

Making Recreational Space:
Citizen Involvement in Outdoor Recreation and
Park Establishment in British Columbia, 1900-2000

by

Jenny Clayton
B.A., University of Victoria, 1999
M.A., University of New Brunswick, 2001

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

Studies of outdoor recreation and the social construction of wilderness have shown how urban consumption of wilderness areas dispossessed rural residents from traditional land uses. Though essential for understanding power struggles over land use, these studies pay little attention to rural involvement in creating recreational areas. In contrast, this dissertation focuses on how rural non-indigenous people used, enjoyed and constructed their own recreational hinterland. Set in twentieth-century British Columbia, where wilderness adventure is popular and where mountains, oceans and lakes lend themselves to romantic and sublime aesthetics, the case studies here examine rural recreation by considering the forms that “rural” has taken in British Columbia, the relationship of civil society to government, conceptions of Crown and private land as a commons, the production and consumption of recreational spaces, and ethics such as woodcraft, “leave-no-trace,” the “good life” and postmaterialism.

The sources include interviews with participants in these activities and archival sources such as diaries, newspapers, government records on parks, forestry and

transportation, and letters that citizens wrote to government. This material is set within the context of historical studies of outdoor recreation, the social construction of wilderness, automobiles and parks, the informal economy, and the contested commons.

The first two case studies involve the imaginative transformation of mountain landscapes into parks and playgrounds to attract tourists at Mt. Revelstoke and on Vancouver Island's Forbidden Plateau. During the Second World War, the province was reluctant to create parks for local recreation, but at Darke Lake in the Okanagan, the Fish and Game Club lobbied successfully for a small park, challenging the supremacy of logging as an essential war industry. After the war, the state's view of parks shifted. The provincial government promoted recreational democracy, and offered parks as part of the "good life" to working families from booming single-industry towns, sometimes responding to local demands as in the case of the Champion Lakes. Inspired by the American Wilderness Act of 1964, some British Columbians sought to preserve large tracts of roadless, forested land. The Purcell Wilderness Conservancy (1974) in the Kootenay region resulted from a local trail-building effort and a letter-writing campaign. Beginning in the late 1980s, retirees in Powell River started building trails on the edges of town. This group is still active in ensuring that their forested hinterland remains an accessible commons for recreational use.

The rural British Columbians discussed in these case studies consistently engaged with the backcountry as their recreational commons where they could combine work and leisure, harvest non-timber forest products, and promote tourism. Rural residents who were willing to volunteer and enjoyed some leisure time forged networks among tourism promoters and applied for government funding to create access to recreational space, and

protect it from uses inconsistent with recreation, such as logging. British Columbians have claimed the right to access Crown land as a commons for recreation in a variety of ways over the twentieth century and these case studies show how rural agency has played a significant role in creating recreational space.

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Chapter 1

Consumers, Creators and Citizens:

British Columbians and Recreational Spaces

Recreational space and spectacular landscapes have played an important role in attracting settlers and visitors to British Columbia, and continue to help propel the provincial economy.¹ Despite the significance of outdoor recreation to the province's economy and identity, historical studies are few and limited in their focus. Because of its varied and often mountainous terrain, British Columbia, Canada's westernmost province, offers a variety of recreational experiences. A study of outdoor recreation there can reveal much about the history of land use, consumerism, local agency, and political involvement in the province.

Inspired by North American historical studies of park planning, urban participation in outdoor recreation, and rural responses to conservation, this dissertation focuses directly on grassroots agency and initiatives to create local recreational spaces and parks. It shows how non-indigenous British Columbians beyond metropolitan Vancouver and Victoria have engaged with their physical environments, formulated economic strategies, and negotiated with various levels of government because of their desire to promote and participate in outdoor recreation. The seven case studies here include communities with urban ambitions, resource-based company towns, and an intentional rural community whose population consisted of former urbanites.²

¹ In 2000 tourism was "the second largest resource industry in the province. In 1997, \$8.5 billion was spent by 21 million overnight visitors." Brett MacGillivray, *Geography of British Columbia: People and Landscapes in Transition* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000). 190.

² These case studies do not include First Nations engagement in recreation and conservation, but do contribute to the groundwork for such a study. For Aboriginal involvement in making and enjoying

Collectively, they challenge the notion of outdoor recreation as simply a consumer activity, because local residents physically and imaginatively shaped natural areas in close proximity to their homes, combined leisure and labour in the same outdoor spaces, and engaged with governments to promote their visions of how these spaces should be managed.

This study shows that British Columbians played three major roles as participants in outdoor recreation: consumers, creators and citizens. As consumers, they enjoyed weekend hiking or skiing trips, or family excursions to the lake. As creators they drew on popular images and narratives that described similar desirable spaces elsewhere in North America and Europe to recognize and value local landscapes as romantic, sublime, and appropriate for recreation, instead of other more productive land uses. Boosters took photographs, wrote newspaper stories and gave presentations to advertise local spaces as enticing landscapes of adventure. Not only did the creation of recreational spaces involve cultural production to equate local spaces with more famous wilderness monuments, but it also required the physical manipulation of sites to build access and accommodation. Recreational spaces produced by communities outside of British Columbia's metropolitan areas attracted both urban tourists and local recreationists. The latter integrated work and leisure, and built some of their own equipment. Finally, citizenship through outdoor recreation worked in two directions. Governments used outdoor recreation to create citizens as strong healthy individuals imbued with democratic qualities of cooperation and equality. For their part, local citizens' participation in

recreational space in British Columbia, see Laura Cameron, *Openings: A Meditation on History, Method, and Sumas Lake* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); Wendy Wickwire and Michael M'Gonigle, *Stein: The Way of the River* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1988) and Bruce Braun, *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada's West Coast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

outdoor recreation spurred them to lobby government for the protection of their natural spaces.

Local enjoyment and later, protection of recreational spaces developed out of a settler belief in rights of common access to Crown land. Political engagement, then, arose not just out of environmentalist motivations but also from a desire to protect customary rights to land. In order to understand why residents felt they had the right to access public lands for recreation and resource harvesting, or how so much of British Columbia became “common,” we must pay attention to its demographic and land policy history. British Columbia is a resettled space, appearing empty, available, and more “natural” than “cultural” because of its history of contact, disease depopulation, and displacement.³ Beginning in 1859, a system of pre-emption allowed rural settlers to stake out Crown land and live on it for free. Once pre-emptors had made “improvements” (fencing, clearing, building), they had the right to purchase that land at a low rate.⁴ While land became more freely accessible to non-Aboriginal settlers, Aboriginal rights to land were constricted. After 1855, reserves in BC were laid out without treaties, and lands that were neither reserves nor private were treated as “Crown lands” controlled by the province. Aboriginal people lost the right to pre-empt land in 1866. By 1871, British Columbia’s stingy reserve policy was entrenched in the Terms of Union by which it entered

³ Cole Harris estimates that “well over 200,000” Aboriginal people lived in what became British Columbia before contact. A devastating smallpox epidemic that hit the Strait of Georgia in 1792 was only the first of many “virgin soil” epidemics that struck the people living here. A subsequent smallpox epidemic in 1862-63 killed 20,000 Aboriginal people on Vancouver Island and the Mainland. By 1871, the estimated Aboriginal population of the province was 25,661. Cole Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 30; Jean Barman, *West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (3rd ed) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 167.

⁴ On the pre-emption system, see R.W. Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space: Land Policy and Practices of Resettlement on Saltspring Island, 1859-1891* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2005), ch. 3.

Confederation.⁵ At the same time, a good portion of arable, valley bottom lands were transferred from the province to finance the building of the Canadian Pacific and Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railways. By 1911, immigration as well as natural growth had increased the European and Asian population to such a degree that Aboriginal people, although numbering over 20,000, constituted only 5.1 percent of the population.⁶

Because of the history of Crown ownership of lands in BC, where forests are generally leased temporarily to logging or mining companies, British Columbians traditionally claim public rights to access these lands.⁷ Cheap land and self-provisioning – harvesting resources from common areas – were key to the survival of rural settlers in nineteenth and early twentieth century, and also essential to the rural informal economy, which operated “outside the formal legalised structures of a nation’s capitalist economy.”⁸ Harvesting from the commons, a resource “that is shared by a community of

⁵ From 1849-1855, Governor James Douglas signed fourteen treaties with First Nations on Vancouver Island. Douglas took as his precedent the Royal Proclamation of 1763 that recognized Aboriginal title to their ancestral lands. He also operated under the assumption that the Crown had the right and the responsibility to extinguish title so that settlers could move onto the land and use it for what were considered more productive purposes. After 1855, Douglas ceased negotiating treaties but assigned reserves on the mainland that took into account the wishes of Aboriginal communities. Douglas intended for Aboriginal people to live on reserves until they integrated into “mainstream” settler society, therefore while Douglas was in power, Aboriginal people had the right to pre-empt land, a right they lost in 1866. At Confederation, Douglas’ discontinuation of treaties and an increasingly parsimonious reserve system under Joseph Trutch were entrenched by the Terms of Union, which stated that “a policy as liberal as that hitherto pursued by the British Columbia Government shall be continued by the Dominion Government after the union.” (BC Terms of Union, Clause 13). An exception was Treaty 8 in the Peace River District, negotiated in 1899. See Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).

⁶ This was a decline from previous population numbers of 25,661 Aboriginal people in BC in 1881, and 28,949 in 1901. Barman, *West Beyond the West*, Table 5, 429.

⁷ Public rights to Crown forest land are at least as old as the 1912 Forest Act, which stipulated (in Penn’s words) that “First, land and management of land remained in the control of the government. Secondly, the timber could be dispensed in a variety of different tenures each of which had a different legal impact of public access, and thirdly, in the Crown’s forests travelers could not be construed as trespassers as long as they were not damaging forests or interfering with operations.” Briony Penn, “Access to Land for Recreation in British Columbia: An Historical Review with Present-Day Implications,” *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 2 (2) (1987), 245.

⁸ Rosemary Ommer and Nancy Turner explain that occupational pluralism “initially involved the utilization of a range of ecological niches to provide year-round sustenance. They are, therefore, of necessity both

producers and consumers,”⁹ was part of a much older tradition. In both nineteenth-century northern New England and the American West, settlers premised their “trespassing for game, fish, berries, pasturage, wood and a variety of other wild resources . . . on the frontier conviction that ‘vacant’ lands were public resources.”¹⁰ Similarly, pre-emptors on Saltspring Island supplemented their subsistence farming by hunting, gathering and fishing.¹¹ Loggers and farmers took advantage of the new life that rose from the ashes of burned-over clearcuts of the Comox Logging Company in the 1930s, as these areas turned into sites of abundance where they could hunt for deer, pheasants and quail, and pick large quantities of trailing blackberries.¹²

British Columbians who live near forested lands continue to harvest non-timber forest products (NTFPs), “for commercial, personal and traditional purposes.”¹³ These include mushrooms, floral greenery (such as salal), edible berries, fruit and herbs, landscaping plants, craft materials and medicinal plants.¹⁴ There has been some debate over citizen rights to harvest NTFPs on Crown land. Commentators have interpreted a lack of regulation in different ways. Supporting Aboriginal economic development

place-specific in operation, and rural.” Ommer and Turner, “Informal Rural Economies in History,” *Labour/Le Travail* 53 (2004), 128.

⁹ Ronald J. Oakerson, “Analyzing the Commons: A Framework,” in Bromley et al. *Making the Commons Work*, 41.

¹⁰ Richard W. Judd, *Common Lands, Common People: The Origins of Conservation in Northern New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 44.

¹¹ R.W. Sandwell, “Negotiating Rural: Policy and Practice in the Settlement of Saltspring Island, 1859-91,” *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 91. See also Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space*.

¹² Richard Mackie, *Island Timber: A Social History of the Comox Logging Company, Vancouver Island* (Victoria, BC: Sono Nis Press, 2000), 264.

¹³ See chapter seven on Powell River and responses from residents of Gold River and Cowichan Lake to a *Times Colonist* article that referred to the current harvest of mushrooms and waste wood from logging sites (see conclusion). Judith Lavoie, “Old Growth Forests Fall in Tough Economy,” *Times Colonist*, 7 March 2009. Accessed 10 April 2009.

<http://communities.canada.com/victoriatimescolonist/blogs/soundoff/archive/2009/03/07260092.aspx>; Sinclair Tedder, Darcy Mitchell, and Ann Hillyer, “Property Rights in the Sustainable Management of Non-Timber Forest Products,” Victoria, BC: Ministry of Forests, 2002, v.

¹⁴ Tedder et al, “Property Rights,” 7.

through the harvest of NTFPs, Nancy Turner and Wendy Cocksedge write that the absence of provincial legislation dealing with “commercial gathering of NTFPs within provincial forest lands and tree farm license areas,” creates a potential for overharvest and inequitable access.¹⁵ A study commissioned by the Ministry of Forests to explore ways to prevent overharvesting NTFPs and loss of revenue to the provincial government, agrees that most harvesting of NTFPs is unregulated but points out that it is illegal without authority.¹⁶ Like public access to Crown land, harvesting non-timber forest products is a citizen right maintained in practice, but apparently not enshrined in legislation.

The BC Wildlife Federation first drew attention to public rights to Crown forest lands in 1947.¹⁷ In recognition of these rights, the provincial government appointed committees in 1963 and 1964 to investigate public access to private roads. Ultimately, the government and the BC Wildlife Federation let the matter rest, because most logging companies allowed weekend access, and the Forest Service expanded its system of picnic areas and campsites. As one historian put it, in 1971 Minister of Lands Ray Williston “said forest lands were available for public use, and unless he could be shown where significant access problems existed, he would not approve access legislation.”¹⁸

¹⁵ Nancy J. Turner and Wendy Cocksedge, *Aboriginal Use of Non-Timber Forest Products in Northwestern North America: Applications and Issues*, in Marla R. Emery and Rebecca J. McLain, eds., *Non-Timber Forest Products: Medicinal Herbs, Fungi, Edible Fruits and Nuts, and Other Natural Products from the Forest* (New York: Food Products Press, 2001), 46.

¹⁶ Tedder et al, “Property Rights.” “Currently, rights of access to public land for the commercial harvest of NTFPs is not regulated in British Columbia, but this does not mean that an informal, or *de facto*, right to these resources exists. With only limited exceptions at present, the removal of NTFPs for commercial purposes is an unauthorized illegal activity.” (13) “The harvest of trees or other forest vegetations without proper authority is illegal and may result in theft charges under the Criminal Code or trespass charges under the Forest Act or both.” (27)

¹⁷ Penn, “Access to Land for Recreation in British Columbia,” 236.

¹⁸ John Gordon Terpenning, “The B.C. Wildlife Federation and Government: A Comparative Study of Pressure Group and Government Interaction for Two Periods, 1947 to 1957, and 1958 to 1975,” (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1982), 65-66. One solution, on grazing lands, was to give individuals

This is also the story of the significance of rural recreation in British Columbia. It draws upon North American environmental history studies of the social construction of wilderness, the rural/urban divide, consumerism, parks, roads and wilderness, the commons, and recreational democracy. This study goes further. It asks: How did rural residents, most visible in the historical literature as labourers, guides,¹⁹ and as critics of urban tourism, participate in their own context in outdoor recreation? What values did they ascribe to nature through this recreation? Considering the critique of urban wilderness tourism as consumerism, what elements of production and consumption were at work in rural recreation? Since several historians have pointed to the dispossession of local residents by the establishment of national parks,²⁰ and others have written about the multiple uses of marginal commons,²¹ this study looks beyond fixed boundaries to examine forms of recreation both inside and outside park boundaries. Finally, given the linkages that historians of material culture, nature tourism, and volunteering have made between recreation, consumerism, and citizenship, this study investigates how in some

holding fishing and hunting licenses an exemption from trespass, but this approach, like giving a key to Bomb Squad members to access logging roads, tended to favour one recreational group over others. Penn, "Access to Land for Recreation in British Columbia," 246. The Comox District Mountaineering Club was recently fighting for access through private logging lands to the trail in use since the 1930s to the Comox Glacier. In 2007, TimberWest proposed to log across the trail and indicate its location with spraypaint. <http://www.comoxhiking.com/> (Accessed 18 May 2009).

¹⁹ See for example, Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), and Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1999).

²⁰ See Karl Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); I.S. MacLaren, "Cultured Wilderness in Jasper National Park," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 1999 34(3), 7-58; and Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²¹ Cameron, *Openings*; Nancy B. Bouchier and Ken Cruikshank, "The War on the Squatters, 1920-1940: Hamilton's Boathouse Community and the Re-Creation of Recreation on Burlington Bay," *Labour/Le Travail* 2003 (51), 9-46; Mackie, *Island Timber*, 263-285.

communities (not all) recreation could lead to political participation in twentieth century Canada.²²

An important body of work by environmental historians and historical geographers highlights how urbanites imagined and visited “wilderness” areas as adventure tourists temporarily escaping the urban landscapes of their everyday lives. According to Samuel P. Hays, in the United States the demand for state parks in the 1920s came from urban residents, while farmers resented the early twentieth century intrusion of “affluent urbanites” into “a more peaceful and virtuous land.”²³ William Cronon asserts that “celebrating wilderness has been an activity mainly for well-to-do city folks. Country people generally know far too much about working the land to regard *unworked* land as their ideal.”²⁴ Closer to home, in his analysis of contemporary tourism and adventure travel, geographer Bruce Braun states, “to live in Clayoquot Sound is to be continuously entangled in the mythopoetic space of others [i.e. visitors from the city], to find one’s home a site of fantasies and desires that are not one’s own.”²⁵ These critiques of urban colonization of the wilderness help to explain the consumer elements of outdoor recreation, to question the need to drive a great distance and purchase specialized outdoor equipment, and to explore the role our imaginations have played in differentiating certain landscapes as exotic, special, and mysterious. They also argue that mythologizing

²² Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Shirley Tillotson, *The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Post-War Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001); Jeremy Wilson, *Talk and Log: Wilderness Politics in British Columbia, 1965-96* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998).

²³ Hays, *Beauty, Health and Permanence*, 23, 288. This theme is developed in more detail in Lawrence M. Lipin, *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in Oregon, 1910-1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

²⁴ William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” in William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996) 79.

²⁵ Bruce Braun, “Landscapes of Loss and Mourning,” in *Intemperate Rainforest*, 146.

particular landscapes shifted rural residents from producers into new roles as participants in tourist service economies.²⁶

Acknowledging the rural-urban divide, scholars are now shifting perspective to address the agency and creativity of rural residents in their relationships with natural spaces, as historians explore how rural residents responded to or initiated conservation movements in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. This includes work by Richard Judd on rural conservation and the commons in New England, Karl Jacoby on the “moral ecology” of rural peoples in the face of American conservation, Benjamin Heber Johnson on class conflict over resource use at Superior National Forest, Bill Parenteau on the Canadian Atlantic salmon fishery, and Lawrence M. Lipin on working-class responses to conservation in early twentieth-century Oregon. Together, these studies focus on class, rural versus urban access to resources, and informal versus formal economies. Rural settler ideology was rooted in the concept of common land and the right to transform natural resources by their labour for their own use. Urban-based conservation movements restricted customary rural access to common resources, such as fish, game and timber. This led to community resistance to conservation regulations, that these scholars document in detail. Conservation tended to favour tourists over locals, consumers over producers, and the market economy over rural subsistence. While tourism brought cash to rural economies, it restricted local modes of self-provisioning.²⁷

²⁶ See Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1998).

²⁷ Karl Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Benjamin Heber Johnson, “Conservation, Subsistence, and Class at the Birth of Superior National Forest,” *Environmental History* 1999 4(1), 80-99; Bill Parenteau, “A ‘Very Determined Opposition to the Law’: Conservation, Angling Leases, and Social Conflict in the Canadian Atlantic Salmon Fishery, 1867-1914,” *Environmental History* 2004 9(3), 436-463; Lipin, *Workers and the Wild* and “‘Cast Aside the Automobile Enthusiast’: Class Conflict, Tax Policy, and the Preservation of Nature in Progressive-Era Oregon,” *Oregon Historical Society* 2006 107(2), 166-195.

The idea of the commons, the importance of the subsistence economy, and rural involvement in soliciting urban tourists are important themes in this dissertation, which unlike the works cited, also looks at rural participation in outdoor recreation to show how recreation merged with subsistence, tourism, and resource economies.

The few available historical studies of hinterland recreation describe how residents integrated recreation into everyday life – a challenge to the notion of recreation as consumerism.²⁸ Productive activities, such as harvesting non-timber forest products, were often permissible only in recreational spaces that were construed as marginal commons, beyond intense regulation. Opportunities to integrate leisure and labour declined after the space became officially bounded and strictly managed, for example as a provincial or national park, and these spaces were promoted for recreational use by temporary visitors only. Laura Cameron’s history of Sumas Lake, BC, includes a chapter on recreation, which she calls “lake pleasures.” Sumas remained a commons partly because annual flooding defied attempts by surveyors to impose a grid, and the lake supported both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal uses. Cameron “encountered descriptions of an enjoyed resource base that had not always been partitioned into useful and useless areas or into work areas and zones of leisure.”²⁹ An Aboriginal family’s Sunday afternoon picnic might include hunting, fishing and knitting. Sumas Lake was not an uncontested commons – different interest groups asserted different values for the lake, which was eventually destroyed, being drained and transformed into farmland.³⁰ In the United States, government intervention to promote national tourism in a rural area

²⁸ See Shelley Baranowski, “An Alternative to Everyday Life? The Politics of Leisure and Tourism,” *Contemporary European History* 2003 12(4): 561-572.

²⁹ Laura Cameron, “Listening for Pleasure” in *Openings: A Meditation on History, Method and Sumas Lake* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 19.

³⁰ Cameron, “Listening for Pleasure”, 16-40.

restricted local residents from access to the quasi-economical recreational activities they had previously enjoyed, and transformed leisure into a commodity separate from everyday life. When the federal government established a national recreation area in their backyards, local residents competed with national tourists for space, and had to purchase rather than create their own leisure.³¹

Some historians have argued that outdoor recreation became a consumer activity when participants stopped making their own games and equipment and began paying for recreational experiences.³² Scholars such as Paul Sutter have equated outdoor recreation and nature tourism as consumerism when tourists perceived landscapes and experiences in acquisitive terms.³³ Many recreationists preferred not to think of their activities as consumerism, instead they viewed their crossing of a carefully maintained frontier between civilization and wilderness in metaphysical rather than financial terms.³⁴

Marguerite Shaffer argues that Americans travelling in the United States in the early twentieth century were engaging in “geographic consumption,” “consuming the nation” in order to attain an American identity.³⁵ Similarly, Canadian historian Patricia Jasen broadly framed all travelers as tourists “whenever the pleasures of sightseeing, or the

³¹ L. Sue Greer, “The United States Forest Service and the Postwar Commodification of Outdoor Recreation,” in Richard Butsch, ed., *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 152-170.

³² Butsch asserts that the transformation of leisure from home-made to purchased was a process of class domination as participants lost control over their own leisure. Richard Butsch, “Introduction: Leisure and Hegemony in America,” in Richard Butsch, ed., *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 8.

³³ Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005). For example, Marguerite Shaffer categorizes the acquisition of intangibles such as “intense personal experience” and “reinvigoration” as consumerism. Shaffer, *See America First*, 2-3.

³⁴ Kerwin L. Klein, “Frontier Products: Tourism, Consumerism, and the Southwestern Public Lands, 1890-1990,” *Pacific Historical Review* 1993, 39-71.

³⁵ Shaffer, *See America First*, 2-3. See also Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).

pursuit of new experiences and the sensation of physical or imaginative freedom, emerged as the main priority.”³⁶

James Morton Turner’s research on woodcraft versus “leave no trace” camping is particularly valuable for understanding creativity and consumerism in outdoor recreation.³⁷ In the interwar period, originators of the wilderness movement took a woodcraft approach by which campers used their skills and knowledge of nature to make themselves at home in the wilderness, cutting wood, hunting, and living off the land. The woodcraft ethos, much like the back-to-the-land movement of the 1960s, rejected consumerism, embracing self-reliance over purchasing equipment. With the increasing popularity of outdoor recreation, however, park managers recognized that wilderness areas could not sustain the modification and resource consumption entailed by woodcraft visitors and so promoted an alternative “Leave No Trace” ethos, a practice in which hikers packed in all they would need and packed it all out again, impacting the landscapes they visited as little as possible. Turner argues that as a result campers discarded the anti-consumerist rhetoric of woodcraft in favour of consumer-oriented backpacking which in turn reduced their knowledge of nature and focused their attention “largely on protecting wilderness as a recreational landscape, in turn dismissing larger questions of the modern economy, consumerism, and the environment.”³⁸ In the case studies here, “leave no trace” did not always supplant woodcraft.

Recreation in non-metropolitan recreation was not simply consumerism, due to factors including living close to recreational space, building one’s own equipment,

³⁶ Jasen, *Wild Things*, 5-7.

³⁷ James Morton Turner, “From Woodcraft to ‘Leave No Trace’: Wilderness, Consumerism, and Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America,” *Environmental History* 2002 7(3) 462-484.

³⁸ Turner, “From Woodcraft to ‘Leave No Trace,” 479.

combining leisure and productive activities, and selling recreation to tourists. Proximity to the backcountry allowed hinterland residents easier, cheaper, and ultimately more varied access to the backcountry. Participants did not have to travel as far for their recreation and they often shared transportation. Cooperative efforts to build communal shelters reduced the need to purchase tents. Before the Second World War, hikers, skiers, and campers made some of their own backpacks, skis, toboggans, and lanterns but also ordered equipment from catalogues. In places like Powell River, local residents continue to build bridges, shelters, and hand rails. Local residents found ways to make recreation less expensive, or even to make it pay. They harvested plants, berries and minerals on their hiking trips, set up camps and lodges, or worked for these establishments as packers, cooks, or guides.

Volunteer labour has been essential to the vitality of outdoor recreation in British Columbia. Canadian historians, however, have been slow to theorize the topic of volunteering, so we must turn to sociologists for direction. John Wilson and Marc Musick define volunteering as a productive, collective and moral activity in which participants “give their time freely for the benefit of others.”³⁹ The collective aspect of volunteering lends it to analysis as a form of social capital, which may be understood as “the benefits accruing to individuals or families by virtue of their ties with others.”⁴⁰ Volunteering is generally carried out in a social context, with a group of people, to serve the community. People are more likely to volunteer who have close and multiple ties to their community, and through volunteering they strengthen and increase those ties. Some scholars have also made a distinction between formal volunteering (with an organization) and informal

³⁹ John Wilson and Marc Musick, “Who Cares? Toward an Integrated Theory of Volunteer Work,” *American Sociological Review* 62 (5), October 1997, 695.

⁴⁰ Alejandro Portes, “The Two Meanings of Social Capital,” *Sociological Forum* 15 (1) March 2000, 2.

volunteering, which might take the form of helping friends and family who need assistance.

In some of the case studies here, the efforts of groups who volunteered to improve local access to the outdoors also yielded economic benefits as recreational spaces drew tourists. Inspired by popular conceptions of wilderness as romantic and sublime, some local entrepreneurs promoted the consumption of nature by offering consumers from larger urban centres an escape from urban modernity and everyday life.⁴¹ In the words of tourism historian Hal Rothman, “The creation of the modern tourism industry required people who recognized that the attributes of a place had potential appeal and who could muster the capital to turn that perception into a tangible reality.”⁴² As “boosters” they promoted local landscapes, compared them to more famous tourist destinations,⁴³ and secured government funding using the language of progress, modernity and local development, to organize access and accommodate a mobile public. One goal of rural entrepreneurs and of preservationists alike was park establishment, but this could also separate nature and culture through that served the interests of the travelling public rather than local residents.

Park historians in Canada, inspired by the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s, wrote modern “progressive” narratives about Canada’s national parks as established for multiple-use. The idea of “usefulness” evolved to become increasingly oriented towards ecological preservation and biodiversity.⁴⁴ More recently, historians are

⁴¹ On the social construction of wilderness, see Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” and MacLaren, “Cultured Wilderness.”

⁴² Hal Rothman, “Selling the Meaning of Place: Entrepreneurship, Tourism, and Community Transformation in the Twentieth-Century American West,” *Pacific Historical Review* 1996 65(4) 557.

⁴³ For alpine areas, Switzerland was a popular benchmark.

⁴⁴ “Use” connotes a negative human interference in nature while “preservation” indicates the separation of nature from people and the harm we can cause. Robert Craig Brown, “The Doctrine of Usefulness: Natural

challenging the dichotomies of nature and culture, preservation and use, to explore how nature is generally imbued with culture, and how human perceptions of wilderness have changed over time.⁴⁵ In his multifaceted study of Jasper National Park, I.S. MacLaren examines how park managers mirrored changing values over time: by removing original residents, suppressing fires, and allowing only certain kinds of work in this space, to create a thickly forested landscape that visitors can enjoy in their leisure time.⁴⁶ Alan MacEachern's work on national parks in Atlantic Canada highlights the many subtle and ironic ways in which nature and culture, preservation and use overlapped: "In parks, the cultural and the natural merge, as they do everywhere else. But parks are particularly interesting because they are places where humans believe they have made nature paramount."⁴⁷

Historical studies indicate uneasy relationships between parks and local peoples. Residents have been physically removed from national and provincial parks that were intended instead for short-term visitors.⁴⁸ Others have lost usage rights. Some historians

Resource and National Park Policy in Canada, 1887-1914," In Nelson, J.G., ed. *Canadian Parks in Perspective* (Canada: Harvest House, 1970); Leslie Frances Bella, *Parks for Profit* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1987); C.J. Taylor, "Legislating Nature: The National Parks Act of 1930," in Rowland Lorimer, Michael M'Gonigle, Jean-Pierre Revéret and Sally Ross, eds., *To See Ourselves/To Save Ourselves: Ecology and Culture in Canada*, Canadian Issues 13 (Montréal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1991), 125-138; and Kevin McNamee, "From Wild Places to Endangered Spaces: A History of Canada's National Parks," in Philip Dearden and Rick Rollins, eds., *Parks and Protected Areas in Canada: Planning and Management* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), 17-44.

⁴⁵ In this, they have been inspired by the work of William Cronon, who argues that wilderness is "quite profoundly a human creation" reflecting "our own unexamined longings and desires." Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness."

⁴⁶ MacLaren, "Cultured Wilderness."

⁴⁷ Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 5. "Unrestrained use would make the park no different from places outside its borders, and the park as an idea would be meaningless. Likewise, unrestrained preservation would demand the exclusion of persons, a policy not only politically untenable but ecologically contrived, in that it would arbitrarily leave out one species to preserve a nature that had already been shaped by that species." (19)

⁴⁸ This occurred at Jasper, Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Pacific Rim National Park, and Juan de Fuca Provincial Park, to name a few. MacEachern argues that when obtaining the land for Cape Breton Highlands National Park, the federal Parks Branch saw locals as "abstractions," or obstacles to the

have argued that local residents can threaten the ecological integrity of parks,⁴⁹ while others have turned this argument on its head to examine how the establishment of parks criminalized traditional land uses.⁵⁰ Some studies have shown how local residents lobbied for provincial parks for their own enjoyment and after the Second World War gained positive results from the Department of Lands and Forests.⁵¹ Manitoba residents sought provincial parks for economic benefits and community revitalization.⁵²

On both sides of the border, the acceptability of roads to and within parks shifted dramatically over the twentieth century depending on whether tourism promoters or

development of the park. When surveying the boundaries of this park, the Branch made decisions about what communities should be left in the park, which ones the park boundary would omit, and which ones had to be erased once incorporated into the park, based on preconceived notions of “what life in rural Nova Scotia should be like.” MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 54-56.

⁴⁹ Rick Searle, *Phantom Parks: The Struggle to Save Canada's National Parks* (Toronto, Ontario: Key Porter Books, Ltd., 2000). One of Searle's arguments is that neighbours represent an ecological threat to parks. Elk ranchers lure elk out of parks to start their own herds; farms and subdivisions extend right up to park borders; non-native weeds invade parkland and bears leave park boundaries to forage in uncovered garbage. Although Searle's arguments are compelling, his representation of some neighbours as ignorant reduces his credibility. Robert J. Burns with Mike Schintz in *Guardians of the Wild: A History of the Warden Service of Canada's National Parks*. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000) generally sympathize with wardens although they recognize the needs of poachers. They note cases of locals being permitted to hunt in national parks, for example muskrats in Point Pelee National Park (26).

⁵⁰ Alan MacEachern mentions how the Parks Branch changed the fishing season to save fish for paying tourists who traveled from elsewhere (205-206). American historian Karl Jacoby focuses on local actors rather than rule-makers, and examines how the conservation movement “radically redefined what constituted legitimate uses of the environment.” Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature*, 1. Likewise, Ted Steinberg points to the arbitrary control of local activities by central authorities at Yellowstone National Park with minimal understanding of the impact of those activities on livelihoods and ecosystems. Steinberg, “Down to Earth: Nature, Agency, and Power in History,” *American Historical Review* 107(3) June 2002, 817.

⁵¹ Gerald Killan, *Protected Places: A History of Ontario's Provincial Parks System*. (Toronto: Dundurn Press with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1993), 39-40. Lobby groups, such as the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC), have also influenced management of national parks. The ACC supported the principle of inviolability in national parks and defended the Rocky Mountain parks against development plans for irrigation and damming in the early twentieth century. Pearlann Reichwein, “‘Hands Off Our National Parks’: The Alpine Club of Canada and Hydro-development Controversies in the Canadian Rockies, 1922-1930,” *Journal of the CHA* 6 1995, 129-155. National park historian Kevin McNamee adds, “History has shown that governments do not act in a benevolent fashion when it comes to wilderness protection. Politics and public pressure are what drive the park establishment process.” McNamee, “From Wild Places to Endangered Spaces,” 41.

⁵² John C. Lehr, “The Origins and Development of Manitoba's Provincial Park System,” *Prairie Forum* 2001 26(2), 242-252. Lehr concludes, however, that recent debates over provincial parks have been polarized along rural/urban lines since urban dwellers are seen to benefit from parks as tourists whereas rural residents lose resource jobs when land is converted to parks.

preservationists advocated parks. In the late nineteenth century, railway companies promoted and benefited from the establishment of western national parks, enabling the rise of mountaineering as a popular elite sport.⁵³ In the 1910s, the construction of automobile roads built through the park and up the side of the mountain at Mt. Revelstoke in British Columbia and Mt. Rainier in Washington State gave visitors a series of unfolding panoramic views of nature through their windshields.⁵⁴ Relief works projects funded road building and park development in the 1930s.⁵⁵ In British Columbia, some tourism promoters doubted the wisdom of a direct road connection to wilderness areas; in the United States, this critique of roads and development led to the formation of the Wilderness Society.⁵⁶ By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the provincial government was becoming more involved in providing British Columbians with recreational opportunities by establishing small parks adjacent to new highways. In 1964, the Wilderness Society was instrumental in the passage of the American Wilderness Act, which defined wilderness areas as being devoid of roads, motorized vehicles and commercial operations. As a result, some new parks established in British Columbia and Washington State did not have direct road access, and prohibited motorized vehicles.⁵⁷

Logging operations and roads continue to serve as a double-edged sword for recreational

⁵³ Bella, *Parks for Profit*.

⁵⁴ Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, 11-67.

⁵⁵ In the United States, this work was carried out by the Civilian Conservation Corps. In Canada, unemployed men also worked on park projects. Bill Waiser, *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1995).

⁵⁶ Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild*, as described in Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, xi, 8.

⁵⁷ North Cascades National Park, established in 1968, did not have roads within it, but could be accessed by roads in recreational areas buffering the park. Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, 105-133. Lobbyists for the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy in BC included Americans who had fled to the Kootenays to get off the grid. They envisioned a new kind of provincial protected area, directly inspired by the 1964 American Wilderness Act, where roads, motorized vehicles, and commercial activities would be prohibited. The idea of a roadless, non-commercial wilderness ignited local debate, as it threatened livelihoods in forestry and sport-hunting.

spaces, opening up some areas for hiking and trail building, while limiting access to or obliterating other popular trails.⁵⁸

Part of the mid-century motivation to build roads to parks stemmed from a belief that parks and recreation created good citizens, shaping young people into responsible, healthy adults. During the First World War, national parks were places where (in particular male) citizens could maintain their strength and vitality. Citizens enjoyed leisure in parks, while non-citizens – defined as indigent enemy aliens – were forced to labour in them, building access and infrastructure in national parks.⁵⁹ Youth groups in the interwar period, such as Scouts and Girl Guides, taught adolescents woodcraft skills, democratic participation, and cooperation. As in the Depression of the 1930s, idle youth continued to be problematic for experts and reformers during the Cold War, when outdoor recreation and forestry training programs were proposed as antidotes to juvenile delinquency and as an education in democracy. By the 1970s, Canada's federal government hoped to integrate alienated youth in community-oriented projects through summer work programs, and youth-initiated projects including trail-building efforts and park feasibility planning.

Recreational land use was not only the result of top-down state encouragement to improve one's self through recreation, but also inspired political participation in state management of natural spaces. Marguerite Shaffer suggests that in the United States nature tourism distracted citizen-consumers, serving as an attractive alternative to

⁵⁸ Since the late 1980s, Powell River trail builders have used logging roads which provide access to, yet sometimes impinge on, hiking and trail building.

⁵⁹ See Waiser, *Park Prisoners*; Bohdan S. Kordan, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada during the Great War* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002); and Bohdan S. Kordan and Peter Melnycky, *In the Shadow of the Rockies: Diary of the Castle Mountain Internment Camp, 1915-1917* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1991).

political participation, and in response tourists celebrated “seeing over speaking, purchasing over voting, and traveling over participating.”⁶⁰ A bumper sticker currently for sale by the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, “I camp and I vote,” is more apt for twentieth century British Columbia. This bumper sticker highlights the sometimes uneasy relationship between camping and driving, but it also suggests camping’s political dimension. Outdoor recreation has led to political participation for both economic and preservationist reasons. Civic boosters early in the century urged their elected representatives to create national parks as economic and cultural engines to increase local prestige, investments, real estate value, population growth, and tourist revenue. When communities identified recreational areas of interest and attracted sufficient tourist use, governments often provided funding for trails and roads.

Local residents lobbied the provincial government for ecological protection of, access to, and the means to benefit economically from the recreational commons. In the 1930s, fish and game clubs petitioned the provincial government in opposition to privatization of lakes. By the 1940s, local groups were writing to the Sloan Commission on Forestry to oppose logging on lakeshores lest it affect the health of lakes. In the postwar years, a broad range of rural residents corresponded with their elected representatives to request parks that accommodated their individual needs, ranging from private homesites to opportunities to work or open businesses inside provincial parks. By the late 1960s, local interests shifted their goals from economic boosterism to preservation. Efforts to protect a mountain range in the Kootenay district involved trail-building, protest poetry, public meetings and a preservationist letter-writing campaign, which culminated in the establishment of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy.

⁶⁰ Shaffer, *See America First*, 6.

The case studies here are held together by the thread of local agency in establishing, enjoying and shaping recreational space. All of the communities studied were located in BC's hinterland and away from metropolitan centres. Since most of these communities were home to more than 1000 people, they did not generally fit into the category of "census rural." Because of British Columbia's mountainous terrain, "rural" is a problematic term. Only 4 percent of its lands are designated agricultural, with another 30 percent having some agricultural potential, for example as range land.⁶¹ As a result, the province does not fit the rural/urban dichotomy evident elsewhere in Canada. BC's lack of agricultural lands and its preponderance of resource-based towns have invited some scholars to define the province as primarily urban. Historian John Douglas Belshaw, for example, uses census data to argue that "the province was arguably the most urban in Canada for much of the twentieth century."⁶² Relying more on resource extraction and processing than agriculture, BC's small towns "operated within the [urban] parameters of proletarianization, wage-labour, and time-work discipline."⁶³ In contrast, scholars of economic development and sustainability have broadened the definition of rural to include resource-based communities with more than 1000 residents but beyond commuting distance of metropolitan centres.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Prime agricultural land is situated on the east coast of Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland, the Okanagan Valley, the Columbia River Valley, and the Peace River district. McGillivray, *Geography of British Columbia*, 166.

⁶² See for example geographer Lewis Robinson who states that BC's "population has always been mainly urban." Lewis Robinson, "British Columbia: Canada's Pacific Province," in Larry McCann and Angus Gunn, eds., *Heartland and Hinterland: A Regional Geography of Canada* (Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall Canada, Inc., 1998), 353. John Douglas Belshaw, *Becoming British Columbia: A Population History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 64.

⁶³ Belshaw, *Becoming British Columbia*, 68.

⁶⁴ For example, geographer Maureen G. Reed notes that people who live in forestry communities define themselves as rural and "share common elements and concerns with residents of other rural places who rely

Twentieth-century settlement in BC can be divided broadly and geographically into metropolis and frontier, or heartland and hinterland. A metropolis is a large urban centre that dominates its geographical region economically and politically by operating as a centre of trade, manufacturing, government and culture.⁶⁵ Heartland and hinterland form a related conceptual dichotomy. Heartlands are strategically located to take advantage of trade routes, are economically diversified and contain large concentrated populations. Hinterlands rely on primary resource production, have limited political power and their growth is often dependent on decisions made in the heartland.⁶⁶ BC's urban centres are concentrated around the Georgia Strait while the vast territory to its north and east constitutes the hinterland, including small cities, towns and resource communities. In 1951 there was already an "enormous disparity between the metropolis with its suburban satellites and the rest of urban British Columbia," as 344,800 people lived in Vancouver and 51,300 in Victoria, while the next largest centres outside of the Lower Mainland were home to less than 12,000 people each.⁶⁷ At the turn of the twenty-first century, almost half of the province's population lives in Greater Vancouver, with

on extraction and/or processing of natural resources for their livelihoods (e.g., mining, fishing, and agricultural communities)." Maureen G. Reed, *Taking Stands: Gender and the Sustainability of Rural Communities* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 9. The authors of *Second Growth: Community Economic Development in Rural British Columbia* suggest that rural is a relative term that can be defined on a continuum. They point to four definitions of rural: "census" rural communities with a population of less than 1,000, small towns outside of commuting distance to centres of 10,000 or more, non-metropolitan regions that are located outside urban cities with at least 50,000 residents, or communities having a population density of 150 persons or less per square kilometer. Sean Markey, John T. Pierce, Kelly Vodden, and Mark Roseland, *Second Growth: Community Economic Development in Rural British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 23. Belshaw notes that the census definition of urban has fluctuated since 1951. Belshaw, *Becoming British Columbia*, 66.

⁶⁵ Maurice Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Review* 35 (1954), 7, cited in McCann and Gunn, *Heartland and Hinterland*, 23.

⁶⁶ McCann and Gunn, *Heartland and Hinterland*, 4.

⁶⁷ Belshaw, *Becoming British Columbia*, 64.

another twenty-five percent located on southern Vancouver Island and the southern Fraser Valley.⁶⁸

For the purpose of examining local participation in outdoor recreation, the following cases were selected as examples of local initiative or popular local use in hinterland communities. Rural or not, most of the communities featured here were resource-based, primary industry communities, reliant on mineral smelting, forestry, or to a lesser extent, agriculture. These were towns and small cities “separated by substantial zones of open countryside,”⁶⁹ which served as a recreational and resource harvesting backcountry for community residents. Their proximity to undeveloped countryside meant that residents did not have to travel far to find themselves in a “wilderness” or a forested playground. Those natural spaces helped attract and retain employees.⁷⁰ In that important sense, their outdoor recreation was different from that of urbanites who used road and railway networks to travel far from their homes for a distinct “wilderness experience.” While these communities were located in close proximity to lands with recreational potential, all were distant from centres of power, where decisions were made over land use. The hinterland locations meant that residents had to negotiate with heartland politicians who may have had different priorities for land use.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Robinson, “British Columbia: Canada’s Pacific Province,” 342.

⁶⁹ Markey et al suggest that “small areas separated by substantial zones of open countryside” is one definition of rural. Markey et al, *Second Growth*, 23.

⁷⁰ Janice Beck, *Three Towns: A History of Kitimat* (Kitimat, BC: Kitimat Centennial Museum Association, 1983), 65. Roderick Haig-Brown, “Recreation and Wildlife for Tomorrow,” in *Transactions of the Sixth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference*, February 1953, 152. The director of a BC paper mill told Haig-Brown that he had access to a good labour market because “This is the sort of place our people like to live in. They can get out and do things.”

⁷¹ Ruth Sandwell notes that rural and urban residents could come into conflict over appropriate land use in the countryside. Sandwell, *Beyond the City Limits*, 13.



Map 1.1: Location of Case Studies

Source: Map by Christian Lieb, Basemap from Wikipedia Commons

Since this is intended to be a social history of outdoor recreation, rather than a top-down history of parks, these case studies consider non-park areas, provincial parks, and a national park. It was not necessary for parks to be formally established for local

residents to enjoy particular landscapes in their leisure time. If the government did not provide access, outdoor clubs or informal groups of friends could create their own paths. Because park status could limit local use through regulation,⁷² even though it could increase the area's profile and tourist potential, it was not necessarily the goal of all local residents. These case studies represent coastal and interior regions in southern BC, communities with different economic foundations, and the mountains, lakes, shorelines and valleys that their residents visited for recreation.

Chapters are organized in chronological succession over the twentieth century. The first chapter focuses on Revelstoke and its adjacent national park. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, this railway hub aspired to be a modern city, and the City Beautiful movement played a role in its designs to create a national park to boost local tourism. The second case study deals with an agricultural area, the Comox Valley, in the interwar period, where logging and mining were also important occupations. Comox Valley residents "discovered" and named the Forbidden Plateau when exploring this alpine area to assess the sustainability of the city's water supply. The third chapter focuses on park creation during wartime. By the 1940s, rod and gun clubs were vocal defenders of public access to Crown land for recreation, and called for a park at Fish Lake in the uplands of the Okanagan fruit-farming district. The fourth chapter, set in the 1950s, explores how the provincial government created parks like Champion Lakes and Lakelse Lake Provincial Parks where workers from single-industry towns, Trail and Kitimat respectively, could escape for the weekend with their families. In the fifth chapter, set in the Kootenay region in the late 1960s, back-to-the-landers from Argentina played a significant role in a regional environmental movement. Despite their different

⁷² See for example, Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature*.

perspectives and values, new and old settlers found common ground in the campaign to protect the Purcell Mountains, including Hamill Creek and Fry Creek. The last chapter is about retired trail builders in the company town of Powell River, on the Sunshine Coast. Some of these men had come from elsewhere to work at the pulp and paper mill, while others grew up in the community. Their work was industrial and factory oriented, but their leisure and some sustenance activities took place in the surrounding working forest.

Since there is no thorough survey of the history of parks and recreational areas in British Columbia, I selected case studies based on readings of park guides, primary source collections such as Forestry Commissions, and individual park records. Maggie Paquet's guide to parks in BC was particularly useful for its short commentaries on the history of many parks, indicating that Mt. Revelstoke National Park and Champion Lakes Provincial Park were established due to public demand, and that a local Opportunities for Youth group had rebuilt a trail in the Purcell Mountains prior to the creation of a conservancy there.⁷³ Submissions to BC Commissions on Forest Resources in 1943-45 and 1955 highlighted locations that British Columbians wanted protected from logging, including Darke Lake. Jeremy Wilson's study of wilderness politics in British Columbia explained the conflicted origins of numerous protected areas. Sometimes my own hiking experiences made me want to learn more about an area, for example trekking on the Forbidden Plateau. Contract research on historical Aboriginal land use in Northern BC brought Lakelse Lake to my attention – a socioeconomic report from 1974 and clippings in the BC Archives vertical files confirmed that this lake was primarily popular with local

⁷³ When describing repeated local efforts to use, protect, and profit from the Champion Lakes for recreation in the early twentieth century, Paquet comments, "The history of this park is interesting because it tells the story of a large number of our parklands." Maggie Paquet, *The B.C. Parks Explorer* (North Vancouver, BC: Whitecap Books, 1986), 159, 185, 229.

visitors and had a history of leisure use before the establishment of a park, largely due to the hot springs.⁷⁴ The Bomb Squad case study came to me. I had contacted an entomologist and retired artist in Kamloops about hikes during his youth on the Forbidden Plateau in the 1930s. He told a friend about my research, and this person wrote to me about a group of retired men building trails and bridges in Powell River since the late 1980s.

Finding information about informal recreational areas that did not become parks is more difficult than tracing back from park reports and files to find out about recreational areas that did become parks. I would not have found the Bomb Squad if one of the group's former members had not contacted me. The Forbidden Plateau, after generations of recreational use, became part of Strathcona Park, and was therefore a traceable "success story." Submissions to Forestry Commissions pointed to areas that different groups wanted to see protected as parks. The records of rod and gun clubs and outdoor clubs would also reveal informal recreational areas. Unfortunately, these records are too scattered around the province to be reasonably accessible. For the purposes of this dissertation, I first confirmed sites with adequate textual information in Victoria, then, for three case studies, arranged oral history interviews closer to the recreational area.

These are not the only parks that could have been examined. Bowron Lake Provincial Park (est. 1961) was backed by enthusiasm from local hunters and settlers, but few records are available. Local, counter-culture hippie, and Indigenous use of the West Coast Trail and Long Beach (reserved in 1970 as Pacific Rim National Park Reserve with the Broken Group Islands) would be a valuable future study as it would nicely

⁷⁴ William F. Sinclair, *The Socio-Economic Importance of Maintaining the Quality of Recreational Resources in Northern British Columbia: The Case of Lakelse Lake* (Terrace, BC: Kitimat-Stikine Regional District, 1974).

complement the section on the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, and connect to recreational use of the Forbidden Plateau in the 1930s, when some of the same people were hiking as far out as the West Coast of the Island.

Because this study is limited to recreational use by residents of hinterland communities, potential case studies of heartland recreation were excluded, although future research might fruitfully compare heartland and hinterland recreation. The BC Archives has a set of interviews about the history of Garibaldi Provincial Park (est. 1920), that indicate that despite some involvement of Squamish residents, members of the park's managing board resided in Vancouver as did most of its visitors, including artists who painted the jagged landscapes, naturalists, hikers and skiers. Victoria skiers submitted a brief to the 1955 Commission on Forest Resources requesting the protection of Mt. Brenton near Nanaimo, and a well-illustrated report at the Ministry of Forests Library suggests that skiing at Mt. Brenton was organized along cooperative, low-cost principles.⁷⁵ Finally, I rejected some cases such as Mt. Robson Provincial Park where the influence of distant, metropolitan interests through the cooperation of the provincial government and the Alpine Club of Canada, overshadowed community initiatives. Similarly, I did not examine guide outfitter Tommy Walker's postwar campaign to protect the Spatsizi Plateau in northern British Columbia since his main assistants were urban industrialist-hunters.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ BC Archives, GR 668, BC Commission on Forest Resources, 1955, Box 4, Exhibit 45, Brief presented to the Royal Commission on Forestry, Province of British Columbia, Advocating preservation of the area surrounding Mount Brenton as a Provincial Park for the year round recreation of the communities of southern Vancouver Island, Prepared by the Victoria Sno-Birds Ski Club, 25th March, 1955; D.M. Trew, *Report on Mount Brenton* ([Victoria, BC]: Parks and Recreation Division, 1949).

⁷⁶ Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 193-201.

