, two First Nations people who have worked to help protect BC's spirit bears.



Lorna Visser
Directors Wayne McCrory (shown) and Craig Pettitt presented a slide show on the logging they had documented in the Slocan Valley and the proposed protected areas they have networked with other groups in the Valley. The Perry Ridge Water Users Association and the Sinixt First Nation also have a very significant park proposal on Perry Ridge.

the current *Forest and Range Practices Act* has caused a de-generation back to the days of terrible wood waste, atrocious road building, and disregard of streams leading to fisheries and domestic water supplies.

Frustrated by a string of fruitless meetings and communications with BC Timber Sales and Springer Creek, 80 people representing several communities and organizations in the Valley attended a meeting sponsored by the Valhalla Society to air their concerns. The Sinixt First Nation sought support for their Aboriginal Title case so they would be in a better position to address the rampant logging. Marilyn Burgoon, President of the Perry Ridge Water Users Association, detailed that group's struggles with BC Timber Sales. The groups agreed to continue meeting.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

It is now critically important to send letters to government. Here are some key points to remember:

- ◆ Old-growth forests are the best means we have to remove carbon from the air and store it on a massive scale. With the climate in so much trouble, logging old-growth forest should be banned.
- ◆ The mountain caribou plan did not significantly reduce logging in mountain caribou habitat. Logging is the chief reason why the mountain caribou are disappearing.
- ◆ Under no circumstances should industry be able to log our caribou forest reserves, old-growth management areas or parks.
- ◆ Fully protected parks to preserve old-growth inland temperate rainforest are now urgently needed throughout the Inland Rainforest Region.
- ◆ The proposed Selkirk Mountain Caribou Park has big trees that should never be logged. Saving it would increase protection of mountain caribou and myriad other species such

as grizzly bears and lichens.

- ◆ Our forests belong to the public. They are critical to the public welfare. As more is learned about how forests protect the planet's climate, its water and biodiversity, BC must have the flexibility to protect more forest as needed. Commercial forest reserves that put forest off-limits to future conservation measures are a severe violation of these principles, and out of touch with the reality of the dangers that we face today from environmental destruction.

Send letters to:

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premier@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Barry Penner
Minister of Environment
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CHARITABLE DONATIONS ARE SUNSHINE TO OUR WORK

An environmental organization is much more than its projects and the parks it has achieved. It is part of a worldwide force for the defense of nature. It gives its members a voice in public environmental affairs. The global economic crisis has had a very large impact on VWS's funding, especially the major funding provided by foundations. This has necessarily reduced our capacity to work, but all the work and achievement recorded in this newsletter, and more, was accomplished this year. Nevertheless, VWS could increase its effectiveness with sufficient funding. The donations of members and supporters are critically important. These funds maintain the core of our work. The generosity of our individual donors has been enormously encouraging for all the VWS activists. Keep it up and together we will see what we can do in the new year.



Valhalla Wilderness Society

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TROUBLING TIMES – AWAKENED CITIZEN-ACTION NEEDED

The proposed Bute Inlet independent power project (IPP) on the coast is being justified as a producer of “green energy.” Yet it includes diversion of 17 streams, 445 kilometres of transmission lines, 314 kilometres of roads, 142 new bridges, 16 power houses and a substation — all in a coastal wilderness area teeming with wildlife and crucial fisheries.

www.valleyvoice.ca



NDP MP Alex Atamanenko speaks to a crowd of over 1,000 protesters at a hearing of the Environmental Assessment process for the Glacier-Howser private power project. NDP MLA Michelle Mungall (far left) spoke forcefully against the project.

The Bute Inlet proposal will receive a federal environmental assessment. But even at their best, environmental assessments seldom turn down projects, even when there is extensive evidence of major environmental damage.

Environmental assessments will not tell us whether BC needs so much power badly enough to cause such huge environmental damage. They will not assess whether the new power source really will reduce carbon emissions (given that they have a HUGE carbon footprint). It has now been established without doubt that the excess energy will be for export to the U.S. Canadians will pay in the damage to their ecosystems while they also subsidize the IPP industry with greatly increased electricity rates.

In its application for the Glacier-Howser IPP in the West Kootenays, the developer, “Purcell Green Power” (alias Axor Corporation), explains that the initial proposal for Howser Creek could not generate enough power to pay for the connection of the project to the provincial grid, so Glacier Creek and two tributaries were added. Now the area is threatened with two dams, the diversion of four creeks that will remove most of the water from them permanently, 16 kilometres of tunnel big enough to accommodate a dump truck, the dumping of a huge quantity of waste rock near streams and rivers, with potential acid drainage into the nearby creeks and lakes, seismic lines and the logging of 91 kilometres of corridor for transmission lines.

The BC Environmental Assessment provided no panel review, and gave the public only 45 days for review and comment on over 1,000 pages of environmental impact statement by the proponent. This and other aggravating factors help to explain why, in June of this year, approximately 1,100 enraged citizens descended on a Glacier-Howser EA meeting in Kaslo. They lambasted the proponent, the Environmental Assessment Office, the provincial government, and the project itself for three hours. The protest was organized by the West Kootenay Ecosociety and was attended by all the West

Kootenay environmental groups.

Director Anne Sherrod gave input to the EA panel on behalf of the the Valhalla Wilderness Society. Based upon experience in several EA processes, Sherrod denounced the state of environmental assessment in Canada and BC. The Glacier-Howser project has been stalled, ostensibly to restudy the bull trout issue, but most likely because of the enormous public attendance and outrage expressed at this hearing.

Vast markets for dirty tarsands oil, raw logs and electrical power are causing a veritable gold rush amongst Canadian government-industrial interests. The need of water-, energy- and forest-depleted countries has become a giant suction pump on Canadian resources, virtually cutting the lines between Canadian citizens and their government decision-makers.

Like a travelling salesman for the logging industry, the BC government has been in China advocating wood construction using BC cedar and other types of logs and signing trade agreements. If we could see visually, at once, the total drain on our resources, and the future pollution of our environment because of IPPs, raw log exports, dirty oil pipelines and oil tanker traffic off BC’s coast, we would see a huge tragedy in the making. And spreading above it all, like a mushroom cloud, would be global warming — all of it stemming from deadly social values that put private and corporate economic gain first and always before the values, needs and rights of all life and the public interest.

This is a time when an awakened and aroused citizenry can make a crucial difference. In Canada we have a democracy, but we will have to use it or lose it.

This year the Watershed Sentinel commissioned a lengthy article by Sherrod on problems with Environmental Assessment in Canada. See “The Farce of Environmental Assessment,” Watershed Sentinel, September/October 2009. You can find it on our home page at www.wvs.org.