The case studies here are not representative of the ways in which all parks were established in British Columbia, as numerous parks came about because of government or metropolitan plans. Likewise, residents of other resource-based hinterland communities may have had different attitudes towards their local countrysides. With limited cases it is impossible to state how common local initiatives were. These cases do, however, permit an examination of the processes of promotion and political lobbying, the changing material culture of outdoor recreation, local attitudes towards nature, and how class, gender, and the age of participants changed over the last century. That being said, there are hints that local initiatives did extend beyond these case studies: for example Roderick Haig-Brown's statement at the 1953 BC Natural Resources Conference that the government was ensuring access to recreation because of public demand; a concerted effort by the BC Wildlife Federation, representative of provincial Fish and Game Associations, to claim access to logging roads for recreation; submissions to the Forestry Commissions asking for protection of specific areas; local proposals for ecological reserves from the late 1960s; and requests to the New Democratic Government for new parks in the early 1970s.⁷⁷ In her guide to parks, Paquet also hints at this.⁷⁸

Archival sources, park reports, conversations with the people who used and enjoyed these areas, and field trips to the cultural landscapes as they exist today, all provide primary evidence for this study. Archival collections did not always offer information about recreational land use, so for three case studies I conducted oral history

⁷⁷ Jeremy Wilson refers to these park proposals in 1972: "For the most part, additions to the list of protected areas candidates came about as a result of the independent initiatives of groups across the province. Many of the proposals put forward were developed by groups based in hinterland communities close to the area in question. Organizations based in Vancouver and Victoria added to the list, both by proposing areas of concern to urban recreationists and by championing others too remote to attract local sponsors." Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 131.

⁷⁸ Paquet, *B.C. Parks Explorer*, 185.

interviews with local residents who had visited these recreational areas.⁷⁹ For chapters that explore the establishment and use of provincial and national parks, I secured access to provincial park files held at the BC Archives, and used federal park records loaned by the Library and Archives Canada.⁸⁰ These files also contain letters from local residents describing their use of the area and suggesting how it should be managed. The BC Archives provided a rich array of additional sources, such as oral history tapes, local histories, newspapers, private manuscripts and other government records.⁸¹ The Ministry of Forests Library in Victoria contains valuable reports on the feasibility, use, and development of provincial parks.⁸² I also used archival material at repositories in Courtenay, Kaslo, Nelson, and Revelstoke. Finally, I have had the pleasure of visiting most of these recreational landscapes myself.

Oral history, along with other records generated by park users, is essential for understanding how local residents remembered their recreation, their impressions of the landscape, the challenges of accessing these locations, and their participation in building recreational spaces. These diverse rural voices allow the historian to pick up what has been missed or only briefly alluded to in the written record. These topics include social relationships among recreationists or relationships with other land users, and discussions of material culture and home-made equipment. These voices differ from the written

⁷⁹ Oral history is a significant component of chapters on the Forbidden Plateau, the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, and the Powell River trail builders. The Mt. Revelstoke chapter is set around the First World War and is therefore too distant in the past to conduct interviews with residents who participated in hiking and skiing, although previously recorded interviews stored at the BC Archives have informed this chapter.

⁸⁰ Access to records relating to the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, Darke Lake and Champion Lakes was gained through a research agreement under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

⁸¹ The New Democratic Government, 1972-1975, kept a record of political participation in the form of letters regarding the Fry Creek Canyon, and these are available in GR 1227.

⁸² The Ministry of Forests Library also has information relating to ecological reserves and Opportunities for Youth projects. The project to digitize these reports is well underway and many can now be directly accessed from their website. The Ministry of Transportation has microform information related to road building in Mt. Revelstoke, and the Surveyor General's Office contains Land Service Files that pre-date park files at the BC Archives.

accounts of urban tourists to wilderness areas. Rural recreation was more closely integrated with work, season and daily life. Since it was not ‘exotic,’ it may have been less likely to appear in the written record than accounts of traveling to wilderness areas. It differs from urban tourism, which has dominated our literature. Oral history illuminates the informal recreation of families, local agency in creating or reacting to park establishment, and the regulation of marginal, common space.⁸³ Oral history was even more critical as a source for exploring recreation outside parks, areas unaddressed by formal government park records.⁸⁴

To reach potential interview participants I wrote letters to the editors of local newspapers to advertise my project.⁸⁵ Once people responded I organized research trips and with my partner, Christian Lieb, interviewed people in nine communities: Courtenay, Comox, Nanoose Bay, Maple Bay, Victoria, Powell River, Ashcroft, Kaslo, and Argenta. One of my case studies came about because Jack Gregson, to whom I wrote regarding his teen years on the Forbidden Plateau, told his friend Helmut Godau about my project. Godau had been a member of a group of trail builders in Powell River. He introduced me to the trail builders, and set up a series of interviews with members. I asked interviewees about their outdoor recreation activities, the locations they visited, their perceptions of the landscape, their food and equipment, their related volunteer activities, and whether they combined work with their recreation. After transcribing the interviews, I sent copies to

⁸³ Cameron, *Openings*; MacEachern, *Natural Selections*; Bouchier and Cruikshank, “The War on the Squatters.”

⁸⁴ The Forbidden Plateau and the Powell River backcountry were not parks in the period that I studied and therefore do not have associated government records. Protest letters to the government regarding the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy provide a range of opinions that may have more accurately represented local feelings about the area at that time, than interviews could have done. Nevertheless, I also conducted interviews for this chapter to find out about trail building efforts.

⁸⁵ Methodology submitted and approved by the University of Victoria Ethics Committee, according to SSHRC guidelines.

participants for their records, and so they could confirm or correct the contents. Several people also showed me photographs and sometimes their outdoor equipment. Oral history interviews can reveal personal experiences, perceptions of the wilderness, jokes, and stories. Interview participants have corrected my assumptions about what was significant, interpreted the foreign country of the past, and brought attention to what they considered important, sometimes in direct opposition to the written record. Meeting people in the present and listening to stories about their past experiences, one can get a sense of how outdoor recreation and activism in their youth may have affected their interests and outlooks afterwards. Visiting the location where events took place, and talking to the people who participated, enlivens a textual understanding of the past. Oral history does have some weaknesses and limitations; for example, participants may recall the past through rose-coloured glasses, censor what they say about other people, and screen what they would share with a young female interviewer. Overall, I found that these limitations were not very detrimental to a project about outdoor recreation. Through numerous interviews I heard a variety of opinions and cross-referenced these with newspaper articles, letters to government, diaries, and written accounts of backcountry trips.

It is important for environmental historians to walk the ground that they are studying, to get a sense of the landscape, the lay of the land, the climate and plant life. With my partner, I have visited five of the case study locations: Mt. Revelstoke, the Forbidden Plateau, Lakelse Lake, the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy and the Powell River trails. By walking the same trails once walked on or built by the individuals in this study, we engaged in similar physical exertions of climbing mountains and were rewarded by similar views. Even though our perspectives are shaped by historical

knowledge, theories of social construction, and questions about change over time, we are products of a society that continues to place value on these landscapes and so we took pleasure from them as well. Hiking and snowshoeing on the Forbidden Plateau gave me a sense of the forest cover, the impact of snow levels on winter recreation, and the geographical division of the plateau between north and south and between different tourist operators. In the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, the density of the interior cedar forest and the width of Hamill Creek indicated the challenges of trail building and maintenance on the rainy and avalanche-prone side of the Earl Grey Pass. Walking along Fry Creek, I was struck by the loud roar of the water, the steep, narrow rocky walls, and the environmental transformations that a logging road would have wrought. One of the Powell River trail builders, in his 80s, guided us on those trails through second growth forest, showed us how the Bomb Squad had modified on-site materials to build bridges and hand rails, and explained the decisions that went into naming sites. During these trips, Christian recorded the landscape and structures in photographs that illustrate several chapters.

By focusing on local residents and their involvement in making, enjoying, selling and protecting recreational spaces in twentieth-century British Columbia, we are afforded a more complex view of outdoor recreation. Non-metropolitan recreation was not entirely separate from productive work, and it did not necessarily involve spending money. Heartland and hinterland recreationists shared an acquisitive attitude towards experiences and aesthetic appreciation of certain visual landscapes, experiences and landscapes that were an item of exchange in the rural-urban tourist economy. Local involvement in outdoor recreation has broader implications than nature enjoyment and economic

development: these included political participation and conservation of natural spaces. A settler tradition of treating the backcountry as a commons encouraged recreational access, the harvesting of non-timber forest products, and common responsibility for local ecosystems. Multiple use of the backcountry was a fine balance, threatened on the one side by road construction and logging, and on the other by park regulations. This shows how local British Columbians in Canada's rural hinterland acted as producers, consumers and citizens in the ways that they recognized, accessed, promoted, and protected recreational spaces since the early twentieth century.

Chapter 2
Progressivism, Citizenship, and
Revelstoke's National Park, 1906-1920

The development of recreation and tourism infrastructure in the first two decades of the twentieth century reveals much about city-building and citizenship as refracted through the lens of the community of Revelstoke. Seduced by ideas of progress and modernity, cities across British Columbia made efforts to achieve order and cleanliness, attract business and settlers, pave streets and sidewalks, integrate telephones and automobiles, and favour productive citizens over squatters. Elite and progressive residents of Revelstoke negotiated with provincial and federal politicians for an alpine park that would attract tourism and be a healthy escape from the small railway town.

The idea of a mountain-top park took shape in local minds during an economic boom when it seemed easy to convince the provincial government that public works projects such as tourist roads were good for development, especially when the local MLA, Thomas Taylor, was public works minister. Once the road was begun with provincial funding, the federal government could be persuaded to establish a national park, a pattern that also occurred a little later at Kootenay National Park. The formation of Mount Revelstoke National Park demonstrates a fluidity between provincial and national governments in terms of projects, civil servants, and elected representatives who moved from one to the other. There was a similar fluidity among mountaineers, tourism promoters and road engineers who relocated to BC to work for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), took up mountaineering, and moved into government positions. In other

cases, divisions were more distinct: residents who could participate in, promote, and profit from outdoor recreation, were not usually the individuals whose physical labour created access for others to recreational space. This distinction blurred later in the century.

Revelstoke received provincial funding for a trail and road up Mt. Revelstoke before the 1913 recession set in and the national park was established in the spring of 1914. During the war, limits to citizenship were more clearly defined as indigent settlers became enemy aliens whose labour as internees served, for a short time, to further the national park project in Revelstoke. At the same time, Scandinavian settlers who had brought skiing and ski-jumping to the western Cordillera, both as transportation and recreation, became actively involved in organizing winter sports events, possibly as a means of highlighting their loyalty to the nation.

Revelstoke is located within the traditional territory of the Sinixt, members of the Interior Salish linguistic family, which extends from north of Revelstoke across the Canadian-American border to almost as far south as Kettle Falls on the Columbia River in Washington, to the west to the height of the Monashee Mountains and east past Kootenay Lake.¹ The Big Bend gold rush (1865-67) brought brief attention to the Revelstoke area but permanent settlement did not occur until the CPR laid out a townsite in 1886, which was apparently “lawless, full of drinkers, gamblers, dancing girls, and ‘gunmen with sticky fingers.’”² That same year, Sinixt Chief Melture and members of his

¹ Paula Pryce, *‘Keeping the Lakes’ Way:’ Reburial and the Re-creation of a Moral World among an Invisible People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 35. The Sinixt have also been known as the Arrow Lakes, or Lakes people.

² Richard J. Caton, *History of Mount Revelstoke National Park* (Revelstoke, BC: Parks Canada, 1977), 7. This townsite was originally known as Farwell. The quote is from Kate Johnson, *Pioneer Days of Nakusp and the Arrow Lakes* (Nakusp, BC: K. Johnson, 1951), 62, cited in Pryce, *Keeping the Lakes’ Way*, 55.

tribe spent the winter in a village across from Revelstoke on the Columbia River.³ Silver was discovered at Slocan and Kootenay Lakes in the late nineteenth century; subsequent violent confrontations with miners made the Sinixt people more inclined to settle south of the border.⁴ By the turn of the twentieth century, Revelstoke was the site of a railway divisional point, had incorporated as a city, and operated as the service and commercial centre for the quartz, copper, iron and placer gold mining operations in the Big Bend mining district. “Surrounded by magnificent scenery,” with a population just over 2,000, Revelstoke began to define itself as a modern urban centre, with “splendid hotel accommodation, banking, postal and daily mails, and other business facilities; churches, schools, newspapers, societies, and all the advantages of a place much larger.”⁵

Mining booms in the Kootenays from the 1890s to the First World War drew, among others, Scandinavian immigrants seeking economic opportunities in the mining camps of southern British Columbia and northern Washington. They enjoyed and promoted the traditional activity of skiing to ease their transition to a new country.⁶ In 1890, a miner from Albert Canyon traveled the 57 km to Revelstoke, by “Norwegian snowshoes,” an early type of ski. Four men made the news in January 1892 when they

³ This village was likely called skæxi'kântən, or skxikn. The next year, this group stayed near Marcus, Washington. Pryce, *Keeping the Lakes' Way*, 43; Eileen Delehanty Pearkes, *The Geography of Memory: Recovering Stories of a Landscape's First Peoples* (Nelson: Kutenai House Press, 2002), 27.

⁴ Some Sinixt dispersed to reserves of neighbouring First Nations in British Columbia. Pryce, *Keeping the Lakes' Way*, 39. Their presence north of the border became intermittent and the British Columbia government was reluctant to establish reserves for a people it refused to acknowledge as distinct from the Shuswap, Ktunaxa or American Colville people. Only one reserve was established for the Sinixt on Slocan Lake. Few Sinixt people were accustomed to living there, so it had a small population. The last resident of the reserve died in 1953; in 1956, this reserve was transferred to the province and the federal government announced that the Arrow Lakes Band was extinct. Pryce notes that the extinct status was ironic “given that in 1959 the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs counted 257 Lakes Indians on the Colville Reservation alone.” Pryce, *Keeping the Lakes' Way*, 68.

⁵ R.E. Gosnell, *The Year Book of British Columbia and Manual of Provincial Information* (Victoria, BC: [Bureau of Provincial Information], 1903), 180, 305.

⁶ Jorgen Dahlie, “Skiing for Identity and Tradition: Scandinavian Venture and Adventure in the Pacific Northwest, 1900-1960,” in Elise A. Corbet and Anthony Rasporich, eds., *Winter Sports in the West* (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1990), 99.

walked 64 kilometres from Lardeau City to Revelstoke on Norwegian snowshoes.⁷ In the Big Bend and Lardeau districts, Scandinavian residents introduced Anglo-Canadians to skis and snowshoes.

By the early 1890s, local residents transformed practical forms of winter transportation and cultural expressions of identity into recreational activities.⁸ Led by prominent businessmen, the Revelstoke Snowshoe and Toboggan Club began with a snowshoe hike in March 1891, enjoyed skiing on Mt. Revelstoke in the winter and summer hikes and dances at cabins owned by members. One of the club's first projects was to build a toboggan slide on the Court House hill.⁹ Norwegians settling in the western United States had also introduced ski jumping as a professional sport associated with gambling and large crowds.¹⁰ Olaus Jeldness, who organized one of the earliest Canadian ski competitions in Rossland in 1897, explained how "the skisport is associated with nearly all of the folklore of Norway, and like its mountains and fjords, and great water falls, and sagas, it is indelibly stamped on its history." Skiing was adaptable to "all snow countries" and had the advantage of being a "clean" activity offering "good fellowship and companionable sport."¹¹

Canada's first national parks, including Banff (1885), Glacier (1886), and Yoho (1911) were established in the Rocky Mountains in the 1880s as retreats for affluent

⁷ Caton, *History of Mount Revelstoke*, 7; William Wistanley Bilsland, "A History of Revelstoke and the Big Bend" (MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1955), 177; Ruby M. Nobbs, *Revelstoke: History and Heritage* (Revelstoke, BC: [s.n.] 1998), 209-210.

⁸ Annie Gilbert Coleman discusses a similar phenomenon south of the border in *Ski Style: Sport and Culture in the Rockies* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

⁹ This group was originally named the Jordan Club. Caton, *History of Mount Revelstoke*, 7; Bilsland, *History of Revelstoke*, 176; Nobbs, *Revelstoke*, 204-205.

¹⁰ H. Percy Douglas, *My Ski-ing Years: The Story of the Start and Development of Competitive Ski-ing in Canada* (Montreal: Whitcombe & Gilmour Limited, 1951), 28.

¹¹ Jeldness, "Skiing, the Royal Sport of the Northlands" (1909), cited in Dahlie, "Skiing for Identity and Tradition," 100. "Olaus Jeldness," Canadian Ski Museum, <http://www.skimuseum.ca/bios/Jeldness_Olaus.pdf> (17 August 2009)

tourists traveling on the CPR.¹² The summer sport of mountaineering extended from these newly established parks to Revelstoke in the early twentieth century. A local druggist, C.R. MacDonald, reached the summit of Mt. Revelstoke (then known as Mt. Victoria) in 1902. Mountaineer Arthur Oliver Wheeler, who was surveying the peaks along the CPR route, published *The Selkirk Range* in 1905 and inspired readers to explore the area further. A.E. Millar, a school inspector, hiked in the alpine in 1906 with two friends, and publicized the area by writing articles for the Revelstoke newspaper and displaying photographs at the drugstore.¹³ Millar asserted that the scenery on the mountains “within a few hours walk” from Revelstoke was much more varied and beautiful than that of Vancouver’s Stanley Park. The mountainous area contained elements of both the picturesque and the sublime. Some parts of it were paintable and park-like: “The central portion is hilly or rolling, covered with short green grass and has clumps of evergreen trees, dotted here and there over the surface, while the slopes are gorgeous with masses of brilliant flowers.” Another section was more dramatic, or sublime, with “glaciers, deep ravines, high precipices, craggy peaks, and two or three charming little lakes.” Millar hoped that the area could become more accessible to the public if the government provided title to the city and funds for a trail.¹⁴

¹² W.F. Lothian, *A Brief History of Canada’s National Parks* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1987).

¹³ In 1903, local merchant, A.F. Chaddock, wrote about Mt. Victoria, part of the Clachnacudainn Ridge; in August 1906, D.M. McIntosh, Wm. Mitchell and A.E. Miller climbed up Mt. Revelstoke, to the Gordon Glacier. *Pioneers of Revelstoke* (Revelstoke, BC: Revelstoke Senior Citizen Association, 1986), 71-72; Caton, *History of Mount Revelstoke*, 8, 31; Lothian, *Brief History of Canada’s National Parks*, 57.

¹⁴ A.E. Millar, “Mountain Park,” *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 4 August 1906, 1. See also “A Veritable Wonderland – Mt. Victoria Park an Ideal Spot for a Summer Camp – Board of Trade will put Attraction to Practical Use,” *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 18 August 1906, 1.

Enthusiasts seemed more interested in building a trail with government funds rather than with their own volunteer effort.¹⁵ They had reason to expect such help. This was an era of generous public works projects, funded by the success of British Columbia's pre-war boom economy. Millar's article had an almost immediate effect as Premier Richard McBride was reputed to have offered funding for a trail up Mount Victoria at a Revelstoke Board of Trade meeting in December 1906. In June 1908, the Revelstoke City Council called for tenders to build this trail. Mayor C.F. Lindmark claimed that the provincial government had agreed to pay half the cost, but the local government agent, Robert Gordon, had not heard of this arrangement. The Revelstoke Tourist Association then offered to pay for half of the trail, if the province would pay the other half, of a total of \$675.00. By late September, the trail ran 5 ½ miles from the CPR mainline, rose 4,200 feet, and cost \$742.50. Gordon emphasized the trail's value for local use – “more than twenty persons having ascended on the day I went over it” – and as a potential tourist attraction. After the trail was started, F.J. Fulton, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, authorized payment of half the cost of the trail.¹⁶

Meanwhile, Wheeler, whose book had drawn attention to the recreational potential of the Selkirk Mountains, founded the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) in 1906 with journalist Elizabeth Parker, in Winnipeg. No doubt aware of an increased local support for mountaineering, Wheeler visited Revelstoke in January 1909. Two aims of

¹⁵ Yet, there was some volunteer work on the Lindmark trail, and a small shelter was built at Balsam Lake by volunteers after the formation of the mountaineering club in 1910. *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 28 February 1914; Lothian, *Brief History of Canada's National Parks*, 57-58.

¹⁶ Ministry of Transportation Archives (hereafter MTA), Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, H. Floyd to R. Gordon, 30 June 1908, 6; H. Floyd to R. Gordon, 17 June 1908, 2; Gordon to Floyd, 18 June 1908, 3; Floyd to Gordon, 22 June 1908, 4; Gordon to Floyd, 25 June 1908, 5; Gordon to Hon. F.J. Fulton, 2 July 1908, 8; Gordon to F.C. Gamble, Public Works Engineer, Victoria, 31 September 1908, 10-11; Public Works Engineer to Gordon, 4 December 1908, 13. The walking trail named after mayor C.F. Lindmark was completed to the summit by 1910, and later extended to Eva and Miller Lakes. Lothian, *Brief History of Canada's National Parks*, 57.

the club, which Wheeler promoted on his visit, were to raise the profile of mountaineering and to celebrate Canada's "mountain heritage." He spoke about the growth of the ACC from 67 to 400 members in three years, solicited funds to build the club house in Banff, and announced that British climbers would visit the ACC's camp the next summer. The ACC's members were mostly Anglophone urban professionals from Canada, Britain and the United States. The club held summer camps in the mountain national parks and cooperated with park administrators to support "mountain sport, art, literature, education, science and exploration."¹⁷ Wheeler portrayed mountaineering as a sport for civic leaders; in London, "most of the distinguished men of the day were mountain enthusiasts." Making the mountains accessible brought economic prosperity: "the club must be run on a business basis, and... the explorations in the mountains could afford valuable scientific data." Fortunately, there were many "opportunities for mountaineering near Revelstoke."¹⁸

At Wheeler's suggestion, local residents formed the Revelstoke Mountaineering Club.¹⁹ Like surveyor Wheeler, local club leaders (and ACC members) William Wasborough Foster and John Preston Forde symbolized the strong connections between mountaineering, tourism, and infrastructure building. Foster (1875-1954) emigrated from Britain to work as an engineer for the CPR in Revelstoke. He climbed the ladder of civic authority in Revelstoke, becoming Justice of the Peace in 1905 then Police Magistrate in 1908. In 1910, he moved to Victoria to become Deputy Minister of Public Works. Foster

¹⁷ Pearlann Reichwein, "'Hands Off Our National Parks': The Alpine Club of Canada and Hydro-development Controversies in the Canadian Rockies, 1922-1930," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 1995, vol. 6, 130.

¹⁸ *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 9 January 1909, 1.

¹⁹ "Local Alpine Club – Revelstoke Mountaineering Club Organized," *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 9 January 1909, 1.

organized the first ACC trip in 1912 to the newly-established Strathcona Provincial Park, and a mountain there was named after him. Contact through the ACC could lead to business opportunities, for example when Wheeler received a contract from his “climber friend” Foster to survey a road from Alberni to Long Beach in 1912.²⁰

Like Foster, John Preston Forde was an active member of the Alpine Club of Canada and a public works engineer. Born in Ireland in 1873, Forde came to Canada in 1891 and worked in land surveying and railway engineering, including for the CPR in Revelstoke. A founding member of the ACC, Forde served as its vice-president from 1912-1916. In April 1911, Forde purchased Foster’s house in Revelstoke when he was appointed assistant engineer of the Public Works Department for eastern BC. He held this position until about 1914, when he became district engineer for the federal Public Works Department in Nelson.²¹ Forde was fortunate in managing his career so that his “professional work throughout the greater period of his life kept him in close contact with Canada’s mountain heritage.”²² In 1912, Forde was responsible for locating the road from Revelstoke to Mount Revelstoke with assistance from Road Superintendent Trimble.²³

²⁰ Lindsay Elms, *Beyond Nootka*, “William (Billy) Wasborough Foster,” <http://members.shaw.ca/beyondnootka/biographies/w_foster.html> (Accessed 24 April 2009); Esther Fraser, *Wheeler* (Banff: Summerthought, 1978), 95.

²¹ “In Memoriam – John Preston Forde,” *Canadian Alpine Journal*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1946, 285; *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 29 April 1911, 1; BC Archives (hereafter BCA), Vertical File 48, “Forde, John Preston,” 763-764. His obituaries mention the appointment for the federal public works department, and that he was responsible for building the Esquimalt drydock. His place of residence changed from Revelstoke to Nelson between publications of the *Canadian Alpine Journal* for 1913 and 1915.

²² “In Memoriam – John Preston Forde,” *Canadian Alpine Journal*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1946, 285.

²³ The preliminary survey was completed by Trimble. BCA, GR 0075, British Columbia Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, Vol. 6, 416-417, 20 July 1912, Memos from Thomas Taylor, Minister of Public Works, to the Public Works Engineer.

Teachers like Eva Hobbs also took a leadership role in the mountaineering club.²⁴

Born in 1885, Hobbs moved to Revelstoke with her family from Donald in 1899 when the CPR divisional point was relocated there. Hobbs taught in various BC communities before returning to teach in Revelstoke in 1904. Women were avid mountaineers at the time, although hampered somewhat by conventions of dress, activity, and company.²⁵ When Hobbs hiked up Mt. Revelstoke in 1909 with her sister and two friends, they hired a packer who took their equipment up by horse, and put up their tent in advance. They did hikes from this base camp for three weeks. Hobbs' party helped men from the mountaineering club who were building a chalet, to cut wood, cook and wash dishes for a day; in exchange the men provided firewood and went hiking with them to Miller Lake, and decided to explore further. Since Eva was used to climbing but her female companions were not, the men stayed behind to help the women who were encumbered by their skirts. Eva went ahead and found a larger lake, which the group named after her.²⁶

Wheeler emphasized that mountaineering should be promoted to the wealthy in order to boost tourism. In April 1909, he cooperated with the Revelstoke Mountaineering Club to lobby the BC government to fund elite British mountaineers to see the province. The ACC planned to offer a tour to British mountaineering club presidents after its own summer camp at Lake O'Hara and the cost of "entertaining these visitors from the British Isles [would] be great." As the tour would take place in British Columbia, Wheeler asked

²⁴ Hobbs was the club's first vice-president.

²⁵ See, for example, Cindi Smith, *Off the Beaten Track: Women Adventurers and Mountaineers in Western Canada* (Lake Louise: Coyote Books, 1989), and for a later period, Kathryn Bridge, *Phyllis Munday: Mountaineer* (Montreal: XYZ Publishing, 2002).

²⁶ Mount Revelstoke National Park – Brown Bag History: February 8, 2005 (provided by Revelstoke Archivist Cathy English), from Interview with Eva Hobbs Parker 1964; Caton, *History of Mount Revelstoke*, 8. See also BCA, Eva (Hobbs) and Phillip Parker, Revelstoke, Interview with Imbert Orchard, 4103:342.

Premier McBride for “a grant of, say, five hundred dollars, to assist us in giving these Alpine visitors the best possible impression of the country.” The Alberta government had generously provided \$1000 even though the camp was not in Alberta though access was through that province. In addition, the ACC advertised British Columbia at no cost through its publication, the *Canadian Alpine Journal*. Forde sent a copy of this letter to a potentially more receptive Thomas Taylor, Minister of Public Works and MLA for Revelstoke. Forde hoped that Taylor could exert his influence with McBride, who, “not having been so intimately connected with mountain districts as yourself, may not be in a position to fully realize the importance of the Club as a money-getter for B.C.”²⁷ Taylor referred the matter to Revelstoke government agent (and hiker) Robert Gordon, who responded enthusiastically that this steadily growing club had held three of its four camps in BC, it was a powerful advertisement for the province through word of mouth and illustrated reports, and club members tended to travel elsewhere in BC to reach the annual camps. Mountaineering had the potential to boost BC’s economy:

The experience in the mountain regions of Europe tends to show that Mountaineering is not just the craze of the day, but that it is yet in its very infancy in this country and that it will continue to grow steadily year by year until it will in all likelihood become second in importance to only the greatest of our natural resources.²⁸

He recommended that Taylor fulfil Wheeler’s “very modest request,” or better yet, match the Alberta grant. Taylor avoided sending money to a club based outside the province, and boosted his reputation in Revelstoke, by granting \$500 to the Revelstoke Mountaineering Club to entertain the ACC visitors.²⁹

²⁷ MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, Wheeler to McBride, Forde to Taylor, April 1909, 19-23.

²⁸ MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, Gordon to Thomas Taylor, 1 May 1909, 24-25.

²⁹ MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, Taylor to Forde, 12 May 1909, 26.

The Revelstoke Mountaineering Club continued to request funding to facilitate hiking in the area. In October 1909, Forde asked Taylor for \$1000 to open up trails to local “points of interest.”³⁰ Scenery was one of Revelstoke’s main resources but government intervention was necessary to provide infrastructure and attract tourists. Forde argued that opening up the trails would benefit the province by bringing in tourist dollars. As with the Mt. Revelstoke summit trail, his letter assumed a specific kind of trail-building effort: asking for grants to hire workers to build trails. Hikers and trail builders appeared to be different groups of people. Hiking was something that people with spare money and time did, and they paid others who needed the money to build the trails. Although Revelstoke residents did offer some volunteer labour and private funding, their energy was directed towards publicity rather than physical effort: “Should such trails be provided the City Council and Board of Trade would unite with this Club in making them known.”³¹ Over the next few years, the Public Works department did hire labourers to build trails to facilitate travel and economic development. In the fiscal year 1910-1911, the provincial government spent \$434.65 on a trail up Mt. Revelstoke, and in 1911-1912, the government spent a further \$662.50 on that trail.³²

Following the success of the hiking trail, residents envisioned an automobile road to the summit of Mt. Revelstoke. Before the First World War, the province’s transportation network consisted of steamships and railways, supplemented by local roads of questionable quality.³³ Revelstoke had only intermittent access to other

³⁰ MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, Forde to Taylor, October 1909, 30.

³¹ MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, Forde to Taylor, October 1909, 30.

³² Thomas Taylor (Minister), “Report of the Minister of Public Works, 1910-1911,” in British Columbia Legislative Assembly, *Sessional Papers* (Victoria, BC: William H. Cullin, 1912), J36; Thomas Taylor (Minister), “Report of the Minister of Public Works, 1911-1912,” in British Columbia Legislative Assembly, *Sessional Papers* (Victoria, BC: William H. Cullin, 1913), P40.

³³ Cole Harris, “Moving Amid the Mountains” *BC Studies* 58 (Summer 1983), 23.

communities by wagon road. When the CPR was under construction, BC premier William Smithe commissioned Cariboo Road builder Gustavus Blinn Wright to build a road from Sicamous to Revelstoke to assist the CPR in transporting equipment to construction sites. After the CPR was completed and the road had served its purpose, it was not maintained. The road was rebuilt in 1895-97 but again fell into disuse. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Revelstoke had no wagon road connection west to Enderby or east to Golden. In 1916, the Sicamous-Revelstoke road was rebuilt for a third time. Not until after the Second World War did it become part of the Trans-Canada Highway.³⁴

Until 1916, the CPR had a monopoly on travel in and out of Revelstoke. While CPR employees had passes for themselves and their families that allowed them to travel for holidays, those who did not work for the CPR, including local business owners, spent their holidays closer to home, hiking to lakes near the summit of Mt Revelstoke. Families of businessmen and government employees, such as Robert Gordon, could afford to camp in the alpine for two or three weeks, and occasionally send their sons to town for additional supplies.³⁵ Having to spend their holidays close to Revelstoke or pay rail fares, these entrepreneurs and civil servants may have been particularly supportive of an auto road that would provide access to Mt. Revelstoke's summit and their summer playground.

³⁴ Wright earned 60,000 acres of crown land for building the Eagle Pass Wagon Road, which was later described as a "useless road." Wright sold this land at a profit to John C. Ainsworth. This land was later claimed by the dominion government as part of the federal railway belt, but the sale was upheld. Wright also opened general stores in Revelstoke and Ainsworth. RG Harvey, *Carving the Western Path: By River, Rail and Road through B.C.'s Southern Mountains* (Surrey, BC: Heritage House Pub., 1999), 53; Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, <<http://www.biographi.ca>> "Wright, Gustavus Blinn." (Accessed 21 April 2009); see map in Harris, "Moving Amid the Mountains," "Figure 7: Principal Wagon Roads in B.C., c. 1903," 25; Harvey, *Carving the Western Path*, 54-55.

³⁵ Caton interview with Estelle Dickey. She notes that Revelstoke's first water supply came from Mt. Revelstoke. Caton, *History of Mount Revelstoke*, 53.

Use of automobiles in British Columbia before the First World War was minimal. In 1908, there were 263 automobiles registered in the province, and by 1914, this number had risen to 6,688. Early automobile owners in BC tended to be progressive-thinking businessmen and professionals, an influential section of the population.³⁶ Riding an economic boom and responding to demands for better roads, McBride established a separate Ministry of Public Works in 1908 and placed it under Thomas Taylor. Born in Ontario in 1865, Taylor came to British Columbia in 1888, working as a storekeeper in North Bend and Donald before becoming a partner of prominent store owner C.B. Hume in Revelstoke. Taylor ran the branch store in Trout Lake during the Lardeau mining boom, acting also as mining recorder and postmaster. From 1900 to 1916, Taylor was the Conservative member for Revelstoke.³⁷

Taylor had close ties with good roads promoters in British Columbia and Washington State.³⁸ When the BC Good Roads Association was formed in Vancouver in the fall of 1909, with “the purpose of influencing public opinion towards the building of better and more permanent roads particularly in the Rural Districts,” and researching the best ways of building them, Taylor sent his congratulations to the secretary and applied for membership.³⁹ The Canadian Highway Association, formed in 1911 to raise public demand for a cross-country road that would increase tourism, chose Taylor as its

³⁶ G.W. Taylor, *The Automobile Saga of British Columbia, 1864-1914* (Victoria, BC: Morriss Publishing, 1984), 63-65, 72

³⁷ BCA Vertical Files, “Taylor, Thomas,” 140-1427. “B.C.’s First Works Minister Is 80 Today,” *Province* 3 Feb 1945, and “B.C.’s First Public Works Minister Dies,” *Province* 28 April 1947; Elections BC website, *Electoral History of British Columbia, 1871-1986*, <http://www.elections.bc.ca/docs/rpt/1871-1986_ElectoralHistoryofBC.pdf> (Accessed 24 April 2009).

³⁸ McBride asked Taylor to represent BC at the first meeting of the American Congress of Road Builders in Seattle in July 1909, and this was an assignment Taylor referred to as a “great pleasure.” BCA, GR 0075, BC Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, Vol. 1, 14 June 1909, Thomas Taylor to Premier McBride, 203.

³⁹ BCA, GR 0075, BC Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, Vol. 1, 23 December 1909, Thomas Taylor to W. Bennett Hood, Secretary, BC Good Roads Association, 372.

honorary president.⁴⁰ His nickname of “Good Roads” Taylor came “from his support of the Canadian Good Roads Association before he was handed the job of realizing its goals.” By funnelling money towards new roads and road-building equipment, Taylor “doubled the mileage of roads in B.C. in six years.”⁴¹

The two major plans for long-distance tourist roads in BC at this time, neither of which directly benefited Taylor’s home riding of Revelstoke, were the Trans-Provincial Highway from west to east across British Columbia (and eventually across Canada) and the north-south Pacific Highway. In September 1909, Taylor informed L.L. Challoner, president of the Victoria Motor Club, that it was “the desire of the Public Works Department that the construction and completion of the Trans-Provincial Highway through British Columbia be shortly put in hand.”⁴² By October, Taylor had engaged an engineer to survey a route through “Yale, Similkameen, and the Boundary Section” to connect with the East Kootenay.⁴³ The Pacific Highway involved international cooperation. When Washington State decided that the Pacific Highway would cross into British Columbia at Blaine, Taylor allotted some of the provincial estimates to building a good road from Blaine over the Clover Valley road to connect with the Yale road. These highways were promoted by various good roads associations. The Vancouver Automobile Club kept Taylor informed of Pacific Highway plans and advertised the trans-provincial road.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Taylor, *Automobile Saga*, 118-119.

⁴¹ Harvey, *Carving the Western Path*, 72-73.

⁴² BCA, GR 0075, BC Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, Vol. 1, 17 September 1909, Thomas Taylor to L.L. Challoner, 273.

⁴³ BCA, GR 0075, BC Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, Vol. 1, 23 October 1909, Taylor to Todd, Taylor to Challoner, 316-317.

⁴⁴ The Pacific Highway was completed from Vancouver to Blaine in 1924; BCA, GR 0075, BC Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, Vol. 2, 3 February 1911, Taylor to Chas A. Ross, Vancouver Automobile Club, 272-3.

The Public Works Minister received special attention not only from good roads associations, but also from the Alpine Club of Canada, which was interested in promoting tourism and developing scenic roads, making mountains more accessible for climbing. The ACC invited Taylor to attend its summer camps in 1911 and 1912, and Deputy Minister Foster attended the Vermillion Pass camp on Taylor's behalf as an "honoured guest" and "representative of the Government of the Province of British Columbia."⁴⁵ Foster's speech to the campers illustrated the value of parks, roads, and tourism to the provincial government. By the summer of 1912, the province was planning numerous scenic motor highways, including a road into Strathcona Provincial Park and the Banff-Windermere Highway, a project that required cooperation with the federal government.⁴⁶ The province wanted to make mountain scenery accessible by creating "provincial parks to embrace the best of such scenery, and [constructing] motor roads winding through its midst."⁴⁷ The idea for the Banff-Windermere road as a commercial link and tourist road came from Robert Randolph Bruce, formerly a CPR engineer who was involved in mine development and boosting the settlement of Windermere. The CPR and the provincial government agreed to share the cost of the road from Windermere to Vermillion Pass on the border, with the federal government paying for the connection to Banff. Construction

⁴⁵ BCA, GR 0075, BC Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, Vol 3, Thomas Taylor to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Alpine Club of Canada, Banff, 31 May 1911, 585.; BCA, GR 0074, British Columbia Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Inward, Box 9, File 1, Taylor to S.H. Mitchell, Secretary-Treasurer, The Club House, Banff, Alberta, 13 July 1912, 101; "Report of the 1912 Camp," *Canadian Alpine Journal* 1913, 131.

⁴⁶ Concerned with game conservation, Foster recommended that the valley through which the proposed Banff-Windermere auto road would travel be protected as a game preserve. Foster had found that "a great deal of illegal shooting" had occurred and expected this would only increase with the accessibility of the valley. Kootenay National Park was established in this area in 1920, and the road completed by the dominion government in 1922. BCA, GR 0075, BC Dept of Public Works. Vol. 4. Memo for the Minister of Lands from Foster, Deputy Minister of Public Works, 15 August 1911, 9; Maggie Paquet, *The BC Parks Explorer* (North Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1986), 216-221.

⁴⁷ "Report of the 1912 Camp," *Canadian Alpine Journal* 1913, 132.

in BC started in 1911.⁴⁸ Foster also expressed appreciation for the work of the Alpine Club in organizing a government-funded expedition to Mt. Robson, the highest mountain in the Canadian Rockies. In July 1913, Foster had the privilege of being in the first party to climb to the summit of Mt. Robson, which had become the second provincial park that March.⁴⁹

An active lobby for a road to the summit of Mt. Revelstoke came from the “Progress Club,” initiated by the Revelstoke Board of Trade in May 1912. This club was part of a North American movement for urban reform and city beautification. Acting in response to negative aspects of urban industrialism, progressives argued that through studies, planning and state intervention, they could improve the health, morality and quality of life of citizens. Urban middle-class reformers championed a range of issues, but they had in common a desire to rein in the “chaotic, wasteful change” brought about by industrialization, through democratic government and scientific study. Progressivism was tied to the conservation movement because it encouraged regulation of public land, long-term management of public resources, and healthy, beautiful urban areas while challenging monopolistic business ownership of resources.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Due to the expense of the road and the outbreak of the First World War, the province was unable to complete its portion. Bruce helped negotiate the transfer of land on either side of the road to the federal government for a national park (Kootenay National Park, est. 1920), and the federal government completed the road, which was opened in June 1923. Bruce thought that the park should have been called Columbia: “One might say that the calling of this park ‘Columbia’ might be pandering to our cousins across the line. Well, we want to pander to them all we can. We want their cars and their money and their business, and that is a good deal why this road was started originally. I know it because it was me who started it.” Cited in Lothian, *Brief History of Canada’s National Parks*, 60-61. See also Thomas C. Meredith, “Boosting in British Columbia: The Creation and Rise of Invermere,” *Urban History Review* vol. xvi, no. 3 (February 1988), 271-279).

⁴⁹ “Report of the 1912 Camp,” *Canadian Alpine Journal* 1913, 132; Fraser, *Wheeler*, 102-103. At this time Mt. Robson was only accessible by railway.

⁵⁰ Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad, *History of the Canadian Peoples* vol. 2, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Pearson Education Canada, 2002), 133; David Stradling, ed. “Introduction,” in *Conservation in the Progressive Era: Classic Texts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 9-10; Samuel Hays, *Conservation and*

The Revelstoke Progress Club had numerous projects on its agenda: clean up and promote the city, lobby for a park reserve and an automobile road up Mt. Revelstoke, and advance new ideas and new technology, such as equal suffrage, telephones, and a road connection out of Revelstoke. By 15 May 1912, 123 residents had paid a dollar each to become members of the Progress Club. Robert Gordon, government agent, urged residents not to leave the work of improving the city to the Board of Trade and the City Council, but to “organize, get together, and work harmoniously for the good of the whole, depending less on other people’s efforts, and being prepared rather to spend more effort of our own.” Members described the club’s goals as promoting local spending, increasing the city’s population, boosting the town, cleaning it up and making it into a tourist centre.⁵¹

The first issues the club addressed with Taylor were making Mt. Revelstoke into a park reserve and building an auto road to the summit.⁵² Despite Revelstoke’s isolation, seven people had registered motor vehicles with which they could motor around the town by December 1912.⁵³ Automobiles were associated with progress and elite tourism, just the kind of benefits that Revelstoke residents wanted to draw to their city. The Progress Club was so eager to discuss this idea with Taylor that members boarded the CPR for a mobile meeting when he did not have time to stop on his way to Ottawa.⁵⁴ As a result of

the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 261.

⁵¹ “Progress Club Take[s] Action,” *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 19 October 1912, 2; 15 May 1912, 1.

⁵² *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 22 May 1912, 4.

⁵³ BCA, GR 665, British Columbia – Motor Vehicle Branch, Originals, 1904-1948, Registers of motor vehicle license, 1900-1920, vol. 1, Register numbers 1-1397, 1904-February 1911, vol. 4, Register 1-1726 to December 1912 expiry date. Those who had registered cars were H. Cunningham Wallace, A. Bremner, H.P. Cummings, G.S. McArthur, J. Shurman, Chas. W. Turnross, and Chas. Lindmark. See also Taylor, *Automobile Saga*, 77.

⁵⁴ BCA, GR 0075, BC Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, vol. 6, Thomas Taylor to AB McCleneghan, Manager Imperial Bank, Revelstoke, BC, 14 May 1912, 241.

this meeting, Taylor promised to help make Mount Revelstoke a public park, and indicated that he had already given instructions for an auto road to be surveyed and had appropriated \$10,000 towards the cost of the road, funding that he confirmed in a memo in July.⁵⁵ The Progress Club also hoped that the CPR would build an “elaborate mountain summer resort and chalet” at the summit of the mountain “in order to adequately cater to the large number of tourists who, following the completion of the scenic automobile highway to the summit and the proclamation of the mountain as a national park reserve, are expected to visit the city.”⁵⁶

Having secured the promise of a nature resort to lure tourists and a road to enable them to access it, the club set to work cleaning up the city, fostering civic pride, and making Revelstoke an attractive place to settle or spend money. The club’s “Civic Improvement Committee” wanted to increase mobility and cleanliness by enforcing by-laws and clearing streets “for driving, motoring and traffic generally.” Garbage should be removed from vacant lots, “gravel, sand, rubbish, or grass” hauled away from the side of streets, and “as far as practicable, all unsightly shacks destroyed or improved.” Wooden sidewalks should be replaced by cement ones. The club wanted residents to allot voluntary labour to cleaning the streets, or as the club put it, “to take a half-day holiday, and have a clean up day.” The club faced some local opposition in its desire for a cleaner city and cement sidewalks. Residents were reluctant to spend limited funds on improving

⁵⁵ BCA, GR 0075, BC Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, vol. 6, Memo for the Public Works Engineer from the Minister of Public Works, 20 July 1912, 416. Taylor told the public works engineer to inform Gordon and Road Superintendent Trimble that “Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) is available from the Revelstoke District Vote towards the construction of a road from Revelstoke to Mount Revelstoke.”

⁵⁶ *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 29 May 1912, 1.

the streets, and compulsory cleaning was not widely popular, even among members of the Progress Club.⁵⁷

Drawing directly on progressive era “city beautiful” rhetoric, these desired changes arguably had more to do with making the city appear more visually attractive, rather than making it more comfortable, convenient, or economical for local residents. “Unsightly shacks” were cheap, often self-built homes that might have suited their inhabitants, yet they were an embarrassment to the Progress Club.⁵⁸ Revelstoke was following a similar trend to the one exhibited by the province’s capital, Victoria, where twenty years earlier civic leaders sought to regulate public spaces so that they were “orderly and uncluttered” and allowed respectable citizens to move freely between home, work and commerce. Victoria’s streets “were becoming spaces to move through – particularly in the service of capitalism and colonialism – rather than to congregate upon.”⁵⁹ A.E. Todd, vice-president of the Pacific Highway Association, associated paving with progress when he told the British Columbia Road Superintendents’ Convention in Victoria in 1913, that cities and towns along the route of the Pacific Highway that “laid permanent pavements... have progressed while the other towns have stood still. Probably prosperity was brought by the pavements.”⁶⁰ Possibly due to local lobbying by the Progress Club, sidewalk improvement was provincially funded in 1912-

⁵⁷ “Progress Club in Action,” *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 15 June 1912, 1.

⁵⁸ *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 15 June 1912, 1. On the impact of the City Beautiful movement on squatters, see Nancy B. Bouchier and Ken Cruikshank, “The War on the Squatters, 1920-1940: Hamilton’s Boathouse Community and the Re-Creation of Recreation on Burlington Bay,” *Labour/Le Travail* 2003 (51), 9-46.

⁵⁹ Lisa Helps, “Bodies Public, City Spaces: Becoming Modern Victoria, British Columbia, 1871-1901,” (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 2005), 30, 35. Paving and cement sidewalks were undoubtedly part of what historian Chris Otter describes as building a “liberal society” through urban reforms such as “wide streets, slum demolition, sewerage and street lighting.” Chris Otter, “Making liberalism durable: Vision and civility in the late Victorian city,” *Social History* 27.1 (January 2002), 3, 7.

⁶⁰ A.E. Todd, *The Pacific Highway* (An address delivered the British Columbia Road Superintendents’ Convention at Victoria on 12th February, 1913), 14.

1913. In Revelstoke, public works projects “Laid 1,795 superficial yards sidewalk; repaired 1,000 lineal feet sidewalk; erected 5,370 lineal feet fencing, and 65 lineal feet handrail.”⁶¹

Since the early twentieth century, “cars have mediated our interaction with parks.”⁶² In his report to Taylor on a motor road to the summit of Mt. Revelstoke, public works engineer J.P. Forde expressed design goals similar to those that guided road building at Mt. Rainier National Park in Washington State (est. 1916), where the Parks Service built a road into the middle of the park and up the side of the mountain. Both mountain roads were designed to offer visitors a series of unfolding panoramic views of nature.⁶³ The proposed Mt. Revelstoke road would take “full advantage of all good view points in the vicinity of the route.” Although Forde did not go into much detail, his report suggests that the road was designed to have the easiest grade possible and offer drivers and passengers a visual experience that would change at different elevations:

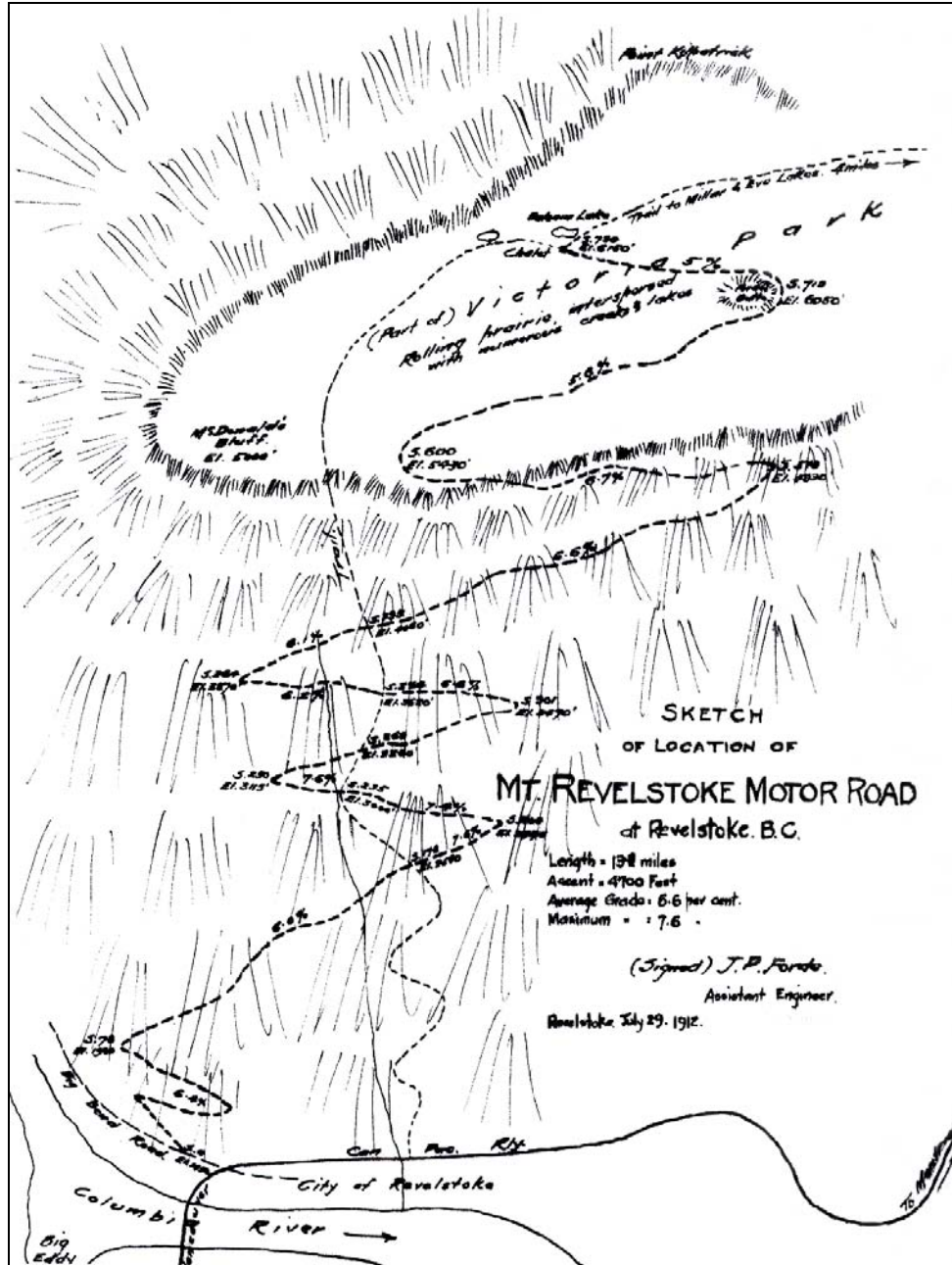
The turns on the face of the mountain are laid out for 100 feet of level grade on each leg and a curve radius of 50 feet, and after the easier country in the park is reached long sweeping turns are made in the meadows and around the base of the bald mountain known as “Forde’s Butte,” which the road circles.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Thomas Taylor (Minister), “Report of the Minister of Public Works, 1912-1913,” in British Columbia Legislative Assembly, *Sessional Papers* (Victoria, BC: William H. Cullin, 1914), S10. Some negotiation may have taken place over provincial and municipal responsibilities, as indicated by a memo from Taylor to the Public Works Engineer: “Be good enough to refer this matter to Road Superintendent Trimble and say that, if at all possible, I would like to see the sidewalk provided for, but before doing so he should take up with the City the question of the removal of snow during the winter time.” BCA, GR 0075, BC Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, Vol. 3, 23 July 1911, 911.

⁶² David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington’s National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 9.

⁶³ See Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*.

⁶⁴ MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, JP Forde, Assistant Engineer, Department of Public Works, Revelstoke, to JE Griffith, Public Works Engineer, Victoria, 29 July 1912, 44.



Map 2.1: Sketch of Location of Mt. Revelstoke Motor Road, July 1912⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Source: Hand-drawn map by J.P. Forde, MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, July 1912, 42.

Revelstoke civic leaders hoped that the automobile summit road would be connected with the trans-provincial highway, then being surveyed. By late summer 1912, surveyor A.E. Cleveland was investigating possible routes via Revelstoke, to the north, or Nelson, to the south.⁶⁶ The Revelstoke Board of Trade was anxious that the trans-provincial highway pass through Revelstoke. A through road would provide “enormous advantages to our Town,” and would from the Board’s point of view be a much more attractive route than one further south. Furthermore, the Board resented that the CPR was the only way of getting out of town: “We realise here that nothing could help our town more than such an out-let as our being shut in here without being able to get in or out without the assistance of the railway, is probably the chief drawback to the progress of the town.”⁶⁷ The Progress Club could clean up and modernize the city, and solicit funds to develop Mt. Revelstoke, but in the end tourists needed the option of automobile access.

After securing provincial funding for a road to the mountain, the Progress Club began to press MP Robert Francis Green to establish the mountain top as a national park.⁶⁸ Mayor of Kaslo from 1893 to 1897, and provincial MLA from 1898 to 1907, in a

⁶⁶ MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, Thomas Taylor to Thomas Kilpatrick, CPR Superintendent, Revelstoke, 31 August 1912, 49. The CPR appeared to be interested in having this road constructed. Taylor states, “I have asked Mt. Cleveland to look you up as, knowing how keenly you are interested in the construction of this road, I thought you would do everything in your power to assist Mr. Cleveland.”

⁶⁷ MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, H.H. McVity, Secretary, Revelstoke Board of Trade, to WW Foster, Deputy Minister of Public Works, Victoria, 16 September 1912, 50-51. The purpose of the letter was to ask Foster’s advice on whether it would help secure the highway through Revelstoke if the Board of Trade sent a representative to the Canadian Highway Association convention in Winnipeg. Foster replied that sending a representative would help advertise Revelstoke as a tourist destination but that the Provincial Government (not the Canadian Highway Association) would decide the route of the highway. MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 965, Foster to McVity, 19 September 1912, 53-54.

⁶⁸ The letter stated, “It is not intended that the proposed reserve shall interfere with the privileges of game hunting, or the existing rights in Water or Timber leases.” It also outlined the legal description of the lands that these groups wanted included in a national park (sections). Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), RG 84, vol. 1673, MR2, Mount Revelstoke National Park – History, Establishment, Boundary, J.H. Hamilton, President of the Revelstoke Progress Club, to RF Green, MP, Revelstoke, BC, August 17, 1912.

by-election in 1912 Green was elected as a federal MP for Kootenay.⁶⁹ Green wrote to the Minister of the Interior that it would be worth establishing a dominion park at the request of Revelstoke residents because the area “certainly is of no use for any other purposes,” the provincial government provided \$10,000 to build a road to the park, “and will, no doubt, from time to time supplement this amount by further grants until the road is completed,” and the CPR had offered to build a hotel in the park if it was set aside and a road built.⁷⁰ Two months later Provincial Deputy Minister of Public Works, W.W. Foster, announced that the Dominion government would establish a park on Mt. Revelstoke and had sent a surveyor to locate it. He estimated that the park road, which had four miles constructed and nine miles left to complete, would cost \$40,000, half paid for by the provincial department of public works, if the dominion government and city of Revelstoke would pay the remainder.⁷¹ By July 1913, the Dominion government had reserved land for the proposed park.⁷² Barnard Harvey, Chief Superintendent of Dominion Parks, surveyed the area in September 1913. At that point the provincial government had spent \$15,000 on the road, hoping that the dominion government would chip in. The city of Revelstoke had also built a pony trail past the summit of the mountain, for \$2000, and the mountaineering club had built a cabin at the summit.⁷³

Harvey and others ascended the mountain in three and a half hours by pony, traveled and

⁶⁹ “Kaslo House,” <<http://www.kaslohouse.com/h1.html>> (Accessed 21 April 2009)

⁷⁰ LAC, RG 84, vol. 1673, MR2, Mount Revelstoke National Park, RF Green to Robert Rogers, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, September 1912. This application was forwarded to JB Harkin, of the Provincial Parks Branch (28 September 1912).

⁷¹ Foster also announced that his department had begun construction of a road from Okanagan Valley to Revelstoke via Mable Lake and Three Valley. “Revelstoke National Park – Highway To Be Constructed between that City and the Okanagan,” *Vernon News*, 28 November 1912.

⁷² LAC, RG 84, vol. 1673, MR2, Mount Revelstoke National Park, Superintendent, BC Lands, to the Agent of Dominion Lands, Kamloops, BC, 3 July 1913; Dominion Parks Branch to T. Crothers, Acting Minister, Department of the Interior, Ottawa, May 2, 1913.

⁷³ “A portion of this was paid for by the Provincial Government as an extension to reach Lake Eva and Lake Miller.”

on to Eva and Miller Lakes, and got back to town by evening. That season alone, 500 people had climbed the mountain and signed the visitor book at the cabin. Although Harvey recommended that Mt. Revelstoke be amalgamated with Glacier National Park (est. 1886), in April 1914, Revelstoke National Park was established by order in council in an area 246 km square.⁷⁴

Revelstoke residents did not have long to enjoy the prestige of their new park before Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914. The next day, the *Mail-Herald* argued that national parks helped build strong citizens and preserve the (white) race. Parks also provided an “antidote to the ills of over-civilization and the complex life of modern cities.” National parks helped distinguish new world societies from old world hierarchies – parks were spaces where all citizens had the right to roam outdoors for as long as they wanted: “Such parks would be, in reality, people’s estates and would afford to the ordinary citizen many of the advantages which the man of wealth possesses in [his] country estate.” Particularly important in wartime, parks were spaces where men of all classes could improve their health and strength, “where boys and men could camp and fish and study nature, where the sick and delicate could find new stores of health in the great out of doors.”⁷⁵

Management of national parks at the onset of the First World War demonstrated that not everyone was entitled to the benefits of citizenship. The divisions between citizens and new immigrants had been exacerbated by an economic downturn in 1913-

⁷⁴ LAC, RG 84, vol. 1673, MR2, Mount Revelstoke National Park, P.C. Barnard Harvey, Chief Superintendent of Dominion Parks (report to the Department of the Interior), 18 September 1913; Memo to Mr. Mitchell, Dominion Parks Branch, Ottawa, 8 October 1913. Apparently, Harvey’s report “did not contain all the information desired,” so JB Harkin planned to visit the area himself. By 1915, the area was renamed Mount Revelstoke National Park. Lothian, *Brief History of Canada’s National Parks*, 57.

⁷⁵ “Great Value of National Parks,” *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 5 August 1914, 3. This was a review of a government publication on national parks.

1914, after the boom years of prairie settlement, industrial expansion and extensive public works projects. Since 1912, with unsettling events in Europe, overseas investors had been pulling out of Canadian projects. Property prices plummeted and British Columbia was overextended in its funding of railways. Thousands of new settlers that Canada had recently recruited faced high unemployment rates.⁷⁶ As early as 1911, non-citizens (and non-voters) were rejected from positions of authority, as a Public Works memo to the Cariboo region stated, “it is not the policy of the Government to employ aliens as Road Foremen when there are equally as good British subjects available for the work.”⁷⁷ Frank Veltri, who identified himself as an “old settler” in Revelstoke, highlighted the divisions between earlier and more recent arrivals, between people of different ethnicities, and between legitimate landowners and “squatters,” when he requested employment with public works, complaining that “I just get promises the favored ones are some Swedes that have squatted on a homestead where they have no right as they have had homesteads before around some place.”⁷⁸

Recent immigrants had difficulty competing for lower paid work in the following years. With the outbreak of the First World War, nativist intolerance turned to suspicions of sabotage by enemy aliens. In 1914, about 120,000 Canadian residents were citizens of the enemy Austro-Hungarian, German, and Ottoman Empires. When it invoked the War

⁷⁶ Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 12-13; Jean Barman, *West Beyond the West* 3rd ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 208-210.

⁷⁷ BCA, GR 0075, BC Department of Public Works, Minister of Public Works Correspondence Outward, vol. 2, 950, 4 August 1911.

⁷⁸ MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 966, Sec. 1, Revelstoke District General Matters, 2, Frank Veltri, Revelstoke, to T. Taylor, 20 May 1912. Robert Gordon, Government Agent, reported subsequently that Veltri was “rather a vicious old fellow, and since the date of his letter, May 20th, has been fined for starting a bush fire which burned the home of the Swedes he refers to, and seriously endangered their lives.” MTA, Revelstoke District, Box 240, File 966, Sec. 1, Revelstoke District General Matters, 7, Robert Gordon, Government Agent, to JE Griffiths, Public Works Engineer, Victoria, 6 June 1912.

Measures Act, the federal government required enemy aliens to register with police authorities. Contrary to international law, aliens were detained at the borders if they tried to leave. About 8,579 enemy aliens were held at internment camps, mostly those who could not support themselves otherwise.⁷⁹

Despite the importance of national parks to nation-building, park infrastructure was not initially a priority in wartime and funds ran out for the construction of the Mt. Revelstoke summit road. Hoping that this road would increase tourist visits to Revelstoke and boost the local economy, Revelstoke residents wanted interned enemy aliens to build the road. Municipalities that were traditionally responsible for indigents saw out-of-work foreigners as a suspicious threat and called for wholesale internment.⁸⁰ Revelstoke saw enemy aliens not as persons and potential citizens who had recently been invited to Canada to homestead, but as nuisances whose enforced labour could be put to constructive use. Ukrainian dairy farmers settled at Mt. Cartier had supplied Revelstoke residents with dairy products, but with the declaration of war, they were potentially transformed into a “menace” because they had originated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.⁸¹ At a city council meeting in May 1915, an alderman

advocated the internment of all Austrian[s] and Germans. One of his reasons was the existing labor problem... There were probably 200 Austrians working close to Revelstoke while in Revelstoke there was much unemployment. He thought that the government should intern the Germans and Austrians and so give good citizens a chance to get work. The Austrians and Germans were a menace to the community.⁸²

⁷⁹ Bohdan S. Kordan, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada During the Great War* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 5, 16-29.

⁸⁰ Kordan, *Enemy Aliens*, 25, 29, 37.

⁸¹ “Cartier, Mount,” *Encyclopedia of British Columbia* (Madeira Park, B.C. : Harbour Pub., 2000), 117.

⁸² “Council Asks Internment of Alien Enemies,” *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 29 May 1915, 1.

There was some confusion at the meeting about how internment would create more work for others but one councilor argued that the “work done by the interned foreigners would be work that would not otherwise be done.”⁸³

In their belief that internment would be good for the local economy, municipal leaders found it easy to distinguish between citizens and enemy aliens. In July, R.F. Green M.P. tried to convince the federal government to put interned aliens to work on the road up Mt. Revelstoke.⁸⁴ The mayor was grateful since other proposals to profit from the war, such as a munitions factory, had not materialized. Revelstoke would surely benefit from the road because guards would be hired, merchants would supply food, and the tourist trade would pick up. Former mayor C.F. Lindmark imagined that aliens could pay for their own internment, since “at Vernon he had seen interned Germans living on the best in the land. They were paying for it themselves and he thought they would be a nice bunch to have in Revelstoke.”⁸⁵ A newspaper article in August confirmed how important the internment camp was economically to Revelstoke, as 53 military guards were stationed at the camp, a “large proportion” of whom were from Revelstoke, and “all supplies for the camp [would] be purchased in Revelstoke.”⁸⁶

J.B. Harkin, Parks Commissioner, visited Revelstoke at the end of July 1915 and initiated the construction of log cabins built into the side of the mountain to house the workers. Harkin was concerned with efficiency, productivity, and keeping costs down. He sent Green a telegram stating, “Selected camp site today, have wired Gen. Otter to

⁸³ “Council Asks Internment of Alien Enemies,” *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 29 May 1915, 1.

⁸⁴ “Green wires essential start Revelstoke Camp immediately to take advantage of good weather there and when bad weather comes to send them elsewhere.” LAC, RG 84. vol. 190, file MR 176, Mount Revelstoke National Park – Utilization of Prisoners of War, FHH Williamson to JB Harkin, 24 July 1915.

⁸⁵ “Alien Internment Camp for Revelstoke Park,” *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 17 July 1915, 1.

⁸⁶ “Infantry Guards and Army Service Corps Arrive,” *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 28 August 1915, 1.

send Military Officer to approve site so work can be commenced immediately. Find cannot economically work more than two hundred twenty five men here. They should about finish road this year.” For housing, he proposed “putting prisoners in log camps instead of tents, faster, cheaper and warmer.”⁸⁷ F.E. Maunder, Revelstoke Park Superintendent, suggested to Harkin that the housing compound be surrounded by “necessary entanglement” of “woven stock wire for the bottom of the inclosure fence and the barbed wire for several strands at the top and interlaced through the stock wire.”⁸⁸

In September 1915, 100 Austrians arrived at Revelstoke from the Vernon camp, followed by 100 internees from Brandon. At the camp, they cleaned garbage from the compound and carried out road work, including grading and excavating loose rock and dirt. Working conditions were poor at Mt. Revelstoke: most of the work had to be done by hand and the side hills tended to erode. The men sometimes protested their forced labour by refusing to work. An early snowfall made road-building impossible and survival imperative. The Mt. Revelstoke camp did not last long. After building one and a half miles of road at Mt. Revelstoke, the internees there were transferred to a new camp at Yoho National Park by 20 December 1915.⁸⁹ Revelstoke had lost its interned labour.

⁸⁷ LAC, RG 84. vol. 190, file MR 176, Mount Revelstoke National Park – Utilization of Prisoners of War, J.B. Harkin to R.F. Green, 29 July 1915; Harkin to F.H. Williamson, 29 July 1915.

⁸⁸ LAC, RG 84. vol. 190, file MR 176, Mount Revelstoke National Park – Utilization of Prisoners of War, F.E. Maunder, Superintendent Revelstoke Park, to JB Harkin, Commissioner Dominion Parks, 7 August 1915.

⁸⁹ LAC, RG 84. vol. 190, file MR 176, Mount Revelstoke National Park – Utilization of Prisoners of War, Maunder to P.C. Barnard-Harvey, 15 October 1915, “Report of work for the month of September.” According to Harkin, “work revelstoke [sic] hampered refusal alien blacksmiths dress tools. Camp commandant unwilling enforce obedience.” LAC, RG 84. vol. 190, file MR 176, Mount Revelstoke National Park – Utilization of Prisoners of War, Harkin to F.H. Williamson, 5 October 1915. In addition, Maunder to Harkin, 5 November 1915 (telegram) “Aliens did not work eight days during October general foreman put time for foreman and teams these days will I allow this time reply.” Bill Waiser, *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada’s National Parks, 1915-1946* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1995), 16-19, 21-22. Part of the reason for their transfer was the unreliability of the water supply: “Palmer reports water supply Revelstoke Camp not reliable for winter which means removal” LAC,

The camp was left in some disorder: cooking utensils were strewn around the bunkhouses of the internees and around the guards' kitchen, and "one heating stove which was sent up there new this fall, was all broken to pieces."⁹⁰

Civic leaders wrote to ask for the return of internees the next summer, without success. In July 1916, city clerk W.A. Gordon forwarded a resolution representing "practically all the voters in Revelstoke and the vicinity" including both the Liberal and Conservative associations, and the Board of Trade, requesting an internment camp to complete the auto road.⁹¹ They argued that the road was useless if it was not completed up the mountain, and that it had to be done during the snow-free summer months. Interned labour was essential for the "up-keep of the city" especially since Revelstoke had "contributed" eight hundred men to the war effort.⁹² Whether resulting from the work of citizens or enemy aliens, maintaining a well-kept city was a priority.

Mount Revelstoke National Park benefited briefly from the labour of internees, but the efforts of residents of Scandinavian origin had a longer influence in promoting the park. Scandinavians had introduced skiing to the hard-rock mining areas of eastern BC and the American Rockies a couple decades earlier, yet Scandinavians revived their association with ski-sport in Revelstoke starting in 1914 by organizing ski clubs and winter sport events. Because of the timeframe, it is possible that Scandinavians were distinguishing themselves as originating from neutral countries, from other recent non-

RG 84. vol. 190, file MR 176, Mount Revelstoke National Park – Utilization of Prisoners of War, General Otter, Ottawa, to Harkin, Banff, 4 October 1915.

⁹⁰ Maunder concluded: "the prisoners must have tried to destroy as much material as possible." LAC, RG 84. vol. 190, file MR 176, Mount Revelstoke National Park – Utilization of Prisoners of War, Maunder to Harkin, 31 December 1915.

⁹¹ LAC, RG 84. vol. 190, file MR 176, Mount Revelstoke National Park – Utilization of Prisoners of War, WA Gordon, City Clerk, Revelstoke, to JB Harkin, Ottawa, 5 July 1916.

⁹² Kordan, *Enemy Aliens*, 159-160. From NA, RG 84, vol. 190, file MR 176, Municipal Resolution, re: establishment of Revelstoke Internment Camp.

Anglophone immigrants from enemy countries, by raising their profile as an active and loyal immigrant group. Park Superintendent Maunder's letter shows the stark contrast between attitudes towards two different sets of European immigrant workers, depending on the involvement of their country of origin in the war, when his description of the barbed wire fencing was closely followed by a reference to photographs of ski-jumping events (involving Scandinavians) that he had enclosed.⁹³

Sigurd Halvorsen founded the Revelstoke Ski Club in December 1914 with 23 members – membership increased to 300 within the first two years. The Club held its first tournament in 1915, when the jump was located below the boundary of the national park.⁹⁴ The event also included skiing and snowshoe races, and selected women's races. Contestants came from Revelstoke and neighbouring mining communities. Scandinavian culture was well-represented in the spectacle as “a parade of skiers and snow-shoers left Scandinavian hall.”⁹⁵ T. Iverson, president of the Western Canada Ski Association, served as judge. His speech after the event linked skiing with Scandinavians and discussed the ways in which skiing should or should not be profitable. He described the sport as “clean” because it was amateur in Canada and “the old country,” although not in the United States.⁹⁶ Scandinavians should maintain control of the sport but should not be paid to participate in it:

⁹³ LAC, RG 84. vol. 190, file MR 176, Mount Revelstoke National Park – Utilization of Prisoners of War, FE Maunder, Superintendent Revelstoke Park, to JB Harkin, Commissioner Dominion Parks, 7 August 1915.

⁹⁴ At this time, Rossland, Phoenix and Greenwood also had ski tournaments and clubs organized by Scandinavians. Dahlie, “Skiing for Identity and Tradition,” 101. Due to the success of the tournament, MP Robert Green helped get a lease for a new jump site within the national park. Nobbs, *Revelstoke History and Heritage*, 210.

⁹⁵ *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 10 February 1915, 1.

⁹⁶ According to Iverson, “the United States was the only country in the world that had allowed the sport to become professional and there they were regretting it every day.” *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 13 February 1915, 1.

It was considered an insult to offer a Scandinavian money for jumping as it was their one national sport and their great object was to keep it clean. He advised that the management of the ski sports should never be taken out of the hands of Scandinavians.⁹⁷

With no apparent irony, Iverson then discussed how Revelstoke could profit from winter sport promotion, without worrying about the expenses of skiers and ski jumpers, who were the main attraction. Revelstoke could take advantage of the war and its own terrain to attract tourists whose access to Switzerland was now blocked. Winter sports should not be privatized, and the town could benefit from developing venues such as ski jumps and ice rinks.⁹⁸ Scandinavians would be happy to do their part for Revelstoke by traveling there, competing, and putting on a show, without asking to be paid.

Men and women of Scandinavian origin were prominent participants in these competitions. At this tournament, Nels Nelson came second in the eight-mile race and first in the men's ski jump. Nelsen was born in Norway in 1894 and immigrated to Revelstoke in 1912, where he worked as a railway brakeman. He was also instrumental in organizing the ski club, winter carnival and ski tournament. Mt. Revelstoke had natural conditions for a good ski jump, and this event was the most popular to watch:

Their great mountain-side needed no artificial tower, little grading, and had an unlimited approach and run-out and a natural contour. This combination of conditions made possible jumps of over 200 feet, equal to the best on United States hills. Their hill was a freak of nature. No one had ever seen one like it anywhere else.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 10 February 1915, 1.

⁹⁸ *Mail-Herald*, Revelstoke, 10 February 1915, 1.

⁹⁹ Douglas, *My Ski-ing Years*, 28-29.

In February 1916, on the larger hill within Mt. Revelstoke National Park, Nelsen made an informal jump of 183 feet, when the world record was 177 feet.¹⁰⁰ He went on to win three Canadian ski jumping championships between 1917 and 1919. In February 1925, he broke the world record with a jump of 224 feet, and later jumped 240 feet. Nelsen also organized skiing in Western Canada, serving as president of the Western Canada Amateur Ski Association (WCASA).¹⁰¹ Nels and his brother Ivan also worked as ski instructors in Quebec.¹⁰²

The Scandinavian interest in ski jumping continued after the war. Norwegian Carl Gunnarsen grew up hiking on Mt. Revelstoke and later became involved in ski jumping. Born in Norway in 1908 and arriving in Revelstoke at age 5, Gunnarsen worked on a trapline along the Jordan River with his father, catching “marten, lynx and beaver and ermine or weasel,” and as a teenager spent winter weekends on the hill with his friends, staying at the cabin on Balsam Lake.¹⁰³ He started working on the ski hills in 1921, packing the hills by foot and preparing for competitions, when it was “all volunteer labour.” Some of the funding came from Ottawa, which sent a \$500 cheque every year to help pay for tournament expenses. He thought it was “more fun in those days” when one had to walk up the hill than later when tows carried people up. He remembered cross-country skiing by moonlight when ski club members set up check points to make sure everyone returned, and finished the evening with coffee and donuts. One hill earned a

¹⁰⁰ This was an informal jump. The larger hill within the park was known as “Big Hill” or “Suicide Hill” and was later renamed after Nelsen.

¹⁰¹ Nobbs, *Revelstoke: History and Heritage*, 211. WCASA was distinct from the Canadian Amateur Ski Association (CASA), representing eastern Canada, but the two later merged. The Canadian Ski Museum notes that WCASA represented 14 clubs in Vancouver, the Lower Mainland, East and West Kootenays, Banff, Smithers, Wells, Calgary, Revelstoke, and one in Japan: Fuji. “Nels Nelsen Biography,” *Canadian Ski Museum*, <http://www.skimuseum.ca/bios/Nelsen_Nels.pdf> (Accessed 17 August 2009).

¹⁰² Douglas, *My Ski-ing Years*, 28-29.

¹⁰³ Caton, *History of Mount Revelstoke*, 38-39.

reputation as slightly dangerous and was locally called “Suicide Hill,” even though Gunnarsen did not recall too many accidents. A judge from “back east” cancelled the tournament because he thought the hill was too dangerous, and put a log across the take-off. Local boys took the log off and jumped anyways, but other competitors abstained or were literally quaking in their boots, because “they came from hills from around 75 to 150 feet and this one at the time was probably 260 feet.”¹⁰⁴

The establishment of Mt. Revelstoke National Park has elements of progress, romanticism, and intolerance. Mt. Revelstoke came into being at the juncture between prosperity and recession. After the turn of the century, residents valued the subalpine parkland because it provided a weekend’s social recreation, a healthful escape from the city, inspirational scenery, or a summer holiday with family. They hoped to turn this discovery into a valuable commodity for tourists. The provincial government was supportive by funding first a trail, then a road to the summit. The Progress Club combined Revelstoke’s ambitions for its cityscape and recreational hinterland. Visiting national parks was touted as a right of citizenship, yet the local definition of citizenship was becoming narrower, excluding first the urban unemployed, then all enemy aliens, interned or not. Although there is no direct evidence, it is likely that Scandinavians organized ski tournaments and carnivals as a way to promote Revelstoke while emphasizing their loyalty as non-Anglophone residents. Once the country was at war, Revelstoke’s civic leaders and boosters reacted as other communities did and defined some recent immigrants as undeserving of the rights of citizenship. “Enemy aliens” were one way for the city to make ends meet and to continue the park project at any cost.

¹⁰⁴ Caton interview with Carl Gunnarsen. *History of Mount Revelstoke*, 35-47.

Chapter 3

The Forbidden Plateau:

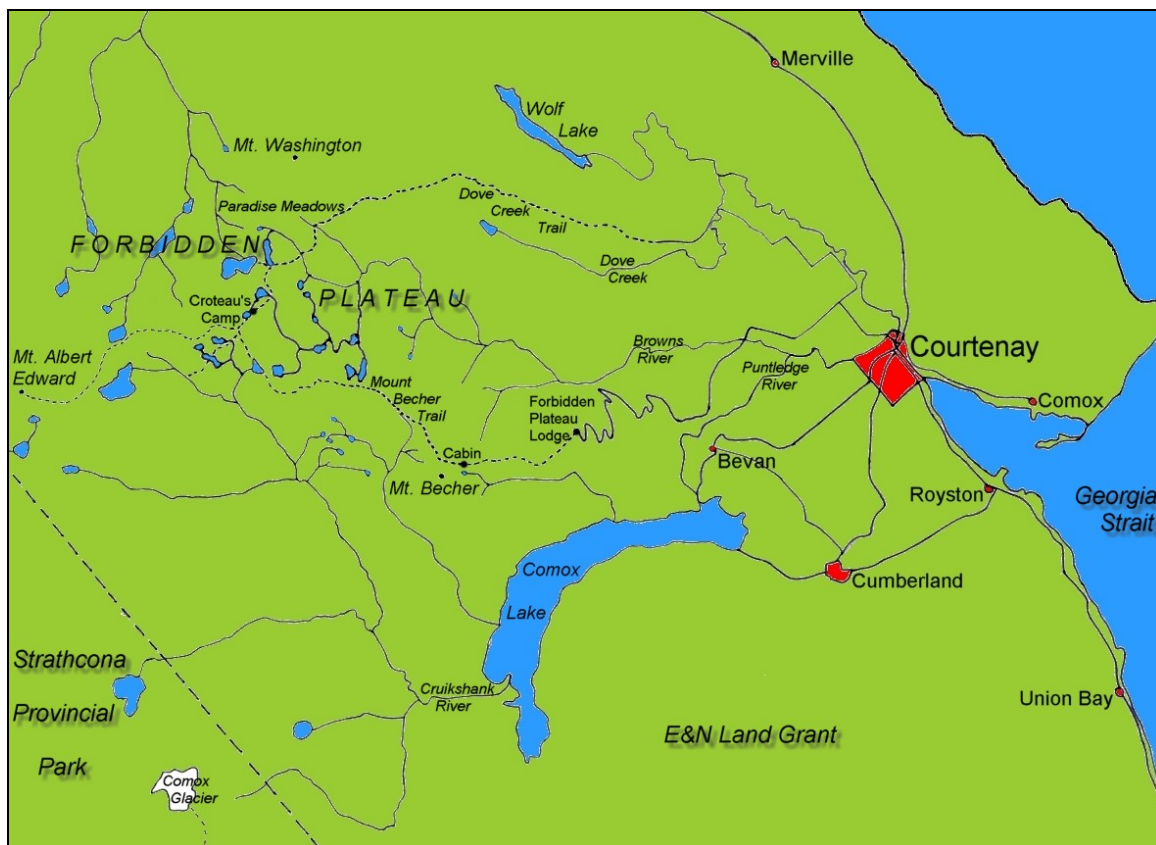
Interwar Playground, Commons, and Commodity

As at Mt. Revelstoke, residents of the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island sought to promote nature tourism by advertising their own mountainous backcountry starting in the 1920s. The plateau had formerly hosted the seasonal work of trappers and prospectors, but local boosters re-imagined the plateau as a mystical landscape of adventure. To publicize the plateau, they used tactics that had proven successful in Revelstoke: forming a mountaineering club, taking and displaying photographs, tapping into a regional network of hiking enthusiasts, and printing newspaper articles that described the landscape in positive and romantic terms. They also lobbied, unsuccessfully, for a national park.

The Forbidden Plateau's development was tied to the interests of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), and municipal, provincial and federal governments. The CPR, which owned the plateau, was reluctant to part with it for the creation of a national park, as it already benefited from the plateau as a recreation area through increased tourist traffic on its Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway branch. An employee of the municipal government, Clinton Stuart Wood, 'discovered' the plateau, and periodically members of the municipal government or the board of trade went there in groups to go camping or tobogganing. The provincial government paid for trail work, and the federal government stocked lakes with fish, even though it did not want take on the plateau as a national park.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Forbidden Plateau was a playground, commons, and commodity. For local youth especially, the plateau was a social and liminal space beyond adult authority. It was a place for young men to develop rugged masculinity, and for young women to leave behind some conventions of feminine dress and behaviour. Civic leaders secured government funding and recognition of the plateau just before the Depression. They had high hopes for the plateau's tourist potential, and over the next few years, it was a popular destination for locals and people from out of town. Trail building sponsored by the government, tourism, and self-provisioning occurred before but increased during the Depression, when these activities became of greater significance to the local economy and family strategies.

Working within the woodcraft tradition, local residents made some of their own equipment and fished for their meals. The plateau offered commodities such as scenery, adventure and non-timber forest resources that could be exploited, harvested, and traded in the formal and informal economies by entrepreneurs, employees, prospectors and naturalists. Yet, they shared it with others by promoting it to out-of-town tourists with access, accommodation and newspaper articles. In short, the plateau was a multiple-use area that local residents could still visit inexpensively.



Map 3.1: The Forbidden Plateau
Source: Map designed by Christian Lieb

Since 1884, the area that became the Forbidden Plateau belonged to Robert Dunsmuir’s Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway Company (E&N), which had received it as part of a grant in exchange for building a railway connecting Victoria to northern Island communities. This was a generous grant, consisting of one-fifth of Vancouver Island, or “the surface rights to 800,000 hectares of the most arable and accessible land on Vancouver Island, the timber on it, and everything below the surface except gold and silver.”¹ In 1905, the CPR bought the E & N railway and the associated land and resource rights. In 1911, the province established its first provincial park, Strathcona, whose

¹ Lynne Bowen, *Robert Dunsmuir: Laird of the Mines* (Montreal: XYZ Publishing, 1999), 114.

borders formed a large triangle of mountainous terrain on both sides of Buttle Lake. The park shared its eastern boundary with the western limit of the E & N grant. By 1914, the E & N reached its eventual terminus at Courtenay, from which it shipped farm produce and coal southward. By the late 1920s, it carried tourists north to the Forbidden Plateau.

Located in the mountains west of Courtenay, in the northwestern fringe of the E & N railway lands, the landscape of the Forbidden Plateau is open and subalpine with meadows, lakes, mountains, sparse and low vegetation cover and some forested valleys. Steep canyons and poor quality wood at these higher elevations discouraged logging. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, a few trappers and prospectors lived on the plateau on a seasonal basis. John Brown, an African-American prospector, who settled in Cumberland in 1898, worked in the mines in the winter, and in about 1915, began prospecting for gold on the plateau and eventually worked a claim seasonally at Circlet Lake.² Tommy Anderson built more than one cabin on the plateau to support his trapping activities. Cecil Smith probably included the plateau in his hunting territory.³ These men were involved in the transition to a recreational landscape: Brown helped guide early recreational visits to the plateau, and hikers used Anderson's abandoned cabins for shelter.

² See also Susan Mayse, *Ginger: The Life and Death of Albert Goodwin* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 1990), 36: "John Brown was a summer gold prospector and winter coal miner, general merchant and no-holds-barred entrepreneur." Courtenay Museum and Archives, Ruth Masters, "History of the Forbidden Plateau" (1988) Courtenay Museum, 174, 175.

³ Angus McMonnies' father sometimes took off for hunting expeditions in the mountains with Cougar Smith. Angus McMonnies, personal interview, May 2006.



Picture 3.1: Plateau Landscape
Photographer: Christian Lieb, 2006
 Photograph used with permission.

Comox Lake, south of the plateau, became the site of summer leisure in the early twentieth century as local residents constructed cottages on the lake shore. To avoid being conscripted for military service during the First World War, some men took refuge in the mountainous interior of Vancouver Island.⁴ Police patrolled the woods around Comox Lake, and restricted residents from visiting their summer cottages in case they provided assistance to men avoiding conscription. The most controversial conscript was Albert “Ginger” Goodwin, born in 1887, a socialist union organizer who had worked in

⁴ “Between upper Comox Lake and the open Pacific miles to the west, from the outskirts of Victoria north to Queen Charlotte Sound, the island’s mountainous spine offered a natural haven for those eager to avoid prying eyes. Scores, perhaps hundreds, of young men hid in the island’s wilderness areas in 1918 to avoid military service.” Mayse, *Ginger*, 150.

Trail and Cumberland. Exempted from military service because of poor health, he was later reclassified as fit for service and hid in the woods near Cruikshank Canyon. Goodwin and his companions were said to have stayed in cabins belonging to John Brown and Tommy Anderson; they ate blackberries and wild game, and food dropped off at night by sympathetic Cumberland residents. Goodwin was shot to death, reportedly in self-defence, by Special Constable Dan Campbell on 27 July 1918. Reporting on the death of Ginger Goodwin, the *Comox Argus* perceived the area as dangerous and rugged, for police had to penetrate the “fastness of the mountains.”⁵

Less than a decade after the First World War, the plateau underwent a social reconstruction.⁶ Tourism promoters and enthusiastic youth transformed the plateau from a preserve of a handful of male trappers and prospectors to a landscape of leisure and adventure for both genders. Local residents reshaped the Forbidden Plateau by advertising it to tourists and using it themselves for recreation.⁷ The local newspaper frequently published accounts of trips to the plateau and descriptions of the landscape. Promoters took photographs and gave presentations to hiking groups and regional tourist associations. They also organized the construction of an infrastructure that included access, accommodation, and services. Local residents enjoyed leisure time on the plateau at minimal cost. They cooperated to form the Comox District Mountaineering Club and build a club cabin. They made some of their own equipment with materials on hand,

⁵ *Comox Argus*, 1 August 1918, 1.

⁶ On the social construction of wilderness, see William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” in William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996); I.S. MacLaren, “Cultured Wilderness Wilderness in Jasper National Park,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 1999 34(3), 7-58; and Bruce Braun, “Landscapes of Loss and Mourning,” in *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada’s West Coast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

⁷ This concept is borrowed from Braun, *Intemperate Rainforest*.

found paid employment on the plateau, and harvested resources such as plants and minerals.

In the interwar period, Courtenay and the Comox Valley were arguably rural in many senses of the term. Comox Valley residents earned their incomes from logging, mining, agriculture and the service industry.⁸ Courtenay, the urban centre of the Comox Valley, remained small in the interwar period, growing from 810 residents in 1921 to 1,219 in 1931, when Victoria and Vancouver, whose citizens were also drawn to the Plateau, had about 50,000 and 170,000 inhabitants each.⁹ Comox Valley residents lived in close proximity to the plateau; they could see its mountains and the Comox Glacier (south of the plateau) from town, and drive and hike to the top of Mount Becher in a few hours. They also defined themselves as different from urbanites. Having to work while visitors from Victoria fished in the Oyster River, Jack Hames shunned future journalist Arthur Mayse and his father. “How dare they fish in my river while I was tied up in bridge work,” he wrote in a later newspaper column of his own. A local mountaineer commented that in the early 20th century, “The few people who went hiking followed game trails. You had to be familiar with the wilderness to do that. It’s too confusing for someone from the city.”¹⁰

Recreational use of the Forbidden Plateau was locally initiated, but inspired within a regional and national network of transportation, mobility, and tourism promotion, and popular ideas of aesthetically pleasing landscapes. Engineer and City of Courtenay employee Clinton Stuart Wood recognized the value of the plateau as a

⁸ Richard Somerset Mackie, *Island Timber: A Social History of the Comox Logging Company, Vancouver Island* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 2000), 75-92.

⁹ Canada, *Census of Canada*, 1921 and 1931.

¹⁰ Duncan MacDonnell, “Hiking into the Wilderness: Old-timers say the spirit has changed with the opening of the woods,” no date, in Masters, “History of the Forbidden Plateau,” 112.

recreational landscape that could bring tourist revenue to local businesses. He also had the energy and connections to promote the plateau and make it accessible. “Without Clinton Wood,” as one of his contemporaries put it, “there would be no Forbidden Plateau now, at least not in the sense that we have had it.”¹¹ Born in Clinton, BC, in 1888, to the wife of a Methodist minister, Wood became familiar with a variety of settler communities in the province, depending on where his father was posted. The ambitious Wood showed an early aptitude for entrepreneurship: as a young teenager, he sold flowers to prostitutes in Kaslo. After high school, he worked in a sawmill in Revelstoke and studied electricity and mechanics by correspondence. A dangerously close shave at the sawmill inspired Wood to re-evaluate the kind of work he wanted to do: “I began to think like Napoleon that I was meant for something,” he told Imbert Orchard, a CBC interviewer, in 1965. He taught school on Salt Spring Island for a year and a half, then studied engineering in Toronto. Wood left Revelstoke in about 1905 or 1906, just at the point when local hikers were aiming for the summit of Mt. Revelstoke, and he would have known about the skis, toboggans and snowshoes that people used to travel between Revelstoke and the Lardeau district. He returned to the island and married Mary Mouat, then worked in Vancouver before settling in Courtenay where he managed the Courtenay Electric Light, Heat and Power Co. After the City of Courtenay took over the power company in 1918, Wood held various other positions with the city.

Wood was manager of waterworks and secretary of the Board of Trade when he first visited the plateau in 1925, after two hot summers prompted city council to investigate the source of its water supply. Wood trekked to McKenzie Lake with prospector John Brown, and the next summer he explored the plateau with cougar hunter

¹¹ Trevor Davies interview in Masters, “History of the Forbidden Plateau,” 82.

Cecil Smith, hiking to the top of Mt. Albert Edward. According to Wood, “You could just see the mountains in those days. They were just there. Nobody ever went up there. Nobody thought of going except a few prospectors.” As a result of this trip, the city of Courtenay got water rights at Goose Lake, installing a dam there to create a reservoir. So impressed by what he saw, Wood spent the next two decades promoting the plateau.

Wood collaborated with *Comox Argus* editor Ben Hughes to market the plateau as an attractive tourist destination. Together, they renamed the plateau, provided it with a history, and gave it a reputation as mysterious and alluring. The name “Forbidden Plateau” was taken from articles he and Hughes wrote about Wood’s first trip into the area. They built up the “mystery” of the plateau by inventing, or at least elaborating on, a legend of Comox Indigenous women and children kidnapped on the plateau by hairy giants, an imaginative explanation of the Plateau’s “forbidden” character that served to entice curious hikers.¹² By writing and publishing this legend, Hughes also implied that the plateau was an empty land, not a territory with a history of use or residence by local First Nations.

In addition to their story of an Aboriginal tragedy in the mountains, Wood and Hughes constructed a plateau steeped in myth, legend and the supernatural. Hughes, himself a regular hiker, published accounts of trips to the plateau which helped to romanticize the plateau’s landscape in the local imagination. As in Revelstoke, the local newspaper helped draw attention to nearby mountain scenery, but in Courtenay newspaper publicity was amplified, both in terms of hyperbolic descriptions of landscapes, and the generous space the *Argus* gave to descriptions of weekend trips to the

¹² The preceding three paragraphs are based on BC Archives (hereafter BCA) *Imbert Orchard Collection*, Clinton Wood Interview, tape T827: 0001, 1965.

plateau. Hughes' impressions and those of other local residents in the late 1920s and the 1930s drew on traditions of viewing landscape as romantic, or investing nature with "new meaning and value", and seeing it as picturesque, or paintable, attractive and pleasing.¹³ This type of rhetoric was also at work at Mt. Revelstoke.

The *Argus* offered a twist on these concepts, describing the Plateau as a playground and fairyland, imbued with hints of a legendary past. Unlike later twentieth-century travelers who sought wilderness with no trace of human habitation or history,¹⁴ interwar visitors were pleased to visit a plateau invested with romantic fairytale qualities, references to medieval Europe, and Orientalist conceptions of the Middle East.¹⁵ The *Comox Argus* typically described the Plateau as "a fairyland of green pastures and flowing streams, and tree-dotted glens and valleys." Castle Mountain resembled "a medieval keep of some predatory baron," and nearby Moat Lake looked like "Maxfield Parish's engravings of the Arabian nights."¹⁶ British neo-romantic ramblers in the 1920s exhibited similar tastes, rejecting rationalism and commercialism, while seeking mysterious landscapes and signs of medieval and pre-industrial Britain.¹⁷ Of course, on the plateau, signs of a medieval past were imaginative interpretations of natural features.

Having worked with Hughes to define the plateau as a desirable space, Wood developed ties with influential figures in business, government and tourism to publicize the plateau regionally and nationally. He formed a local mountaineering club expressly

¹³ Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 7-9.

¹⁴ See Braun, "Landscapes of Mourning," in *Intemperate Rainforest*.

¹⁵ Pre-World War I nature tourists in Eastern Canada also visited historic battle sites. Jasen, *Wild Things*.

¹⁶ *Comox Argus*, August 2, 1928, 1.

¹⁷ Frank Trentmann, "Civilization and Its Discontents: English Neo-Romanticism and the Transformation of Anti-Modernism in Twentieth-Century Western Culture," *Journal of Contemporary History* v. 29 (1994), 584, 587, 593-4. Trentmann found that "By the 1930s about 100,000 English men and women were regularly hiking across the countryside, organized in small clubs..." (586).

“as a publicity medium.”¹⁸ He organized trips into the Plateau for Courtenay city councillors and the Victoria-based section of the Alpine Club of Canada. Coordinating with regional and national tourist promoters, he corresponded with George Warren, commissioner of the Victoria and Island Publicity Bureau, and attended a National Parks convention in Vancouver to persuade the federal government to make the plateau into a national park.¹⁹

The most important body that Wood had to deal with was the landowner. From his earliest promotions of the plateau, Wood negotiated with the CPR to use the area and lobbied the CPR to sell or lease the plateau to the federal government so it could be made into a national park. Wood argued that the company would benefit from a park “by increased business from tourist and [related] traffic.”²⁰ Happy to sell off smaller sections of low-lying land to settlers and large blocks of timber to logging companies, the CPR hesitated to part with the plateau and its timber and mineral rights to the federal government or anyone else. The railway company, however, had no objection to campers using the area as long as they observed “proper precautions in the matter of fire prevention.”²¹

Wood and other local boosters did secure support from various levels of government, if not park status for the plateau. As with Mt. Revelstoke, municipal representatives appealed to the dominion government for national park status, and to the provincial government for infrastructure funding. In March 1928, Clinton Wood met in

¹⁸ BCA, *Imbert Orchard Collection*, Clinton Wood Interview, tape T827: 0001.

¹⁹ Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 54; *Comox Argus*, March 29, 1928, 1.

²⁰ *Comox Argus*, February 2, 1928.

²¹ The northern boundary of the game reserve connected Buttle Lake with Mt. Washington, and the southern boundary ran west to east from the park boundary to Mt. Becher. *Comox Argus*, 24 January 1929, 4.

Victoria with W.W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to discuss the possibility of a national park on the Forbidden Plateau. J.C. Campbell, director of publicity of the Dominion Parks Board, returned with Wood to the Comox Valley. Campbell's aim appeared to be to promote permanent settlers by first attracting them as tourists.²² Later that month, Wood attended a Canadian National Parks Association convention in Vancouver on behalf of the Courtenay Board of Trade to promote a national park on the plateau. William Wasborough Foster, the association's president, who had been involved in the development of Mt. Revelstoke National Park as Deputy Minister of Public Works and who, now headed an engineering firm, supported him.²³ The Parks Association agreed that there should be a national park somewhere on Vancouver Island.²⁴

Federal and provincial governments showed some interest in developing the plateau. The federal government planted trout in the lakes which did not have fish but appeared to offer good habitat. In 1928, Major Motherwell of the Fisheries Department gave the fledgling Comox District Mountaineering Club 30,000 Kamloops trout fry to stock the Goose Lakes.²⁵ By 1931, healthy fish were spotted in eleven lakes.²⁶ Even though the plateau was private property, the provincial government passed an order-in-council creating a game reserve in the shape of a parallelogram attached to the eastern

²² *Comox Argus*, March 22, 1928, 1.

²³ Lindsay Elms, *Beyond Nootka*, "William (Billy) Wasborough Foster," http://members.shaw.ca/beyondnootka/biographies/w_foster.html (Accessed 26 April 2009)

²⁴ *Comox Argus*, March 29, 1928, 1.

²⁵ *Comox Argus*, February 2, 1928, 1.

²⁶ A.W. Neill, the MP for Comox-Alberni, informed the Courtenay-Comox Board of Trade in 1931 that eight more lakes would be planted with five hundred thousand fish eggs. *Comox Argus*, April 30, 1931, 1. Some of the eggs were planted in July by Capt. H.H.M. Beadnell and Mr. Carrick of the Cowichan hatchery. *Comox Argus*, July 2, 1931, p. 8, July 16, 1931, 5. To protect the fish, fishing was not allowed in Circlet lake until 1933. *Comox Argus*, June 30, 1932, 2. "On the afternoon of June 29th, a half million Kamloops trout eggs arrived in Courtenay on their way to their destination, the Forbidden Plateau. They will be transported by truck for the first ten miles, where pack-horses will be waiting to take them in to the lakes on the Forbidden Plateau. Prior to 1929 all the lakes on the Plateau were absolutely barren of fish." *Comox Argus*, July 14, 1932, 5.

side of Strathcona Park. This game reserve did “not take in all the area usually considered to be part of the Forbidden Plateau.”²⁷

The Comox District Mountaineering Club (CDMC) that Wood formed for promotional purposes in 1928 enabled a cooperative local recreational use of the plateau.²⁸ At early meetings, members discussed inviting Victoria and Vancouver groups to the plateau, grading members according to a scale of how high they had climbed, building a cabin, and lobbying for the plateau to be made into a park. After the club secured permission to build a cabin on CPR land in 1928, James A. Warren designed a cabin with sleeping areas for men and women, and a kitchen and common room, at an estimated cost of \$225. Warren built much of the cabin, which began as one room, and volunteers from the CDMC shingled the roof, installed doors and windows, and carried up an oil drum heater for a stove.²⁹ According to Angus McMonnies, the cabin was a “straight rectangle, kitchen in the centre with a big kitchen stove, then it was a few chicken wire bunks, and... mainly storage for food.”³⁰ Ruth Masters recalls how “Mice rattled in the dishes and silver-ware all night, while ravenous fleas made a hearty meal.”³¹

The cabin was a popular, low-cost winter retreat, that made possible “sudden week-end invasions of [a] hitherto peaceful domain.”³² While staying at the cabin, club members went tobogganing and skiing, and took photographs on Mt. Becher. Club members were happy to use the cabin, but less eager to pay for it. In June 1931, members still owed \$105 on the cabin. CDMC leaders encouraged people to pay their membership

²⁷ Clifford Carl, *The Natural History of the Forbidden Plateau Area, Vancouver Island, British Columbia* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1943), D19.

²⁸ This club is still going strong with over a hundred members, see <http://www.comoxhiking.com/>.

²⁹ *Comox Argus*, 6 December 1928.

³⁰ Angus McMonnies, personal interview, May 2006.

³¹ Masters, “History of the Forbidden Plateau,” 149.

³² *Comox Argus*, 7 March 1929.

fees, or to leave fifty cents when they stayed at the cabin. They also chastised those who left the cabin a mess and used up the food supplies. The cabin was an ongoing project, needing more shingles, flooring and better bunks, but it was still full almost every weekend that winter, sometimes with 25 people crammed in at once. Adapting to the deep winter snowfall, club members hung a shovel high up a tree in the fall above the cabin door, so that they could find and dig straight down to the door in the winter.³³ In the fall, groups of volunteers cut wood for use over the winter. Washroom facilities consisted of an outhouse built up into the trees, with a ladder to reach it. The soil was not very deep so it would have been difficult to dig a deep hole, and nonsensical for winter use. According to Ruth Masters, “The old cabin... fairly throbbed with lusty fellowship, good humour and rich puns.”³⁴ Angus McMonnies recalled that people would go up to the cabin for the night even if they did not have skis. To entertain themselves in the long winter evenings at the cabin, McMonnies and his friends told jokes in the style of radio comedians Jack Benny, Ed Allen, and Bob Hope:

we’d sit there and cook up a lovely big T-bone steak for supper, fried mushrooms, everything there. Sit down to eat it and somebody’d say something funny and start laughing. Somebody else would say something funny. We spent the whole night sitting there laughing. Food would be dead cold when we finally [ate it]. [Those] were the heydays.³⁵

Members of hiking groups to the plateau were generally young people, a new generation of hikers. The majority of mountaineering club members were in their teens and early twenties. In June 1931, “three-quarters of the attendance,” at the Comox District Mountaineering Club meeting “was of young people who have made great use of

³³ Angus McMonnies, personal interview, May 2006

³⁴ Masters, “History of the Forbidden Plateau,” 76.

³⁵ Angus McMonnies, personal interview, May 2006.

the cabin on Mount Beecher and enjoyed the winter sports.”³⁶ By September 1932, club members replaced Clinton Wood as president with Sid Williams, age 24. Geoffrey Capes, who also lost his position as secretary-treasurer to the youthful Peggy Watt, wrote in his diary that the club was “practically taken over by the younger [generation].”³⁷

In the interwar period, Canadian youth were coalescing into a distinct cultural group. A study focusing primarily on urban youth in Ontario found that young people in the 1920s had some surplus income and time on their hands, and participated in a consumer culture of ‘paying to be amused’ by diversions such as cinema, the dancehall and the automobile.³⁸ Social reformers worried that commercial entertainment would erode the character and creativity of adolescents. They tried to steer youth away from commercial leisure “and into adult-supervised, community-based, Christian-influenced, and often church-affiliated organizations,” such as Girl Guides and Boy Scouts. Certainly, local Boy Scouts and the Anglican Young People’s Association (AYPA) used Forbidden Plateau.³⁹ In such groups, young people could learn democratic participation and cooperation, qualities that were increasingly valued as the Depression threatened to marginalize and radicalize youth.⁴⁰ Although the CDMC was not intended as a youth group, young adults eventually dominated its leadership.⁴¹

The activities of CDMC members on the Forbidden Plateau shared certain features with popular outdoor movements in interwar Europe. In Britain by the 1920s,

³⁶ *Comox Argus*, 18 June 1931, 1.

³⁷ BCA, MS 1618, Geoffrey Capes Diary, 29 September 1932; *Comox Argus*, 6 October 1932, 7.

³⁸ Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth: Adolescence and the Making of a Modern Canada, 1920-1950* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006) 166, 200.

³⁹ On December 31, 1930, a party of twenty “Anglican Juniors and A.Y.P.A.’s” climbed Mt. Beecher in the moonlight to celebrate New Year at the summit. The article noted that the “idea of winter sports is appealing very vigorously to the youth of Courtenay,” *Comox Argus*, 1 January 1931.

⁴⁰ Comacchio, *Dominion of Youth*, 190, 192, 200.

⁴¹ See *Comox Argus*, 9 August 1928, 1; 1 January 1931, 3.

rural rambling ceased to be purely a pursuit of elite, solitary artists and naturalists. Large groups of young clerks and other city workers, with some surplus cash and few responsibilities, took advantage of cheap rail and bus fares to escape from the city and participate in a “mass invasion” of the countryside through strenuous hikes in rural areas. These young people wanted to improve their health, get off the beaten track, seek the mystical in nature, and avoid the commercialism of seaside resorts. Not unlike outdoor recreation in twentieth century British Columbia, the British rambling movement suited the interests of the state and citizens. Government and social reformers hoped that citizens would improve their health and morality by hiking, while local ramblers wanted access to ‘traditional’ footpaths and common land, and organized sleeping accommodation along the way.⁴² Like participants in the British outdoor movements, groups of young people in the Comox Valley cooperated to build and maintain a cabin for overnight accommodation, and participated in low-cost recreation off the beaten track in order to explore mysterious and enticing landscapes.

On the plateau young men and women could escape for long hikes away from the interference of their parents and other adults, and explore new landscapes and relationships, although not too far from home.⁴³ Moreover, they had to maintain a certain decorum since their activities were often reported afterward in detail in the *Comox Argus*. Margaret Ellis and her brother spent their childhood in India, but because of her father’s failing health settled in Courtenay when Margaret was nine years old. Her parents moved to Duncan in 1930, but Margaret and her brother stayed behind for a year to complete

⁴² Helen Walker, “The Popularization of the Outdoor Movement, 1900-1940,” *British Journal of Sports History* 1985 2(2), 148; see also Trentmann, “Civilization and Its Discontents.”

⁴³ As Comacchio argues, “Early twentieth-century changes in the organization of both work and leisure gave rise to a youth-oriented mixed-sex recreational arena, more removed than ever before from the watchful gaze of adults.” *Dominion of Youth*, 166.

high school: “That was when we had our fun on the Plateau.”⁴⁴ Jim Greig, whose father, Ted Greig, worked in the mines then opened a nursery, first went skiing on Mt. Becher as a twelve-year-old. In July 1935, when he was about 15, Greig climbed Mt. Washington with a group of people in their teens and twenties. When Bob Filberg, head of the Comox Logging Company, consulted the Greigs about a rose garden they were going to plant for him, Filberg accused Jim Greig of lying when he claimed to have hiked to the top of Mt. Washington the previous day. Ted Greig got out a map and showed Filberg that it was possible to do this hike in a day since the group left at 2:30 in the morning and travelled about three miles an hour.⁴⁵

The plateau was as popular with girls as it was with boys, although there were subtle differences in how they visited it. For example, girls travelled in all-female groups or with male friends, but not usually on their own, nor alone with one or more boys. Young men sometimes hiked by themselves, or with a few male friends on more “strenuous” long distance hikes. Young women sometimes took responsibility for traditionally female tasks associated with the club, for example cleaning up the Mt. Becher cabin:

the girls found the floor dirty and the pots and pans left anywhere, rusty and full of water. They cleaned up before they came away, and if other people who have no respect for themselves or for other people's property don't get there first, it will be in good condition for the next party of hikers.⁴⁶

Possibly inspired by role models like Phyllis Munday, who lectured in Courtenay and hiked on the plateau,⁴⁷ girls like Peggy Watt assumed leadership roles in the

⁴⁴ It was a running joke about Duncan and Courtenay that “all the admirals and generals retired to Duncan, and the captains and lesser breeds of the non-commissioned officers went up to Comox, because that was how it was divided off.” Margaret Ellis, personal interview, 10 October 2006.

⁴⁵ Jim Greig, personal interview, April 2006. An album from Katherine Capes includes two photos of this day trip. Courtenay Museum and Archives, Katherine Capes photos, “Mt. Washington Hike – July 1935.”

⁴⁶ *Comox Argus*, 27 October 1932, 2.

mountaineering club. By the 1930s women were accustomed to wearing pants or shorts while hiking. The idea that girls and boys shared the Mt. Becher cabin, or camped out together, seemed to be of little concern in the *Comox Argus*.⁴⁸

Diarist, mountaineer and hardware store owner Geoffrey Capes took his daughters hiking on the Forbidden Plateau and they soon organized independent excursions, both local and further afield. In 1929, they tried out a new trail, and Capes wrote, “the girls had stood it just as well if not better than I did.”⁴⁹ On one of their trips, the girls “left the house at 6.10 [in the morning] dressed up like boys in breeches and heavy boots, with packs on their backs, on their way to Mt. Beecher cabin where they and several others propose to spend two nights.” His entry suggests that the girls thought it was fine and practical to dress that way, but he found it a bit surprising. On the evening when they returned, they went to a Girl Guides dance, switching from “dressing up like boys” to “dressing up like girls.”⁵⁰ Their other Girl Guides activities included camping on Denman Island and at Kye Bay.⁵¹ In 1933, Katherine and Phyllis applied their hiking skills to an ambitious project when they walked, hitch-hiked, and rode the rails from Courtenay to Toronto.⁵²

⁴⁷ *Comox Argus*, 19 April 1928, 7. For more information on Phyllis Munday, see Kathryn Bridge, *The Lives of Don and Phyllis Munday: A Passion for Mountains* (Surrey, BC: Rocky Mountain Books, 2006), or Cindi Smith, *Off the Beaten Track: Women Adventurers and Mountaineers in Western Canada* (Lake Louise, Coyote Books, 1989).

⁴⁸ *Comox Argus* 10 December 1931, 2.

⁴⁹ MS 1618, Geoffrey Capes Diary, 30 June 1929. In 1930, Capes took his daughters and a friend up to Mt. Becher, but they also went there without his company. MS 1618, Geoffrey Capes Diary, 30 June 1930; “The girls came home just before I left; six of them had reached the top of Mt. Beecher, and seemed to have made the trip in good shape. Weather sunny and very warm, but some heavy rain about the time I came home” (26 October 1929); “Just as Nell and I were dressing to go out, the girls returned, tired out and wet from their Mountain trip” (1 Jan 1931).

⁵⁰ MS 1618, Capes Diary, 8 April 1931.

⁵¹ MS 1618, Capes Diary, 2 July 1931; 29 July 1932.

⁵² “Courtenay Hikers Reach Toronto,” *Comox Argus*, Aug 31, 1933, 3.

For young men, long distance hiking contributed to their identity as rugged and masculine, allowing them to achieve a contemporary aesthetic standard of being a “young, fit, virile, and handsome male.”⁵³ Young men who went on long-distance hikes were a favourite news item in the *Argus*, for example three men who “undertook a marathon 24-hour hike round the hills and home again,” after which one of them modestly “confessed that his feet were a little sore next morning.”⁵⁴ Born in 1910, Dick Idiens worked for the Imperial Oil Company and his family owned the dance hall at Royston.⁵⁵ Idiens, who filled his car with younger people when driving up to the plateau, seems to have been the epitome of a strong outdoorsman. The *Argus* reported that when hiking in the Beaufort Range, Idiens

boundeth over the hill-tops like a deer, like a mountain goat he skippeth over the high places. ... and there is plenty of climbing for those who are young and supple and strong in wind and limb.⁵⁶

After spending his youth becoming strong in the mountains, Idiens signed up with the Air Force during the Second World War, dying in a 1944 plane crash in England while training to be a pilot.⁵⁷

Young people who visited the Plateau could do so relatively cheaply. In the Depression, many local residents opted for low-cost recreation. People often made the equipment they would need for a hiking or skiing trip, bought it relatively cheaply, or traveled with what they had on hand at home. Visitors to the Plateau in the 1930s used a mix of home-made and imported equipment for winter sports. Ski jumping and racing

⁵³ Comacchio, *Dominion of Youth*, 179-180.

⁵⁴ *Comox Argus*, 29 September 1932.

⁵⁵ The dance hall was also a source of income for young scavengers, including Jim Greig who was too young to attend the events but collected bottles the next morning (Jim Greig interview). Betty Annand, *Voices from Courtenay Past* (Courtenay: Betty Annand, 2008), 169.

⁵⁶ *Comox Argus*, 18 August 1932, 2.

⁵⁷ BC Archives, Genealogical Index. Masters, “History of the Forbidden Plateau,” 211.

had developed in localized pockets of BC, like Mt. Revelstoke and Rossland, starting around the turn of the century. In the 1920s, skiing equipment was not readily available in Courtenay so Clinton Wood had to “fashion” his own pair of skis for a photo shoot on the plateau to suggest its potential for skiing.⁵⁸ In the 1930s, Comox Valley teenagers could order skis from a catalogue for about ten dollars, but some people made their own. Skiing without lifts, people would hike up Mt. Becher on the weekend and stay overnight just to have two or three runs.⁵⁹ In the absence of professional instructors, club members developed their own ski styles. Clinton Wood and the mountaineering club held ski races, inviting participants from Vancouver Island and Vancouver.

In making their own equipment, people put old and low-value material to new uses. Jack Gregson’s equipment was mostly “home made and cheap,” including a toboggan he made “out of plywood and turned up cheese box for the front,” and skis which he fashioned from “floor-boards with tomato cans at the ends.”⁶⁰ Margaret Ellis’s younger brother made his first pair of skis from barrel staves, which were “about six feet when they were unwrapped.” The *Comox Argus* noted that in February 1929 plateau visitors had ordered a toboggan from Edmonton and skis from Winnipeg.⁶¹ Ruth Masters bought her first skis for nine dollars and Angus McMonnies ordered his skis, boots, and poles from the Eaton’s catalogue for a similar price. Jim Greig’s parents bought him skis when he was about twelve, and he used these with his winter boots: “We only had one pair of shoes in the winter time and that was boots to go to school in, so we cut grooves

⁵⁸ BCA, *Imbert Orchard Collection*, Clinton Wood Interview, tape T827: 0001.

⁵⁹ Jim Greig, personal interview, April 2006.

⁶⁰ Jack Gregson, “Forbidden Plateau,” personal letter to the author, 10 August 2006.

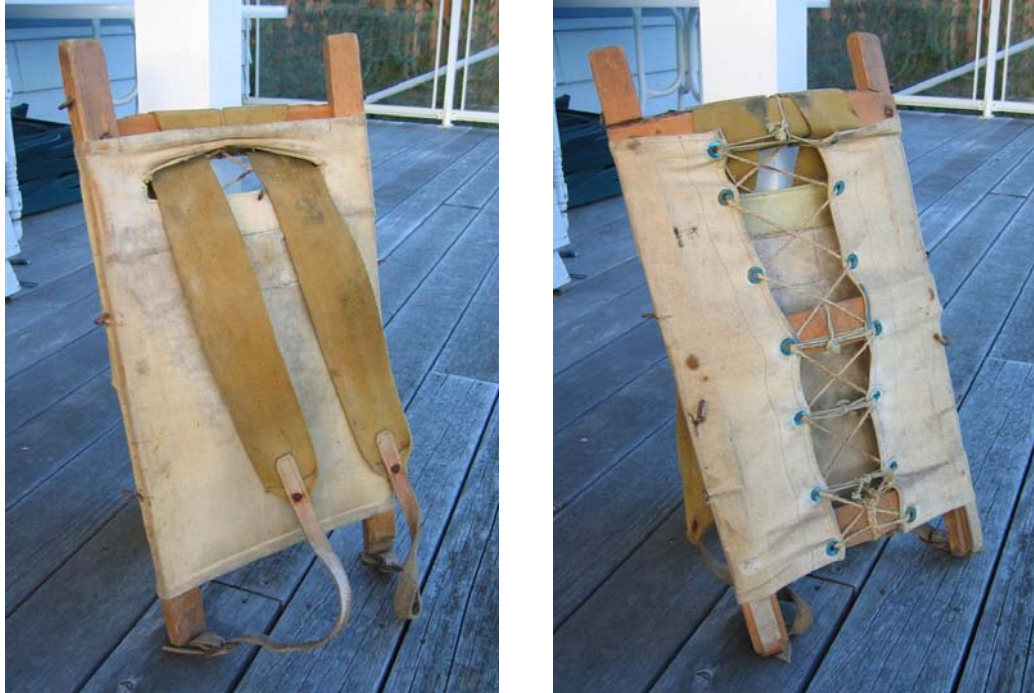
⁶¹ *Comox Argus*, 7 February 1929, 1.

in the heel, and you put the straps around.”⁶² Instead of spending \$15 a pair on sealskins, several people made their own from locally shot seals.⁶³ To walk uphill on skis, they attached sealskins to the underside of their skis with wax, allowing them to slide forward uphill but not slide back. Harvested from the ocean and used to ease transportation up the mountain, seal skins “were a tremendous help,” according to Ruth Masters: “You could go up the hill called Breakneck with just the tips of your skis coming out in front of your nose.”

For camping in the summer, hikers carried their gear in packboards, a wooden exterior frame backpack with canvas bands stretched across the frame to keep the wood off the wearer’s back. The gear is attached to the frame by metal hooks. Angus McMonnies made his own packboard, so sturdy that years later his children were able to use it. He first went hiking alone with his dog on the Plateau via the Dove Creek trail in 1938, when he was sixteen. The Trapper Nelson style packboard he had built was “used by all the old trappers in the old days,” which suggests a connection between the “old” plateau of the trappers and prospectors, and the “new” recreational Forbidden Plateau.

⁶² Jim Greig, personal interview, April 2006.

⁶³ Masters, “History of the Forbidden Plateau,” 78. By the 1950s, the mothers of young skiers modified canvas sacks to fit on skis to serve the same purpose as seal skins.



Picture 3.2: Harry Dougan's Packboard⁶⁴
Photographer: Christian Lieb, April 2006
 Photographs used with permission.

The informal rural economy of harvesting natural resources from public spaces increased in importance with the reduction of paid labour opportunities during the Depression. The informal economy was relatively vibrant on Vancouver Island, taking place, for example, on the cut-over lands of the Comox Logging Company. The company burned the slash left over from its logging operations in controlled fires in the fall. In the interim before a young forest grew up again, these burned-over areas turned into sites of abundance where loggers and farmers hunted for deer, pheasants and quail, and picked large quantities of trailing blackberries: “Many families survived the Depression by exploiting the transformed resources of [clearcut] Block 29.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ This is a packboard (front and back) that a friend made for Harry Dougan in the 1940s, which he used when hiking up to the Comox Glacier.

⁶⁵ Mackie, *Island Timber*, 264.

The fish stocks that were introduced to lure tourists to the plateau became a source of purposeful leisure to men whose incomes may not have been sufficient to feed their families. Local fishermen such as Geoffrey Capes took advantage of the government-planted Kamloops trout. He took pleasure in catching his meals, and described his fishing trips in loving detail. Interviewees who were children in the 1930s associated excessive fish consumption with the poverty of the Depression. As Jim Greig relates: “I don’t remember feeling poor; I didn’t like the damn fish that I had to eat.” Margaret Ellis’ father, who fished on the Plateau, “was an inveterate fisherman, he fished everywhere. We lived on the stuff and I hate fish to this day.” Visitors procured other food directly from the Plateau, primarily blueberries. “In crossing the open country,” in early September 1934, Capes wrote, “the low growing Blue Berries tempted me; they were delicious; and the whole tableland was covered with them.”⁶⁶

Local residents also harvested plants on the plateau. One of the few sources of cash for young people was to collect and sell cascara bark, pine cones, and empty beer bottles to second-hand dealer Bill Douglas. He was also an alderman and member of the hiking club who had a lake on the plateau named after him.⁶⁷ The plateau was a place where anyone with the time, effort and knowledge of how to find what they were looking for, could harvest useful resources for free. Today, these resources are called “non-timber forest products,” and might include mushrooms, berries, or salal. Even though it was technically private land, the plateau was a shared resource, a commons, where local

⁶⁶ MS 1618. Wild blueberry picking in the fall on the plateau has continued: newspaper articles from the 1950s refer to the blueberry harvest, and a young family had stopped for blueberries with plastic buckets when friends and I hiked by Battleship Lake in fall 2006.

⁶⁷ Masters, “History of the Forbidden Plateau,” 221; Jack Hames, *Field Notes: An Environmental History* (Courtenay, BC: Gertrude Hames, [1990]) 72-74; Mackie, *Island Timber*, 272. According to Masters, “Bill never talked down to us when we were children. Instead he treated us like regular business men and women which we certainly were not.” Ruth Masters reminiscences in Annand, *Voices from Courtenay Past*, 169.

residents could harvest certain resources for their own use or to sell. Botanical societies occasionally sponsored Ted Greig to collect plants on the Plateau. Partly inspired by the alpine plants of the Plateau, Greig, an amateur botanist, left his job at the Cumberland coal mine to start a nursery with his wife Mary. Picking blueberries and huckleberries has been a popular fall pastime on the plateau.



Picture 3.3: Blueberries on the Forbidden Plateau
Photographer: Christian Lieb, October 2006
Photograph used with permission.

Jack Gregson, who became a leading Canadian expert on ticks, started his career on the plateau. A winning insect entry in the Victoria fall fair of 1930 encouraged Gregson to aspire to university, but he had to teach himself the high school biology course and earn money for his education. In July 1931, the *Comox Argus* noted that Gregson had left on a ‘bug hunting’ expedition.⁶⁸ Margaret Ellis remembered that

⁶⁸ *Comox Argus*, 2 July 1931, 8.

Gregson was good at persuading his friends to help him collect butterflies.⁶⁹ Like other Comox Valley youth, Gregson raised money by peeling and drying cascara bark. He also harvested Douglas Fir cones from the foothills of the Forbidden Plateau to sell to the Forestry branch for seed. Partway through his UBC degree in 1932, a scientist paid him \$150 to collect butterflies on Mt. Albert Edward.⁷⁰

Recreational use and harvesting from the commons occurred at the same time as the plateau became increasingly popularity with tourists. After initiating the Comox District Mountaineering Club in 1928, Clinton Wood took steps to improve physical access, for without access to scenic landscapes, “the combination of inspiration, marketing, and capital were insufficient to create even the illusion of an economic future.”⁷¹ In the later 1920s, local hikers climbed a rough and steep trail from Bevan to Mt. Becher, a trail that was occasionally obliterated by the work of the Comox Logging Company. Bevan, the site of a small coal-mining settlement before the First World War, in 1928 became the location of a Comox Logging Company camp.⁷² Early in the 1930s, the company logged some of its timber holdings on the hillside behind Bevan. The company seems to have followed a policy of cut and run. Jim Greig hiked this trail in the winter as a teenager. Carrying his skis on his shoulder, he crossed the swinging pedestrian bridge across the Puntledge River and scrambled up a trail through “big old bits of chunky timber... Comox Logging would take out the big marketable trees, but

⁶⁹ Margaret Ellis, personal interview, October 2006.

⁷⁰ John Douglas Gregson, *Grenehelghe (On the Bend of a River): The Biographical Recollections, Reflections, and Travels of a Naturalist* (Kamloops: Gregson family, 2009), 64-65, 72.

⁷¹ Hal Rothman, “Selling the Meaning of Place: Entrepreneurship, Tourism, and Community Transformation in the Twentieth-Century American West,” *Pacific Historical Review* 65(4) 1996, 557.

⁷² One of the mines was reactivated from 1936-1953. T.W. Paterson & Garnet Basque, *Ghost Towns & Mining Camps of Vancouver Island* (Langley, BC: Sunfire Publications Ltd., 1989), 59; Mackie, *Island Timber*, 123-4.

anything that was shattered, ... that was all left behind, and of course you're talking large logs, so the ground is heavily smashed up."⁷³

Wood realized that the Bevan trail was inadequate for tourists, so he scouted out a trail along Dove Creek, east of the plateau, and persuaded the provincial government, which had recently created a game reserve, to finance trail construction.⁷⁴ The trail was built over the summer of 1929. Always with an eye to publicity, Clinton Wood orchestrated an official opening of this new trail in July 1929 by the Lieutenant Governor Randolph Bruce (1926-1931), a booster who had lobbied for the Banff-Windermere highway, which had opened in 1923.⁷⁵ Bruce was accompanied by his niece, Helen Mackenzie, who had a lake named in her honour.

In his meticulous diary, Geoffrey Capes recorded the official opening, showing the overlapping of local and tourist use on the plateau. The event was highly ceremonial: there were speeches, presentations, and an orange bow tied neatly across the trail. About 75 people attended, even though tea had only been prepared for 50. Capes observed that "In the middle of the proceedings a party consisting of Helen Fowler and some others [came] gaily down the trail, [but] they got out of sight until the thing was ended."⁷⁶ Hikers like Helen Fowler did not need an official opening by the Lieutenant Governor to start using the trail.

Construction of the Dove Creek trail opened the Plateau up to visitors on horseback. Once horses could get into the plateau more easily, so could equipment for a camp and a new class of visitors. These visitors could pay to arrive by horseback or for

⁷³ Jim Greig, personal interview, April 2006.

⁷⁴ Clinton Wood on the Dove Creek trail, in Masters, "History of the Forbidden Plateau," 110-111.

⁷⁵ Len Rossiter interview in Masters "History of the Forbidden Plateau," 75.

⁷⁶ BCA, MS 1618, Geoffrey Bernard Capes, Diaries, 18 July 1929.

their gear to be packed in, although some people preferred to walk. In September 1929, members of the Board of Trade, and some aldermen, rode on horseback up the Dove Creek trail to explore the plateau, participate in some team building campfire activities, and evaluate the scenic resources newly available to exploitation by the city. A cook, Mr. Skittles, and a Dominion Government filmmaker, Harlan Smith, better known for his work as an archaeologist and ethnographer with the Geological Survey of Canada, accompanied the expedition.⁷⁷ In his dry style, participant Geoffrey Capes observed the vanity of civic leaders, and the construction of the plateau on film as a paradise for horsemen: “The Movie picture man took many feet of films; Galloway posed himself on his prancing steed on a rock above a Lake nestling at the foot of Strata Mountain.”⁷⁸

Entrepreneur Eugene Croteau took advantage of the Dove Creek trail to establish a camp for paying visitors in 1930. Born in 1862, Croteau, the son of a Quebec wine merchant, moved to Victoria as a young man. He had managed a Vancouver hotel, then prospected in Rossland in the southern interior. In the 1920s, he was back on Vancouver Island, working for the Comox Logging Company and prospecting and hunting on the Forbidden Plateau. His familiarity with the plateau and his background in the hotel business were solid preparation for opening a guest camp at what is now known as Croteau Lake.⁷⁹ By 1932, his camp offered “well-cooked meals” and “spring beds... under canvas in convenient proximity to the main camp, yet with adequate privacy for each party.” Because of the altitude of the camp, it was only open from the time the snow melted, in mid-June at the earliest, until September. To reach the camp, guests walked or

⁷⁷ MS 1618, Geoffrey Capes Diary, 16-19 September 1929; Canadian Museum of Civilization website, “Harlan Ingersoll Smith,” <<http://www.civilization.ca/cmhc/exhibitions/tresors/ethno/etp0400e.shtml>> (Accessed 3 May 2009).

⁷⁸ MS 1618, Geoffrey Capes Diary, 16-19 September 1929.

⁷⁹ Richard Mackie, *Island Timber*, 118; Masters, “History of the Forbidden Plateau,” 75; Lindsay Elms, *Beyond Nootka*, http://members.shaw.ca/beyondnootka/articles/eugene_croteau.html.

rode on horseback on the five-hour Dove Creek trail through the forest, and promotional material recommended that they hire a packer to bring their gear in. Meals cost 75 cents each, beds from 50 cents, and a guide could be hired for day-hikes.⁸⁰ Frequently published guest lists for Croteau's camp in the *Comox Argus* included visitors from Vancouver Island, Eastern Canada, the United States and Europe. Croteau's camp was known locally as a place for "people with money." Local residents could offset the cost of staying there by bringing their own tents and sleeping bags or cooking their own meals.⁸¹ With the opening of the Dove Creek Trail, hikers could approach the plateau via Mt. Becher, stay at the cabin, and pick up their heavier gear at Croteau's.⁸²

In August 1932, R.H. Pooley, the attorney general, stayed at Croteau's with his family to go fly fishing. Accompanying them were journalist Bruce Hutchison, Courtenay mayor Charles Simms, and Dr. G.K. McNaughton, MLA. Pooley and company did not catch any trout, which appeared to be too well fed and unmotivated to swim to the surface.⁸³ The *Comox Argus* took advantage of Pooley's visit to elaborate on the plateau's beauties:

The day Mrs. Pooley and her party climbed this hill there was not a cloud in the sky ... [Mount Elma is] an exquisite alpine garden of white and purple heather, limpid pools, tinted rocks, gnome hemlocks, velvet smooth in branch and leaf. No landscape gardener could have planned anything more varied and balanced than this alpine Eden... Looking east the Coast Mountain range lifts its serrated and savage facade into the far horizon and in the middle distance the narrow waters of the Gulf of Georgia, a cobalt blue. There may be a more perfect

⁸⁰ Eugene Croteau, *The Forbidden Plateau, Courtenay, Vancouver Island: 1932 Season* (Courtenay, BC: Comox Argus, 1932).

⁸¹ Interview with Jim Greig, 24 April 2006.

⁸² "Four girls from Nanaimo are setting off up the Mount Beecher trail. They will stay in the hut over night and then go on to Camp Croteau where they will find their packs which are being taken over the Dove Creek trail." *Comox Argus*, 2 July 1931, 8. Geoffrey Capes' daughter, Katherine, and a friend followed a similar plan in 1934, incorporating the road that Clinton Wood had built up to his lodge on the way to Mt. Becher. MS 1618, Geoffrey Capes Diary, 19 July 1934.

⁸³ *Comox Argus*, August 4, 1932, 5; August 11, 1932, 1.

panorama of natural beauty but it is hard to conceive of it.”⁸⁴

The E & N and regional tourism promoters had a stake in the success of Croteau’s business. E & N surveyors visited his camp in July 1932, likely assessing their employer’s territory, now that Wood, Croteau, and the Courtenay Board of Trade had increased its value. Croteau, whose tenure may have depended partly on the standards of his camp, cleaned up in anticipation of their visit. The next spring and summer, Croteau asked the CPR for permission to improve and continue running his camp. He postponed building a “Sitting Cabin” because the CPR land agent had advised him “not to erect any buildings or spend any more money on equipment until they know what they are going to do with it.”⁸⁵ Nevertheless, he paid for men and horses to haul in a stove for the coming season. In June 1933, Frederick Victor Longstaff accompanied Croteau to the E & N land office in Victoria, where they had a “long confidential talk with head man. Suggested Croteau for unpaid fire warden E & N. approved.”⁸⁶

Longstaff’s involvement shows that the plateau was connected to a larger Vancouver Island network of tourist travel, and that tourism promoters in Victoria also sought to develop it. Born in England in 1879, Longstaff came to Victoria in 1911, where he worked as an architectural draftsman. He met his wife through the Alpine Club of Canada and after their marriage neither worked for wages. Instead, he focused on research and writing about naval history, church history, mountaineering and British Columbia in general.⁸⁷ Longstaff’s interest in the recreational potential of the plateau

⁸⁴ *Comox Argus*, August 11, 1932, 1.

⁸⁵ BCA, MS 677, Frederick Victor Longstaff, vol. 404, file 309, Croteau to Longstaff, 2 April 1933.

⁸⁶ BCA, MS 677, Frederick Victor Longstaff, vol. 68, Diary 12 June 1933.

⁸⁷ Finding Aid, MS 677, Frederick Victor Longstaff, BC Archives website:

<http://search.bccarchives.gov.bc.ca/sn-9F553B/view/TextualRecords/find%2Bms%20677%2B%2B%2B%2B/1> (Accessed 3 May 2009)

seems to have preceded Wood's, as Harold Banks of Cumberland had guided him to Boston Mountain in 1923.⁸⁸

Longstaff spent two weeks at Croteau's camp in July 1932, intending to write an article for the Geographical Society. To his annoyance, Wood, with whom he had corresponded, announced Longstaff's upcoming visit to two newspapers. To make amends, Wood invited Longstaff to stay at his house, and Longstaff accepted. He and a friend travelled north to Courtenay on the E & N, then hired a packer to carry their equipment on three pack horses. They rode for five hours on saddle horses along the "wet & steep" Dove Creek Trail. At Croteau's camp, they bought their meals but economized by sleeping in their own tents. Longstaff explored the trails, climbed nearby mountains, took photographs, and studied the area through field glasses. At the camp, Longstaff socialized with Croteau, Alpine Club members from Winnipeg, and the E & N surveyors, and drafted plans for a "drawing room hut for Croteau, ... galvanized iron roof, concrete floor."⁸⁹

When he returned to Victoria, Longstaff wrote a letter to the editor detailing the plateau's natural features, the amenities at Croteau's camp, access, and what equipment campers should bring with them. This letter is particularly interesting for its opposition to a road to the plateau. In the United States in the 1930s, individuals who opposed roads and development formed the Wilderness Society.⁹⁰ Doubt about the value of roads providing access to wilderness areas appeared in British Columbia and elsewhere in the

⁸⁸ BCA, MS 0677, Frederick Victor Longstaff, file 237, "Comox," Expedition to Boston Mountain, Comox lake, B.C. Guide, Mr. Harold Banks of Cumberland, V.I., 17 Sept 1923.

⁸⁹ BCA, MS 677, Longstaff Diary, Sunday 24 July 1932.

⁹⁰ Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005); as cited in David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), xi, 8.

Pacific Northwest in the 1930s but the Depression made this largely a theoretical concern. When Longstaff went to the plateau, visitors could park their cars at the end of a 12 mile pack trail leading up to Croteau Lake, and proceed on foot or on horseback. His stay on the plateau changed Longstaff's mind about cars and wilderness:

For some years I have been in favour of completing a motor road into the plateau, but since I have seen the country and gone over the many factors I have changed my opinion and think it is in the best interest both of the tourist and the City of Courtenay to keep the end of the wagon road at least six miles from Croteau lake.

Longstaff thought it “absolutely necessary keep all motor cars right away from the plateau” so that it could be preserved for “the lovers of nature and the great out of doors.” It was better to approach the plateau slowly, and stay a few days, rather than “rush up and down.” Longstaff hoped that the plateau would become “a natural health resort” that would be accessible to everyone, and not too expensive for any visitor.⁹¹ The next summer, the Comox District Mountaineering Club also concluded, after some discussion, that “no road should be made unless the interests of the Public were in some way protected.”⁹²

Judging from the accommodation that he developed at the southern end of the plateau in the spring of 1933, Clinton Wood did not subscribe to the philosophy of a roadless wilderness. Having brought attention to an alpine playground from which Croteau and others profited, Wood and his family built a lodge near Mt. Becher that guests could reach by car. A railway built by the Comox Logging Company climbed the hill up to 2100 feet and cut across the trail from Bevan to Mt. Becher. After purchasing land for the lodge from the Comox Logging Company, the Wood family converted the

⁹¹ BCA, MS 677, Box 404, File 309, Longstaff letter to the editor, 18 August 1932.

⁹² BCA, MS 1618, Geoffrey Capes diary, 9 August 1933. They planned to draft a resolution to government.

abandoned railway grade into a motor road with “several very sharp turns,” built a trail connecting the new lodge with the old trail to Mt. Becher, and erected a “collection of tents and buildings; a good many of which were built out of long cedar shakes.”⁹³ The also set up satellite camps at Kwai Lake and McKenzie Lake to which lodge visitors could travel on horseback.

In contrast to Croteau’s more rustic camp, Wood’s lodge offered modern conveniences, but he assured visitors that they could also enjoy dramatic landscapes and camp life. Wood used his engineering expertise to harness water from Trickle Creek, a thousand feet above the lodge, and convert it into electricity with a “motor from an abandoned streetcar in Vancouver.”⁹⁴ Available at his substantial lodge were “Hot and cold water, Electric lights, beds with spring filled mattresses, home cooking... restful atmosphere.” For guests who craved adventure and a closer communion with nature, Wood offered “two fully equipped camps” on the plateau to which guests could travel by foot or saddle horse, the latter at \$3.00 a day. Guides were also available for \$4.00 per day. From these camps, visitors were in close proximity to “Breath taking canyons, Great Ice Caves, roaring waterfalls, placid lakes, ... heather clad hills, and timber filled valleys.”⁹⁵

To secure their tenure, the Woods bought the site of the Forbidden Plateau Lodge from the Comox Logging Company and their campsites at Kwai Lake and McKenzie Lake, and an island at Moat Lake from the CPR.⁹⁶ Wood had created the mountaineering club to publicize the plateau, yet club members were unhappy that he wrote on club

⁹³ BCA, MS 1618, Geoffrey Capes diary, 1-2 July 1934.

⁹⁴ Angus McMonnies, personal interview, May 2006.

⁹⁵ *The Forbidden Plateau: Vancouver Island’s Winter and Summer Playground* ([Courtenay]: Forbidden Plateau Lodge, [no date])

⁹⁶ BCA, *Imbert Orchard Collection*, Clinton Wood Interview, tape T827: 0001; Mary Jane Wood Interview, T828:0001

stationery when applying to purchase lots on the plateau which he kept for himself. This conflict demonstrated a tension between private space for private enterprise, and public space for common use (on private land) on the plateau.

Wood and Croteau hired young people, generally from Vancouver Island, to work as cooks, hosts, guides, packers, and handymen. Finding paid employment on the Plateau was also a way to consume the Plateau at little expenditure while enjoying the scenery and an active lifestyle. Many of these workers explored the Plateau in their leisure time. Ruth Masters cooked for a year at Croteau's camp at 1939 and worked for the Wood family at their lodge, in between hiking and skiing excursions.⁹⁷

Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, Croteau's camp folded for financial reasons and because of Croteau's advancing age. The war sombered the plateau because many of the young people who visited so frequently went to war and some did not return. Among the dead was Clinton Wood's eldest son Stuart, who had worked from a young age as a packer for Croteau, then helped his parents build the Forbidden Plateau Lodge. The Woods sold the Lodge at the end of the war. After the war, manufactured skis and packs became more sophisticated, more widespread, and likely more expensive. Angus McMonnies helped put together the first ski tow out of a hodge-podge of used equipment near the Forbidden Plateau Lodge. People did not have to hike up the mountain to ski anymore, and the Mt. Becher cabin gradually fell into disuse.

In the interwar period, local residents and regional tourism promoters re-imagined the Forbidden Plateau as a recreational space. The plateau gained new value when it was described in new ways. Local residents asserted the right to use their backcountry for

⁹⁷ Ruth Masters, personal interview, March 2006.

recreation, tourism, and harvesting plants and fish. Entrepreneurs established businesses, and some of the people who worked for them also enjoyed the plateau at work and in their time off. Comox Valley residents improvised with what they had to make some of their own outdoor equipment, they helped to build and maintain the Mt. Becher cabin, and they combined work and leisure on the plateau. The provincial government played a role in developing the plateau by sponsoring public works trail building projects before and during the Depression. The next chapter discusses the formation of the provincial parks system, beginning with Strathcona Park in 1911, and into the 1930s when the government began to build facilities in the parks for the first time as Depression-era public works projects. Opposition to privatization of the recreational backcountry was echoed elsewhere in the province especially by fish and game clubs in the 1930s. The next chapter will show how the local fish and game association asked for a provincial park at Fish Lake in the Okanagan during the Second World War, not for tourism but primarily for local use, and to stop logging around the lake.

Chapter 4

“Something the Public Wants for Itself:”

A Wartime Provincial Park

By the early 1940s, rod and gun clubs, active in the province since the late nineteenth century, were becoming increasingly concerned about the health of lakes and streams and the creation of recreational space for local use. Waterways at lower elevations were contested spaces, more so than mountain tops, like the Forbidden Plateau and Mt. Revelstoke. Lakes and streams served for irrigation, had the potential to provide hydroelectric power, and were surrounded by forests. In the early 1940s the priority of the Forest Service, then responsible for parks, was to support the war effort by increasing the output of the logging industry. Proponents of a park at Fish Lake, in the southern Okanagan, faced challenging circumstances as they requested a park for local use before such small parks came into vogue.

Since this is the first chapter dealing with a provincial park, it is worth briefly summarizing the evolution of the provincial parks system. Richard McBride’s Conservative government set aside the first provincial park, Strathcona, on Vancouver Island in 1911. The province spent over \$100,000 in 1913 on surveys and access trails, and had ambitious plans to develop the park with roads, trails, “family camps, summer homes, and children’s playgrounds.”¹ A recession and the First World War halted

¹ Paula Louise Eng, “Parks for the People? Strathcona Park 1905-1933,” (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1996), 56.

development. Before 1939, other parks were created by order-in-council or special acts, and administered by the Department of Lands or by local boards.²

From 1914 to 1935, little recreational development of provincial parks took place. Parks appeared on the map, but many remained inaccessible to the general public. Interwar provincial governments even considered transferring provincial parks to the federal government, but were reluctant to part with resources. As resource industries grew, the government reduced park protection, allowed mining and timber cutting in parks, and cancelled some parks by order-in-council.³ An Amendment to the Strathcona Park Act in 1918, for example, allowed prospecting and mining. In 1926, Liberal Minister of Lands, T. Dufferin Pattullo, announced that timber companies could log around Buttle Lake in Strathcona Park. The Courtenay-Comox Board of Trade, among other groups, protested that Buttle Lake would be “surrounded by blackened stumps.”⁴ Although Pattullo ultimately did not permit the logging to proceed, in 1927 he amended the Strathcona Park Act to allow the damming of Buttle Lake for hydro-electric power. Simon Fraser Tolmie’s Conservative government, elected in 1928, purchased timber rights along Buttle Lake within the park and welcomed hydro-electric development. Because of the Depression and the lack of a market for electricity, Buttle Lake was not dammed until the 1950s.⁵

² Eric Michael Leonard, “Parks and Resource Policy: The Role of British Columbia’s Provincial Parks, 1911-1945,” (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1974), 26. Paula Eng notes that the province did build some cabins and trails within the park, but most of the modifications were made outside the park, at the entrance. Eng, “Parks for the People?” 60, 61. Jeremy Wilson, *Talk and Log: Wilderness Politics in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 93.

³ Leonard, “Parks and Resource Policy,” 31-34.

⁴ Eng, “Parks for the People?” 66-67.

⁵ Eng, “Parks for the People?” 62-82. The Alpine Club of Canada, which had protested the damming of Spray Lakes in 1926, also opposed the commercial exploitation of Strathcona Park.

By 1930, British Columbia had thirteen provincial parks with an area totaling 1,735,512 acres but most were essentially wilderness areas, in the sense that they did not have access or facilities.⁶ The Depression meant a decline in industry and therefore less pressure to extract resources from parks.⁷ Ernest C. Manning, Chief Forester from 1936 to 1941, was outspoken in his promotion of sustainable forestry and multiple use. Active in expanding the parks system, he established small popular parks on Vancouver Island, such as Englishman River Falls (1940), Little Qualicum Falls (1940), and Stamp Falls (1940) as well as large parks in the interior like Tweedsmuir (1937) and Wells Gray (1939). He also promoted the development of skiing on Mt. Seymour. Manning helped initiate the Young Men's Forestry Training Program (YMFTP) in 1935, based on the American Civilian Conservation Corps.⁸ This program began the process of modifying provincial parks for visitor access. Young men were carefully selected for summer work that was intended to build character. The program included training in woodcraft, recreational activities, and work such as tree planting, building access roads, and setting up telephone lines. They also built facilities at provincial and municipal parks, including a trail to Elk Falls, near Campbell River.⁹ Such forestry relief projects were intended to

⁶ C. Lyons, "British Columbia's Provincial Parks," *Transactions of the Second Resources Conference* (Victoria: Department of Lands and Forests, 1949), 236. As Leonard states, "The existence of large wilderness parks in British Columbia is something of a fortunate historical accident. It is clear that the governments which established the large parks were not interested in the preservation of wilderness per se, and that, had the parks been proposed on those grounds alone, they would never have been established." Leonard, "Parks and Resource Policy," 47-48, cited in Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 93.

⁷ Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 93.

⁸ Richard A. Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest: Production, Science, and Regulation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 155-166; Helen Manning Akrigg, "Ernest C. Manning," in *Manning Park Memories: Reflections of the Past* (Victoria: British Columbia Ministry of Lands and Parks, 1991), 6-14.

⁹ YMFTP crews also worked at Hollyburn Ridge, Silvertip Falls, Kokanee Park, and Tweedsmuir Park. Richard A. Rajala, "From 'On-to-Ottawa' to 'Bloody Sunday': Unemployment Relief and British Columbia Forests, 1935-1939," in Penny Bryden and Dimitry Anastakis, eds., *Framing Canadian Federalism: Essays in Honor of John T. Saywell* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 126, 134.

“salvage youth and reduce the danger of disorder.”¹⁰ The BC Forest Branch also ran a winter works program for single unemployed men, called Forest Development Projects (FDP). These camps were intended to pick up the slack of the terminated Department of National Defence camps. The FDP provided no educational or organized recreation, but were “labour camps pure and simple,” intended as “social containment.”¹¹ Park development was one priority of the FDP, whose crews also worked at Elk Falls and other parks on Vancouver Island.¹²

In 1939 amendments to the Forest Act gave the Forest Service responsibility for most parks, and introduced a series of classifications for provincial parks.¹³ Class A was the highest level of protection. Neither land nor timber could be alienated from the park by sale, and prospecting and mining were not allowed. Class B parks were multiple-use entities in which prospecting, mining, and logging were allowed as long as they were not “detrimental to recreational values.” Class C parks were generally very small, and served as “the rural community’s counterpart of the city’s municipal parks.”¹⁴ As opposed to Class A parks, which were meant to draw tourists to large wilderness areas, Class C parks were designed for local use and management, may have included picnic areas and playgrounds, and were administered by local park boards. During the Second World War, as park planner Chester Lyons said in a 1949 speech, “limited personnel and minimized

¹⁰ Laurel Sefton MacDowell, “Relief Camp Workers in Ontario during the Great Depression of the 1930s,” *Canadian Historical Review* 76, no. 2 (1995): 209.

¹¹ Rajala, “Unemployment Relief,” 129.

¹² FDP crews also worked at Englishman River Falls, Qualicum River Falls, Skutz Falls, Thetis lake and John Dean parks. Later projects included a trail to the summit of Mount Douglas in Victoria, access to the Medicine Bowls near Courtenay, fireplaces, picnic tables and a stairway at Elk Falls, and improvements to Capilano, Stamp Falls, and Little Qualicum Falls. Rajala, “Unemployment Relief,” 130, 138. See also Lyons, “British Columbia’s Provincial Parks,” 236-244.

¹³ Strathcona, Mt. Robson, and Garibaldi were governed by their own park boards. Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 93.

¹⁴ Lyons, “British Columbia’s Provincial Parks,” 237.

appropriations restricted park administration to what must be recognized as less than minimum maintenance of improved areas and reconnaissance and preliminary planning in unimproved areas.”¹⁵

While he undertook some development and organization of provincial parks in the late 1930s, Manning’s chief concern was the declining state of the forest resource. To address the depletion of forests, Manning promoted fire suppression, prompt and controlled burning of clearcut slash, and leaving seed trees behind for natural regeneration. Manning was willing to regulate lumber companies, even those operating on private land, to ensure future timber supplies. In January 1941, Manning died in an airplane crash in Ontario. In comparison to Manning, his replacement, C.D. Orchard, was more laissez-faire in his approach to logging companies, yet he was also concerned about the forestry system which had allowed logging companies to lease lands without a long-term vision, and under no obligation to reforest their lands. The government established a Royal Commission on Forestry that Mr. Justice Gordon Sloan carried out between 1943 and 1945. His report stressed the necessity of sustained yield forestry, or maintaining the forest in perpetuity, not just clearcutting one area then moving on. Sloan believed that large enterprises were better suited to carry out long-term management of resources because they could weather poor economic times, had more capital to invest, and could manage larger areas of timber. In 1947 the government set up forest management licenses. Forest companies would lease land and treat it as a tree farm, replanting for the next harvest. Companies that had owned private land from railway grants or leased Crown land on attractive terms since the McBride era, would operate within private

¹⁵ Lyons, “British Columbia’s Provincial Parks,” 236-237. Lyons states that the Forest Service assumed responsibility for provincial parks in 1940.

working circles, with the right to cut on adjacent Crown land, while the trees were growing back on their own land.¹⁶

Organizations, individuals, and government departments with an interest in forest management had submitted briefs to the Commission. Since the Forest Service had recently become responsible for parks, groups that were concerned about parks and outdoor recreation also made submissions. Briefs supporting parks, recreation, tourism and conservation came from the Board of Park Commissioners of Vancouver and that city's tourist association, the Interior BC Resort Owners' Association, Vancouver Island boards of trade, the BC Natural Resources Conservation League, and several fish and wildlife groups.¹⁷ Along with naturalists and outdoor organizations, rod and gun clubs formed one of the roots of the environmental movement in BC.¹⁸

Submissions from these groups exhibited a series of common concerns: some forests should be left standing, lakes and streams should be protected, and parks needed to be developed. More care should to be taken in managing forests, and the government should realize that standing forests had economic and aesthetic value. Also, forests were crucial for the preservation of game and watersheds. The Municipality of Peachland and its rod and gun club voiced concern about the impact of logging practices on the water supply, important for orchard irrigation, recommending "that only selective logging be

¹⁶ Rajala, *Clearcutting the Pacific Rain Forest*, 155-166; Akrigg, "Ernest C. Manning," 6-14; Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 84-85; Jean Barman, *West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* 3rd ed (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 195-196, 303.

¹⁷ These included the Penticton and District Fish, Game and Forest Protective Association, the Associated Rod and Gun Clubs of Eastern Kootenay, the Vernon and District Fish, Game and Forest Protective Association, and the Peachland Rod and Gun Club.

¹⁸ Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 43, 99. Richard Rajala has shown how fish and game organizations played a role in ensuring a buffer zone between clearcuts and creeks on Vancouver Island, and were active in lobbying against the Stellako River log drive in the mid-1960s. Rajala, "Clearcutting, Multiple Use, and the Politics of Salmon Habitat in British Columbia, 1945-1970," *American Society for Environmental History Conference*, Boise, Idaho, 15 March 2008; and Rajala, "'This Wasteful Use of a River': The Stellako River Controversy, 1965-70," *Space and Place in British Columbia: BC Studies Conference*, University of Victoria, 2 May 2009.

practiced on the watersheds,” and “That no brush be burnt especially in the spruce areas. As this burns off the moss that holds the snow.”¹⁹ The Penticton and District Fish, Forest and Game Protective Association noted: “Preservation of tree and bush growth will create shade, create insect food for fish, provide cover for game, prevent drought and erosion.”²⁰

These groups had lost faith in forest reserve designations, which could be overturned overnight. If reserve designation was stronger and the government respected the value of green areas near tourist highways, and places used by residents for recreation, there would be no question of logging these areas. They referred to several areas – Buttle Lake, Cathedral Grove, Green Timbers, and Hollyburn Ridge – that had been the subject of conflicts over logging. The Board of Park Commissioners of Vancouver stated that “the wonderful stand of specimen timber around Buttle’s Lake, ... the favourite haunt of fishermen and outdoor lovers, would never have been salvaged from the logger’s axe”²¹ if organizations had not protested. The British Columbia Natural Resources Conservation League argued that it would be “almost a sacrilege” to sacrifice the “beautiful stand of timber” at Cathedral Grove. If the timber was cut, “the area that was once clothed in beauty and majesty will become a veritable wilderness.”²² This use of the word “wilderness” shows that its meaning was quite different from its manifestation in the 1960s.

¹⁹ BC Archives (hereafter BCA), GR 520, BC Commission on Forest Resources 1943-45, Box 16, File 13, Exhibit 372, JH Olson, on behalf of the Peachland Municipality and Rod and Gun Club.

²⁰ BCA, GR 520, Box 16, File 16, Exhibit 382, letter from R.J. McDougall and G. Morgan, Penticton and District Fish, Game and Forest Protective Association, 17 October 1944.

²¹ BCA, GR 520, Box 16, File 1, Exhibit 324, Board of Park Commissioners of Vancouver, 6 September 1944.

²² BCA, GR 520, Box 17, File 8, Exhibit 421, British Columbia Natural Resources Conservation League, 6 January 1943.

Green Timbers was a stand of 5,000 acres of old growth trees in Surrey through which passed the Yale Wagon Road, which was incorporated into and renamed the Pacific Highway in 1923. It was a tourist attraction until the late 1920s as people traveled to see the 200-foot tall trees that lined the highway. By 1930, all of these trees had been cut. Reforestation began that same year, with some native trees and imported trees, a nursery and forestry training centre. Some of the work of the YMFTP took place at the Green Timbers experimental station.²³ Hollyburn Ridge was a recreational area in the North Shore mountains under threat of logging, that the Vancouver Parks Board and the Municipality of West Vancouver attempted to preserve.²⁴

These groups advocated development of park areas. Although British Columbia was fortunate to have large areas set aside as parks, access remained difficult. The Vancouver Board of Park Commissioners, in casting its gaze beyond Vancouver to the places where urban residents liked to spend their holidays, wrote, “These areas must be turned from park land ‘areas’ into ‘parks’” and the way to do this was with roads, trails and facilities.²⁵ Several writers questioned the appropriateness of the Forest Service managing parks when its mandate was to promote logging. Instead, they recommended a separate Parks Branch that would be free to make decisions to protect wildlife and develop parks for the public. Forests were under pressure, so the province should be surveyed as broadly as possible to set aside park areas close to all communities. Parks would need modern facilities to attract tourists once the war had ended, according to the

²³ Rajala, “Unemployment Relief,” 123. Today, the Green Timbers forest covers 560 acres. “Historical Background,” Green Timbers Urban Forest, <http://www.greentimbers.ca/> (Accessed 5 May 2009). See also David J. Sandquist, “The Giant Killers: Forestry, Conservation and Recreation in the Green Timbers Forest, Surrey, British Columbia to 1930,” (MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2000).

²⁴ BCA, GR 520, Box 16, File 1, Exhibit 324, Board of Park Commissioners of Vancouver, 6 September 1944.

²⁵ BCA, GR 520, Box 16, File 1, Exhibit 324, Board of Park Commissioners of Vancouver, 6 September 1944.

BC Natural Resources Conservation League. The League wanted “good roads, adequate parking areas at scenic points on the roads; clean, modern and comfortable camps or lodges, - in short, vastly improved and more modern facilities for the convenience of visitors.” Others argued that park work could employ and rehabilitate returned soldiers after the war.²⁶

Finally, attention was focused on conserving water resources. Mountains had dominated park development before the war, but now, organizations worried about the health of lake and river systems and proposed lakes as ideal places to establish parks. Rod and gun clubs, with their history of stocking lakes at their own expense, wanted to avoid privatization of lakes and streams.²⁷ Waterscapes were attractive to tourists, made clear by the request by the Vancouver Tourist Association that roads should be kept in good condition so tourists could “reach our mountains, lakes, streams, rivers, shore lines etc.”²⁸ The Board of Park Commissioners of Vancouver urged that the park system be augmented by “beauty stands of specimen timber... around lakes, along streams, flanking tourist highways.”²⁹

Submissions to the commission recognized the need to protect lakes as much if not more than mountain tops, and after the war the province created a bundle of new lake parks. Fish Lake, located northwest of Summerland, was protected as a park just before the rising popularity of lake parks. It is a useful case study to show how local organizations, in particular fish and game clubs, became instrumental in the conservation

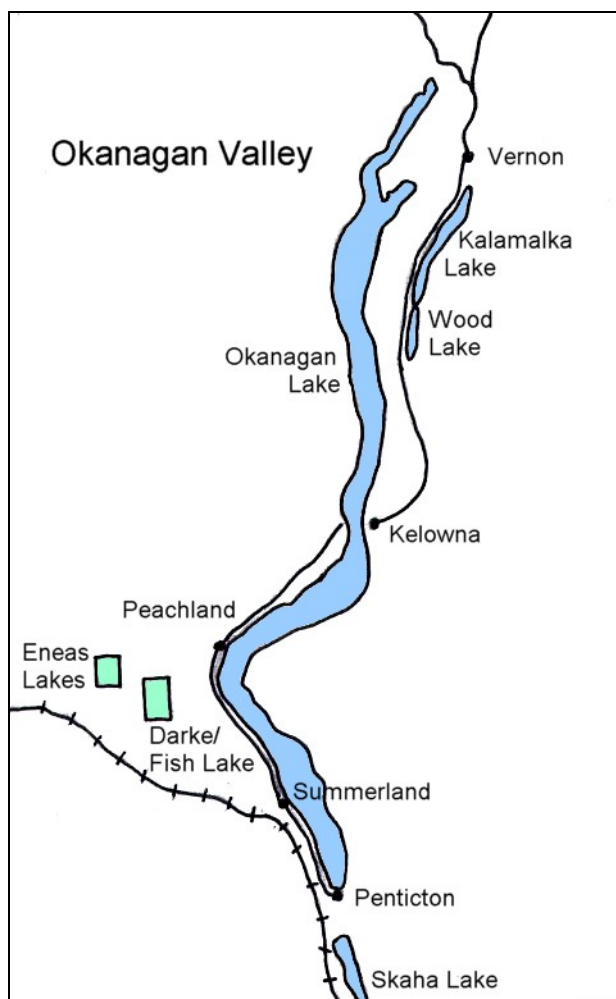
²⁶ BCA, GR 520, Box 17, File 8, Exhibit 421, British Columbia Natural Resources Conservation League, 6 January 1943; Box 16, File 1, Exhibit 324, Board of Park Commissioners of Vancouver, 6 September 1944.

²⁷ BCA, GR 520, Box 17, File 8, Exhibit 416, E.T. Cooper, Associated Rod & Gun Clubs of Eastern Kootenay, Cranbrook, BC Oct 31, 1944.

²⁸ BCA, GR 520, Box 17, File 8, Exhibit 422, M.L. Sweeney, President, Vancouver Tourist Association

²⁹ BCA, GR 520, Box 16, File 1, Exhibit 324, Board of Park Commissioners of Vancouver, 6 September 1944.

of lake parks. This case also shows the constraints on park establishment in BC during the war: limited funding and personnel, a priority on logging and resource extraction, and a provincial reluctance to establish parks for local use at this time.



Map 4.1: Location of Eneas Lake Park and Darke (Fish) Lake Park
Source: Map designed by Jenny Clayton

By the time it was established in 1943, Darke Lake Provincial Park, popularly known as Fish Lake, had a history of recreational use for fishing and hunting. Fish Lake, at 2950 feet, was a low altitude lake in a narrow valley that “broadens into an undulating plateau” and gradually widens into a half mile of meadows and farmland. Eneas and

adjacent lakes were located on an “upland plateau” at 4700 feet.³⁰ Local residents had safeguarded this area as a commons by protesting any attempt at privatization. Lot 4240, at the south end of Fish Lake, was pre-empted by a Mr. Darke in about 1900 and abandoned. In 1923, another pre-emption application was disallowed by the government for three reasons: fishing and hunting parties had used the area for some time, there would be a fire hazard if the lakeshore were fenced and campers stayed on the side hills, and the lot was of “doubtful value as a pre-emption,” since it had been abandoned twice.³¹ In 1928, a Penticton resident applied to lease Lot 4240 for a campsite. The application was disallowed shortly before more than a hundred Summerland residents submitted a petition to the Minister of Lands against the campsite application because they wanted to maintain public access. Government and popular opinion agreed that most of the land at Fish Lake should be kept for common use. The petition argued that the lot was not valuable for agriculture, that it should be open to fishermen since the lake was stocked with fish, and the area was used “in the fall as a camping ground for our hunters.”³²

Even without the benefit of a lease, the applicant built his camp. A Land Classification Report by the Forest Service in 1929 showed that he had constructed a 432 square foot “inn,” a small bunkhouse and a stable made out of salvaged lumber. Fish Lake was a popular retreat, with a campsite at the south end that could be reached by auto via a 16 mile gravel and dirt road from West Summerland. Fish Lake was connected to

³⁰ C.P. Lyons, “Reconnaissance and Preliminary Recreation Plan, Darke (Fish) Lake Park and Eneas Lakes Park,” (Victoria: Parks Section, Forest Economics Division, BC Forest Service, 1944), 3.

³¹ BCA, GR 1991, British Columbia, Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division, B01733, 11, 2-2-1-6, 1, Darke Lake Park, September 1922-October 1954: Certificate of Pre-emption Record Lot 4240, Summerland, Disallowed 15/8/23, 2; Lands Department Status, Lot 4240, 5; Land Classification Report 12 October 1922, 9 (Restricted file).

³² BCA, GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Petition from West Summerland Residents to the Minister of Lands, 29 February 1928, 36.

the Eneas Lakes by a seven mile horse trail.³³ The report stated that “owing to elevation this is a good spot to go to avoid [the] heat of Okanagan Lake during summer months” and recommended regulating the area by building a large public campsite.³⁴ After the camp operator died in 1934, his widow paid up lease fees. After she remarried, in 1936 she sold the buildings and her rights to the area to the Penticton and District Fish and Game Protective Association.³⁵ In 1938, a Young Men’s Forestry Training Program crew cleared a camping area and built 5 rock fireplaces, to minimize the danger of forest fires. In the 1940s, local residents used the lake for fishing from May to July, “until the hot weather starts,” while summer visitors were mostly Americans. Hunters, mostly from the Okanagan but some from the coast and the United States, frequented the lakes from the start of the open season for deer and grouse in mid-September.³⁶

Until the 1940s, local residents had protested the privatization of Fish Lake, but had not sought any other type of land management, such as a park. The Forest Reserve system that surrounded Fish Lake appeared to be adequate. It was the threat of logging that ignited the Fish Lake park movement. A Summerland resident applied to purchase rights to timber near Fish Lake in 1939, and a timber sale was made in 1941.³⁷ In February 1942, the Municipality of Penticton, which opposed logging in the vicinity of Fish Lake, asked the Forest Service to create a park of 13,000 acres to be called Mt. Baldy. Specifically, the municipality wanted this park area to disallow about 200 acres of the logging permit. The response of C.D. Orchard, Chief Forester, underlined the primacy

³³ Lyons, “Darke (Fish) Lake Park,” 6.

³⁴ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Forest Branch, Land Classification Report, Lot 4240 Osoyoos District, 5 September 1929, 50-53.

³⁵ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, 74-110.

³⁶ Lyons, “Darke (Fish) Lake Park,” 6-7.

³⁷ Lyons, “Darke (Fish) Lake Park.” See “Darke Lake Park History,” for specific lots.

of economic contracts and argued that parks could only consume so much productive forest land. The Forest Branch had entered into a “binding contract” with a logger and “nothing could be done” unless the logger “was willing to voluntarily surrender his rights.” Besides, he wrote, British Columbia could not afford to “multiply parks,” or there would be no room for logging, so the Penticton Municipal Council had to be sure this was the best place to put one.³⁸ Support in Penticton remained strong for a park, however. The *Penticton Herald* argued that logging could take place elsewhere, but “where else, again, could the rest of us ever find such a site for outdoor recreation?” The Water Rights branch added that it was “very apprehensive that serious damage may be done to the watersheds supplying that part of our Irrigation System through present or future logging operations.”³⁹

Proponents of logging countered that “hunting is just as good in one place as another” and that logging would not affect fishing, since fishers were not interested in hiking and would be happy with a narrow band of trees around the lake.⁴⁰ The local forest ranger suggested that the proposed logging road would provide more accessible recreation for people “who are not as active as they used to be” and would also serve as a fire road.⁴¹ Based on this evidence, the Forest Service believed that it could “make a sale and at the same time protect the aesthetic and fish and game values.”

It was difficult to argue that trees should be left standing during the war because lumber was a necessary component of the war effort. Cut off from a Scandinavian timber

³⁸ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, C.D. Orchard to Corporation of Penticton, 6 February 1942, 134.

³⁹ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Water Rights Branch, with support from the Municipality of Penticton and the Rod and Gun Club, to C.D. Orchard, 3 February 1942, 137.

⁴⁰ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, C.C. Ternan, District Forester Kamloops, to C.D. Orchard, 25 September 1942, 160; Kelowna logging operator to Ternan, 24 September 1942, 161; Ternan to Chief Forester (C.D. Orchard), 14 October 1942, 166.

⁴¹ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, C. Perrin, Ranger, Penticton to District Forester Kamloops, 6 February 1942, 140.

supply during the war, Britain was a hungry market for Canadian lumber. In Canada, lumber was used to build facilities for the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and military camps and to replace steel which was needed for ships, and tanks. In the Okanagan, lumber was required for apple boxes. In 1942, the federal government classified logging and sawmilling as essential industries.⁴² A second timber sale applicant in the area applied additional pressure – he had already invested in building a road into the area, and the road should not be wasted: “Timber stands with log roads already made are extremely valuable to our Country’s War Effort at the present time.”⁴³

The Forest Service agreed that logging was necessary for the war effort, but parks were not. Very few parks were established in BC during the war, and two of these, Hamber and Liard, were large but remote and undeveloped and today are now just a fraction of their former size.⁴⁴ Orchard argued that his department could not put a lot of effort into park-making because much of the field survey staff had enlisted in the armed forces. Since their work required them to be young and fit, survey staff were more likely to enlist than staff in other departments. The war was a time of extraordinary conditions when cutting timber had a priority over park establishment, as Orchard reasoned: “Under normal conditions, we probably would not have considered this sale until the whole park

⁴² Ken Drushka, *Tie Hackers to Timber Harvesters: The History of Logging in British Columbia’s Interior* (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 1998), 114-115. G.W. Taylor, *History of the Forest Industry in B.C.* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1975), 150-160.

⁴³ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Kelowna logging operator to C.D. Orchard, 25 September 1942, 161.

⁴⁴ Ben Bradley, “4,000,000 Acres Deleted: Automobility and the Failure of Liard River and Hamber Provincial Parks, 1940-61,” *Space and Place in British Columbia: BC Studies Conference*, Victoria, BC, 2 May 2009. According to Forest Service reports, there were seven parks established between 1939 and 1945: EC Manning (Class A), Hamber (Class A) and Wendle (Class C) in 1941; none in 1942; Darke Lake in 1943; Summit Lake near Prince George, Liard River, and Kitty Coleman Beach (Class C) in 1944; and Memory Island Park in Shawnigan Lake (Class A, 2.26 acres) in 1945. Manning, Kitty Coleman, and Darke Lake still exist, Hamber and Liard parks have been greatly reduced, and Wendle and Summit Lake no longer exist under those names.

question had been finally settled.”⁴⁵ The Forest Service may also have been reluctant to establish a park since American tourism had fallen off due to tighter regulations on passports to return to the United States from 1940, and tire and fuel rationing in both countries from 1942.⁴⁶

Park promoters were not satisfied with the war effort as a priority and pointed to the need to maintain local democracy. Allowing logging in the park, a Penticton resident argued, elevated private interests over the public good. The Penticton Board of Trade informed the Minister of Lands that wartime exigencies should not override the local democratic process or benefits of park space for the citizens of the province. As the Board of Trade stated, “The suggestions (from Gov’t Dept. sources) that war time exigencies justified handing this area over to logging operations, was carefully digested, and, as evidenced by spoken opinion and the vote, very definitely exploded.”⁴⁷ The *Penticton Herald* helped intensify local sentiment by printing an article entitled, “Logging Interests Get Timber Lot in Center of Eneas Creek Park.”⁴⁸ In a letter requesting advice from the Minister of Lands in January 1943, Orchard stated that timber was still needed for “war purposes” but because of opposition to the timber sale on various fronts, “we could, if it seems desirable, return the tenders and refuse to make the sale.” The Premier withdrew the timber sale.⁴⁹ This was remarkable in part because since 1940 the Minister of Lands was empowered to “suspend any condition on an existing timber sales contract which retarded the production of materials required for the war

⁴⁵ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Orchard to Corporation of Penticton, 19 October 1942, 168; Orchard to Corporation of Penticton, 4 January 1943, 170.

⁴⁶ Dawson, “Tourism Promotion,” 240, 246.

⁴⁷ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Penticton Board of Trade to Minister of Lands, 14 January 1943, 191-192.

⁴⁸ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, *Penticton Herald*, 14 January 1943, 185.

⁴⁹ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Orchard to Minister of Lands, 12 January 1943, 181-182; Handwritten note by Orchard on letter from Minister of Lands to the Premier, 21 January 1943, 195.

effort,” and withdrawing this timber sale would have the opposite effect.⁵⁰ Possibly to placate timber interests, Orchard argued that the park could not be created when the country was at war, but soothed park proponents by stating that “it is our intention to proceed with your local park project as soon as circumstances will permit.”⁵¹

Although the timber sale was withdrawn due to public pressure in January 1943, in March a Summerland lumber processor known as a “solid type of citizen” informed the Attorney General that there was not enough lumber available locally even for fruit boxes. The Summerland Conservative Association agreed: “The people of Summerland resent very much the fact that an organization outside the district and riding should have influence enough to thus interfere with our needs here.”⁵² Their letters led to a reconsideration of the logging ban and Orchard organized a field trip and meeting with interested parties for 6 June 1943 when the road was clear of snow. Those accompanying Orchard represented a sawmill, box company, a Conservative association, fish and game associations, board of trade, newspaper, municipal councils, and logging companies. At the meeting there was “strong pressure” to permit logging in the park. Orchard originally decided that there would be no logging in this small park and “to make [a] park around Eneas & 3 small lakes adjacent.”⁵³ The next day, however, he approved a timber sale that partly overlapped with the boundaries of Fish Lake Park and therefore allowed logging within the park. On June 8 he sent a letter of understanding to which all parties responded

⁵⁰ Taylor, *Timber*, 157.

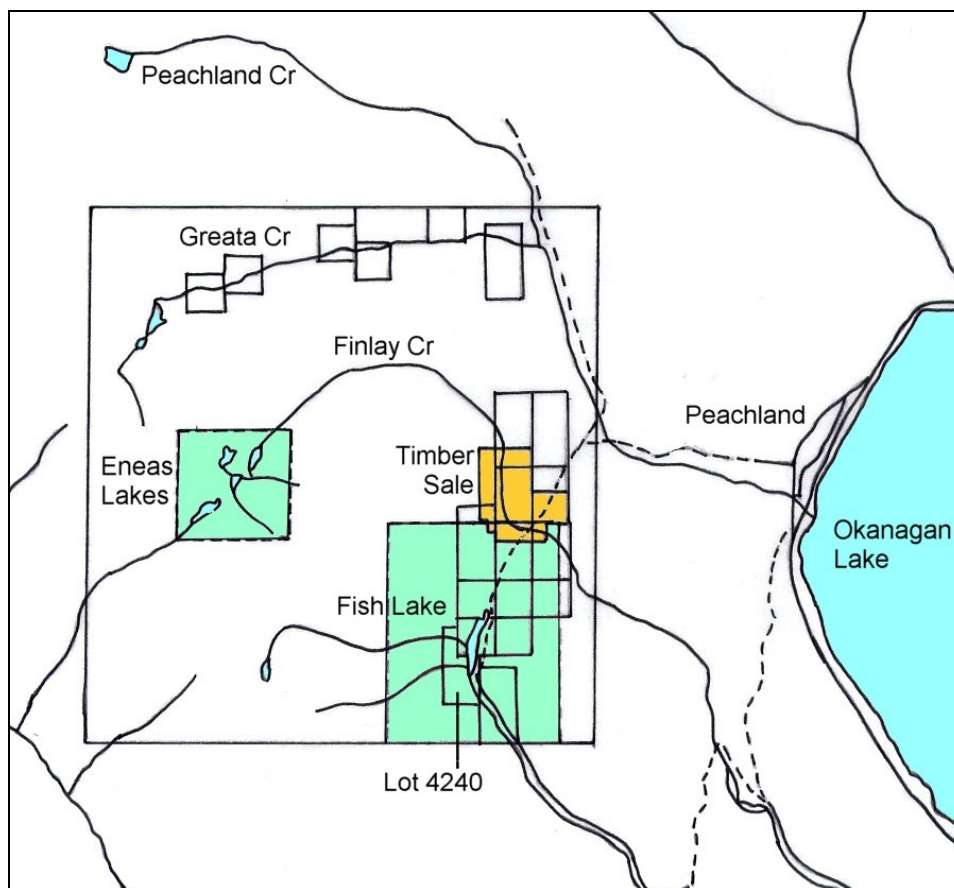
⁵¹ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Orchard to Penticton resident, 197.

⁵² This lumber processor cannot be named due to privacy regulations that apply to restricted files at the BC Archives. GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Lumber dealer writing on behalf of Summerland Conservative Association to R.L. Maitland, Attorney-General, 14 March 1943, 201-202.

⁵³ BCA, MS 840, C.D. Orchard Personal Papers, 1920-1971, Box 12, Diary June 1943, 77-81.

with their approval. Orchard described the meeting as “fine and representative” in which the parties had come to an “amicable understanding.” Apparently,

the Park interests are quite prepared to permit us to proceed with Timber Sale x31415 without further objection and ... the area they actually wanted for Park purposes was only a small fraction of what had been outlined in previous correspondence.⁵⁴



Map 4.2: Eneas Lake Park and Darke (Fish) Lake Park⁵⁵
Source: Map designed by Jenny Clayton

⁵⁴ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Orchard to Bernard Webber MLA, 8 June 1943, 233.

⁵⁵ This map shows the first proposed park (in the large rectangle), the park boundaries recommended by Orchard within the outline of the proposed park, and the timber sale overlapping with Fish Lake Park. GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Memorandum and map from Orchard to the Minister of Lands, 14 June 1943, 246-249.

Letters to the Chief Forester suggested that even those who had requested a larger park and objected to the aesthetic impacts of logging approved of Orchard's decision. There is little evidence to explain how Orchard extracted this approval.

Initially the Penticton Fish, Game, and Forest Protective Association (FGFPA) expressed gratitude for the establishment of a Class A park at Fish Lake but may have done so only because it knew its bargaining position was weak and this was the only way to get a park and avoid logging directly around the lake. Darke Lake Provincial Park was established 5 July 1943, named after the first pre-emptor. This name has not stuck, as local users still refer to it as Fish Lake.⁵⁶ The Penticton FGFPA proposed to the Chief Forester that Fish Lake be known as Orchard Park, but Orchard declined the honour.⁵⁷

Park planner Chester Peter Lyons wrote a report on Fish (Darke) Lake and its development potential in March 1944. He found that Fish Lake had suffered aesthetically from a lack of regulation:

Unplanned public use during the past 10 years has destroyed much of the former beauty of the area. The five original fireplaces have disappeared and uncontrolled parking together with the thoughtless pasturing of horses have destroyed all small plant growth.⁵⁸

Lyons recommended a "completely new arrangement" to increase the campsite's attractiveness, including a parking area for 15 to 20 cars, fireplaces, toilets, garbage cans and pit, signs, and landscaping such as removing dead brush and planting deciduous trees

⁵⁶ BC Parks website, Darke Lake Provincial Park, http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/darke_lk/ (Accessed 5 May 2009).

⁵⁷ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Penticton and District Fish, Game and Forest Protective Association (FGFPA) to Orchard, 4 September 1943, 261; Orchard to Penticton FGFPA, 17 September 1943, 263.

⁵⁸ Lyons, "Darke (Fish) Lake Park," 9. In addition, concessions operated by the Penticton FGFPA at Fish and Deer Lakes were "haphazardly established," and the Fish Lake camp had a problem with access to water and garbage removal. Stumps and garbage gave the impression that cabins at the upper lakes were "trappers' cabins rather than guest cabins," (11-12).

to offer privacy to campers and screen the view of the dam and associated gravel pit.⁵⁹ He proposed hiring a crew of five or six men to improve the public campsite, but the Forest Service quickly downgraded his recommendations. One planner suggested that a fire crew working in the area could clear out a parking space, although he did not “propose to go into an elaborate construction of fire places, tables, etc. as suggested on Page 21 of Mr. Lyons’ report.” The Forest Service was even less enthusiastic, unwilling to pay the fire crew for that work, which it considered the responsibility of the camp operator.⁶⁰

In the Okanagan district where water was so important to fruit farming, privatization and logging may have elicited vocal protest but irrigation, despite its noticeable impact on Fish Lake, attracted very little criticism from local park proponents.⁶¹ Fish Lake and nearby Eneas Lake, considered together as a park but separated by non-park land, had both been altered by dams. S. Darke applied to dam Fish Lake to irrigate his farm in 1917. In 1938, a six foot earth dam was built at the lake. Deer Lake and Big Eneas Lake had dead trees on their shorelines, the result of dams built in 1922 and 1932 by the Municipality of Summerland.⁶² In his 1944 report, Lyons wrote that the effects of irrigation on the lake shore “would appear more damaging from a scenic standpoint than the logging.” Lyons, the son of Penticton fruit farmers, had spent

⁵⁹ Lyons, “Darke (Fish) Lake Park,” 10.

⁶⁰ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, R.G. McKee, Assistant District Forester, Kamloops, to Chief Forester (Orchard), 1 August 1944, 277; Memo (author and recipient unclear), 278. The Forest Service took a hands-off approach to Darke Lake, exemplified by its recommendation not to supervise the park. GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, G.P. Melrose, Assistant Chief Forester, to C.F. McBride, Assistant Forester, Kamloops, (no date), 304.

⁶¹ The Darke Lake Park file contains petitions and letters from individuals who supported the lake as a recreation area, but they cannot be identified due to privacy regulations.

⁶² Lyons, “Darke (Fish) Lake Park,” 18-19.

much of his youth in the local mountains, and possibly gained a more critical perspective on damming in parks since moving to Victoria for his work.

Meanwhile, the Penticton Fish, Game and Forest Protective Association, which had fought for the park in the first place, became less enthusiastic about what had been granted. In its 1944 submission to the Sloan Commission the Association criticized arguments put forth by the Forest Service that logging should take place near the lake “because the trees were commercially ripe for cutting, that selective logging would be used and the operation was a War Effort.” Logging operations had destroyed “much of the beauty of the area” before the Department of Forests had created “a park out of part of the site originally proposed by this Association.” But, the Association argued, the boundaries of the park should have been set long before, and the category of “reserve” needed to have more teeth, otherwise it was useless, and they feared that they would “wake up some fine morning to find that the Forestry Department has allowed axes and saws, bull dozers and logging trucks into what we thought would some day be developed as a public playground in the woods.”⁶³

There did not seem to be any regulations against damming lakes in Class A parks, damming continuing after the park’s establishment. In May 1945, Meadow Valley farmers wanted to raise the level of Fish Lake six feet. Concerned that this would kill brush and trees along the shoreline, Summerland residents organized their own Fish, Game and Forests Protective Association whose first project was to clean up the brush in preparation for the dam. This group asked the Minister of Lands for access to tools, and for the dam to be situated at the north end of the lake so the water would not run through

⁶³ BCA, GR 520, Box 16, File 16, Exhibit 382, Penticton and District Fish Game and Forest Protective Association, 17 October 1944.

the park. The Assistant Chief Forester agreed, “impressed by [the Association’s] effort to do something for themselves.”⁶⁴

In 1953 and 1954, two park planners reassessed the value of Darke Lake Park, both concluding that a landscape they saw as mediocre and degraded should not have been assigned Class A park status. R.H. Ahrens, of the Reconnaissance and Inventory Section of the Parks Branch, declared that “Class A Park status for this land is ludicrous.” The cabins at Darke Lake were “depressing, ill-kept little structures,” some of the surroundings looked like “a well scattered garbage dump,” and the lakes were surrounded by flood-killed timber because their main public purpose, as he saw it, was to store irrigation water. Ahrens had “difficulty recalling a comparable instance where sporting people have shown such callous disregard for everything except the fishing, which might be had.”⁶⁵ Darke Lake lowered the standards for Class A parks. Forest reserve status, alternatively, would be adequate for the continuation of recreational uses like fishing, hunting and camping. Planner G.A. Wood largely agreed with Ahrens’ assessment, adding that “fishing and some hunting are practically the only attractions of the park.” Darke Lake was simply “an unattractive body of water which functions as an irrigation reservoir.”⁶⁶ The decision to allow logging had not involved much forethought, hillsides visible from the lake having been logged. Wood offered a clear differentiation between land suitable for a park and land suitable for rural recreation:

Recreational values are not necessarily park values and it is believed that Darke Lake Park is a case of mistaken identity. These little fishing lakes

⁶⁴ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Summerland Fish and Game Association to the Minister of Lands, 26 June 1945, 314; C.C. Ternan, Assistant Chief Forester, to employee of Ministry of Forests, 6 July 1945, 317.

⁶⁵ R.H. Ahrens, “Reconnaissance – 1953 – Darke and Eneas Lake Parks,” in Lyons, “Darke (Fish) Lake Park.”

⁶⁶ G.A. Wood “Report, 1954, Darke Lake Park,” in Lyons, “Darke (Fish) Lake Park.” Wood continued, “The difference between high and low water is 16 feet and there are no beaches.”

have no great destiny within the park system. They are approximately equivalent to numerous others located within forest reserves. Their recreational role would be sufficiently safeguarded if they were a part of the Okanagan Forest with logging excluded from designated areas.⁶⁷

Parks official E.G. Oldham, who had not forgotten the passion of local groups for their recreational space a decade earlier, resisted revision of the park boundaries. He closed the issue and the park file stating “Our position in this regard is very much influenced by the local public opinion expressed in adjacent communities a few years ago and by the policies enunciated at that time.”⁶⁸ Darke Lake Provincial Park still exists.⁶⁹

Darke Lake was protected as a provincial park because of persistent local lobbying, led by the Penticton Fish, Game, and Forest Protective Association. As Roderick Haig-Brown would claim about access to recreation in 1953, this park was “something the public want[ed] for itself.”⁷⁰ During the Second World War, the province was reluctant to set aside park land, where most of the users were local residents, and where a park designation would interfere with logging. The actions of the fish and game club and others indicate a desire for small parks near population centres, a sentiment also articulated to the Forestry Commission. But as a forest ranger wrote to the District Forester, “I understand it is not your policy to establish small parks for such purposes throughout the Province.”⁷¹ The province was not heavily involved in small park creation until after the war. Even then, some locations were favoured over others. By 1953, damming and logging had degraded the visual qualities of Darke Lake and the

⁶⁷ G.A. Wood “Report, 1954, Darke Lake Park,” in Lyons, “Darke (Fish) Lake Park.”

⁶⁸ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, E.G. Oldham, Forester, Parks and Recreation Division, to T.R. Broadland, Assistant Forester, Kamloops, 15 October 1954, 373.

⁶⁹ For a current description of the park, see BC Parks website, “Darke Lake Provincial Park,” http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/darke_lk/ (Accessed 6 May 2009).

⁷⁰ R.L. Haig-Brown, “Recreation and Wildlife for Tomorrow,” *Transactions of the Sixth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria: British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1953).152.

⁷¹ GR 1991, Darke Lake Park, Ranger to District Forester, February 1942, Ternan, District Forester, Kamloops, to Orchard, 9 February 1942, 142.

province had made no move to provide facilities or garbage removal in a Class A Park that some planners thought should be struck off the books. At the same time, the provincial parks branch was going to great lengths to create small parks like “beads on a string”⁷² along the new highway system. The next chapter considers two of these postwar lake parks, Champion Lakes near Trail, and Lakelse Lake near Kitimat. Both of these parks were intended to provide outdoor recreation for smelter workers and their families, and arguably to improve the quality of life of industrial workers so that they would appreciate what the state had to offer and not be tempted to become working-class activists. People who lived near Fish Lake were farmers and loggers, and the continued lack of state attention to Fish Lake may have been the result of state goals to promote recreational democracy to industrial workers instead.

⁷² This phrase comes from Bradley, “4,000,000 Acres Deleted.”

Chapter 5

Recreational Democracy and Postwar Lake Parks

After the Second World War, British Columbia enjoyed an economic boom, based on its ability to export primary resources for rebuilding Europe and for the Korean War. The Liberal-Conservative Coalition government made British Columbia's resources available to large out-of-province companies, initiating the damming of the Nechako River to power a new aluminum smelter at Kitimat, designating Forest Management Licences to large companies, and opening up the Peace River district to oil exploration. The fledgling Social Credit party narrowly won the 1952 election by appealing to populists such as farmers and small business operators in the Interior who felt they were being squeezed out by big companies and who resented this giveaway of British Columbia's resources. Once in power, Premier W.A.C. Bennett made room for small business operators while he continued to encourage big business to invest in British Columbia's resources, promoting transportation, industrial growth, and hydroelectricity.¹

During the war the provincial government had been reluctant to create parks for local use, but in the postwar period, provincial parks, accessible by roads and equipped with facilities, took on a new significance as part of what Bennett called the "good life." To examine the development of the provincial park system during the postwar economic boom, and the associated goals of the state and citizens for recreational spaces, this

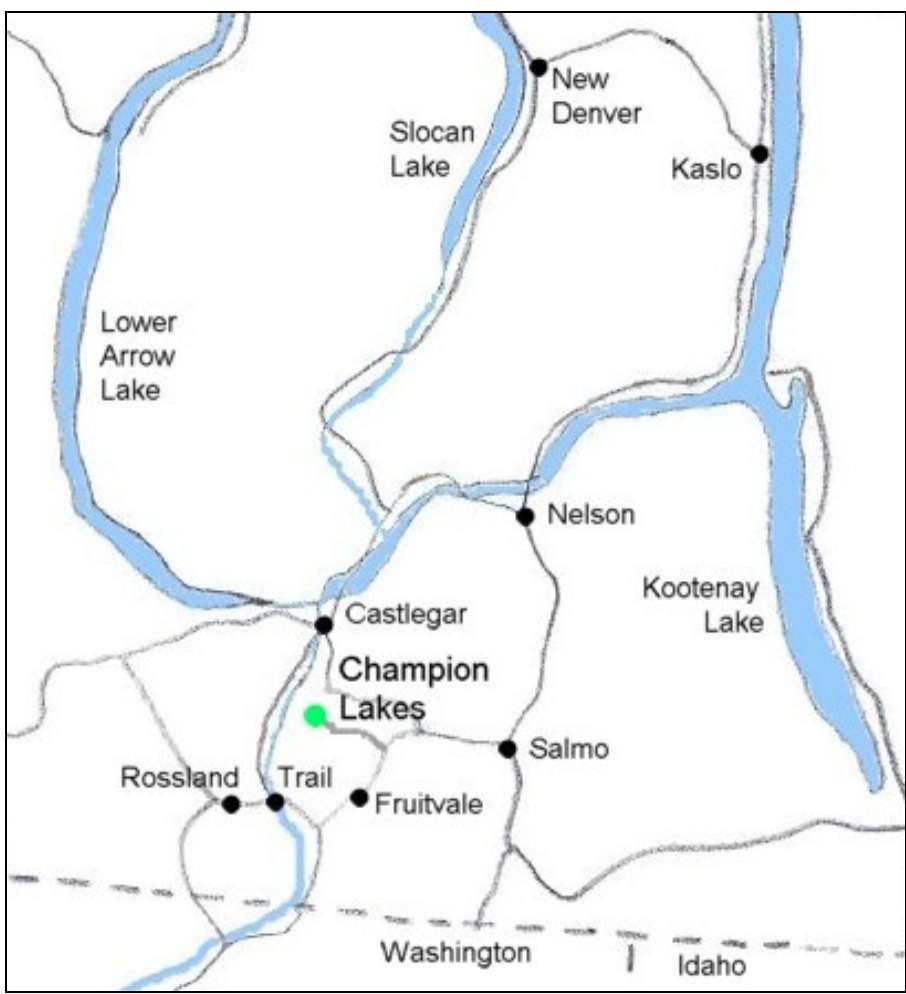
¹ In 1952, the Liberals and Conservatives ran separately, using a transferable ballot aiming to keep out the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). Voters ranked their candidates in order of preference, and the Social Credit and CCF picked up votes as second choices. The CCF earned 31 percent of the popular vote, and the Social Credit, 27 percent, but the Social Credit party elected 19 members and the CCF, 18. In an election the next year Social Credit won 45.5 percent of the vote and the CCF came in as the opposition with 29.5 percent. The Conservative vote almost disappeared. With 28 of the 48 seats in the Legislature, Bennett was able to form a majority government. Gordon Hak, "Populism and the 1952 Social Credit Breakthrough in British Columbia," *Canadian Historical Review* 85(2) June 2004, 277-296.

chapter is organized into two sections. First, it explores park planner philosophies by examining BC Natural Resources Conferences (BCNRC) from the late 1940s and the early 1950s. Planner philosophies, which can be summed up by the term “recreational democracy,”² remained consistent during this time, despite the change in government, partly because some of the same civil servants continued to work for the Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Lands and Forests. In essence, park planners, sociologists and criminologists attending the BCNRC argued that constructive outdoor recreation could create healthy, democratic and law-abiding citizens. Partly in response to public demand, they stressed that parks should be available to all British Columbians, particularly in the form of smaller parks within easy driving distance of towns and cities.

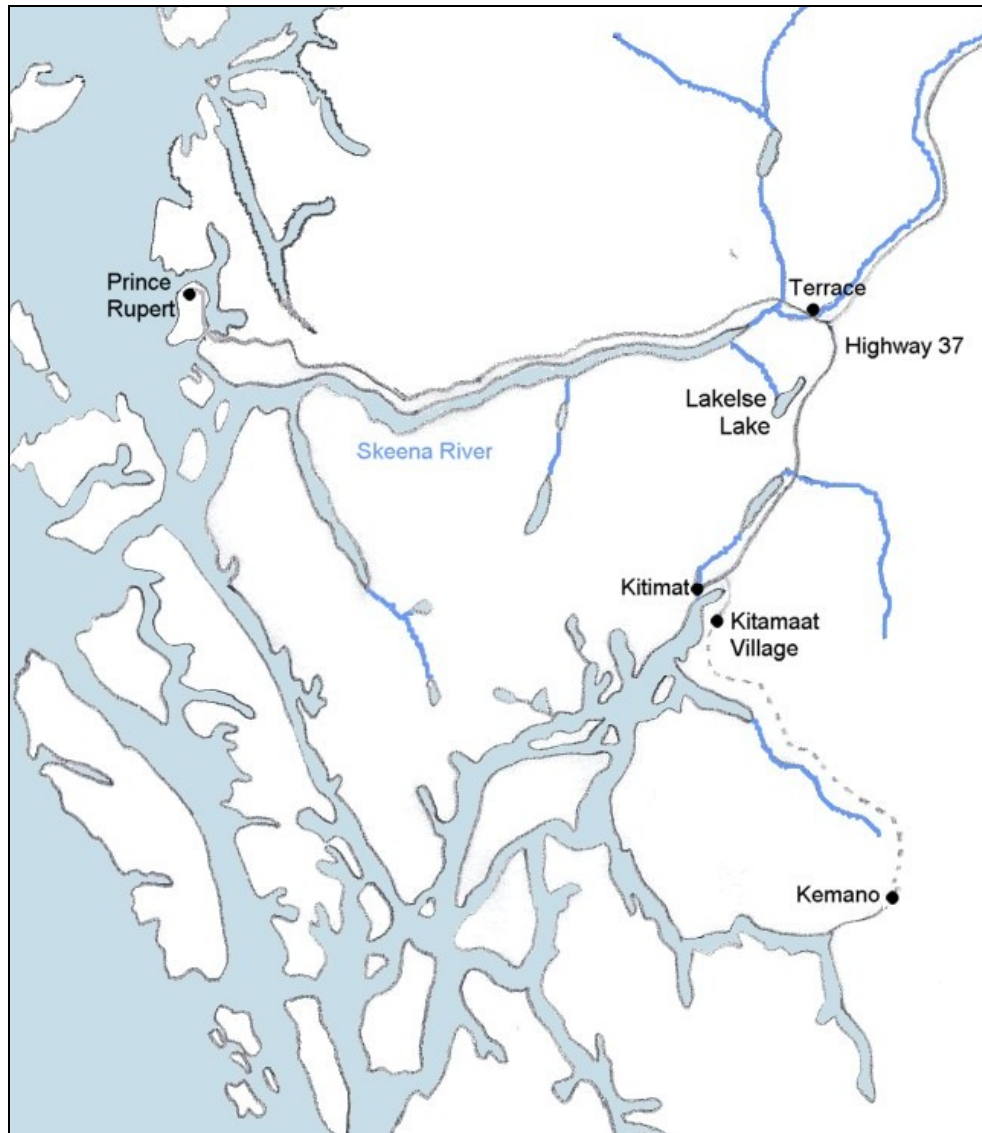
Second, this chapter will examine how planner ideas played out on the ground, and interacted with local goals for recreational land use, by considering the establishment of two provincial parks near industrial towns: Champion Lakes (1955) near Trail and Lakelse Lake (1956) near Kitimat. Both parks were created for the benefit of smelter-shift workers, as rejuvenating escapes from harsh working conditions. Recreational use took place at both locations before and after park creation. It is possible that the government offered parks to British Columbians (especially those populists who supported the Social Credit) as compensation for the vast territories that were removed from local control for resource extraction by outside interests. The dramatic reduction of large parks and the creation of numerous small parks near population centres would be consistent with this idea. This chapter focuses on two postwar parks created specifically to meet the needs of smelter employees, industrial workers in the postwar economy.

² This phrase is from Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 161-162.

Recreational space for working British Columbians may not have been the impetus behind most parks at this time, but these two cases enable us to view how the Social Credit government may have appealed to potential supporters of the labour-oriented Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) party by offering parks as an advantage of the “good life.”



Map 5.1: Location of Champion Lakes, West Kootenays
Source: Map designed by Jenny Clayton



Map 5.2: Location of Lakelse Lake, Northwest Coast

Source: Map designed by Jenny Clayton

Recreational democracy was a compelling ideal in postwar North America. Historians have defined recreational democracy as both a bottom-up popular desire for recreational spaces, and a top-down strategy to inculcate democratic (as opposed to Communist) values and offer the good life to working people. Recreational democracy was a distinct manifestation of a long-held idea that appeared in the turn of the twentieth century playground movement as part of urban reform, during the First World War as a

link between healthy citizens and outdoor recreation, and in rationalizing Depression-era forestry training programs.³ Historian Samuel Hays suggests that, beginning in the interwar period, the American state set aside increasing recreational space as a response to popular demands to access the countryside and enjoy healthy leisure time outdoors.⁴ Other scholars propose that the state promoted mobility and access to nature instead of other rights of citizenship. Focusing on the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, Marguerite Shaffer argues that tourism promoters framed national tourism as a patriotic duty, that in turn offered participants an apparently classless mobility: “The benefits of citizenship did not rest in political rights or private property but in the seemingly classless community of the open road and the freedom of geographic mobility.”⁵ Similarly, Alexander Wilson contends that in the postwar period “physical mobility stood in for the dream of social mobility that North American society has been unable to deliver. Camping is one form of this refusal of station.”⁶

In postwar Canada, leisure and recreation came to be seen as democratic rights, elements of the “good life.” Recreation was not just a right demanded by Canadians, it

³ Robert A.J. McDonald shows how the playground movement, “founded on the conviction that properly directed play was essential for the best moral and physical development of youngsters,” shaped the development of Vancouver’s Stanley Park in the early twentieth century. McDonald, “‘Holy Retreat’ or ‘Practical Breathing Spot’?: Class Perceptions of Vancouver’s Stanley Park, 1910-1913,” *Canadian Historical Review* 1984 65(2), 140-142. Marguerite Shaffer quotes Secretary of the Interior, Franklin Knight Lane, reassuring Americans in 1917 that national parks would remain open during the war: “it is even more important now than in times of peace that the health and vitality of the Nation’s citizenship be conserved, that rest and recreation must materially assist in this conservation of human tissue and energy.” Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 100, 109. An article in the Revelstoke *Mail-Herald* in 1914 made a similar link between strong citizens and national parks (see chapter 1). Forestry training programs in the Depression were partly intended to “build character through hard work and wholesome play,” Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to Exxon Valdez* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1991), 41. See also Richard A. Rajala, “From ‘On-to-Ottawa’ to ‘Bloody Sunday’: Unemployment Relief and British Columbia Forests, 1935-1939,” in Penny Bryden and Dimitry Anastakis, eds., *Framing Canadian Federalism: Essays in Honor of John T. Saywell* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

⁴ Samuel P. Hays and Barbara D. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 23, 117.

⁵ Shaffer, *See America First*, 231.

⁶ Wilson, *Culture of Nature*, 31.

was also, in its constructive forms, a responsibility that the state sought to encourage. In his history of national parks in Atlantic Canada, Alan MacEachern indicates the postwar rise of recreational democracy, or the right to recreation and a yearly vacation. Across the continent, North Americans saw their standard of living improve. With the strong economy, more families could afford cars, and governments were expanding highway systems to facilitate travel and tourism. Because recreation was seen as “the great social equalizer,” the national park system took an active role in promoting recreational democracy, for example by planning parks as social spaces in the 1950s, rather than wilderness areas of escape from the city and from other people.⁷ In her study of public recreation in postwar Ontario, Shirley Tillotson observes that leisure rights became more democratic (available to more of the population) over the twentieth century. During the Cold War, the state framed leisure time as a privilege of democracy, offering citizens the chance to develop as persons, to play, to be involved in creative activities that were not necessarily available at work. Yet leisure time also came with responsibilities to participate in community life, so that “by engaging in volunteer organization of recreation, adults came to understand and feel a part of community democracy.”⁸

Fish and game clubs lobbied for recreational democracy, in the form of public access to lakes for recreation, before the provincial government recognized it. In the 1940s, as we have seen, Darke Lake Provincial Park was established because of the persistence of the local fish and game club, with community support, a case of

⁷ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 161-162.

⁸ Shirley Tillotson, “Time, Swimming Pools, and Citizenship: The Emergence of Leisure Rights in Mid-Twentieth-Century Canada,” in Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn and Robert Menzies, ed., *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2002), 214. See also Shirley Tillotson, *The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Post-war Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

recreational democracy working primarily from the bottom up. By the postwar period in British Columbia, recreational democracy was a two-way street. Park planners created small parks throughout the province not so much in response to local demand (although that was present), but as a project to promote democratic qualities through recreation, and in the midst of the Cold War, to make the good life available to families, especially veterans and immigrants who had settled in booming company and factory towns.

British Columbians were increasingly eager to visit parks after the war, and the government responded by creating and developing more parks. By 1949, BC had 59 provincial parks covering 10,815,298 acres. The provincial parks had about 300,000 recorded visits in 1950 and the number of visits increased tenfold over the next decade.⁹ Between 1949 and 1961, the number of parks tripled. Most of these new parks were relatively small, and they were established near centres of population, along highways, on lakeshores and at the seaside.¹⁰ Parks were created throughout the province to satisfy British Columbians, more so than wealthy tourists and visitors. They offered amenities such as parking, camping sites and toilets. This was a period of relative affluence, when most families owned cars and could travel on the improved highway system to reach new provincial parks. In size, the provincial park system was impressive, slightly larger than the total US National Park and Historic Site acreage, and six times the size of provincial park acreage in Ontario.¹¹

⁹ J. Ken Youds, *A History of the British Columbia Provincial Park System, 1911-1980* (Victoria, BC: Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division, 1981), 8.

¹⁰ Youds, *British Columbia Provincial Park System*, 12; BC Archives (hereafter BCA) GR 1379, BC Forest Service, Briefs to the Commission on Forest Resources (1955), Box 1, File 1, Parks and Recreation Division, Exhibit 17.

¹¹ C. Lyons, "British Columbia's Provincial Parks," *Transactions of the Second Resources Conference* (Victoria, B.C.: Department of Lands and Forests, 1949), 237.

Some of the most detailed discussions by professionals, social scientists and park planners about parks and outdoor recreation in the province are found in the transactions of the BC Natural Resources Conference (BCNRC), sponsored by the provincial government. The conference, held annually from 1948 until 1970, was the forum for representatives of government, industry, university and conservation groups to meet and exchange conservation ideas. The conferences integrated planning for a range of resources, including water, soil, fisheries, energy, recreation, mining, forestry, agriculture, wildlife, and people. The BCNRC's "core goals – planning, research co-ordination and efficiency – were characteristic expressions of modernity."¹² BCNRC presentations on recreation are a window into how experts thought about the management and value of recreation as a "resource," and how recreation could benefit British Columbia's human resources. Outdoor recreation would grow sturdy and intelligent citizens, and address Cold War anxieties about delinquency, strong families, and democracy.¹³

Park planners at the BCNRC agreed that parks should be available at minimal cost to the most people. Ideally, parks should be managed for "optimum social effect" to offer the maximum benefit to the most citizens without infringing on exploitable resources.¹⁴ Parks had to be easily accessible to visitors, which in the 1950s meant

¹² Arn Keeling and Robert McDonald, "The Profligate Province: Roderick Haig-Brown and the Modernizing of British Columbia," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3 (Fall 2001), 16. See also Keeling, "'A Dynamic, Not a Static Conception': The Conservation Thought of Roderick Haig-Brown," *Pacific Historical Review* 2002 71(2): 239-268; and Keeling, "Ecological Ideas in the British Columbia Conservation Movement, 1945-1970," (MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1998).

¹³ For another perspective on inculcating democratic values in new immigrants to Canada (including through leisure activities), see Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), 88-91

¹⁴ Lyons, "British Columbia's Provincial Parks," 240. D.L. MacMurchie, Technical Assistant, Department of Lands and Forests, "Basic Problems Pertaining to Utilization of Recreation Resources," *Transactions of*

providing “overnight campsites along our highways.”¹⁵ Parks should be free, offering “the public recreational opportunities without cost.”¹⁶ Recreation was not just for the elite, either in wealth or fitness, but for all citizens. The parks branch set out to adapt parks to the masses of “active but unskilled” British Columbian families, by offering facilities such as toilets, change rooms, garbage collection, tent pads and parking areas, amenities that would allow them to enjoy the new parks in comfort.¹⁷

In their vision of “overnight campsites along highways,” park planners started to question the value of maintaining large wilderness parks far from urban areas for the few people who could afford to reach them. They may have been responding to comments at the Forestry Commission of 1943-45, where participants requested parks accessible to communities, roads, parking spaces and comfortable camps.¹⁸ Park planner C.P. Lyons acknowledged that tastes varied and different people wanted different experiences in parks. For him, parks should embrace multiple values: “wilderness, primeval, multiple use, community use, roadside reserves, park ways, look-out points, camp sites, geological, historical, and archaeological.”¹⁹ Over the 1950s, though, park planners convinced themselves that since recreation for the most people was the primary goal of

the Third British Columbia Natural Resources Conference (Victoria, BC: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1950), 234.

¹⁵ Jerry M. Mathison, Provincial Supervisor, Physical Education and Recreation Branch, Department of Education, “Problems Relating to Some Specific Uses of Recreation Resources,” *Transactions of the Third British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria, BC: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1950), 248.

¹⁶ Lyons hoped that revenue for park management could be raised in other ways, such as privately-run concessions, services, and accommodation. Lyons “British Columbia’s Provincial Parks,” 242.

¹⁷ Brooks was referring specifically to skiers at Mt. Seymour: “Before the rugged mountain slopes can be safely used by such masses of active but comparatively unskilled skiers and mountaineers, ski slopes must be cleared, trails must be cut and properly signed, ski tows must be designed and eventually a chair lift will be required to accommodate the growing use.” Lloyd Brooks, Parks and Recreation Division, BC Forest Service, “Recent Recreational Development in B.C.,” *Transactions of the Sixth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1953), 139.

¹⁸ See Chapter 4.

¹⁹ Lyons, “British Columbia’s Provincial Parks,” 240.

the park system, large parks were not so necessary. Demonstrating that the protection of wilderness had a low priority in the parks branch, Mr. Trew, an employee of the BC Forest Service, doubted that British Columbia's large park acreage fulfilled "the purpose that we actually desire for the development of recreation, which is, essentially, whether these areas serve the week-end recreational needs of our communities and our cities?"²⁰ In 1953, R.H. Ahrens, of the Parks and Recreation Division, wondered if it was a mistake to establish large parks far from where people live.²¹ This new way of thinking translated into an increase in the number of small parks, but a decrease in overall park acreage from 4.4 to 2.5 million hectares, most notably the dramatic reduction of Hamber and Liard parks.²²

Not only were park planners responding to public demand for recreational spaces, they also attempted to manage people to achieve particular goals. Bureaucrats and social scientists embraced the notion that constructive recreation could mould democratic, engaged citizens, while idleness could do the opposite. BCNRC participants noted that British Columbians had increased leisure time due to the contraction of the work week, paid vacations, earlier retirement, and "time saving appliances" for homemakers, and they hoped that residents would put their leisure time to good use, defining recreation as

²⁰ Mr. Trew, Verbal comment following the session on "Recreation Problems in British Columbia," *Transactions of the Third British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria, BC: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1950), 255.

²¹ R.H. Ahrens, "The Recreation Potential of British Columbia," *Transactions of the Sixth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria, BC: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1953), 136.

²² Youds, *British Columbia Provincial Park System*; Ben Bradley, "4,000,000 Acres Deleted: Automobility and the Failure of Liard River and Hamber Provincial Parks, 1940-61," *Space and Place in British Columbia: BC Studies Conference*, Victoria, BC, 2 May 2009.

“the constructive use of leisure time in harmonious and satisfying activities.” Frivolous use of leisure time, one presenter worried, could “unmake civilizations.”²³

Recreation and park planners were optimistic that by getting out into nature together, families and youths could learn skills of cooperation and consensus building.

According to Jerry M. Mathison, provincial supervisor of the Physical Education and Recreation Branch of the Department of Education, camping was a lesson in democracy:

Camping is an experience in outdoor living. It is widely recognized as one of the most effective means of character development and is particularly significant when it is a group experience in which people learn to live, work and play together. The natural environment is a continual challenge to campers. They share common tasks; use wilderness materials to provide common fun, welfare and comfort. They draw heavily upon their own initiatives in meeting their small emergencies. They learn to understand and to practice democratic living.²⁴

If recreation could promote healthy people, planners had a role to play in directing people towards the right kind of recreation. R.F. Osborne, director of the UBC School of Physical Education, stated that although “freedom of choice” was essential to recreation, the availability of “natural sites does not guarantee that the individual will elect to use them to best advantage.”²⁵ Citizens had to be taught how to make good decisions. D.L. MacMurchie, a technical assistant with the Department of Lands and Forest, was torn between managing recreational resources and managing people. In order to manage the resources according to demand, the government should study the market – consumers of

²³ MacMurchie, “Basic Problems Pertaining to Utilization of Recreation Resources,” 228-229.

²⁴ Mathison, “Problems Relating to Some Specific Uses of Recreation Resources,” 247.

²⁵ R.F. Osborne, “Leadership in Recreation in British Columbia,” *Transactions of the Ninth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria, BC: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1956), 342. Osborne continued: “People of all ages require, and even demand, leadership, while at the same time they want to retain their right to do what they want when they want to, or not to do anything at all.”

recreation – and find out what they liked to do.²⁶ However, he stressed that consumers were not experts:

The curricula of our education system are not arranged by the individuals who require education... Neither can we hope that the apparent preferences of a large part of our population will point the way to recreational pursuits which will result in maximum social benefits.²⁷

Youth were a prime target of recreation programs, and BCNRC participants argued that recreation could prevent juvenile delinquency. According to the abstract of a session on recreation,

We know that recreation is a fundamental requirement for physical and mental health. We believe that it reduces delinquency and contributes, in desirable ways, to the development of individuals and to society.²⁸

One participant stated, “People who shoulder packs to tramp the hills seldom have time for crime.”²⁹ Postwar reformers saw supervised recreation as a way to channel youthful energy into strenuous, constructive pursuits instead of immorality and crime.³⁰ R. Ken

²⁶ According to Hays, the American government invested in these types of studies in the 1960s. Hays, *Beauty, Health and Permanence*.

²⁷ MacMurchie, “Basic Problems Pertaining to Utilization of Recreation Resources,” 234.

²⁸ “Abstract,” *Transactions of the Third British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria, BC: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1950), 226. No particular author is cited but F.C. Oldham, a forester in charge of the Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Lands and Forests, chaired the session.

²⁹ Mathison, “Problems Relating to Some Specific Uses of Recreation Resources,” 249. In addition, D.L. MacMurchie asserted in 1950 that “Probation officers, police officials and prison authorities in large numbers have testified from their experience that much delinquency and crime result from inadequate recreation opportunities.” MacMurchie, “Basic Problems Pertaining to Utilization of Recreation Resources,” 229.

³⁰ Franca Iacovetta states that “it is difficult to overestimate the attention paid to juvenile delinquency in postwar Canada.” Iacovetta, “Gossip, Contest and Power in the Making of Suburban Bad Girls: Toronto, 1945-60,” *Canadian Historical Review* 80 vol. 4 (1999), 598. Doug Owrarn agrees that these fears were exaggerated: youth formed a low percentage of the population and the number of juvenile cases in the courts was not exceptionally high. The seriousness of juvenile delinquency was a matter of opinion, as it could range “from murder to skipping school or just being uncooperative with officials.” Owrarn, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 143. Psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers took on the responsibility of identifying factors leading to juvenile delinquency and offering solutions. Comacchio, “‘The Rising Generation:’ Laying Claim to the Health of Adolescents in English Canada, 1920-70,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 19 vol. 1 (2002), 140. One supposed cause of delinquency was “bad home life.” Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 57, 74-75. New family configurations resulting from the Second World War – fathers away in the

Jordan, the executive commissioner of the Boy Scouts Association in Vancouver, agreed that recreation helped create moral citizens: “Well-directed youth recreation is a potent influence in building character and in the promotion of good citizenship.”³¹ With some supervision and direction, and access to natural areas, the outgoing and energetic potential of youth could be transformed through recreation into the qualities of good citizenship, which included “social consciousness,” “cooperative spirit” and “sense of community responsibility.”

Recalling the Young Men’s Forestry Training Program of the 1930s,³² in 1951 Edward T. Kenney, Minister of Lands and Forests, announced a new program to “use youth” to develop the provincial parks.³³ The employment of youth crews in provincial parks could both stem the tide of juvenile delinquency and make parks more accessible. Speaking in gendered terms, Kenney claimed that the young men who participated “became self-reliant and healthy,” and “learned how to live like a mature man in a forest environment.” The youths earned \$3.00 per day, their living expenses were covered, and they carried out tasks including building roads, trails and bridges, and cutting wood. In their spare time, they could participate in organized recreation, like sports, field trips, fishing, swimming and evening events. Working at Manning Park, which became accessible with the completion of the Hope-Princeton Highway in 1949, was a “break

military and mothers away at work – gave adolescents more opportunities to get into trouble. Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, 142-144. Another was “bad neighbourhoods” – overcrowded working-class urban areas. Iacovetta, “Gossip,” 598.

³¹ R. Ken Jordan, “The Use of Recreation Resources by Youth Organizations,” *Transactions of the Third British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria, BC: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1950), 244.

³² See Rajala, “Unemployment Relief.”

³³ Kenney was the Liberal MLA for Skeena, and the Nechako dam then under construction was named after him. His program also echoes suggestions to the Sloan Commission that soldiers could be rehabilitated through park work – a program that does not seem to have been carried out, possibly because jobs were more plentiful than expected after the war (see Chapter 4).

from the city routine and the city life,” and camping was perfect “training for good citizenship,” because the young men learned to make good choices, conserve available resources, and maintain a living space in good order.³⁴

Roderick Haig-Brown, a frequent BCNRC participant, was a naturalist and writer who forged a conservationist countercurrent in the profligate postwar province.

Historians Arn Keeling and Robert McDonald characterize Haig-Brown as a “cultural and political outsider,” despite his status as a popular writer, since he was one of the few outspoken critics of government environmental policies in the 1950s. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, he had been a leader in the struggle to stop the damming of Buttle Lake in Strathcona Park for hydroelectricity, near his home town of Campbell River.³⁵

In a presentation at the BCNRC in 1953, Haig-Brown pointed out how industrialization was threatening green space while increasing demand for it. Proximity to natural spaces, with its benefits to health and quality of life, attracted workers to British Columbia’s company towns. Strict regulation of industrial pollution, to safeguard recreational spaces, could help the province avoid “a proletariat, the mass of living dead that periodically arises to destroy civilizations and delay human development.”³⁶ If working British Columbians did not have access to green spaces, Haig-Brown implied, they might turn to alternative philosophies such as socialism or communism.

³⁴ As Kenney put it, camping required such specific skills as “learning to pick a good campsite, establishing camp without mutilating the surroundings, and finding by experience the numerous little improvements that can be made for more comfortable living.” E.T. Kenney, “Youth Use, A New Experiment,” *Transactions of the Fourth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria, BC: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1951), 5-11.

³⁵ Ultimately Buttle Lake was dammed, with the water level raised 15 feet instead of the proposed 45 feet. Keeling and McDonald, “The Profligate Province,” 12, 14, 17.

³⁶ Haig-Brown suggested that outdoor recreation was not a cure-all, and “avoiding a proletariat [was] a much larger thing, embracing the whole scope of this conference.”

Haig-Brown celebrated the agency of British Columbians in pressing for and using recreational space:

I have emphasized the public's aggressive and positive claim to a right in the land of the province for recreational purposes, because it is the clearest possible evidence of the strength of public demand for recreational outlets. This is not something dreamed up by planners and other enthusiasts as likely to be good for the public. It is something the public wants for itself and insists on having, which puts it on a far more respectable plane than any planner's dream.³⁷

He cautioned his fellow BCNRC participants against managing people, and that planning should be focused instead on managing resources. "Planned recreation" was "a contradiction in terms" that reminded him of Huxley's *Brave New World* (1931). "There will always," he hoped, "be a few free spirits to evade the planning and enjoy themselves properly." Pointing to the myriad of government departments that had some responsibility for recreational resources, Haig-Brown recommended the establishment of a Ministry of Recreation, containing the Parks Division, the Game Department, and the Tourist Bureau, and an "Act to Administer the Recreation Resources of British Columbia."³⁸

Postwar park-making was strongly influenced by the sentiments expressed at the BCNRC, not the least because presenters such as Lyons and Ahrens were the same individuals who went out into the field to survey parks and make recommendations on their development. Parks and outdoor recreation became part of a larger project of

³⁷ R.L. Haig-Brown, "Recreation and Wildlife for Tomorrow," *Transactions of the Sixth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria, BC: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1953) 152.

³⁸ Quotes in the last two paragraphs come from Haig-Brown, "Recreation and Wildlife for Tomorrow," 151-156. Haig-Brown argued that recreation helped make healthy citizens. "This conference has declared many times that a healthy, independent and aggressive people is the most valuable natural resource. If such declarations are more than just pious words, the importance of the recreational resources is obvious." Even though he was suspicious of planning, he commented, "But the Brave New World seems to be pretty well upon us and if others plan, we must plan at least as effectively."

creating a strong, healthy and democratic citizenry, and convincing citizens of the advantages of Bennett's "good life," by giving them well-developed parks they could easily reach by car. Providing industrial workers with healthy weekend recreation was key to the reasoning behind provincial parks at Champion and Lakelse Lakes. These were lake parks, where a family might camp for the weekend or have a picnic at the shore, rather than large extensive wilderness parks that required more strenuous exertions, and longer holidays, to enjoy. Both parks were made more accessible by roads, and had youth crews assigned to them, to build the facilities that modern consumers came to expect when visiting provincial parks.

At both sites, as at Fish Lake, recreational use preceded official park establishment, as some residents were participating in outdoor recreation without any impetus from government. Local residents and organizations, who expressed themselves through letters to the Parks department, saw parks as a means of improving their quality of life – they wanted parks to provide employment and private spaces for family holidays. Visions of the good life in a rapidly developing British Columbia came to include summer homes at the lake: squatters built summer cottages before Lakelse Lake became a park, and a petition for summer home sites helped initiate Champion Lakes Provincial Park.

Action by the local rod and gun club against privatization was a common thread in the stories of Fish Lake and the Champion Lakes. In 1907, a surveyor included three of the Champion Lakes in the 1260 acres of Sublot 71. The Columbia and Western Railway briefly owned Sublot 71 but it reverted to the Crown in 1919. In the early twentieth century, the Christie family of the Sinixt First Nation included the Champion Lakes in

their seasonal cycle of fishing, hunting, trapping, guiding and berry-picking.³⁹ In the 1920s several local residents applied at different times to raise muskrats and fish at the lakes but there is no evidence of these projects going ahead. In 1938, a person applied to the government to build a summer resort for hunting, fishing and camping, proposing to build seven and a half miles of road to the lakes and to charge a toll on the road or receive a grant of 600 acres around the lakes. The government rejected the proposal.⁴⁰ When applicants tried to purchase 320 acres on the second lake in 1938 and 1942, the Trail Rod and Gun Club protested. The Club had improved the trail to the lake and worked with the BC Game Commission to stock the lake. The Club requested ten-acre public reserves of land on the lakes, and the government reserved all of Sublot 71 “for the recreation and enjoyment of the public” on 3 July 1942. That year, the Forest Service built a truck road that terminated near the lakes. In the 1940s, there were a number of applications to develop resort and tourist facilities, or create group camping sites at the lakes.⁴¹

In 1948, residents of Fruitvale, a bedroom community for workers at the Trail smelter, launched an appeal for what they called a “Workman’s Summer Recreation Ground” at the Champion Lakes, to benefit the health of local smelter shift-workers. The Fruitvale Ratepayers’ Association asked the government to improve the road to the third lake, but as a nod to the rod and gun club asked that the other two lakes be left in their “present virgin state for the preservation of wild fowl and fish.” The Ratepayers’

Association envisioned a lakeside recreation area where families could lease lots to build

³⁹ Paula Pryce, *‘Keeping the Lakes’ Way’: Reburial and the Re-creation of a Moral World among an Invisible People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 63. Pryce’s information comes from Harold Webber, *People and Places* (Castlegar: Cotinneh Books, 1975), 86-93.

⁴⁰ Robert H. Ahrens, *Investigation of a Proposed Park at Champion Lakes near Trail, B.C.* (Victoria, BC: Parks and Recreation Division, 1954), 2.

⁴¹ Surveyor General Branch, Lands Survey Office, Lands Service File 037069, Champion Lakes, Trail Rod and Gun Club to Wells Grey, Minister of Lands, 22 June 1942, 43-44; Grey to Trail Rod and Gun Club, 26 June 1942, 49; Ahrens, *Investigation of a Proposed Park at Champion Lakes*.

summer cabins.⁴² Since workers in Trail had one of the highest per capita incomes in Canada, many families could afford a cabin. In single-industry towns like Trail, during the postwar boom, capital and labour agreed to a “Fordist wage bargain,” where in exchange for doing repetitive tasks,

Workers with no more than an eighth grade education and little in the way of technical skills could end up drawing paychecks that enabled them to have two cars, a vacation cottage as well as principal residence and maybe a boat for fishing and water-skiing.⁴³

The Ratepayers also requested public facilities such as a hostel and camping site. Five Canadian Legion branches, representing veterans, were among the seventeen organizations that endorsed this project. Other interested groups included the rod and gun club, voluntary associations, the smeltermen’s union and the farmers’ institute.⁴⁴ To a certain degree, the goals of the rod and gun club and the Ratepayers were slightly at odds: the former wanted public space for fishing and hunting, while the latter wanted the possibility of private spaces in nature for families.

The government responded positively, if somewhat slowly to the Fruitvale Ratepayers, and the park was established in 1955. When justifying the park, planner R.H. Ahrens admitted that the area was not “superlatively beautiful” but did provide what he described as a “relaxing atmosphere for enjoyment of outdoor surroundings” just “a short distance from a population, largely industrial, who for the most part work and reside in the smoky atmosphere of a smelter fume area, lacking the appeal of natural vegetation.”⁴⁵

Park development plans included a road, parking space, “beach improvement, change-

⁴² Surveyor General Branch, Lands Survey Office, Lands Service File 037069, Champion Lakes, Fruitvale Ratepayers’ Association to Superintendent of Parks, Department of Lands, 4 August 1948, 80-82.

⁴³ R. Marshall and M. Tucker, *Thinking for a Living: Work Skills and the Future of the American Economy* (New York: Basic, 1984), 8.

⁴⁴ Surveyor General Branch, Lands Survey Office, Lands Service File 037069, Champion Lakes, Fruitvale Ratepayers’ Association to Superintendent of Parks, Department of Lands, 4 August 1948, 80-82.

⁴⁵ Ahrens, *Investigation of a Proposed Park at Champion Lakes*, 33-34.

houses, water supply system, picnic and campsite facilities, a ranger's residence and hiking trails."⁴⁶

Responding to local enthusiasm, the Parks and Recreation Division did consider summer home sites for the Champion Lakes. Park planners had established certain criteria for approving summer homes: homes should not be scattered through the park, and they should not be within sight of highways, public use areas, or even scenic attractions.⁴⁷ Signs of industrial modernity such as highways should not intrude on the peaceful escape provided by summer homes, but then neither should homes interfere with the public's right to enjoy lakes and streams. In the end, it proved too challenging to keep private homes and public activities separate. No location met all these criteria, and the Parks Division decided that Champion Lakes worked best for short-term visits. Campsites would serve more people and have a lower impact on natural values. An unstated reason may have been that by replicating a class system in the park, summer homes were not in keeping with recreational democracy, while camping set people on equal terms, more likely to socialize with each other.

At the BCNRC the balancing act between providing recreational space for the public and telling them how to use it was a key tension. Planners reasoned that providing summer homesites would not be in the "public interest." Yet a public interest in homesites brought provincial attention to this area as a potential park. In his summer home site report, planner Lloyd Brooks implied that the public was ignorant and had not thought through their desire for summer homes:

⁴⁶ BC Archives, GR 1991, British Columbia, Parks and Recreation Division, B01745, 23, 2-3-1-6, 1, Champion Lakes Park (May 1949-Feb 1968), R.E. Sommers to Nelson Daily News, 19 October 1955, 99-100.

⁴⁷ Lloyd Brooks, *Champion Lakes Park Report on Assessment of Summer Home Potential*, (Victoria, BC: Parks and Recreation Division, 1955), 1.

No doubt there would be a rash of building-starts made if this park was opened to private dwellings, since the idea of a home in a park has traditional appeal. However, it is believed that initial enthusiasm would rapidly cool when the public becomes aware of the true facts of their situation; the limited natural attractions; the very short period of use each year; the difficulties and expense of building and providing their basic services.⁴⁸

As Brooks stated, “the policy of private ownership of structures in a public park has long ago been rejected by most of the progressive park organizations on this continent.”⁴⁹

When some local residents asked when they could purchase or lease a lot at Champion Lakes for a summer home, they were told that “under the provisions of the Forest Act, the lands of Champion Lakes park are reserved from sale, lease or license.”⁵⁰

While some residents near the Champion Lakes and elsewhere sought summer home sites, others looked to the park for paid employment. The work of youth crews also satisfied the desires of planners to shape youth through healthy outdoor labour. To build access and amenities at the Champion Lakes, the Parks division organized both adult and youth crews. An adult crew built wooden structures such as an outhouse and change house, while a Park Development Crew (i.e. youth crew) worked on landscaping and digging (preparing a road, parking lot, campsite, water and sewage systems).⁵¹ In the spring of 1957, \$17,000 was allotted to the youth crew to cover all expenses, including equipment, material, food and wages.⁵² The Champion Lakes may have received special

⁴⁸ Brooks, *Assessment of Summer Home Potential*, 6.

⁴⁹ Lloyd Brooks, *Report on Recreation Residence Potential at Manning Park* (Victoria, BC: Parks and Recreation Division, 1955), 3.

⁵⁰ BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes, Letter from female resident of Trail to R. Sommers, 5 February 1957, 126; Forester, Parks and Recreation Division to female resident of Trail, 18 February 1957, 127. Because files in GR 1991 are restricted under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the confidentiality of private individuals must be protected.

⁵¹ BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, “Project List, Champion Lakes Park,” sent from E.G. Oldham, Forester, Parks and Recreation Division, to male resident of West Summerland, 3 May 1956, 116.

⁵² BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, Forester, Provincial Parks Branch, Victoria, BC, to local operator of Parks Branch, Fruitvale, BC, 28 May 1957, 171.

treatment, possibly because the region's MLA, Robert Sommers, Minister of Lands and Forests, was trying to fend off a scandal involving bribes for a forest management license elsewhere.⁵³ Sommers took some of the credit for the new park, for example when he announced the park in Fruitvale in the fall of 1954.⁵⁴ In the spring of 1957, youth crews, a major source of development labour, were allocated to work at three provincial parks: 34 boys at the Champion Lakes, 34 at Manning, and 12 at Mt. Robson.⁵⁵ As the province entered the recession of 1958-62,⁵⁶ Premier Bennett announced that he would try to alleviate winter unemployment. Responding to this statement, residents asked the Minister of Forests to boost the local economy by extending the working season at the Champion Lakes. Closing down park work in October would be "very hard on these men and their families," one resident wrote. "If the government wishes to help the unemployment situation I suggest this would be a good place to start."⁵⁷ However, she was told that there were limited funds for this work and the winter weather would not allow efficient progress.⁵⁸ Around the same time, the Rossland-Trail Social Credit League, on behalf of the Fruitvale group, expressed their hope that Sommers would use his "influence to get [their resolution] looked after if it meets your approval." The resolution reiterated that the government should extend work on the Champion Lakes as long as possible to support local families in difficult economic times. Sommers,

⁵³ Formerly a school principal in Castlegar, Robert Edward Sommers was elected in 1952 as a Social Credit MLA for Rossland-Trail.

⁵⁴ The Trail Rod and Gun Club praised Sommers' "proposal for opening up the Champion Lakes area and the establishment of a camp ground..." BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, Trail Rod and Gun Club to R.E. Sommers, Minister of Lands and Forests, 14 October 1954, 39.

⁵⁵ BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, C.J. Velay, Engineer, Provincial Parks Branch, Victoria, BC, to Mr. H.G. McWilliams, Forester, Provincial Parks Branch, Department of Recreation and Conservation, 3 May 1957, 157.

⁵⁶ Barman, *West Beyond the West*, 286.

⁵⁷ GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, female resident of Fruitvale, BC, [to Ray Williston], 11 September 1957, 198-199.

⁵⁸ GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, Earle C. Westwood, Minister of Recreation and Conservation, to female resident of Fruitvale, BC, 27 September 1957, 196.

unfortunately, did not have any influence at that time because he was in Washington State avoiding criminal charges.⁵⁹

In the 1950s it was common for park managers to modify nature in parks, reducing the numbers of some species and introducing others, often with the goal of improving visitor experiences. With additional funding and the assistance of biologists, these interventions could be accomplished on a larger scale, and a hands-off approach to nature was not yet popular.⁶⁰ The Parks Branch wanted to create an attractive lake shore for visitors to Champion Lakes but was hampered by other water managers: beavers. In the fall of 1954 the Parks Division surveyed the proposed park area. Lloyd Brooks, of the Planning Section, was concerned that the activities of beavers could flood the third and most popular lake. Beavers had already drowned the timber bordering the second lake and the water was three feet above 'normal' levels.⁶¹ The parks division appealed to the man who held the trapping license for the lakes: "The solution to the problem would be to remove, somehow, enough beaver from 'your' lakes so that the beaver from these colonies will not spread. It is certainly not our objective to eliminate these colonies."⁶² The trapper responded that the beaver were not doing any harm, just cutting down some brush, and it was "nice to have them in a park." Besides, with low fur prices in mind, he

⁵⁹ BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes, Representative of R.E. Sommers, Victoria, BC to Westwood, 23 September 1957, enclosing copy of resolution from the Fruitvale branch of the Rossland-Trail Social Credit League, 201-203. Sommers helped bring about a major scandal for the Social Credit government, that began brewing in 1955, when he was convicted and sent to jail for accepting bribes from BC Forest Products for a forest management license in 1957 (*Encyclopedia of BC* online, Sommers scandal). Sommers skipped a pre-trial hearing on 23 September 1957, and returned to Victoria in November. David J. Mitchell, *W.A.C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983), 239, 240.

⁶⁰ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 206-207.

⁶¹ BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, Lloyd Brooks, Planning Section, to E.G. Oldham, Forester in Charge, Parks and Recreation Branch, 27 October 1954, 41.

⁶² BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, Representative of Oldham to male trapline holder, Castlegar, BC, 8 November 1954, 48.

wrote: “it is too bad to have to keep them trapped off when they are not worth any more than they are now.”⁶³

The lakes had been modified to create good fishing conditions since the 1930s, when the local fish and game club and the Game Commission had stocked the lakes with trout. By the mid-1950s, park planners had more ambitious plans. R.G. McMynn, the chief fisheries biologist, wrote to Oldham that it would be “highly desirable” to dam and poison the lakes, “since it would eliminate a swampy area between the two lakes, produce a productive body of water for fishing, and at the same time, provide an effective fish barrier.”⁶⁴ The beaver dam would be removed along with the beavers, a dam built to connect lakes two and three and the resulting lake poisoned to remove unwanted fish and replaced with more desirable fish. Once the lakes were dammed, McMynn intended to treat them with rotenone in order to remove “coarse fish,”⁶⁵ though he did not specify the species. In the 1940s and 1950s Canadian park administrators commonly applied rotenone to lakes.⁶⁶ The summer plans for Champion Lakes park in 1958 included “blowing up” three beaver dams and constructing a “ten foot earth-filled dam” to “bring

⁶³ BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, Trapline holder, Kinnaird, BC to Chief Forester, 12 December 1954, 51.

⁶⁴ BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, R.G. McMynn, Chief Fisheries Biologist, B.C. Game Commission, Vancouver, BC, to Oldham, 27 March 1956, 113-114.

⁶⁵ BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, McMynn to McWilliams, Parks Branch, 20 November 1957, 218.

⁶⁶ Rotenone is a natural poison made out of plant roots that is ingested through the gills, quickly killing all the insect and fish life. There are no proven long-term effects on the water, so other species can be introduced as replacements after a short time. MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 206-207. Rotenone was used by indigenous people to catch fish, but until recently its impact on humans was considered negligible so that it has been used as an insecticide on organically grown produce. However, it has been linked to Parkinson’s disease. James Butcher, “Scientists Suggest a Link Between Rotenone and Parkinson’s Disease,” *The Lancet*, vol. 356, iss. 9242, p. 1659, 11 November 2000.

the second and third lake to the same level.”⁶⁷ The trapper was enlisted to trap out or live trap beavers and move them to another section of his trapline.⁶⁸

While Champion Lakes was being developed as a recreation site for rural industrial workers in southern BC, a similar pattern was unfolding on the northwest coast at Lakelse Lake, located between Kitimat and Terrace.⁶⁹ A hot springs made it a hospitable stopping place and habitat for human and animal residents, including annual migrations of trumpeter swans. Long before Lakelse was considered as a park, Tsimshian people, prospectors, trappers, surveyors, and railway construction workers stopped at the springs while traveling the “grease trail” from Kitimaat to Kitselas.⁷⁰ The hot springs formed “a large pool about one hundred feet in diameter of almost boiling water with a steady flow... only a few feet above lake level and about three quarters of a mile from the Lake.”⁷¹

Lakelse Lake had few permanent residents by the early twentieth century. About six Tsimshian families lived at the southwest corner of the lake in the winter, and trapped mink, marten, beaver and fisher in the spring between the lake and Kitimat.⁷² The forest service had a ranger cabin, and the federal government operated a fish hatchery.⁷³ A few spruce were cut during the First World War to make airplanes, but hauling them out of the bush proved uneconomical. In 1921, forester Frederick Davison Mulholland surveyed

⁶⁷ BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, McWilliams to F. Butler, Commissioner, BC Game Commission, 22 August 1957, 186.

⁶⁸ BCA, GR 1991, Champion Lakes Park, Butler to McWilliams, 20 September 1957, 194.

⁶⁹ The name of the lake may originate from the Tsimshian word for fresh water clams, which were once abundant in the lake. BCA, Vertical Files, Lakelse Lake.

⁷⁰ BCA, Vertical Files, Lakelse Lake.

⁷¹ F.D. Mulholland, *Report on Examination of Part of the Lakelse Valley, Coast Range 5* (Victoria, BC: Forest Service, 1921), 11.

⁷² BCA, Imbert Orchard Collection, Lloyd M. Johnstone interview, T3125:1.

⁷³ The federal fish hatchery was the main employer, with ten staff. People who lived at Lakelse supplemented their hatchery work with trapping in the winter. BCA, Johnstone interview.

the Lakelse Lake area, and the result was not promising. Much of the land around the lake was subject to flooding, only a few meadows and timbered areas had good soil, and snowfall was heavy. Some pre-emptions had been abandoned but three remained active. Mulholland concluded: “the Lakelse Lake district is suitable for two purposes, growing timber and development as a summer resort.”⁷⁴ At the time of Mulholland’s report, Lakelse Lake was connected to Terrace in the north by a 12.7 mile-long wagon road and a ferry across the Skeena. A few individuals had developed pre-emptions though the terrain was “rough hills and muskeg,” and many families left during the First World War.⁷⁵ Traffic picked up in the 1920s, including automobiles in the summer. From the north end of the lake, a trail ran around the east side, and south to Kitimat, a length of about 30 miles. Lakelse River connects the lake to the Skeena River.⁷⁶ The first float plane landed on the lake in 1929, and until the mid-1950s most of the freight arrived at the lake by plane.

The first commercial operation to profit from Lakelse Lake was Bruce Johnstone’s hotel at the hot springs. Born in Prince Edward Island in 1879, Johnstone came to the west coast in 1905 and found work at the Lakelse fish hatchery. Hoping that the proposed Kitimat-Omenica Railway would pass by the eastern side of Lakelse Lake, Johnstone pre-empted the land around the hot springs in 1907.⁷⁷ When the Grand Trunk Pacific chose the site of Prince Rupert rather than Kitimat as its terminus, Johnstone’s

⁷⁴ Mulholland, *Report on Examination of Part of the Lakelse Valley*.

⁷⁵ “Nearly every homestead along the road was boarded up and the men gone to war. Most of them did not return. This seemed to set the country back for a good 20 years.” Boss, “Reminiscences.” BCA, Vertical Files, Lakelse Lake.

⁷⁶ Native people could travel this route with a loaded canoe in a long day. According to Mulholland’s report, a railway grade had been surveyed between Copper City on the Skeena and Kitimat, running east of the lake.

⁷⁷ BCA, Vertical Files, Lakelse Lake. Also Nadine Asante, *The History of Terrace* (Terrace, BC: Terrace Public Library Association, 1972), 60.

pre-emption was by-passed, but he still built a twelve-bedroom hotel with Henry Boss, likely another hatchery employee, at the site of the hot springs by 1910. Johnstone circumvented his isolation by successfully advertising his “spa” on the west coast and in the United States. Johnstone and his wife Beatrice operated the hotel from April to November and spent the winters in Terrace, where their son went to school, and Bruce worked as a logger.⁷⁸

Bruce Johnstone “had great faith in the ability of the spring to cure rheumatic type diseases.” His clientele included fishermen from Prince Rupert, prospectors, and surveyors: “they had huge big wooden bathtubs with the hot water coming into them, and these people would come up after a long fishing season.” At the hot springs regional visitors could improve their health and travelers from further away could escape to a wilderness refuge. One local man who benefited from the springs was Shorty Haven. After he developed severe rheumatic arthritis while searching for gold in Yukon and Alaska, his partner packed him in to the hot springs in the mid 1920s. Hot springs therapy involved sitting up to his neck in hot water in a hole dug in the clay, drinking a gallon or two of hot springs water, then rinsing off and sweating in a Hudson’s Bay blanket. After a few months of this treatment, Haven’s arms and legs straightened out and he was able to walk away on snowshoes. More dramatic visitors, four men dressed as Catholic priests, arrived in October 1928. Lloyd Johnstone, who was twelve years old at the time, recalled that the men had Scotch whiskey sent in by the case, and when they left they gave him a

⁷⁸ A Mrs. M.W. Boss, who told a Terrace newspaper in 1952 that “My husband went to work on the sawmill until after Christmas when he joined the Dominion Fish Hatchery at Lakelse” was likely the wife of Boss. Johnstone married Beatrice Bradley in 1913 while on a business trip to the Fisheries headquarters in New Westminster and in 1916, their only child, Lloyd Melrose, was born in Prince Rupert. In 1927, Johnstone sold a quarter share to neighbour Mrs. Bowen-Colthurst, and a half interest to Martha Boss, Henry’s wife. After the war, Johnstone’s son Lloyd bought the whole property back. BCA, Johnstone interview; Asante, *History of Terrace*, 60-61.

ten dollar tip. Lloyd later found out that it was Al Capone and some companions who were running from the law in Chicago and “they ended up up here knowing that nobody would ever look for them in this neck of the woods at that time.”⁷⁹

By 1939, there was a Forest Service campsite at Lakelse. This may have been the campsite originally built by fish hatchery employees at Furlong Bay.⁸⁰ In 1945, the Forest Service recommended that a lot at Blackwater Creek be “reserved and set apart for the recreation and enjoyment of the public.”⁸¹ In the later 1940s, the “campsite and facilities were in frequent use during the summer” and local residents voiced their desire for campsite improvements.⁸²

The growth of Kitimat and the subsequent highway connecting the lake to Kitimat and Terrace drove park establishment. In 1950, the Aluminum Company of Canada chose the Haisla village site of Kitimaat for a smelter because of the hydroelectricity potential and deep sea access. The Alcan projected operated on a grand scale: the company built the Kenney Dam, which reversed the flow of the Nechako River, and flooded lakes in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park. Water was diverted to a powerhouse at Kemano, from which transmission lines carried the electricity to Kitimat.⁸³ Alcan designed the modern town of Kitimat to attract long-term employees, even hiring a sociologist who

⁷⁹ BCA, Lloyd Johnstone interview.

⁸⁰ Asante, *History of Terrace*, 99.

⁸¹ BCA, GR 1991, British Columbia, Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division, B01763, 41, 2-5-1-7, 1, Lakelse Lake Park, Jan 1939-Nov 1966, Recommendation approved 25 July 1945, 30.

⁸² BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, Memo from R.G. McKee, Forester, Prince Rupert, recipient unknown, 22 May 1947, 41; Improvement Progress Report - Lakelse Campsite, Prince Rupert, 10 December 1947, 46.

⁸³ Janice Beck, *Three Towns: A History of Kitimat* (Kitimat, B.C.: Kitimat Centennial Museum Association, 1983), 43-46. This project and smelter construction employed more than 5000 workers. Patricia E. Roy and John Herd Thompson, *British Columbia: Land of Promises* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2005), 148.

recommended recreational space and accessible shopping.⁸⁴ By 1954, families started living in the new houses, and work had begun at the smelter. Four years later, the population was 9,000, including 3,500 children. Keeping Kitimat residents happy meant providing a link to the outside world and parks. There were no paved roads out of Kitimat until the highway was completed in 1957,⁸⁵ when residents “poured out of Kitimat onto the highway like lemmings’ in the 2,500 cars... which had previously been confined to the fifteen miles of roads in their town.” People drove to Terrace for an evening out or shopping, and had easy access to camping at Lakelse. Many Kitimat residents viewed the wilderness and access to outdoor recreation as an advantage to living there.⁸⁶

At Lakelse Lake, visitors paid to stay at cabins adjacent to the Forest Service campsite by the early 1950s.⁸⁷ In 1951, the district forester reported “several squatters ... have built summer cabins” and “seem to believe that they have squatters’ rights” on Lot 3980, Crown land south of the Lakelse sawmill. The forester did not approve of this squatting. He thought that the area was “attractive... for recreational purposes” and should be surveyed and placed under reserve.⁸⁸ The boys’ crew, part of the program announced by Kenney, the Minister of Lands and Forests, built a change house at Lakelse

⁸⁴ Sociologist Lois Murphy “felt that the woods and hilly grounds should be maintained for their beauty; and suggested plenty of covered areas for children to play under during the rainy months, and special planning by Alcan to provide cultural resources. Murphy was particularly concerned that loneliness at Kitimat and the monotony of a one-industry town would lead to broken marriages, roughhousing and general disquiet.” Beck, *Three Towns*, 49-51.

⁸⁵ The Canadian National Railway opened a branch line connecting Kitimat to Terrace in January 1955.

⁸⁶ Terrace residents also went shopping in Kitimat. Beck, *Three Towns*, 55-58, 62, 64, 65.

⁸⁷ BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, May 1951, Memo from E.G. Oldham, Forester, Parks and Recreation Division, to Prince Rupert [Forest District], 11 May 1951, 48; Owner of rental cabins at Lakelse Lake to [Parks and Recreation Division], Victoria, 2 May 1951, 49.

⁸⁸ BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, District Forester, Prince George, to Chief Forester, Victoria, 7 July 1951, 60.

in the summer of 1952, and in 1953 they were employed to do the dirty work of moving toilets and digging a well to deal with a typhoid outbreak at the lake.⁸⁹

In 1955, while the highway was being surveyed, provincial park planner Chester Peter Lyons, who also wrote the recreation plan for Fish (Darke) Lake, composed a “Park Proposal to Utilize the Lakelse Lake Hot Springs.”⁹⁰ Lyons’ task was to investigate how the provincial government could provide outdoor recreation for residents of the Prince Rupert district, including Terrace and Kitimat, and the obvious central choice was Lakelse Lake. The lake was good for swimming because the hot springs warmed the water. Lyons described Lakelse Lake as “an escape from the factory surroundings” for residents of the company town of Kitimat.⁹¹ He expected the new highway would bring the hot springs to public attention, and

In view of the probable population of Kitimat in years to come, together with the modernization of the highway system in Central British Columbia, it is likely that the Lakelse Hot Spring region could assume an important place from a recreational standpoint. A major park may be the answer.⁹²

Lyons considered the feasibility of the government developing the hot springs for public use but the Parks Division ultimately decided that lower-impact uses such as swimming and fishing were more popular with the public, and the government was not in the business of developing and selling access to natural features such as hot springs. In

⁸⁹ BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, Oldham to [Forester], Prince Rupert, 23 April 1952, 71; 27 May 1952, 74; District Forester, Prince Rupert to Chief Forester, Victoria, 20 July 1953, 80-81; Oldham to District Forester, Prince Rupert, 22 July 1953, 82.

⁹⁰ BCA, Vertical Files, “Lakelse Lake,” 77-1502, “Talk Politics” with Jim Hume, *Colonist* July 30, 1978, 5. A few areas around the lake had been reserved for park purposes, and there was some discussion about creating a national park at the lake in 1948 but Hugh Keenleyside, federal deputy minister of mines and resources, recalled that the provincial government was reluctant to purchase or part with the area.

⁹¹ C.P. Lyons, *A Park Proposal to Utilize the Lakelse Lake Hot Springs* (Victoria, B.C.: Parks and Recreation Division, 1955), 4.

⁹² BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, Oldham to A.F. Paget, Comptroller of Water Rights, Department of Lands and Forests, 22 November 1955, 89.

November 1955, Chief Forester Oldham asked the Water Rights Branch to stop granting licenses for the hot springs, in case the government wanted to develop it in the future.⁹³ Lyons nevertheless concluded that government operation of the springs might not be worth the effort, since some of the hot springs area had already been alienated. An addenda to the report stated that it was not appropriate for the Forest Service to develop the hot springs for bathing as that would be providing a “personalized service.”⁹⁴ Lakelse Lake Provincial Park was established as a Class A park on 16 March 1956.⁹⁵

Like at other local recreation areas, residents hoped to benefit from Lakelse economically. Several people sought permission to open a store at the popular beach selling pop, candy, hot dogs, hamburgers, and fries.⁹⁶ They reasoned that such a concession would be a “boost to the park.”⁹⁷ One man provided a short personal history to convince the Parks Division that he deserved such an opportunity: he had been hurt in an accident, he was local, having lived in British Columbia for 20 years, and he had six children to support.⁹⁸ The Parks division rejected all applications because there could be no private buildings or improvements in a park and “park regulations prohibit commercial enterprises.”⁹⁹ This reasoning shows a shift in policy from Lyons’

⁹³ BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, Oldham to Paget, 22 November 1955, 89.

⁹⁴ Lyons, “A Park Proposal to Utilize the Lakelse Lake Hot Springs,” 10.

⁹⁵ BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, Representative of Oldham to Prince Rupert Forest District, 4 April 1956, 93.

⁹⁶ BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, Correspondence inward from Lakelse Lake, 22 Jan 1954, 86; Correspondence inward from Terrace received 5 March 1956, 91-92; Correspondence inward from Terrace, 25 May 1957, 117-119.

⁹⁷ BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, received from Terrace 5 March 1956, 91-92.

⁹⁸ BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, received from Terrace 25 May 1957, 117-119.

⁹⁹ BCA, GR 1991, Lakelse Lake Park, Forester, Parks and Recreation Division to Kinsmen Club of Terrace, 21 December 1956, 114.

presentation at the BCNRC in 1949, when he stated that the public should be able to use the parks for free but that the parks would generate revenue from concessions.¹⁰⁰

In 1957, the province established a Department of Recreation and Conservation, responsible for the Fish and Game Branch, the Parks Branch, Photographic Branch, Commercial Fisheries Branch and the Travel Bureau. Recreation and conservation, at least as they related to park lands, were made independent from the Forest Service due to public demand, with approval from public servants.¹⁰¹ This idea had appeared in submissions to the 1943-45 Commission on Forestry, for example the Vancouver Board of Park Commissioners, which requested a parks authority separate from the Forest Branch, which was more focused on promoting forestry than managing parks.¹⁰² Roderick Haig-Brown had also called for an amalgamated Recreation Department in his 1953 speech to the BCNRC. The intention of this new configuration of branches was to ensure a “united approach and perspective of recreational outdoor activities.”¹⁰³ The goals of the Recreation and Conservation Branch could be expressed as providing recreation for as many British Columbians as possible, ensuring that recreation was constructive, and avoiding privatization. The first annual report stated that the “park system... in time must blanket the Province.”¹⁰⁴ Recreation was intended for the greater public good rather than the benefit of individuals, as recreation objectives included: “To protect areas comprising such a system from alienation and from the real or fancied

¹⁰⁰ Lyons, “British Columbia’s Provincial Parks,” 242.

¹⁰¹ *Report of the Department of Recreation and Conservation, 1957* (Victoria, BC: Don McDiarmid, 1958), 7.

¹⁰² BCA, GR 520, BC Commission on Forest Resources, 1943-45, Box 16, File 1, Exhibit 324, Submission from the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Vancouver, 8 September 1944.

¹⁰³ *Report of the Department of Recreation and Conservation, 1957*, 7.

¹⁰⁴ *Report of the Department of Recreation and Conservation, 1957*, 8.

claims of individuals” and “To develop the park areas to enable their best recreational use by the greatest number of people by encouraging all practical constructive activities.”¹⁰⁵

A popular desire for access to local recreational spaces was a consistent factor in shaping community hinterlands over the twentieth century. A state desire to shape citizens through recreation also appeared in various forms since the late nineteenth century. Park planners had particular goals when promoting recreational democracy in the 1950s. They wanted outdoor recreation to be available to everyone, and they hoped that by camping together, people would improve their health and learn to cooperate. The state may also have hoped to “avoid a proletariat” by providing parks, part of the “good life,” to industrial workers. It is difficult to judge how successful recreational democracy was at Champion and Lakelse Lakes, partly because it is next to impossible to know whether camping achieved the goals of making people get along with each other and interact as problem-solving equals. The state did not ignite an interest in camping in these locations, since local people were already going there for that reason. When the state sought to shape an area for recreation, its designs sometimes diverged from local interests: in these case studies, camping was privileged over summer homes, the state made decisions about who could be employed and when, and concessions were disallowed. Despite local interests in private family retreats and economic opportunities, the state decided that provincial parks would be public, non-commercial spaces, following the earlier requests of rod and gun clubs, and anticipating the non-commercial goal of the American Wilderness Act (1964), which would influence British Columbia’s parks in the 1970s.

¹⁰⁵ *Report of the Department of Recreation and Conservation, 1957*, “History,” [9].

Chapter 6

Preserving Wilderness in the West Kootenays, 1969-1975

British Columbia's first wilderness conservancy, located in the Purcell Mountains between the East and West Kootenays, owes its existence to local initiatives to protect an unspoiled area for recreational and ecological reasons. The conservancy was the result of sustained and varied activism in an age of heightened citizen participation, nurtured by several generations of Kootenay residents. In the early 1970s, provincial and national governments promoted constructive citizen participation by funding centennial celebrations and youth employment, intended to invite citizens to improve their communities through their imagination and labour. Kootenay residents took advantage of government funding and new legislation to protect ecologically valuable landscapes. Provincial Social Credit and New Democratic Party governments responded differently to hinterland environmentalist voices desiring a role in land use decisions. The Social Credit party favoured development, big power projects, and increasing the output of the forest industry. Once elected in 1972, the New Democratic Party gave more weight to the ecological concerns of the Fish and Game department, paid attention to environmental movements, and increased the province's park acreage. This chapter considers campaigns in the 1970s over two watersheds flowing into the northern end of Kootenay Lake and explores local approaches and government responses to creating recreational space in the Purcell Mountains. The establishment of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy in 1974 demonstrates how local residents, who had multiple ways of being rural, campaigned to

protect a wilderness they defined as separate from human interference but beneficial to people, and how different governments reacted to and incorporated citizen participation.

Canada's baby boom generation grew up in a time of affluence and material comfort. Coming of age in the 1960s, baby boomers looked beyond the quest for material goods to seek something more: experience, authenticity, and intense relationships with others and with the environment.¹ Some of them embraced postmaterialist values, which could flourish when an educated middle class became less concerned with economic stability and more so with improving their quality of life.² Intangible amenities, such as beautiful landscapes, 'virgin' forests and clean air, became increasingly valuable. The civil rights movement in the United States set in motion a general desire for justice, equality and human rights. Groups of students, women, and members of religious organizations began to speak out in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the United States and Canada against the Cold War rationale of nuclear brinkmanship. One of the social movements of the late 1960s, environmentalism recognized ecological interdependence and the dangers of pollution, and increased regard for the value of wilderness. Concerned individuals formed environmental organizations, lobbied for new legislation and environmental justice, and changed their personal consumption patterns.³

Accelerated road building in North America after the Second World War, including highways, suburbs, and logging roads, helped inspire a new definition of "wilderness" as roadless. Although roads provided access to nature, some people began

¹ Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 35: "rising levels of living led more people to desire qualitative experiences as well as material goods in their lives."

² Frank Zelko, "Making Greenpeace: The Development of Direct Action Environmentalism in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 2004 (142-143), 222.

³ Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Chapter 15, "Shades of Green." See also Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*, 263-265.

to critique their negative impact on natural areas. Due to pressure from the Wilderness Society, the United States Congress passed the Wilderness Act in 1964.⁴ The legislation defined wilderness as: “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” Wilderness was “primeval,” a place that “appear[ed] to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.” It offered “opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation,” was large enough for unimpaired use and practical preservation (5000 acres), and “may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.”⁵ In setting aside 9 million acres of land, the Act forbade key activities related to development: roads, motorized transportation, buildings, and commercial establishments.⁶ The American Wilderness Act directly influenced wilderness preservation in British Columbia, as this chapter will show.

The environmental movement in British Columbia developed apace with events in the United States. Roderick Haig-Brown, who highlighted citizen desires for recreational space at the BC Natural Resources Conference, led a relatively isolated group opposed to damming Buttle Lake in Strathcona Park in the early 1950s. Run Out Skagit Spoilers (ROSS) protested raising the Ross Dam in the 1960s.⁷ British Columbians concerned

⁴ Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 243. See also Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); Kevin R. Marsh, *Drawing Lines in the Forest: Creating Wilderness Areas in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007); Hal K. Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation? Environmentalism in the United States since 1945* (Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace, 1998); Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington DC: Island Press, 1993, 2005); Adam Rome, “Give Earth a Chance: The Environmental Movement and the 1960s” *Journal of American History* 92 (Sept 2003), 525-554.

⁵ 1964 Wilderness Act.

⁶ 1964 Wilderness Act; Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 243.

⁷ Jeremy Wilson, *Talk and Log: Wilderness Politics in British Columbia, 1965-96* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998) 100, 103. Arn Keeling, “Ecological Ideas in the British Columbia Conservation Movement, 1945-1970,” (MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1998); Arn Keeling and Robert McDonald, “The

about water and air pollution established branches of the Scientific Pollution and Environmental Control Society (SPEC) in Vancouver (1969) and other locations in the province.⁸ Vancouver Islanders created a BC branch of the Sierra Club in 1969 in their effort to preserve Nitinat Lake, adjacent to the West Coast Trail, from logging.⁹ Greenpeace was established in Vancouver in 1971, to protest nuclear weapons testing.¹⁰

Historians debate the extent to which rural communities in BC and elsewhere participated in the early 1970s environmental movement. Rural BC's attractiveness to young urbanites going "back to the land" further complicates definitions of BC communities as exclusively "rural." Environmental historian Frank Zelko has made valuable connections between the Greenpeace movement in Vancouver and its connection to environmental ideas coming from Quakers and American metropolitan areas, Zelko suggests that "generally, people living in the countryside have shown far less support for environmental issues than have their urban counterparts."¹¹ In his study of wilderness politics in British Columbia, Jeremy Wilson is more attuned to rural agency, stating that "groups based in hinterland communities close to the area in question" took the initiative to propose parks to the newly elected NDP government in 1972. Although Wilson did not examine rural conservation specifically, he found that rural areas that had

Profligate Province: Roderick Haig-Brown and the Modernizing of British Columbia," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 2001 36(3), 7-23; Arn Keeling, "'A Dynamic, Not a Static Conception': The Conservation Thought of Roderick Haig-Brown," *Pacific Historical Review* 2002 71(2), 239-268; Thomas L. Perry, *A Citizen's Guide to the Skagit Valley* (Vancouver, BC: Run Out Skagit Spoilers Committee [1981]); Dianne Louise Draper, "Eco-Activism: Issues and Strategies of Environmental Interest Groups in British Columbia," (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1972). There were also campaigns for Cypress Bowl near Vancouver and Cathedral Park in the Okanagan-Similkameen in the 1960s (Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 102-103).

⁸ Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 101.

⁹ Ric Careless, *To Save the Wild Earth: Field Notes from the Environmental Frontline* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 1997), Chapter 1, "Nitinat Triangle;" <http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/quick-links/about/our-roots>.

¹⁰ Zelko, "Making Greenpeace;" Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 109. Greenpeace was originally called the "Don't Make a Wave Committee."

¹¹ Zelko, "Making Greenpeace," 221.

attracted American immigrants and people with “‘countercultural’ values” tended to have “more radical environmental visions.”¹² Wilson’s hypothesis points to the impact of urban refugees on rural spaces, a significant factor in Kootenay region environmentalism.¹³

After the Second World War, logging and mining operations increased sharply in the Kootenay region. Changing logging technologies and regulations increased the cutting of Interior forests, a trend that did not go uncontested. Residents could not help but notice, for example, that almost every creek valley draining into Kootenay Lake was being logged.¹⁴ Celgar started operating the first pulp mill in the southern Interior in Castlegar in 1960. New logging technology in the Interior included the introduction of skidders and mechanized fallers. Skidders were trucks that could drag tree-length logs, easing transportation at a time when horse logging was still common, but large trees were farther from good roads. The feller-buncher, invented in Wisconsin in 1968, revolutionized Interior logging because it could cut and stack trees.¹⁵ Until 1966, the Forest Service forbade cutting trees under 11 inches in diameter, because smaller ones could not be processed at the mills. A forester from Winlaw recalled that “it wasn’t economically feasible” to cut anything smaller, “so twenty-five years later forestry

¹² Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 144.

¹³ On rural British Columbians as conservationists, see also Richard Rajala, “Forests and Fish: The 1972 Coast Logging Guidelines and British Columbia’s First NDP Government,” *BC Studies* 2008 (159), and Arn M. Keeling, “The Effluent Society: Water Pollution and Environmental Politics in British Columbia, 1889-1980,” (Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 2004).

¹⁴ Tina Loo, “People in the Way: Modernity, Environment, and Society on the Arrow Lakes” *BC Studies* 2004 (142-143). According to Wilson, Coastal logging produced more timber until about 1960, when the Interior industry caught up, and by the early 1970s, its output exceeded that of the coast. (Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 22).

¹⁵ In Cranbrook, Crestbrook Timber solicited Japanese funding to start a sawmill a few years later. Ken Drushka, *Tie Hackers to Timber Harvesters: The History of Logging in British Columbia’s Interior* (Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 1998), 180-181, 186-191. “In a little more than a decade the industry moved from its reliance on horses and bush mills to become highly sophisticated users of modern logging and milling technology.” Drushka, *Tie Hackers to Timber Harvesters*, 207.

companies could get beautiful second cut timber. It wouldn't be there if we had clearcut back then."¹⁶ In the 1960s the consolidation of the sawmill industry in BC saw a reduction of small mills and a modernization of big mills, better able to efficiently process smaller logs to convert them to boards, and chips for pulp mills. Minister of Forests Ray Williston promoted this development by allowing logging companies to cut smaller trees (to a diameter of 7.1 inches), and buy and sell timber quotas, so they could safely invest in mill technology and know they had a secure supply of timber. This increasing intensity and efficiency of logging in the Interior resulted in a shift from selective logging to clearcuts that had more noticeable environmental and aesthetic impacts.¹⁷

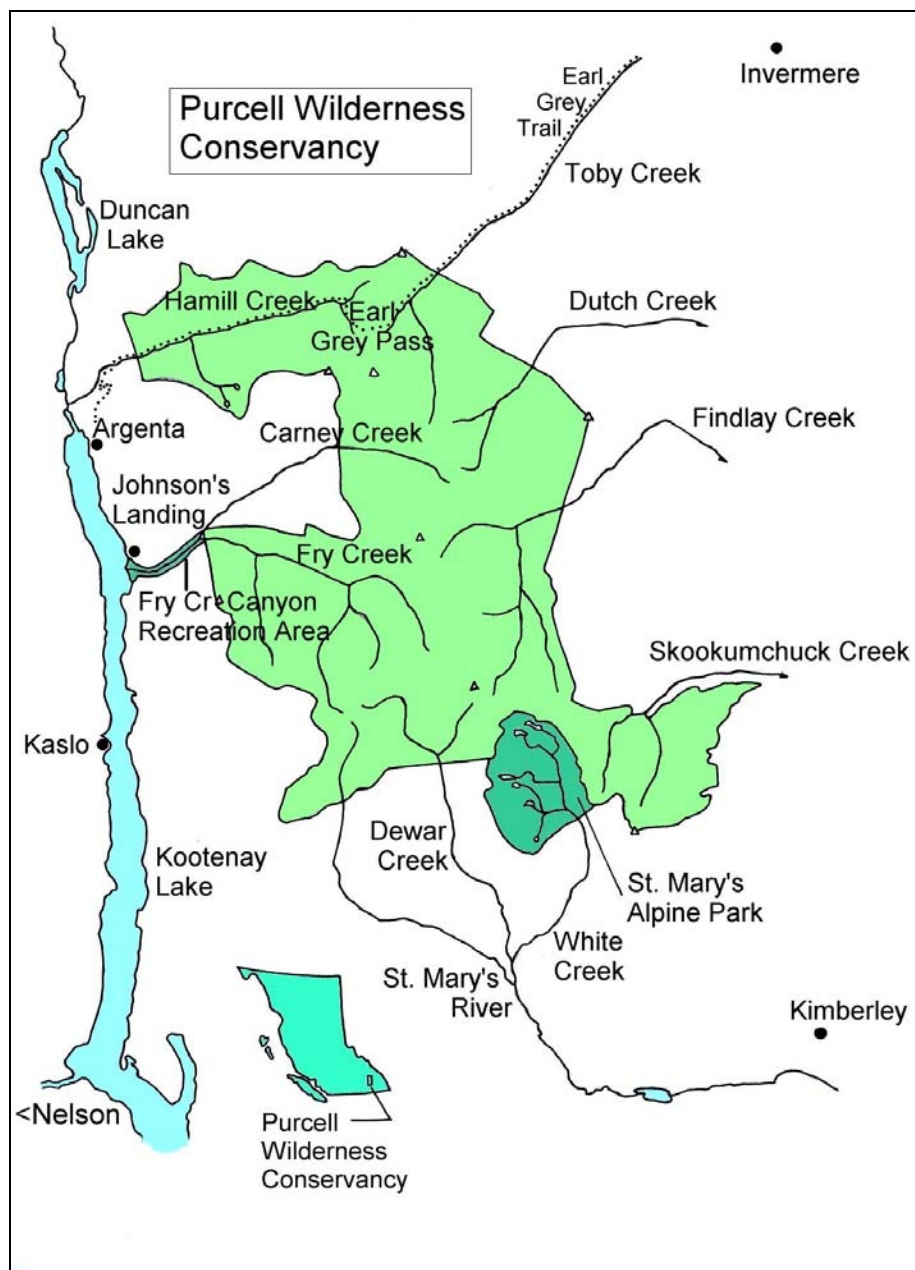
In the 1960s, the dams built as a result of the Columbia River Treaty (1964) dramatically altered local landscapes. The dams inundated huge acreages of low level land, "some of it not cleared prior to flooding," removing beaches and making recreational use unpredictable because of changing water levels, swallowing up wildlife habitat and reducing fish populations. Kootenay residents bore the cost of the dams through a reduction in logging jobs, environmental degradation, and resettlement of those displaced by flooding. Reacting to this large-scale resource exploitation, long term residents and recent arrivals demanded a say in how local lands were managed.¹⁸ The

¹⁶ Gordon, *The Slocan*, 218.

¹⁷ Drushka, *Tie Hackers to Timber Harvesters*, 194-197. In 1962, 1,627 mills operated in the province; by 1971 there were only 627. At the same time, there was an increase in lumber production of 49%. As Drushka explains, "utilization of small logs and the development of equipment to harvest them led to widespread abandonment of selective logging systems, and the adoption of clearcut harvesting." *Tie Hackers to Timber Harvesters*, 191.

¹⁸ BCA, GR 1601, Box 26, Purcell File, 'The Purcell Wilderness – Its Past and Its Future,' Presented to the B.C. Advisory Committee on Wilderness by the Kootenay Mountaineering Club, Box 3159, Castlegar (exact date unknown). See also Susan Toller and Peter N. Nemetz, "Assessing the Impact of Hydro Development: A Case Study of the Columbia River Basin in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 114 (Summer 1997), and Loo, "People in the Way."

newcomers were mainly dissidents, including Quakers, members of the pacifist religious organization the Society of Friends, who had left California in the early 1950s, young Canadians from the cities, and draft-age students graduating from American universities in the late 1960s who sought a more agreeable political climate.



Map 6.1: Purcell Wilderness Conservancy
Source: Map by Jenny Clayton

It was in this social and political milieu, that residents of Argenta and Johnson's Landing, at the north end of Kootenay Lake, started rebuilding an historic trail across a mountain pass. The oldest mountain range in Canada, the Purcell Mountains are slightly lower than the Rocky Mountains with some peaks reaching to 3400 metres.¹⁹ The Purcell Mountains separate the East and West Kootenays, with Kootenay Lake to the west and the Rocky Mountain Trench to the east. The western side of the Purcells receives more precipitation. Hamill Creek, originating in the Purcell Mountains and draining into Kootenay Lake, crosses several biogeoclimatic zones, from alpine tundra, to fir and Engelman spruce, montane spruce, and cedar hemlock rainforests at lower elevations. Elk and moose take advantage of grassy meadows as do black and grizzly bears, mountain goats, mountain caribou, whitetail deer, and pileated woodpeckers.²⁰ The eastern side is located in a rain shadow and contains drier Douglas fir forests.

The Purcell Mountains also serve as a border between Sinixt and Ktunaxa territory.²¹ The Ktunaxa people, who have lived traditionally in the Columbia River basin, north and south of the international border, traveling east across the Rocky Mountains and west to Kootenay Lake and beyond,²² likely entered eastern Sinixt territory around 1795, because of conflicts with the Blackfoot. Later, the mountains around the Slocan Valley provided a refuge for the Sinixt from fur traders and gold

¹⁹ With the Monashee, Selkirk, and Cariboo Mountains, the Purcells form the Columbia Mountains. *Encyclopedia of British Columbia and Canadian Encyclopedia*, online.

²⁰ Terry F. Wood, *A Summary of Ecological Reserves and Ecological Reserve Proposals in the Nelson Forest Region*, "Application for Ecological Reserve, Report No. 66" (Victoria, BC: Ministry of Forests, Research Branch, 1983), available at the Ministry of Forests Library, Victoria. "Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Provincial Park," Great Wild Spaces (sponsored by BC Spaces for Nature), <<http://www.spacesfornature.org/greatspaces/purcell.html#wildlife>> (30 December 2008)

²¹ Paula Pryce, *'Keeping the Lakes' Way: Reburial and the Re-creation of a Moral World among an Invisible People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 35. The Sinixt are also known as the Arrow Lakes, or Lakes people.

²² See traditional territory map, "Who Are the Ktunaxa?" Ktunaxa Nation, <http://www.ktunaxa.org/who/index.html> (30 December 2008).

miners. However, Fort Colville in Washington was a centre of trade where they had access to reserve land, and more Sinixt people settled south of the border after fighting over resources with newcomers drawn by silver rushes. Their presence in Canada became intermittent and the British Columbia government was reluctant to establish reserves for a people it refused to acknowledge as distinct from the Shuswap, Ktunaxa or American Colville people. Only one reserve was established for the Sinixt on Slocan Lake. Few Sinixt people were used to living there, so it had a small population. Its last resident died in 1953; in 1956, this reserve was reverted to the province and the federal government announced that the Arrow Lakes Band was extinct. In the 1980s, Sinixt people reasserted their presence in British Columbia by occupying a burial site at Vallican in the Slocan Valley and supporting environmental campaigns, however, evidence of their participation in the debate over the Purcell Mountains in the 1970s is slight.²³

A group of Shuswap people, led by Paul Ignatius Kinbasket, crossed the Purcell Mountains in the mid-nineteenth century, en route from Adams Lake, north of Kamloops, to the Columbia Valley. They settled in the Windermere area, where the Ktunaxa, who controlled this territory, allowed them to remain.²⁴ A member of surveyor Walter Moberly's party who followed this trail from Kootenay Lake to the Columbia Valley

²³ Some Sinixt dispersed to reserves of neighbouring First Nations in British Columbia. Pryce, *Keeping the Lakes' Way*, '32, 39, 50-54, 68. Pryce notes that their new extinct status was ironic "given that in 1959 the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs counted 257 Lakes Indians on the Colville Reservation alone." (68)

²⁴ Pryce, *Keeping the Lakes' Way*, '32. "Ktunaxa Nation Chiefs Sign Declaration Reaffirming Shuswap Kinbasket Descendants as Ktunaxa Citizens," *Ktunaxa Nation*, "Latest News," 25 May 2005, <http://www.ktunaxa.org/news/documents/MediaReleaseShuswapDeclaration.pdf> (30 December 2008); Hugh A. Dempsey, *Indians of the Rocky Mountain Parks* (Calgary: Fifth House Publishers, 1998), 67, cited in Rod J. Heitzmann, Historical Background, "Archaeological Investigations at the Salmon Beds," *Living Landscapes*, <http://www.livinglandscapes.bc.ca/cbasin/salmonbeds/history.htm> (30 December 2008)

along Toby Creek in 1866, called it “Kinbasket’s trail.”²⁵ In 1883, when Gilbert Malcolm Sproat examined the possibility of a route from the Columbia River to Duncan Lake, he consulted Kinbasket and others who had taken this route. When Europeans moved into the area in the late nineteenth century in search of minerals, prospectors and cattle drivers followed this trail from Windermere in the east to Argenta in the west.²⁶ Around 1901 the provincial government spent about \$6,000 on the “Toby Creek Road.”²⁷

In less than a generation, a working trail associated with silver mining, cattle ranching, and settlement, became attractive for recreation and tourism. In 1908, the Fourth Earl Grey, Governor General of Canada, recognized the area’s tourist potential. He had a cabin built for his family on Toby Creek and recommended that BC Premier Richard McBride designate the area as a national park.²⁸ The governor general publicized the trail, attracting mountaineers and sport hunters to the area. Several mountaineers wrote about their trips in the *Canadian Alpine Journal*.²⁹ Guide outfitters operated on the eastern side of the pass, keeping the trail open for hunting and horse-riding parties. But

²⁵ BCA, Provincial Archives Correspondence 1909-1979, GR 1738, Box 70, File 9, Herbison, Hugh, Willard Ireland, Provincial Archivist, Victoria, to Hugh Herbison, Argenta, BC, 17 December 1970.

²⁶ BCA, BC Centennial ’71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, Leo Gansner, Court House, Nelson, B.C. to W.D. Black, Member of the Executive Council, Parliament Buildings, 11 December 1970. See also Ruth Roberts, “Mt. Lavina,” in *Bound Together: A Miscellany of Thoughts on Experiencing Argenta* (Argenta, BC: Argenta Library Committee, 2006), 46-48. On the silver mining boom, see Pryce, ‘*Keeping the Lakes’ Way*,’ and Cole Harris, “Industry and the Good Life around Idaho Peak,” in *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

²⁷ BCA, Provincial Archives Correspondence 1909-1979, GR 1738, Box 70, File 9, Herbison, Hugh, Willard Ireland, Provincial Archivist, Victoria, to Hugh Herbison, Argenta, BC, 17 December 1970.

²⁸ BCA, BC Centennial ’71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, Leo Gansner, Court House, Nelson, B.C. to W.D. Black, Member of the Executive Council, Parliament Buildings, 11 December 1970.

²⁹ BCA, Provincial Archives Correspondence 1909-1979, GR 1738, Box 70, File 9, Herbison, Hugh, Willard Ireland, Provincial Archivist, Victoria, to Hugh Herbison, Argenta, BC, 17 December 1970.

west of the divide, possibly due to the rainforest climate and frequent avalanches, the trail had fallen into relative disuse by the 1960s.³⁰

Argenta, located at the north end of Kootenay Lake and the western terminus of the mountain trail followed by Kinbasket and Earl Grey, was a silver mining centre at the turn of the twentieth century, and became an agricultural settlement.³¹ Beginning in 1952, Quaker families from California who rejected McCarthyism, militarism and materialism, looked for land in British Columbia where they could work on family farms and “pursue a common purpose.”³² In Argenta, the Quakers found affordable land and helpful neighbours who made a living farming, logging and selling produce. In 1954 the Quakers and other Argenta residents formed the Delta Land Co-operative in which they farmed together, pooling and redistributing part of the income that members earned from working off the farm, in teaching, logging and construction.³³ Quakers also started a printing press and, since many of the adults had backgrounds as educators, the Argenta Friends School (1959), a boarding school for high school students based on democratic principles of student involvement in decision-making.³⁴ Argenta preceded the back-to-the-land movement in the Kootenays, with a good proportion of its residents intentionally but not originally rural.³⁵

³⁰ Disuse was also due to changing forestry practices. See BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, Leo S. Gansner, to L.J. Wallace, cc Mr. H. Herbison, 16 March 1971.

³¹ “The Delta Co-op of Argenta: Memory, Quakerism, and Co-operative Studies in British Columbia during the 1950s,” *Galleria: Stories of the BC Co-op Movement*, <http://bcics.uvic.ca/galleria/bc.php?group=15&tourtype=1&story=24> (30 December 2008)

³² Helen Stevenson, quoted in Andrew Scott, *The Promise of Paradise: Utopian Communities in B.C.* (Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1997), 162-163.

³³ Scott, *Promise of Paradise*, 163.

³⁴ See Arthur Garratt Dorland, *The Quakers in Canada: A History* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1968).

³⁵ Wood, *A Summary of Ecological Reserves*, “Application for Ecological Reserve, Report No. 66,” “A Brief Presented to the Ecological Reserves Committee of British Columbia by the Residents of Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, B.C. Supporting the Setting Aside of the Hamill Creek Valley as an Ecological Reserve Under the Ecological Reserves Act of British Columbia,” 14 October 1971.

Peace, social justice and environmental preservation are traditional priorities for Quakers.³⁶ As Hugh Herbison, who moved with his family to Argenta in 1961, observed,

People at Argenta had a wonderful commonality of purpose. They pursued an intentional rural life with the ideals of respecting the environment and their neighbours and providing the best possible place for their families. The community was cohesive but not exclusive. The Quakers established a mystique that attracted other people.³⁷

Quaker philosophies of pacifism and direct action against nuclear testing influenced the founding of Greenpeace in Vancouver.³⁸ Quakers and draft resisters continued to move to Argenta into the 1960s and 1970s, and settle more broadly in the region, buying land or joining communes around Kootenay and Slocan Lakes. Some of these communities were more successful and long-lasting than others. Many of these newcomers were Americans, but a good portion were urban Canadians, and most were young people. They thought that the Kootenays would be a safe place where they could test out new social values, and live organically on the land. Although there were tensions between older residents and newcomers, those more familiar with farming in the area did offer assistance to former urbanites with little experience.³⁹

In the 1960s, logging companies were pushing roads up the sides of several streams around Kootenay Lake, and the construction of the Duncan Dam also opened new territory to logging. Argenta residents noticed that a road alongside the new dam indicated that there would be a new log booming ground established near Argenta.

³⁶ As Scott writes, “Its traditions of dissent and belief in universal brotherhood have led the sect into the realms of social reform. Quakers are involved in protecting the rights of prisoners, women, aboriginal people and the poor. They raise funds for all kind of causes and are active world-wide in the fields of education, emergency relief, environmental preservation and peace-making.” Scott, *Promise of Paradise*, 163.

³⁷ Hugh Herbison, quoted in Scott, *Promise of Paradise*, 166. Herbison and his wife, Agnes, were not Quakers at the time they moved to Argenta.

³⁸ Zelko, “Making Greenpeace,” 198-202.

³⁹ Katherine Gordon, *The Slocan: Portrait of a Valley* (Winlaw, BC: Sono Nis Press, 2004), chapter 15, “Harmony and Understanding: The Seventies,” 236-253.

Lardeau, across the head of the lake, already had a booming ground. When Argenta residents and others participated in a letter writing campaign with Ducks Unlimited, based out of Creston, the new booming ground was cancelled.⁴⁰ Concerned that the Hamill Creek valley might be logged next, residents of Argenta and Johnson's Landing decided in November 1969 to rebuild the "Earl Grey Trail," in an attempt to keep this valley in its natural state by highlighting its historic and recreational features. One trail builder recalls their hope that the trail would become a "tourist destination," because residents had seen "what was happening with the West Coast Trail, and [thought] we could use this in the Kootenays."⁴¹

Quaker and non-Quaker residents and youth from neighbouring communities, planned and rebuilt the trail with provincial and federal government funding over the summers of 1971 and 1972.⁴² Because British Columbia was celebrating its centennial as a province,⁴³ the Provincial Centennial Committee funded local projects that would promote community self-improvement and creativity, celebration of a shared history, and inclusion of settlements on the geographic periphery.⁴⁴ Argenta and Johnson's Landing proposed to rebuild the Earl Grey Trail as their centennial project. Since typical projects included building "libraries, museums, community halls, parks, and a wide variety of

⁴⁰ Rik Valentine, personal interview, 2 May 2007, Argenta, BC.

⁴¹ David Polster, personal interview, 14 June 2007, Victoria, BC.

⁴² *A Hiker's Guide to the Earl Grey Trail* (1972) states that the OFY crew cut the first trail in 1971, the year of the fire (3). According to Rik Valentine, the trail was re-routed the next year. The Earl Grey Pass Project (1973) states that OFY funded the trail in 1971(68).

⁴³ This was BC's fourth centenary in 14 years.

⁴⁴ The 1971 Centennial Committee had subcommittees that reached out to ethnic, labour, pioneer, religious and women's groups in order to involve as much of the BC population as possible. British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, *Celebration of the Century: 1871-1971* (Victoria, BC: 1973). See also Mia Reimers, "'BC at Its Most Sparkling, Colourful Best': Post-War Province Building through Centennial Celebrations," (PhD Dissertation, University of Victoria, 2007).

recreational facilities,” a trail was relatively unusual.⁴⁵ These projects were funded with a per capita grant, based on a community’s population, of a dollar each from the provincial and federal governments to match 60 cents per capita raised from the community, which was also expected to contribute volunteer labour and donated equipment. Since the population of Argenta and Johnson’s Landing in July 1969 was 125, centennial funding for the trail was relatively minor. Rik Valentine, who worked on the trail as a teenager, described this as “using the excuse of the centennial to build a trail, make a youth project of it.”⁴⁶

In their correspondence with the government, the trail-building committee linked itself with early twentieth-century conservation ideas by quoting Earl Grey to promote the aims the committee espoused. “Earl Grey urged that the area be made into a National Park. We request that our Centennial Project – a project of ultimate value to thousands of those who turn to Canada’s priceless heritage of natural beauty – be protected by a long-term lease, and in due course, a declaration defining it as a Historical Site or Provincial Park.” The local committee warned that the trail would be lost if logging occurred and that road-building would disturb the trail, increase avalanche activity, and make the area less attractive for recreation.⁴⁷

The local committee enlisted regional assistance in their goal to achieve legal protection for the trail. Nelson Judge Leo Gansner, who had hiked the trail in 1967, wrote to Social Credit MLA Wesley Drewett Black (Nelson-Creston), responsible for

⁴⁵ BC Centennial ’71 Committee, *Celebration of the Century*, 5.

⁴⁶ Rik Valentine, personal interview, 2 May 2007.

⁴⁷ BCA, BC Centennial ’71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, Betty Polster, Secretary, Argenta – Johnson’s Landing Centennial Committee Argenta, B.C., to L.J. Wallace, General Chairman, B.C. Centennial ’71 Committee, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. 25 November, 1970. Cc: Burt Campbell, MLA, Willard Ireland, John Cochran, O.B.E, Judge Leo Gansner.

Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection, urging him to preserve the route of the trail which was of historic significance and traversed spectacular scenery. Gansner argued that there was “relatively little merchantable [sic] timber in the Hamill and Toby valleys.”⁴⁸ Desiring the protection of recreational areas apart from Kokanee Glacier Park, the Kootenay Mountaineering Club informed provincial Centennial Committee chairman Laurie J. Wallace that members were prepared to support the trail reconstruction project by writing letters to MLAs and by volunteering their labour on the trail.⁴⁹ Constituents convinced MLAs that this was a worthwhile project, as Social Credit MLAs Burt Campbell (Revelstoke-Slocan), and James Chabot (Columbia River), both wrote to Wallace in support of the project, with Campbell noting that the local committee had “done its homework well in that it has already initiated discussions with various government departments and local logging companies, including Kootenay Forest Products.”⁵⁰

Wallace asked various government ministries if it was possible to protect the route of the trail.⁵¹ The Forest Service, within the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, held a somewhat ambivalent attitude to recreational trails. It had once played a stronger role in maintaining trails to fight forest fires – trails that were also used

⁴⁸ BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson's Landing, Leo Gansner, Court House, Nelson, B.C. to W.D. Black, Member of the Executive Council, Parliament Buildings, 11 December 1970. Black was elected in Nelson-Creston.

⁴⁹ BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson's Landing, C.E. Charlton, Secretary, Kootenay Mountaineering Club, Trail, B.C., to L.J. Wallace 3 February 1971.

⁵⁰ BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson's Landing, Burt Campbell, MLA, Revelstoke-Slocan, to L.J. Wallace, 26 November 1970.

⁵¹ For example, Wallace wrote to the Minister of Highways: “The site of the project should if possible be preserved against any future plans of development which would obliterate the preservation of this trail as a Provincial site of great historic interest.” BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson's Landing, L.J. Wallace to W.D. Black, Provincial Secretary and Minister of Highways, December 31, 1970.

by recreationists – but trails had grown over with the increasing use of helicopters.⁵² Assistant Chief Forester Ian Cameron informed Wallace that no reserve was necessary since the trail would soon be included in a general forest reserve.⁵³ At the same time, the Department could not protect the trail from roadbuilding, since the valley bottom was apparently the best place for a road.⁵⁴ The Forest Service was willing to note the existence of the trail on its maps so that logging operations would cut around the trail, but not “to protect the entire watershed.” British Columbia’s existing trail system should not be allowed to impede logging: “There are many trails throughout the Province and if we were to reserve the timber in every watershed with a trail in it, there would be little left to log,” commented the Assistant Chief Forester.⁵⁵ By March 1971, it seems that the Forest Service had been unwillingly directed back to trail maintenance, since it had “been recently assigned duties and responsibilities to look after recreation problems in Provincial Forests and a considerable portion of our time will have to be expended on this aspect of multiple land use.”⁵⁶

⁵² BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, Memo from D.F. Martin, Senior Maintenance Engineer, Department of Highways, to H.T. Miard, Deputy Minister, Department of Highways, 18 January 1971. Also Gansner to Wallace, cc Herbison, March 1971.

⁵³ The Lardeau Forest Reserve was approved March 9, 1971. BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, Ian Cameron (I.T. Cameron, Assistant Chief Forester) to L.J. Wallace, 30 March 1971. According to L. Brooks in 1953, the primary role of forest reserves was for growing timber, but they were also open to “forms of recreation which are not ordinarily permissible in the parks. This includes summer home sites and hunting grounds.” In some forest reserves, the Forest Service developed picnic and camping sites. L. Brooks (Parks and Recreation Division, B.C. Forest Service), “Recent Recreational Development in B.C.” *Transactions of the Sixth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference* (Victoria, BC: The British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, 1953), 140.

⁵⁴ BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, W.R. Redel, Director of Lands, Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, to L.J. Wallace, 15 December 1970.

⁵⁵ BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, Memo from I.T. Cameron, R.P.F., Assistant Chief Forester, i/c Operations, to W.R. Redel, Director of Lands 8 February 1971.

⁵⁶ BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, Ian Cameron, Assistant Chief Forester, to Wallace, 30 March 1971.

Wallace had to inform Judge Gansner, who seemed to have become a spokesperson for the Argenta-Johnson's Landing committee, that the project could go ahead, but with the "understand[ing] that there is some possibility of parts of the watershed being logged in the indefinite future."⁵⁷ In response, Gansner charged that the Forest Service had failed to manage forests for multiple use since it was "handicapped by tradition, lack of money and suitably trained personnel from displaying initiative in supporting the recreational use of the forests." He referred to the problem of overgrown trails and added that loggers were "permitted to obliterate established trails without any insistence upon a clean-up." Gansner suggested that the trail be protected under the Land Act.⁵⁸ The local trail-building committee was also frustrated, since it had to submit the project forms "without being able to indicate in Item #9 much security of tenure on the route of the Earl Grey Trail." Hugh Herbison, chair of the local committee, asserted that the group would be happy to build the trail as a centennial project even if it might be logged in future, "but in any case, the local community is going to go ahead and re-open the trail."⁵⁹

While the provincial government offered little financial aid for the trail and no legal protection for the watershed, trailbuilders had more generous support from Opportunities for Youth (OFY), a federal job creation program that grew out of the government's pro-active and inclusive approach to 1960s social movements.⁶⁰ The Pearson government established the Company of Young Canadians in 1966, "a voice of

⁵⁷ BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson's Landing, L.J. Wallace to Gansner, 25 February 1971.

⁵⁸ BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson's Landing, Gansner to Wallace, cc to Herbison, 16 March 1971.

⁵⁹ BCA, BC Centennial '71 Committee, GR 1450, Box 30 – Argenta-Johnson's Landing, Herbison to Wallace, 6 April 1971.

⁶⁰ See Dominique Clément, *Canada's Rights Revolution: Social Movements and Social Change, 1937-82* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008).

dissident youth created and funded by government,” to work at the community level with alienated and disadvantaged groups.⁶¹ Hoping to foster national unity and a sense of inclusiveness, Pierre Trudeau also attempted to harness popular citizen participation by promoting a “Just Society” that would be upheld by participatory democracy. Drawing on these principles, OFY operated from 1971 to 1975 to integrate youth and provide a smoother transition from high school or university to the workforce. OFY accepted proposals from youth across the country for ‘useful and rewarding’ summer projects that would benefit communities in the fields of recreation, culture, environment, social services and so on.⁶² Unlike Depression-era public works, OFY participants designed the projects that would assist them in gaining creative, social, and organizational skills.⁶³ Initiated in an era of prosperity, OFY jobs were cut in 1975 following an economic downturn.

Not surprising for a program “in which the young people invented the jobs,”⁶⁴ OFY invited its share of criticism: for example, that the government was intruding on the private sector by directly creating jobs and that OFY supported the spoiled counterculture. Kootenay settlers were divided on the value of government grants versus volunteer labour. One older resident was critical of grant recipients, stating: “They got \$24,000 for the Vallican community hall. We built ours with our own labour, our own

⁶¹ Leslie Pal, *Interests of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism, and Feminism in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 109.

⁶² Alan Clarke, “CYC, OFY, LIP et al...” *Journal of Architectural Education* 29(3) February 1976, 29.

⁶³ On relief programs during the Depression, see Richard Rajala, “From ‘On-to-Ottawa’ to ‘Bloody Sunday’: Unemployment Relief and British Columbia Forests, 1935-1939,” in Penny Bryden and Dimitry Anastakis, eds., *Framing Canadian Federalism: Essays in Honor of John T. Saywell* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). The Young Men’s Forestry Training Program combined education, work and recreation for hand-picked young men, while Forest Development Projects were winter labour camps for unemployed men.

⁶⁴ Jim Coutts, “Expansion, Retrenchment and Protecting the Future: Social Policy in the Trudeau Years,” in Thomas S. Axworthy and Pierre Elliott Trudeau, *Towards a Just Society: The Trudeau Years* (Markham, Ontario: Viking, 1990), 192.

pool of money and little bits of board - \$24,000 and they never got further than the foundation.”⁶⁵ David Polster, who worked on two OFY projects in the Purcell Mountains, explained that the Kootenay region received more funding than elsewhere “because it was a depressed region.” He thought that the government used this funding “as a social instrument” to “stimulate the economy” and “get the kiddies off the streets.”⁶⁶

While community leaders applied for funding, local youth constructed the trail. Rik Valentine, Brenda Herbison, and another teenager hiked into the valley to find the trail and “ribbon out a route” in 1970, the summer before it was constructed.⁶⁷ Young people growing up in Argenta were used to hiking, if only because it was one of the few available leisure options. People who worked on the trail told me about climbing and racing up Mt. Willet (9000 feet) before they worked on the trail.⁶⁸ Although trail builders tried to follow the first trail as much as possible, landslides and fires had obstructed the old route. Evidence of the old trail was apparent in corduroy logs, cut stumps, and old blazes, but “oftentimes the trail switched sides, and it switched sides from year to year, historically.”⁶⁹ The original trail was meant for horses which could ford Hamill Creek at various points and thus did not need bridges. A trail for foot travel could not cross the creek as frequently, since the funding was supposed to pay for labour, not building

⁶⁵ Myrna Kostash, *Long Way from Home: The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1980), 120. The Vallican hall seems to have been a sore point. Gordon quotes a defense of this project in *The Slocan*, 248: “People say that the building didn’t go up because a bunch of lazy, American hippies were ripping of the government. The fact is that people, the major part of whom were Canadians, worked hard that hot, dry summer.” The hall was completed in 1975.

⁶⁶ David Polster, personal interview, 14 June 2007.

⁶⁷ The trail was constructed in the summers of 1971 and 1972 (*Hiker’s Guide*). A fire in the summer of 1971 ended trail building and required some builders to come out for firefighting duty. Rik Valentine, personal interview, 2 May 2007.

⁶⁸ David Polster and Rik Valentine interviews. Hugh Ector, a member of the local centennial committee, has written a poem called “Willet Mountain,” published in the Argenta Library Committee, *Bound Together*, 77. Scott suggests that “growing up in Argenta was like living in an enchanted forest. They loved everything about it.” *Promise of Paradise*, 164.

⁶⁹ David Polster, personal interview, 14 June 2007.

supplies. It was easier for untrained teenagers to keep the trail on one side of the creek wherever possible.⁷⁰ Since the original trail switched from side to side of the creek and was shaped by occasional avalanches and slides, there was no single original trail that could be rebuilt.

Re-creating the trail “was hard physical work.” The group worked for ten days at a time, carrying their food, a chainsaw and fuel. David Polster carried the chainsaw the first year, and Rik Valentine did so the second year. Polster recalls that,

for ten days I’d take ten gallons of mixed gas and two gallons of oil. So I’d end up with a pack that was a hundred and twenty-five, a hundred and thirty pounds. It was all you could do to roll over, get the pack on your back, heaven help if you if you ever fell down.

Work included finding the old trail, clearing it, and building shelters. One person worked as the designated cook. The group had no official training, and work consumed their days: “It was up in the morning, work hard all day, and by the time it got dark you were gone to bed.”⁷¹

⁷⁰ Rik Valentine, personal interview, 2 May 2007.

⁷¹ The information in this paragraph comes from David Polster, personal interview, 14 June 2007.



Picture 6.1: The Earl Grey Trail Building Crew.

Photographer: Rik Valentine.

Photograph used with permission.

Trail builders published an eight-page booklet, *A Hiker's Guide to the Earl Grey Trail*, describing the Hamill and Toby creek valleys, the history of the area, the rebuilt trail, markers, camps, and how to access the trail from Argenta and Windermere. It concludes by instructing campers to “leave no trace.” By the late 1960s, the woodcraft movement, in which recreationists used materials on hand to make bedding, fires, and shelter, was beginning to lose favour with campers. The “leave no trace” ethic gained popularity when wilderness areas came under pressure from increasing numbers of visitors. This ethic states that visitors should bring in their own equipment such as a stove and bedding, rather than burning wood or cutting branches to sleep on, therefore leaving no trace of their presence. The Earl Grey Trail hiking guide instructed campers not to

leave food or garbage behind because these attracted bears, to dig and bury latrines away from campsites and water sources, and to take a propane stove instead of building a fire, because it was “safer, cleaner, and does not denude the forest.”⁷² The “leave no trace” ethic fit well with the 1964 Wilderness Act’s exclusion of commercial (and productive) activities that might modify the landscape. However, the transition to “leave no trace” camping shifted the impact of consumption from the local forest to distant factories where equipment was produced. It was in these locations that wilderness recreation did leave traces. “Leave no trace” camping served to separate labour from leisure, and production from consumption, since wilderness was cordoned off as a non-productive area that people visited primarily for recreation.⁷³

Some users of the Earl Grey Trail felt that the bark shelters were too elaborate and that not enough trees were felled. A hesitancy to cut down trees resulted in a meandering and challenging trail. Some hikers called for improvements to make the trail easier to follow. Writing about a trip in August 1972, when the trail was just completed, surveyor Gordon Stein warned that “the only thing that Hamill Creek has to offer is a great deal of exercise.” He thought that too much attention was given to camp construction and not enough to the trail. The Toby Creek camp was “luxurious” with structures such as tables and benches, but, he noted dryly, “the only thing lacking was a source of water within ten minutes walk,” water being of course more essential than benches to a backcountry campsite.⁷⁴ The trail was too much work for Stein, who thought that the OFY group attempted to build the trail without cutting any trees “but did their best to relieve trail

⁷² Earl Grey Pass Project, *Hiker’s Guide to the Earl Grey Trail* (Argenta, BC: Root Cellar Press, 1972).

⁷³ James Morton Turner, “From Woodcraft to ‘Leave No Trace’: Wilderness, Consumerism, and Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America,” *Environmental History* 2002 7(3) 462-484.

⁷⁴ Earl Grey Pass Project, *Hiker’s Guide*. To be fair, the *Hiker’s Guide* notes that the stream dries up in August.

monotony by providing interesting changes of elevation and allignments [sic] at every possible opportunity and comic relief at every stream crossing.”⁷⁵



Picture 6.2: Trail Builders at a Camp along the Trail.

Photographer: Rik Valentine.

Photograph used with permission.

While the local centennial committee attempted to secure protected status for the Earl Grey Trail, a connected group of Argenta and Johnson’s Landing residents tried to protect the Hamill Creek watershed under the new designation of “ecological reserve.”⁷⁶

The province was becoming aware of an emerging global trend to study and describe representative ecosystems. Vladimir Krajina, a UBC professor of botany who had escaped the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948, was instrumental in the

⁷⁵ Gordon Stein, “Earl Grey Pass Access,” *Kootenay Karabiner*, Vol. 15, Fall 1972, 37-38. Park rangers Carter and Pettit had a similar impression when they hiked the trail as park rangers for the newly created Purcell Wilderness Conservancy.

⁷⁶ Gladys McLeod, ed. *Hamill’s Last Stand* [Castlegar, BC: Co Tinneh Books, 1972]

study of biogeoclimatic zones and called for a legal system to protect these diverse ecosystems in the province. In 1968, BC scientists and civil servants formed an Ecological Reserves Committee.⁷⁷ In April 1971, the provincial government passed the Ecological Reserves Act to protect these reserves. Distinct from parks, ecological reserves recognized the scientific importance of undisturbed ecosystems. The reserves would be set aside to study natural ecosystems and ecosystems under stress, and to protect endangered and unique species. Although this may not have been their primary function, ecological reserves were also to be preserved so that people could experience primeval landscapes, their “cultural heritage.”⁷⁸ The government also passed an act to create an Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC), intended to integrate environmental standards across ministries and to ensure that environmental protection was considered in resource development decisions.⁷⁹ Ray Williston, the Minister of Lands, was the first chair of this committee.⁸⁰

Legislative debates over ecological reserves and the ELUC raise doubts about the sincerity of the Social Credit government when it came to environmental protection and suggest that these bills may have been a reluctant concession to environmental interests. Statements by Social Credit MLA George Mussallem, who favoured flooding the Skagit Valley to provide power for Seattle, that the “biggest problem in the land is the red-hot

⁷⁷ “Ecological Reserves,” *BC Parks*, Ministry of the Environment, http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/eco_reserve/ecoresrv/ecoresrv.html (30 December 2008)

Adolf Ceska, “Prof. Vladimir Krajina died,” *Metla: Finnish Forest Research Institute*, 7 June 1993, <http://www.metla.fi/archive/forest/1993/06/msg00002.html> (30 December 2008)

⁷⁸ V.J. Krajina, P.A. Larkin, J.B. Foster, and D.F. Pearson, *Ecological Reserves in British Columbia*. (Vancouver, BC: [s.n.] 1974), 4.

⁷⁹ “Land Pledge Kept by B.C.,” *Victoria Colonist*, 18 March 1971, 47; “Environmental committee, ecology reserves on way,” *Vancouver Sun*, 18 March 1971, 16; Eileen Williston and Betty Keller, *Forests, Power and Policy: The Legacy of Ray Williston* (Prince George, BC: Caitlin Press Inc., 1997), 245.

⁸⁰ By 1971, ELUC coordinated environmental issues between six ministries: Agriculture; Lands, Forests and Water Resources; Health Services; Recreation and Conservation; Municipal Affairs, and Mines and Petroleum Resources. Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 107-108.

environmentalist who doesn't know what he is talking about" and that "Pollution is life itself," tended to undermine faith in the government's steps towards environmental protection.⁸¹ Williston stated that the government wanted to increase public concern for the environment with these initiatives. The land use committee would hold public meetings, and scientists and the public would be invited to study the workings of ecosystems in ecological reserves. Liberal leader Pat McGeer retorted that the government was out of touch with public demands because the public was already concerned about the environment and the government needed to be more so. "In my experience," McGeer said, "the public is aware and is concerned – they're aware of the minister (Resource Minister Williston) and are concerned about him."⁸² With his "record of plunder," Williston was in a poor position to conserve resources. The Ecological Reserves Act was soon passed despite attempts by the NDP to amend it so that only the legislature could cancel the reserves and to have the new Environment and Land Use Committee administer the reserves rather than the Minister of Lands and Forests.⁸³

In February 1971 the provincial Ecological Reserves Committee agreed to fund a survey of the Hamill Creek area. That September, while the Earl Grey Trail was under construction, Bruce Fraser, a biologist at Selkirk College, and biology student Brenda Herbison of Argenta (who had helped locate the route of the trail the previous summer), surveyed the watershed and submitted an application to create an ecological reserve. The application described the topography and biogeoclimatic zone and included a

⁸¹ "House Debates Land Use Bills – Hunkum bunkum – or a new Magna Carta," *Vancouver Sun*, 24 March 1971, 15.

⁸² "Committee's Duties 'Twisted Around,'" *Victoria Daily Times*, March 24, 1971, 38.

⁸³ "Ecological Reserve Bill through House," *Victoria Daily Times*, 31 March 1971, 20.

comprehensive list of plants and animals within the area.⁸⁴ It also included a brief from the residents of Argenta and Johnson's Landing, explaining how they perceived their relationship to the Hamill watershed and their willingness to act as local custodians:

... The long-range importance of preserving an extensive natural habitat in a world where machines are persistently eating into the wilderness is evident. British Columbia's privileged role as continental custodian of magnificent terrain such as never existed or has been destroyed in other less blessed parts of the continent provides us with a unique opportunity to preserve land for the future. What our delegation can perhaps contribute to the deliberations of the Committee is an offer to be a sort of local custodian of the public interest, day-by-day and year-by-year. It is not often recognized that legislative decisions are not always effective unless they are understood and made functional at the local level. We are convinced that the setting aside of an ecological study reserve would be most significant in years to come. Our old-time residents have extensive knowledge of the area through trapping, hunting, fishing, mining, guiding and logging. Newer residents who have taken up land during the past twenty years are dedicated to the idea of living in harmony with nature.⁸⁵

Residents had demonstrated their commitment to making the Hamill watershed available for study by re-opening the Earl Grey trail as a footpath. In applying for the ecological reserve, they explained: "We are involved in a very immediate, direct, personal way that is not just words or theory: we are prepared to devote actual time and labour to the success of an ecological study reserve."⁸⁶ They argued that there was "probably no rural community in B.C. that would be more sympathetic to programmes of ecological study than Argenta-Johnson's Landing," since three-quarters of the adults had

⁸⁴ McLeod, *Hamill's Last Stand*, Krajina et al, *Ecological Reserves in British Columbia*, 20.

⁸⁵ Hamill Creek basin ecological reserve application, "A Brief Presented to the Ecological Reserves Committee of British Columbia by the Residents of Argenta-Johnson's Landing, B.C. Supporting the Setting Aside of the Hamill Creek Valley as an Ecological Reserve under the Ecological Reserves Act of British Columbia," October 14, 1971.

⁸⁶ Wood, *Summary of Ecological Reserves*, "Application for Ecological Reserve, Report No. 66."

“university degrees in fields such as biology, engineering, hydrology, sociology, applied science, agriculture, ornithology, forestry, and many degrees in education.”⁸⁷

Much to the disappointment of Argenta and Johnson’s Landing residents, the Environment and Land Use Committee rejected the Hamill Creek ecological reserve proposal in February 1972, citing conflicts with mineral claims, the amount of valuable mature timber in the area, and, ironically, the “enthusiasm of the local people” which suggested that “park status rather than an ecological reserve might well be considered to serve local needs.”⁸⁸ The park idea seemed to be forgotten less than three weeks later when the provincial government offered for sale 7 million cubic feet of timber in the Hamill Creek area.⁸⁹ Shocked community members expressed their frustration in a poetry and protest book, *Hamill’s Last Stand*, outlining the chronology of events surrounding Hamill Creek, what the creek meant to them, and how the provincial government had put it up for sale. *Hamill’s Last Stand* also acknowledged that there was dissent within the community regarding the prospect of an ecological reserve.⁹⁰

The ecological reserve proposal and poetry book both point to the influence of young, well-educated baby boomers working towards environmental protection. Established in 1966 in Castlegar, Selkirk College had 400 students by 1971.⁹¹ According to the college’s website, it is the “oldest regional college in the province” and “one of the first colleges in British Columbia to have been created as the result of a community

⁸⁷ Wood, *Summary of Ecological Reserves*, “Application for Ecological Reserve, Report No. 66” (Victoria, BC: Ministry of Forests, Research Branch, 1983), “A Brief Presented to the Ecological Reserves Committee of British Columbia by the Residents of Argenta-Johnson’s Landing, B.C.”

⁸⁸ Letter from D. Borthwick, Deputy Minister, Department of Lands, Forests, and Water Resources, to Dr. V.J. Krajina, Professor of Botany, UBC, cc. Dr. B. Fraser, Selkirk College, Castlegar, BC, February 28, 1972, cited in McLeod, ed. *Hamill’s Last Stand*.

⁸⁹ *Nelson Daily News*, March 16, 1972, cited in McLeod, ed. *Hamill’s Last Stand*.

⁹⁰ McLeod, ed. *Hamill’s Last Stand*, 2.

⁹¹ W.F. Murison, Principal, Selkirk College, To whom it may concern, 12 October 1971 in Wood, A *Summary of Ecological*, “Application for Ecological Reserve, Report No. 66.”

referendum.”⁹² Selkirk College Principal, W.F. Murison, wrote in support of the ecological reserve proposal:

Many of these students [at Selkirk College] are fired by an interest in matters ecological and concerned enough to want to learn more about the environment that they will inherit from us, albeit used and in some places abused. Situated as we are within easy driving distance of such places as Hamill Creek Valley, it is easy for the faculty and students to see what is, what was and what might have been in an environmental sense. Such first-hand experiences are so much more vital and telling; so much more useful to a young learner who can bring all his senses to such a pitch of receptivity in the field that the memory of the experience will long outlive the mental fruits of it.⁹³

Rik Valentine remembers that biology professor “Bruce Fraser led some groups from the college up the trail,” and that the poetry book edited by Gladys McLeod “may have been part of an English class at Selkirk.”⁹⁴ After a summer of trail building, Selkirk College biology student David Polster worked with another group based out of Windermere, to “develop a planning model for alpine recreation and alpine parks,” by studying the Earl Grey Pass between Hamill and Toby Creeks. Also funded by OFY, it was “another opportunity for kids in first year university to spend the summer in the mountains and get paid... a minimal amount.” Pat Bavin, the organizer, and Don Wah used this experience to write a thesis for a planning program.⁹⁵

The election campaign in the summer of 1972 signaled a change in forest management. Likely responding to popular demand and a lack of comprehensive Social Credit policy on the environment, Liberal, Progressive Conservative and New Democratic Party candidates in the West Kootenays all highlighted environmental

⁹² “Selkirk College Story,” Selkirk College, <<http://selkirk.ca/about/history/>> (30 December 2008)

⁹³ W.F. Murison, “To whom it may concern,” in Wood, *Summary of Ecological Reserves*, “Application for Ecological Reserve, Report No. 66.”

⁹⁴ Rik Valentine, personal interview, 2 May 2007.

⁹⁵ David Polster, personal interview, 14 June 2007. *Earl Grey Pass Project 1973 – Report of an Opportunities for Youth Project*.

programs in their election platforms.⁹⁶ On August 30, British Columbians elected the NDP under Dave Barrett as the new government. NDP MLAs were elected in four of the five Kootenay region ridings (see Table 6.1). This government proved to be more open than its predecessor to environmental reform, public participation, and creating large new parks. Barrett assigned Bob Williams responsibility for the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources and also the Department of Recreation and Conservation. Williams held the second portfolio until Jack Radford was appointed in mid-1973. Williams, open to experimentation and suspicious of the ties between the Forest Service and the big logging companies, was also determined to increase funding for Fish and Wildlife, and for Parks, previously second-class branches.⁹⁷

Table 6.1: Electoral History of Kootenay Region, 1969-1975⁹⁸

| | 1969 | 1972 | 1975 |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| Rosland-Trail | Donald L. Brothers Social Credit (49%) | Christopher A.C. D'Arcy NDP (54%) | Christopher A.C. D'Arcy NDP (55%) |
| Nelson-Creston | Wesley D. Black Social Credit (54%) | Lorne James Nicolson NDP (50%) | Lorne James Nicolson NDP (56%) |
| Revelstoke-Slocan | Burton P. Campbell Social Credit (51%) | William S. King NDP (55%) | William S. King NDP (55%) |
| Columbia River | James Roland Chabot Social Credit (56%) | James Roland Chabot Social Credit (45%) | James Roland Chabot Social Credit (60%) |
| Kootenay | Leo Thomas Nimsick NDP (38%) | Leo Thomas Nimsick NDP (44%) | George Wayne Haddad Social Credit (52%) |

⁹⁶ See *Nelson Daily News* 15 August 1972, 3; 22 August 1972, 3; 23 August 1972, 3 and advertisements for Lorne Nicolson in *Nelson Daily News*.

⁹⁷ Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 117-119, 129.

⁹⁸ From Elections BC, *Electoral History of British Columbia, 1871-1986*

<http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/PubDocs/bcdocs/37907/electoral_history.pdf> (31 December 2008)

A letter-writing campaign in the fall of 1972 to keep a logging road out of the Fry Creek Canyon, located south of Hamill Creek and adjacent to Johnson's Landing, tested the NDP's environmental platform. This campaign also revealed how local residents thought about political participation and citizenship, damming and logging, wilderness and outdoor recreation, and post-materialism and the good life. By this time, Fry Creek Canyon was one of the few intact watersheds draining into Kootenay Lake. Fry Creek was named after Richard Fry, who lived in the West Kootenays in the late nineteenth century with his Sinixt wife, Justine Soqu-stike-en, combining "her usual seasonal rounds with gold panning, ferrying, and mercantilism."⁹⁹ Over the next century, trails built by trappers and prospectors that hugged the side of the narrow canyon became popular with recreationists.¹⁰⁰ In 1972, the BC Forest Service, having sold cutting licenses to forestry companies in the Fry Creek and adjacent Carney Creek watersheds, was planning to build a road along Fry Creek to make the timber accessible.¹⁰¹ In November, concerned groups such as the local branch of the Scientific Pollution and Environmental Control Society (SPEC), the Trail Wildlife Association, and the Unitarian Church, which had operated a camp since 1966 on its property at the mouth of Fry Creek, organized a public meeting in Nelson. They invited representatives of the BC Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Branch to give presentations.

⁹⁹ Pryce, *Keeping the Lakes' Way*, 114; 166-177 fn 17. See also Clara Graham, *Kootenay Mosaic* (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1971), 80-82. "Fry Creek," *BC Geographical Names*, <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcgn-bin/bcg10?name=4480> (30 December 2008)

¹⁰⁰ "Fry Creek Canyon and Birchdale Trails," *BC Parks*, http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/purcell/fry_creek_trail_brochure.pdf (30 December 2008)

¹⁰¹ Martin A. Keeley, "Kootenay Diary," *British Columbia Lumberman*, July 1974, 30. On creekside logging in the early 1970s, see Rajala, "Forests and Fish."

The groups that planned this public meeting included branches of older and newer environmental organizations in BC. The Trail Wildlife Association likely grew out of fish and game clubs and naturalist groups dating back to the turn of the twentieth century. These organizations often included environmental protection as a part of their mandate.¹⁰² The original branch of SPEC was established in Vancouver in 1969 as part of the environmental movement and in response to strip mining in the Kootenays. It was also concerned with pollution control, primarily in the Lower Mainland. By the early 1970s, branches of SPEC operated in other parts of the province.¹⁰³ The Unitarian Church that owned a camp at Fry Creek was based in Vancouver and had previously lobbied against development and pollution, when it teamed up in 1970 with the BC Sierra Club, SPEC, and other groups for the Festival of Survival at Stanley Park.¹⁰⁴

The Nelson meeting illuminated a growing rift between the Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the provincial government, both of them headed by Minister of Lands, Forests and Resources, Bob Williams.¹⁰⁵ At the meeting, Harvey Andrusak of the Fish and Wildlife Branch explained that the departments had ceased to co-operate after the Fish and Wildlife branch recommended against building “a road through this beautiful area” after seeing how logging on other Kootenay Lake streams had damaged fish and wildlife habitat.¹⁰⁶ This kind of critical expression was apparently acceptable to

¹⁰² Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 98-100. See also John Gordon Terpenning, “The B.C. Wildlife Federation and Government: A Comparative Study of Pressure Group and Government Interaction for Two Periods, 1947-1957, and 1958-1975” (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1982).

¹⁰³ “SPEC Turns 30!!!” *Spectrum: Newsletter of the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation* 27(1) Spring 1999 http://www.spec.bc.ca/about/downloads/SpectrumVol27_No_1.pdf.

¹⁰⁴ Zelko, “Making Greenpeace,” 226.

¹⁰⁵ This was prior to Jack Radford’s appointment in mid-1973. Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 129.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted from Brian Freemantle, “Creek preservation is peoples’ wish,” *Nelson Daily News*, 17 November 1972.



Picture 6.3: Fry Creek Looking towards Kootenay Lake.

Photographer: Christian Lieb, 2007.

Photograph used with permission.

the new Minister of Lands, who “believed that interesting results usually follow when the cat is dropped among the pigeons.”¹⁰⁷ Yet this interdepartmental disagreement at the Nelson meeting received mixed reviews, as an observer referred to the meeting as a “burlesque,” asking “who wins in a confrontation between the fish and wildlife branch and the forest service”?¹⁰⁸ Other residents approved of how the Minister of Lands juggled responsibility for different resources, for example an Argenta family who wrote: “We appreciate the recognition that your combined ministry gives to the relationship of

¹⁰⁷ Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 118-119.

¹⁰⁸ *Nelson Daily News*, November 17, 1972.

resources, recreation and conservation,” and another couple who thought that Williams “humanized” the various departments for which he was responsible.¹⁰⁹

Following this meeting, the Minister of Lands received 178 letters opposing the construction of the Fry Creek road and requesting a public inquiry into how this area should best be managed. Just nineteen letters and nine petitions supported further road building and logging. The letters opposing the road and calling for a public inquiry are a rich and detailed source: they were, for the most part, original expressions from people in a number of communities throughout the Kootenays.¹¹⁰ By writing to Williams in significant numbers, Kootenay residents proved their enthusiasm for participatory democracy. Letter writers identified themselves as citizens (and immigrants), taxpayers and local landowners. Writers included men and women, teachers,¹¹¹ physicians, engineers, tourism promoters,¹¹² outdoor enthusiasts, conservationists, young people, and elders with deep roots in the West Kootenays.¹¹³ Letter writers also worked for construction companies, the Forest Service, or the logging industry. One Johnson’s Landing resident said he “would hate to see this particular area logged, even though I

¹⁰⁹ Unless otherwise noted, quotes and statistics from pages 181 to 193 of this chapter come from British Columbia Archives, GR 1227, Forest Service - Public Information and Education Division, “Fry Creek (1972-1973).” Names have been removed to protect the confidentiality of letter writers.

¹¹⁰ Some of the anti-logging letters were form letters often with comments added, and nine pro-logging letters were typed on the same typewriter.

¹¹¹ Several teachers wrote in, including high school and university biology teachers and the principal of the Procter elementary school.

¹¹² Individuals and organizations who may have wanted to safeguard some of the area’s beauty for tourism included the Mayor of Trail, the Trail Chamber of Commerce, the Nelson City Council, and Kokanee Travel Ltd.

¹¹³ People frequently stated that they had lived in the area for a long time, including one man who had lived in Kaslo for sixty-one years, “(barring 3 W. War I years, 1916-1918) – and rancher – also ran a Tourist Camp for 31 years.” Another man who had arrived in Kaslo with his parents in 1897 argued that “we need parks and beaches for our older citizens, our children, and our Tourist[s].”

make my living from construction work and logging. The effect of logging on wildlife is never good, and back there is one of the last really untouched areas in B.C.”¹¹⁴

Letter writers identified the NDP with an enlightened environmental policy. Political scientist Jeremy Wilson argues that the NDP in 1972 was “not a green party.” However, Wilson notes that it was critical of previous forest practices and the close ties between government and industry, and its openness to new ideas enabled the growth of the environmental movement.¹¹⁵ Writers were optimistic that the NDP would be better environmental managers than the Social Credit government. As a Vancouver resident who had hiked near Nelson put it, “I hope your government, unlike its predecessor, will see fit to stop the sellout of any potential park area merely for a short term gain on timber sales.”¹¹⁶ Some writers had voted for the NDP or volunteered for their campaigns, and wanted the new government to keep their environmental commitments.¹¹⁷ A form letter used by at least 72 writers and to which 53 had added personal sentiments, requested a public hearing based on the NDP’s commitment to “require total environmental impact evaluation of new industrial and other development prior to their introduction.” A couple who wrote on Notre Dame University of Nelson letterhead stated, “My neighbors and I in Queens Bay area voted N.D.P. + now we want you to show us that this Treasure, that must be shared by our children will be saved.”¹¹⁸ A resident of Genelle wrote, “we feel that our new government has more or less committed itself to stop pollution and to

¹¹⁴ GR 1227, Johnson’s Landing, 18 November 1972.

¹¹⁵ Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 112.

¹¹⁶ GR 1227, Vancouver BC, November 1972.

¹¹⁷ A high school biology teacher from Trail wrote, “This fall, my family and I have worked for many weeks in the service of the N.D.P., first for Chris Darcy and then for the great majority polled by our federal M.P., as canvassers, federal enumerators (!), and outside scrutineers.” GR 1227, [November 1972].

¹¹⁸ GR 1227, Nelson, [Nov 1972].

control mans' [sic] devastating [sic] progress."¹¹⁹ One writer equated the interests of "common people" with green policies, stating, "We elected you to protect the interests of the common people, all the people of British Columbia, and their descendants."¹²⁰

Another writer found the election of the NDP "heartening" and hoped that the new government would put "the needs of man before those of institutions and industries which should serve man, but too often dominate him."¹²¹

Many letter writers asked the NDP to set up a public inquiry to make the Social Credit-initiated land use committee "functional and effective."¹²² They wanted an open process to decide the best land use for the Purcell area, one that would listen to public input about current uses and consider values beyond forestry. They argued that if the Forest Service built a road up the Fry Creek Canyon for a private logging company to remove the timber, this use of public money on public lands required public input. They were spurred on by Bruce Hunter, president of the Nelson and West Arm SPEC, who opened the information meeting on Fry Creek with the comment: "With an informed electorate we can properly inform those in elected positions on the proper management of our resources." Or, as a resident of Trail asked Williams, "are we to have another government that knows best what is good for the voter?"¹²³ Not only did the public demand the right to have its wishes represented in government, but the Trail Wildlife

¹¹⁹ GR 1227, Genelle, BC, 22 November 1972; Kinnaird, BC, 14 November 1972: "One of the most urgent reasons why many of us worked for an N.D.P. victory was to stop the destruction of B.C.'s environment." In a similar vein, a representative of the local branch of SPEC wrote to Revelstoke-Slocan MLA William King (NDP), "With the changeover in Victoria to a more responsive government, British Columbia environmentalists are more hopeful than ever of preserving such remaining vestiges of our natural heritage." (22 November 1972).

¹²⁰ GR 1227, Kinnaird, 14 November 1972.

¹²¹ GR 1227, Nelson, 10 Nov 1972.

¹²² GR 1227, Trail (November 1972).

¹²³ GR 1227, Trail, 7 November 1972.

Association argued that the “Forest District must recognize that quality-environment is a basic human need, and a right.”¹²⁴

Of the 178 letters opposing the road, at least 148 were sent from 21 different communities in the Kootenay region (see Fig. 7). Writers insisted that people who lived and played in the Kootenays should have a voice in how their region was run. As one writer put it simply: “it’s time for us, the citizens here, to tell you, the government, that we are ready and willing to exchange short term gains for some long term gains.”¹²⁵

Table 6.2: Origins of Letters Protesting Fry Creek Logging Road¹²⁶

| Kootenay Region | | Outside of Kootenay Region | |
|------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----|
| Nelson | 45 | Lower Mainland | 14 |
| Trail | 39 | Victoria and Gulf Isl. | 3 |
| Rossland | 16 | Vernon | 1 |
| Castlegar | 6 | Other provinces | 2 |
| Argenta | 5 | Sweden | 1 |
| Johnsons Landing | 5 | | |
| Fruitvale | 5 | | |
| Kaslo | 5 | | |
| Montrose | 4 | | |
| Thrums | 3 | | |
| Creston | 3 | | |
| Robson | 2 | No Address | 9 |
| Procter | 2 | | |
| Kimberley | 2 | | |
| Kinnaird | 1 | | |
| Nakusp | 1 | | |
| Kootenay Bay | 1 | | |
| Genelle | 1 | | |
| Blueberry Creek | 1 | | |
| Meadow Creek | 1 | | |
| Windermere | 1 | | |

¹²⁴ GR 1227, Form letter from the Trail Wildlife Association, 6 November 1972.

¹²⁵ GR 1227, Johnson’s Landing, 18 November 1972.

¹²⁶ GR 1227, “Fry Creek (1972-1973).

In some cases, people articulated their desire to protect landscapes for the enjoyment of local residents with nationalist arguments. Dam building on the nearby Arrow Lakes in the late 1960s had inspired Anti-American sentiment as residents wanted Canadians to retain control and benefits of the dams.¹²⁷ By 1972, the West Kootenays had received a significant influx of American citizens, including Quakers, back-to-the-landers, and draft resisters, who often brought environmental ideas with them.¹²⁸ Writing in opposition to the road and accepting some of the new environmental ideas, a handful of writers nevertheless questioned whether American immigrants should have equal rights with Canadians to recreational space. A family from Trail felt strongly “that the Government should do all in its power to preserve our Province for Canadians.”¹²⁹ Writers complained that the previous Social Credit government had allowed the United States to flood valuable bottom land, and non-Canadians to buy local land.¹³⁰ Others pointed out that the land at the mouth of Fry Creek was privately owned by the Unitarian Church, which they associated with Americans (although the camp was run out of Vancouver), and despite the Unitarian Church having collaborated with SPEC at the Nelson protest meeting. One Trail resident stressed that it was “time we did something about the nude Unitarians (Americans) so that our families can use Fry Creek beach also.”¹³¹ In a similar spirit, another couple from Trail recommended that the government should “keep the naked ‘hippies’ off the beaches and develop this area as a provincial

¹²⁷ Loo, “People in the Way,” 161-196.

¹²⁸ See Zelko, “Making Greenpeace.”

¹²⁹ GR 1227, Trail, BC (November 1972).

¹³⁰ GR 1227, Trail, BC (November 1972). Similarly, the director of the Trail Wildlife Association complained that a German-owned company controlling access points to recreational land in the West Kootenays: “Does it seem paradoxical to obtain permission by a German controlled company to hunt and fish on Canadian soil? Will this same alienation occur in Fry Creek?” (Nov 6, 1972).

¹³¹ GR 1227, Trail, BC (November 1972). Parentheses included in the original.

park & Camp area for all people to enjoy.”¹³² It is worth noting that American immigrants also wrote letters opposing the logging road, including one who “hope[d] that Canadians will learn from the mistakes and lack of caring of the U.S.”¹³³

Opposition to resource extraction in Fry Creek was strong because people had recent and first-hand exposure to logging and damming and were beginning to realize the local scarcity of unlogged areas. As an Argenta resident wrote: “So many areas are being, in some cases, [literally] destroyed in order to make more jobs, more electricity, more money etc. without enough attention towards what [beauty exists] today.”¹³⁴ Residents were dismayed by logging practices that wrecked the landscapes in watersheds draining into Kootenay Lake. According to a writer from Nelson,

Twenty years ago there were many other beauty spots on the Lake but they for the most part have been wrecked in favor of the logging industry. You need only to examine Coffee & Woodbury Creeks to name two, to be overcome with disgust, alarm, and sadness too, at the wholesale destruction both throughout the woods area and the creeks from boulders, debris, smashed down trees as well as sluffing into creekbeds from the roads.¹³⁵

Damming projects that residents had seen increased their desire to protect what was left. A Trail resident wrote, “It does not make a damn bit of sense, building a road up Fry Creek canyon. While at the same time millions of trees will be flooded behind Mica Creek Dam. P.S. Some of the trees to be flooded are 6 feet in dia. – these I have seen myself.”¹³⁶ The massive dam building projects following the Columbia River Treaty struck at least some local residents as wasteful and destructive. Opponents of the road referred to the Duncan Dam (1967) north of Kootenay Lake, and the Mica Dam (1973),

¹³² GR 1227, Trail, BC (November 1972).

¹³³ GR 1227, [Kootenay Lake, BC], 13 November 1972.

¹³⁴ GR 1227, Argenta, BC, November 1972.

¹³⁵ GR 1227, Nelson, BC, 9 November 1972.

¹³⁶ GR 1227, Trail, November 1972.

then under construction.¹³⁷ A Trail resident described the “area behind the Duncan Dam” as an “ecological disaster” because it had not been logged prior to flooding. A member of the Kootenay Launch Club listed Duncan Lake as an “ecological blunder” made by the Social Credit government. The lake had become “a boater’s death trap, that could have been a recreational paradise.” Residents were incensed that the Mica Dam would be flooded without being logged, which did “not make sense, either economically, or ecologically,” and several argued that logging behind the Mica Dam would more than make up for the volume of logs that a road into the Fry Creek would access.

Writers stressed their recreational use of the Fry Creek Canyon or their desire to visit it in the future. Residents of nearby Argenta in particular, emphasized their use of the area, one writer who had taken many walks in the canyon having “developed a great love for this unique creek.” One woman who had worked on the Earl Grey Trail wrote:

The recreational value of Fry Creek is significant. The steep sided canyon, through which the ‘creek’ thunders to the lake, is unusually beautiful, and the hike on the narrow trail along the canyon’s side is truly an [awesome] experience. Old mining trails and well-used game trails make hiking for miles up the creek very pleasurable, and the area has long been known to people all over the Kootenays who like to fish.¹³⁸

Another Argenta writer pointed out that people had much to learn from their natural surroundings: “I don’t know formal letter writing as well as I know these mountain trails... This country inspires closeness to nature and people.”¹³⁹ Urbanites who had spent their summer holidays at Fry Creek also wrote, including a Victoria man who hiked with his wife along Fry and Carney Creeks in the summer of 1971 and the Earl Grey Trail in 1972, and a visitor from Richmond to the Unitarian Church camp where “Each

¹³⁷ At least seven letters protesting a logging road up the Fry Creek Canyon mentioned the Mica Dam.

¹³⁸ GR 1227, Argenta, BC, 24 October 1972.

¹³⁹ GR 1227, Argenta, BC, November 1972.

day we swam in beautiful Kootenay Lake or hiked up to the falls; several times we made extended hikes on the trail beside the canyon.”¹⁴⁰ The camp was kept in as natural a state as possible with the only improvements being outhouses. As one of its founders wrote, “No organized activities were scheduled; those gathered spontaneously ranged from strenuous climbs in the magnificent mountains behind the camp to total relaxation on the beach.”¹⁴¹ Even if they did not claim to have visited Fry Creek themselves, local residents wrote in support of other people who did, and about the need to preserve areas where they or their children might go in the future.

There are few definitions of wilderness in the Fry Creek letters but these letters do give an impression of why people valued this area. Fry Creek was aesthetically pleasing: it was a “beauty spot,” “wild and lovely,” and “the most spectacular and gorgeous scene.”¹⁴² They referred to the Kokanee salmon, caribou, mountain goats and grizzly bears that depended on the watershed for their habitat. The meaning of wilderness was wrapped up with its relationship to human beings. The letters build a picture of how people should relate to a wilderness area, and how they could benefit from these places without exploiting them. Fry Creek was valuable because it was unmarred by human intrusion, an untouched “primal forest.”¹⁴³ It offered inspiration, freedom, pure water and pure air. Several writers discussed the psychological benefits of hiking along the creek: “I feel that [it] is necessary to the psychological well-being of the people living around Kootenay Lake to preserve Fry Creek in its natural state,”¹⁴⁴ or referred to the “nerve

¹⁴⁰ GR 1227, Victoria, BC, 4 December 1972 and Richmond, BC, 30 November 1972.

¹⁴¹ Phillip Hewett, *Unitarians in Canada* (1978), 286. Phillip Hewett pers. comm. February 15, 2007. Hewett has been a leader in the Vancouver Unitarian Church

¹⁴² GR 1227, Rossland, 13 November 1972 and Johnson’s Landing, 17 November 1972.

¹⁴³ GR 1227, [Nelson], 22 November 1972.

¹⁴⁴ GR 1227, Nelson, 19 November 1972.

soothing effect of being surrounded by the giants of the forest.”¹⁴⁵ The canyon offered a place to transform people for the better.¹⁴⁶ One writer from Johnson’s Landing explained how the existence of wilderness restored his humanity:

And I guess the last, and perhaps the most important reason to me for wanting to see Fry Creek spared is that I would like my children to see it as I saw it. That is a little thing and a big thing – to say that Fry Creek is unimportant except as a means to increase the amount of money in circulation is to say that my life has no meaning save how much I earn and buy. In seeing a sight like that wilderness, I get back some of the humanity I lost while on the job, and I’ll bet there are an increasing number of people who need that same balm¹⁴⁷

Post-materialist values influenced writers who criticized economic development at the expense of intact ecosystems and quality of life, or “ecological disfigurement under the blade of economics.”¹⁴⁸ A Rossland writer observed: “Ideas and values are changing, already money is no longer of prime importance.” She added that many people did not have time to enjoy wilderness due to work and responsibilities but she hoped for “a future when we all will have more time for recreation.”¹⁴⁹ Writers wondered whether local beauty spots had to be “sacrificed” to the “almighty dollar.”¹⁵⁰ Forestry threatened the benefits of living in the Kootenays, including clean air, pure water, uncut forests, and natural beauty. What was needed was not further development but a re-evaluation of the human hubris that said all things could be improved by people: “Human beings need

¹⁴⁵ GR 1227, Nelson, 8 November 1972.

¹⁴⁶ For example, comments like “I speak of the plant and animal and water life that exists there now, and of the human life that goes there, not to exploit, not to make money from, but to be renewed, be made aware of something greater than our human selfishness,” and “The highly stressed man from the city who faces for the first time the wonders of a Douglas fir or the pileated woodpecker or the six foot spread of a golden eagle, who hears the water ouzel above the roar of white water begins to undergo a transformation.”

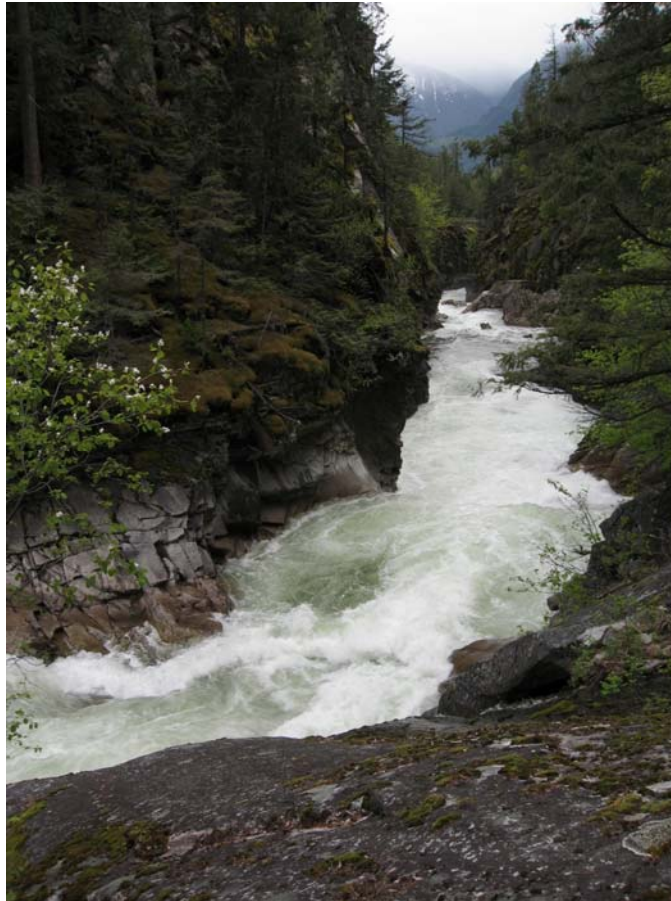
¹⁴⁷ GR 1227, Johnson’s Landing, 18 November 1972.

¹⁴⁸ GR 1227, Meadow Creek, 19 January 1973.

¹⁴⁹ GR 1227, Rossland, 13 November 1972.

¹⁵⁰ GR 1227, Kaslo, BC, 13 November 1972.

places unchanged by themselves every particle as much as they need the lumber or minerals or water power.”¹⁵¹



Picture 6.4: Fry Creek Canyon.
Photographer: Christian Lieb, 2007.
Photograph used with permission.

In early December, Williams responded to this public input by placing a moratorium on logging in the Fry and Carney drainages until a resource use study could be completed. Understandably, this moratorium resulted in a backlash from those who viewed it as a threat to their livelihoods. Mostly in December 1972 and January 1973, Williams received 19 letters (nine of which were typed on the same machine) and nine

¹⁵¹ GR 1227, [Kootenay Lake] 13 November 1972.

petitions containing 415 signatures from Kootenay residents in favour of well-planned logging and multiple use of resources. Pro-logging road writers represented themselves as a rational majority. They made their living from the logging industry and therefore contributed to the economic backbone of the province. They argued that making the Purcells into a conservancy would only “meet the demands of an emotional few.”¹⁵² They argued that few people ventured any distance on foot into existing national parks, so why create more parks? Several road supporters noted that logging roads enabled them to access the backcountry to enjoy outdoor recreation pursuits. These writers avoided engaging with ecological arguments, but stated that recreation was not an adequate reason to save Fry Creek, where they thought few people would hike.

These writers tended to reject post-materialist values, instead desiring “the good life,” which they equated with a secure livelihood and its associated material comforts. Proponents of the road wrote about how ‘multi-use’ resource management could continue to provide their families and themselves with a ‘good standard of living.’ Being able to commute daily to logging sites in nearby watersheds meant that they could live in communities with their families, rather than in logging camps. Multi-use management allowed single areas to provide multiple resources: wood, clean water, places to hike and hunt. Anti-road writers who had witnessed the result of other logging operations were not convinced that this was possible, including a SPEC representative who asked the District Forester if he could “furnish at your earliest convenience some examples in the West Kootenay where your department carries on programs of multiple use and describe their advantages.” He replied that “all our forest management practices are based on the

¹⁵² GR 1227, Petition from Kaslo residents, 27 December 1972.

balanced use (multiple use) concept.”¹⁵³ Pro-road writers saw the creation of a conservancy as ‘locking up’ land for the single use of recreation, therefore benefiting only a small pool of people. They had faith in the continual improvement of forestry techniques and they wanted to protect their jobs.

Although the petitions contained more than twice as many signatures as there were anti-logging letters, the Minister of Lands seems to have given more weight to the letters, which took longer to compose and expressed individual sentiments. He strengthened the Environment and Land Use Committee by providing it with a Secretariat, or staff support. The Secretariat was meant to coordinate different land use ministries, particularly when conflicts arose. In May 1973, ELUC commissioned the Purcell Range Study to investigate how to better manage the resources in this area.¹⁵⁴ Alan Chambers of the UBC Faculty of Forestry coordinated this regional study of land-use conflicts and submitted his report to government in January 1974. Chambers recommended creating a better resource inventory and a regional group to deal with resource planning, using resources more intensively, and improving communication between the government and the public.

Wilderness advocates had other ideas. Ric Careless, a University of Victoria student who grew up in Toronto, successfully organized opposition to logging in the Nitinat Triangle in 1970.¹⁵⁵ He connected with Kootenay environmentalists at the Earthwatch Conference in Golden in the fall of 1972. This conference brought together about 40 concerned activists and biologists who mapped out areas in the region that they

¹⁵³ GR 1227, Correspondence between representative of the local branch of SPEC, and JR Johnston, District Forester.

¹⁵⁴ Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 66, 118-119, 122-123.

¹⁵⁵ Careless came to Victoria with his family when his father, historian J.M.S. Careless, was a visiting professor at the University of Victoria in 1968-69.

thought should be protected, including the Purcell Mountains. Careless hiked to the Earl Grey Pass along Toby Creek the next summer and later met with the Minister of Lands Bob Williams to “urge that he take action on the Purcells.” The Minister offered Careless a position with the ELUC Secretariat that Careless accepted. When the Purcell Study was completed, Careless heard from his friend Art Twomey in the Kimberley area that Toby Creek was threatened by logging. According to his autobiography, Careless approached Williams and requested that ELUC create a large protected area within the Purcell Mountains, even though this went beyond Chambers’ recommendations. Careless and other members of the Secretariat compared different land uses in the Purcells, and with Twomey’s help, Careless drew a boundary encompassing “more than 300,000 acres of wildness.” Twomey had arrived in the area in 1969 with friends from the University of Wisconsin, following their consciences to the Kootenays in the midst of the Vietnam War. Twomey built a cabin in the subalpine White Creek Valley and packed in soil on which he grew vegetables. He traveled the Purcell range for enjoyment and sold photographs as a source of income. He also popularized the landscapes, plants and animals of the Purcells through slideshows and helped galvanize public opinion in favour of conserving the Purcell wilderness.¹⁵⁶

In March 1974, before the Purcell Range Study was made public, the provincial government announced the establishment of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, which included Hamill Creek and the Earl Grey Trail, and the adjacent Fry Creek canyon, as a Recreation Area.¹⁵⁷ Management of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy corresponded closely to Careless’ conception of wilderness, which he described in retrospect as having

¹⁵⁶ Careless, *To Save the Wild Earth*, 59-62, 47. Gil Parker on Art Twomey, *Times Colonist*, 13 July 1997, 6.

¹⁵⁷ Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 136.

a “priceless virginal quality... either it remains intact or it is irrevocably lost... Defile it with roads, cut down trees and, regardless of the logging technology used, the wilderness vanishes.” The Conservancy was also influenced by the American Wilderness Act, since the Order-in-Council that Careless drafted assigning management to ELUC stated that this “wilderness area will be maintained as a roadless tract in which both natural and ecological communities are preserved intact and the progressions of the natural systems may proceed without alteration...”¹⁵⁸ This, Jeremy Wilson notes, was the “first definition of wilderness found in BC legislation.”¹⁵⁹

Logging interests in the Kootenays would not accept the Conservancy quietly. In the July 1974 edition of the trade magazine *BC Lumberman*, journalist Martin A. Keeley outlined events leading up to the creation of the conservancy and interviewed regional logging company managers, small contractors and mill owners about the likely impact on their businesses. Keeley and his interviewees resented the influence of environmentalists who they saw as threatening their jobs and communities by restricting their timber supply. While the Purcell Study may have balanced different interests, Keeley argued that making a conservancy went far beyond its recommendations. Keeley expressed the frustration of forest workers who relied on what the study called “over-committed” forests, as forest companies had made their plans based on tenure arranged with the Social Credit government and assumptions that almost all the forest land would be available for logging. An article entitled “Will Kaslo be allowed to die? – the decision will be political” questioned which ‘people’ the NDP claimed to be looking after. If the Purcell Mountains could not be logged, Kaslo men could not come home to their families

¹⁵⁸ Careless, *To Save the Wild Earth*, 61, 64.

¹⁵⁹ Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 136.

in the evening but would have to work in camps further away; a family-run shingle mill employing local labour might be forced to close; and small companies would no longer be considered for bank loans. Keeley was particularly critical of a government decision to allow American Art Twomey to draw the boundary of the conservancy, a boundary that threatened local workers.¹⁶⁰

This anti-American sentiment brings us back to the root of environmentalism in the West Kootenays. Did it come from elsewhere, as Frank Zelko has argued in his study of Greenpeace? Americans and Quakers were certainly influential in the Kootenays, as they were in Vancouver. Yet the Kootenay region provided a particularly welcoming, or at least attractive, destination for Americans rejecting McCarthyism or the Vietnam War. Even though they may have asked “what are these crazy hippy Quakers up to this time?” older residents of Argenta and Johnsons Landing provided expertise and advice to young trailbuilders.¹⁶¹ Environmental campaigns show cross-pollination – the involvement of Quaker and Unitarian churches, cooperation between the Trail Wildlife Association and the newer SPEC, and a cross-section of society – including young and old, American immigrants and Canadian nationalists – writing to protest the Fry Creek road.

In the 1970s, British Columbians became more creative in their efforts to convince governments to make recreational spaces. In previous decades, residents employed petitions, lobbied their elected representatives, and offered submissions to government commissions. These techniques were still applied in the 1970s, but at the

¹⁶⁰ Martin A. Keeley, “Sanity Lost in the Wilderness;” “It’s a Tragic and Frustrating Time for Crestbrook;” “Six Years’ Sweat Down the Drain;” “Too Much ‘Shifting’ Around at Radium!” “Complex Resource Planning with Too Few Tools,” and “It’s Hard to Get a Bank Loan with No Timber!” all in *British Columbia Lumberman*, July 1974. [No author noted but possibly all by Keeley], “The Purcell Study;” “Logging on an Empty Gut;” “Will Kaslo Be Allowed to Die – The Decision Will Be Political;” “Kootenay Diary;” all in *British Columbia Lumberman*, July 1974.

¹⁶¹ Rik Valentine, personal interview, 2 May 2007. Valentine also observed how young people had the chance to prove their worth while working side-by-side fighting fires with oldtimers.

same time more state funding became available for community projects that were designed to achieve local goals. The centennial project correspondence reveals the importance of achieving protected status for the Hamill Creek watershed. In addition to lobbying local MLAs, residents of Argenta and Johnson's Landing collaborated with various departments at the newly-established Selkirk College. Biologists and English majors approached the challenge differently, applying for an ecological reserve, and writing poetry. Publications such as *Hamill's Last Stand* and *A Hiker's Guide to the Earl Grey Trail* publicized the valley throughout the Kootenay region, invited local use and helped establish an emotional connection to the area, much like the Carmanah Valley campaign in the early 1990s which included a boardwalk trail and coffee table book of artwork. When participating in government initiatives such as the celebration of the centennial or the Ecological Reserves Act, and creative endeavours such as a trail and poetry, did not protect the Hamill Creek Valley from logging, Kootenay residents tried something new for Fry Creek. Instead of waiting for the government to hold an open house about its plans for the canyon, old and new environmentally-minded groups organized their own meeting and invited government representatives. This meeting was followed by a wave of letters from Kootenay residents to the Minister of Lands.

This chapter also shows a shift in government responses to the outdoor recreation lobby. Public opinion reshaped government policy, for example when the development-oriented Social Credit government passed the Ecological Reserves Act and established an Environment and Land Use Committee. The Forest Service was slowly adapting to the desires of recreationists, taking more responsibility for forest trails and at least on paper, managing for multiple use. The Social Credit and NDP governments had quite different

approaches to watershed protection on Kootenay Lake. While individual MLAs supported the trail building project, the Social Credit government ultimately offered the Hamill Creek valley as a timber sale. In contrast, the NDP Minister of Lands bolstered the Environment and Land Use Committee with a Secretariat, set a moratorium in response to the letter-writing campaign, and devoted resources to the Purcell Range Study. Formerly second-class branches such as Fish and Wildlife and Parks took on a more important role as they received more funding and civil servants were willing to publicly acknowledge the destructive effects of logging on fish stocks.

These campaigns show quite clearly that concern about wilderness was not merely an urban phenomenon. Communities with smaller populations, whose residents lived closer to the land, participated in outdoor recreation and took action to preserve areas from development. Yet these case studies also show that “rural” is a problematic term in BC history. The Kootenay region had a population that was divided along several lines: industrial vs rural, older vs newer settlers, Canadians vs. American immigrants. Undeniable ties connected this region with Vancouver, the provincial and federal governments, and the United States, and influenced the success of the Conservancy. Yet there was enough collaboration with older settlers, and residents in many small communities, to argue that the movement was not just an urban transplant.

Chapter 7

Volunteer Trail and Bridge Builders in Powell River since 1988

In the late 1980s, a much older group than the Argenta trail builders shaped recreational space around Powell River, on the Sunshine Coast north of Vancouver. The B.O.M.B. Squad, an acronym derived from “Bloody Old Men’s Brigade,” is a volunteer group of retired men, many of them former employees of the pulp and paper mill, who have been building and maintaining bridges and trails in the bush east of Powell River for the past two decades.¹ This case study shares several characteristics with the other cases explored earlier: the Bomb Squad is a group of local residents who are creating recreational spaces out of Crown land at a low cost, spaces that help facilitate economic development.

Directly connected to a lineage of outdoor recreation in British Columbia, the Bomb Squad case study found me, rather than the other way around. The name of teen-aged Jack Gregson frequently appeared in newspaper accounts of the Forbidden Plateau in the 1930s, hunting for bugs in the summer or building a sled and skis for winter recreation. Gregson grew up to become a respected entomologist stationed in Kamloops, where he founded a hiking club. Discovering on the internet that Gregson was showing paintings in his 90s, I wrote to him in Kamloops. Gregson had kept in touch with Helmut Godau, a member of the Kamloops hiking club who had moved to Powell River in the late 1970s. Hearing from Gregson about my research, Godau wrote to me about the Powell River Bomb Squad that he helped start in the late 1980s. I wanted to learn more. Helmut Godau assisted me in planning a trip to Powell River, introduced me to several

¹ I will refer to the group hereafter as the Bomb Squad.

Bomb Squad members, and advised me on whom to interview. He also took me on a guided tour of several of the trails. Although my exposure to the Bomb Squad was largely shaped by Godau's enthusiasm for the group, the interpretation of the interviews is my own.

The Bomb Squad owes a good deal of its success to the carpentry and design skills learned and developed at the mill, but it is organized and carried out quite differently from mill work. Bomb Squad members volunteer their time and work for free, one day a week. They use their building skills in a more creative and aesthetically pleasing way, admitting that they work harder in the bush than they did when they were paid. Mill work was hierarchical and time-disciplined, compared to the Bomb Squad's lack of formal organization. They are egalitarian, careful to have no boss, although they take advice from more experienced members. Rather than giving directions, a member will say he needs a task to be done, and anyone can offer to do it. Some of them come out to work on additional days on alternative projects. They do not ask permission and treat the backcountry as a commons where they can manipulate the landscape for their own enjoyment and for the benefit of others.

The company town structure of Powell River seems to have affected the timing and gender make-up of the Bomb Squad. Composed of men only, the group began its work when the mill was downsizing and forest towns had to devise alternative economic plans. The pulp mill and adjacent forest land also shaped the group's building techniques and route choices. At work, men learned skills that they would use and teach to other volunteers. Logging companies cut wood for the mill in the forested backcountry, leaving roads and railway rights-of-way that remained even as a second-growth forest grew up.

Hikers drive logging roads to reach Bomb Squad trails that often incorporate decommissioned railway tracks. Retired mill employees and others are going back to the forests that provided the material for their livelihoods, to fashion a recreational space, using felled and left-over old growth to make long-lasting planks and shakes for their bridges. The forests around Powell River have provided both livelihood and recreation for Bomb Squad members.

To understand the economic and territorial context of the Bomb Squad, this chapter briefly surveys the history of Powell River and its forested hinterland, paying attention to local developments in outdoor recreation. Since the First World War, a pulp and paper mill, logging operations, and a rural informal economy have sustained residents of Powell River. Logging companies and various forestry work camps shaped the landscape on which the Bomb Squad now build their trails, influenced the directions these trails take, and the landscapes through which hikers pass. It is relevant to review the early twentieth-century history of Powell River because at least one Bomb Squad member grew up there in the Depression.² Mill employees and other Powell River residents were engaged in a power relationship with the Powell River Company, a relationship that may have affected the attitudes that Bomb Squad members hold towards access to public and timber lands surrounding Powell River.

² Roger Taylor, from John Carlson, personal interview, 26 May 2007, Powell River, BC.



Map 7.1: Powell River Trail Networks³
Source: Map designed by Christian Lieb

³ The Duck Lake trails are core trails built by the Bomb Squad. The group has also helped maintain the Powell Forest Canoe Route portages, and sections of the Sunshine Coast Trail. They have also built additional trails further out of town.

Using seven interviews conducted with Bomb Squad members in May 2007, we can examine the group's origins, membership, philosophy, and activities. The Bomb Squad negotiated with the Forest Service for space and resources and adapted to the activities of logging companies. These Bomb Squad trails serve an informal rural economy of Powell River and provide other social and economic benefits. The activities of the Bomb Squad indicate a continuum of low-cost local initiatives for outdoor recreation in British Columbia. Volunteer community groups such as this have enriched the outdoor recreation experience for the BC public and ensure that Crown land is open to public use. Although membership is exclusive, enjoyment of the trails and bridges is not.

Following the late-nineteenth century activities of logging operations and a few non-Aboriginal homesteaders settling in the territory of the Sliammon people, in 1909 the American Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Co. purchased local water and land rights. They imported European workers to construct a power generating dam across Powell River and a pulp and paper mill. The new Powell River Company produced its first roll of newsprint in April 1912. At the same time, the company designed and built a townsite with accommodation of varying quality and distinct neighbourhoods for managers, engineers, and other employees.⁴

In isolated company towns such as Powell River, the company exerted economic, material and cultural leverage over its employees, making decisions not only about employment but also regarding housing, consumer goods, education and recreational

⁴ G.W. Taylor, *Timber: History of the Forest Industry in B.C.* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd., 1975), 83-85.

facilities.⁵ Like other large employers who desired a compliant yet satisfied workforce, the Powell River Company tempered its control with paternal benevolence. Although it disbanded two attempted unions by 1921, the Powell River Company provided state of the art services and amenities to its employees in the homes it rented to them, such as telephones, cheap electricity, flower and tree-lined streets, and Christmas hampers.⁶

Powell River weathered the Depression due to a continuous international demand for paper, isolation from Vancouver's desperate unemployed, and a rich natural environment upon which those out of favour with the mill depended. The Powell River Company did reduce employment to four days a week but adjusted house rents accordingly. In 1933, socialist Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) candidate Ernest Bakewell, a critic of clearcutting and unregulated industry, was elected provincially in the district of Mackenzie, which included Powell River. In response, the Powell River Company fired about 350 employees suspected of having voted for Bakewell.⁷ Men who lost their jobs lost their accommodation, and their entire families were blacklisted. The company tried to forbid association between remaining employees and those they had purged.⁸

Although the Powell River Company may have controlled the lion's share of the cash economy of Powell River, residents drew on the rich environment and the rural informal economy if the male breadwinner lost his job.⁹ Settler families learned from

⁵ Katie Rollwagen, "Bunkhouse and Home: Company, Community, and Crisis in Britannia Beach, British Columbia," (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 2005), 1-6.

⁶ Barbara Ann Lambert, *Rusty Nails and Ration Books: Great Depression & WWII Memories, 1929-1945* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2002), 28, 90; Karen Southern and Peggy Bird, *Pulp, Paper and People: 75 Years of Powell River* (Powell River, BC: Powell River Heritage Research Association, 1988), 47-48.

⁷ Lambert, *Rusty Nails and Ration Books*, 19.

⁸ Lambert, *Rusty Nails and Ration Books*, 76, 108-111.

⁹ See Rosemary Ommer and Nancy Turner, "Informal Rural Economies in History," *Labour/Le Travail* 53 (2004).

Sliammon people how to fish for salmon and harvest other seafood. Blackberries were plentiful. Families who could afford it purchased their own property in the adjacent settlements of Cranberry, Wildwood, and Westview if they had no access to company housing or preferred not to rent. Families in and outside the company's townsite grew gardens, cut and sold wood from woodlots, stretched resources by converting flour sacks into clothing, and traded garden produce and used clothing with Sliammon people for fish and baskets.¹⁰ Homesteaders tried to make a living where the Bomb Squad trails now run. The informal economy of squatting and extracting botanical products continued to provide support into the postwar period. Hippies going back to the land squatted in abandoned houses in the nearby Olsen Valley in the 1960s, but the Forest Service burned down these houses.¹¹ Salal harvesting was a lucrative local industry by the 1960s. An economic study of Powell River in 1977 noted that tourism was underdeveloped, and that salal and alder harvesting could be better organized to boost the local economy.¹²

Small and large logging companies, shingle bolt operations, cordwood cutting, work camps and reforestation efforts shaped the landscape that surrounds the Bomb Squad trails. Logging in the Powell River hinterland preceded the pulp mill by a couple of decades. Sawmills at Moodyville and Burrard Inlet had logging camps near Powell River in the 1880s and 1890s.¹³ About four different logging railways operated in the area by 1907.¹⁴ Vancouver millionaire Doc Jameson and labour contractor Sam Sing started a shingle mill at Powell Lake in the 1920s, and the shingle bolt industry was

¹⁰ Lambert, *Rusty Nails and Ration Books*, 14-17, 44-45, 117.

¹¹ John Carlson, personal interview, 26 May 2007, and Helmut Godau, personal interview, 28 May 2007, Nanaimo.

¹² Karen R. Boyer, *An Economic Base Study of the Powell River Region* ([Powell River: s.n.], 1977), 104, 143-144, 151.

¹³ Taylor, *Timber*, 82-83.

¹⁴ Southern and Bird, *Pulp, Paper and People*, 4.

vibrant until Japanese employees were removed from the coast in March 1942. The Powell River Company owned forested land in Wildwood which it opened up for cordwood in the Depression, paying individuals a dollar a cord for cutting and a dollar for hauling. One local historian writes that people in Powell River had “free wood for the taking” in the bush, but does not indicate whether this was on their own, or Crown, land.¹⁵ Governments located work camps in nearby former logging camps in the 1930s and 1940s. Duck Lake was the site of a relief camp, then a forestry camp, in the 1930s. Sustainable forester Merve Wilkinson remembers that although the unemployed men were “kept out of circulation,” they also contributed to reforestation, planting the second growth forest through which some of the Bomb Squad trails now run.¹⁶ During the Second World War, the Powell River hinterland was still a convenient location to keep dissenters productive and out of circulation. From 1940 to 1942, Doukhobor and Mennonite conscientious objectors planted trees near Nanton and Lewis Lakes. These Alternative Service Workers, paid for by the federal government and administered by the provincial Forest Branch, fought fires, cut snags, replanted trees, and cleared railway grades for truck travel in coastal camps between 1942 and 1944.¹⁷ Sixty years later, the Bomb Squad commemorated these workers with the “Conchie Trail.”¹⁸

Early outdoor recreation in Powell River was localized, close to town and often sponsored by the Powell River Company. Operating on the same principles as the

¹⁵ Lambert, *Rusty Nails and Ration Books*, 39, 73-4, 81-83.

¹⁶ Lambert, *Rusty Nails and Ration Books*, 105. For more on Merve Wilkinson, see Goody Niosi, *Magnificently Unrepentant: The Story of Merve Wilkinson and Wildwood* (Surrey, BC: Heritage House, 2001).

¹⁷ Lambert, *Rusty Nails and Ration Books*, 18. Richard A. Rajala, “A Political Football: Federal-Provincial Cooperation in BC Forests, 1930-1995,” *Forest History Today* (Spring/Fall 2003), 33-34. See also Marlene Epp, “Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles: Conscientious Objectors in B.C. During World War II,” *BC Studies* 105-106 (Spring/Summer 1995).

¹⁸ Bresee papers, “Bridges and Boardwalks, 2001-2002.”

provincial government and company towns would in the 1950s, the Powell River Company offered recreational amenities as a way to keep workers happy. A playing field, leveled in 1913, was an early component of the townsite, followed by asphalt tennis courts. Public games could foster community solidarity, and as local historians observe, “It seemed that next to being an experienced papermaker, your best qualifications for a job in the company was to be a good athlete.” The playing field was also a site of cross-cultural interaction, as Archie McPhee remembered that the Sliammon community “always had a good soccer team and some of them played baseball.” In the early days of the mill, elite residents frequented the Ogborn’s rustic floating lodge on the Goat River. Nora McQuarrie remembers that carpenters in the mill made her a sled and a wagon when she was a child. In 1928, the company developed a public beach at Willingdon and hired a life guard. Residents skated at Cranberry Lake if the winter was cold enough, as in 1949.¹⁹

Following the Second World War, the Powell River Company started to relinquish some of its previous municipal responsibilities. In 1949, the company handed over the management of Willingdon Beach Park to the Lions Club.²⁰ The community became less isolated with an airport at Westview in 1952 and a highway connection to Vancouver in 1954, linked by ferries. The next year, the Powell River townsite was incorporated, along with neighbouring villages, as the District of Powell River, and the company divested itself of the townsite houses, selling them to employees.²¹ The

¹⁹ Information for the above paragraph is from Southern and Bird, *Pulp, Paper and People*, x, xii, 5-6, 11, 13, 20, 47, 53, 64, 95.

²⁰ Southern and Bird, *Pulp, Paper and People*, 114.

²¹ Lambert, *Rusty Nails and Ration Books*, 33.

Chamber of Commerce was active in park-making in the early 1960s, establishing campsites at Saltery Bay and Haslam Lake and a boat ramp at Powell Lake.²²

Powell River was one of the single-industry communities affected by restructuring in the forest industry in the late 1980s and early 1990s, just as the Bomb Squad started building trails.²³ This restructuring was a transformation from Fordist style manufacturing to economic flexibility. Fordist manufacturing, most effective in BC company towns from the 1940s to the early 1970s, involved assembly lines, the repetition of simple tasks, and a bargain between labour and capital that workers would receive good wages for efficiently transforming old growth forests for a global market, while lacking control over the work they did. This bargain was also attractive to workers because “high wages and employment opportunities were frequently complemented by desirable lifestyles organized around outdoor recreation.”²⁴ When the industry was restructured at the end of this long boom from mass production to more flexible production, this translated into higher paid work for people who learned on the job, and were involved in teamwork and creative problem-solving. It also meant downsizing: employment at the Powell River paper mill dropped from 2,600 individuals in 1973 to 1,275 in 1994, and some employees received incentives to retire early. When mills became less dominant employers, communities had to diversify and plan for their own economic development. Some, like Powell River, have taken advantage of scenery and location to develop their tourism potential.²⁵ The Bomb Squad and their trails appear to be connected to the restructuring of the forestry sector in Powell River, as the mill

²² Southern and Bird, *Pulp, Paper and People*, 57, 158.

²³ Roger Hayter and Trevor Barnes, “The Restructuring of British Columbia’s Coastal Forest Sector: Flexibility Perspective,” *BC Studies* 113 (Spring 1997), 7-34.

²⁴ Hayter and Barnes, “Restructuring of British Columbia’s Coastal Forest Sector,” 11.

²⁵ Hayter and Barnes, “Restructuring of British Columbia’s Coastal Forest Sector,” 22, 26-32.

downsized and local residents sought ways to make their community more attractive to locals and tourists, in this case within a flexible, creative volunteer sector.

Before the Bomb Squad started operating in the late 1980s, local hiking trails were rudimentary and did not meet the demands of the growing hiking population. Local hikers had access to old logging roads and railway grades, some of which were maintained as trails by the Forest Service, alpine trails that were marked by the Alpine Club, and grant-funded trails built in town by the short-lived Greenways Society.²⁶ Describing a common form of outdoor recreation prior to the Bomb Squad, John Carlson recalled that “a few people drove up the logging roads, and they’d walk over to a lake.” Roy Hewitt explained that early Bomb Squad members were hikers motivated by a desire to get off the straight, open logging roads and into the forest: “we were hiking a great deal on logging roads, and they’re most unpleasant. So we wanted to get off into the bush. We were all pretty keen on the BC bush.” John Hooper made a distinction between the Forest Service, which “probably used a lot of logging roads, skid roads” for their trails, and the Bomb Squad which went “into the bush and made brand new, virgin trails.” In this case, “virgin” refers to an area that was not accessible by hiking trails, although it could be first or second growth forest.²⁷

The Bomb Squad began with a few separate trailbuilding projects by small groups of friends who soon joined together to build longer and more challenging trails than were available locally. Beryl Hooper, a member of the Wednesday hikers, and her husband John started building the “Hooper Loop” before the Bomb Squad was organized. They

²⁶ Niels Voss, personal interview, 26 May 2007, Powell River, and Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007, Powell River.

²⁷ John Carlson, personal interview, 26 May 2007; Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007; John Hooper, personal interview, 24 May 2007, Powell River.

were motivated by curiosity and wanted to extend a trail that was already in use. Working on the weekends before John retired, they could only do so much on their own without a chainsaw. John invited Helmut Godau and Roy Hewitt to help them. Independently, Tony Mathews, a mill employee who had taken early retirement when the mill was downsizing, decided to build a trail to connect his home at Mowat Bay to Haywire Bay and Lost Lake so he could go fishing. This mountaineer and “whiz with a chainsaw” made the trail himself but asked Roy Hewitt and two carpenters, Roger Taylor and Jim Koleszar, to help complete the driftwood bridge in 1988.²⁸

While still at work on the Hooper Loop, Godau, Hooper and Hewitt started to investigate the possibility of building another trail near the Southview Road. Lorna McCann of the Thursday hikers showed Helmut the destruction that a windstorm had caused near an old homestead. Helmut took Roy to look at the bluffs in the area, and Roy saw a rock face that reminded him of Gibraltar, which he had seen while sailing with the merchant navy in the Second World War. They decided to make a trail to the bluff but determining a route was difficult. One day they struggled through a clearcut and ended up at a track that was a short walk to where they had parked; however, this track did not go in the direction they wanted. Another day they took a different route in, through salal and heavy underbrush. Again they met the same track, which formed a loop. The track was made in the 1920s by homesteaders who built themselves a six-wheel drive truck. The group decided to use the existing track and build a spur out to the bluff.²⁹ This Marathon trail incorporated the beginning of a larger group, including Tony Mathews and Roger

²⁸ Margo Pfeiff, “Bomb That Brush: Renegade Retirees,” *The Walrus* September 2008. Available online at <http://www.walrusmagazine.com/articles/2008.09-field-notes-bomb-that-brush-margo-pfeiff-life-after-retirement/> (Accessed 19 May 2009); Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007; notes Roy Hewitt.

²⁹ This was called Marathon Trail after Roger Taylor’s participation in the Boston Marathon.

Taylor who had worked on the bridge to Haywire Bay, Helmut Godau and John Hooper who had helped build Hooper's Loop, Roy Hewitt, who had worked on both projects, and Bob Innes, a sawfiler.³⁰

Since its beginnings in 1988, the Bomb Squad has built about 60 bridges and 200 km of trails on public land for the common good.³¹ This volunteering takes place in a social context for the benefit of a community where most members have lived for some time. The Bomb Squad began as informal volunteering with friends and has since formalized to the degree that the group has a name, a limited membership, and acts as an entity in relation to the Forest Service. The accomplishments of the Bomb Squad show how valuable seniors are as a resource, in the ways that they support rural communities through their volunteer efforts. If they have "aged-in-place" or grown older in a community, they have potentially accumulated a high level of social capital.³² The seven Bomb Squad members that I interviewed have lived in Powell River for an average of 45 years.³³ One was born in Powell River, one arrived as an infant, four arrived to work as adults between 1957 and 1979, and one relative newcomer had been in town for 14 years.

Social capital (the benefits resulting from social ties) and human capital (skills, education, tools) have been essential to the growth and survival of the Bomb Squad.

Social connections that involve trust, shared labour, and the flow of information can

³⁰ Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007; Helmut Godau, personal interview, 28 May 2007; John Hooper, personal interview, 24 May, and Roy Hewitt notes.

³¹ As of May 2007.

³² Amy Qiaoming Liu and Terry Besser, "Social Capital and Participation in Community Improvement Activities by Elderly Residents in Small Towns and Rural Communities," *Rural Sociology* 68 vol. 3 (2003).

³³ This is a conservative and approximate average: one man whose age I don't know was born in Powell River and left for about 7 years as a young man.

promote volunteering.³⁴ Bomb Squad members met each other through their work, spouse, outdoor activities, or the provision of services. John Carlson was connected to Helmut Godau by doing business with the school board. Several Bomb Squad members invited their physician, Dr. Andy Davis, to join. “I jokingly asked whether they had a little meeting to see if I was okay,” Davis recalls, “but I’ve still never understood how people join... (my membership) was just serendipitous.” Having a common cultural background could be a stepping stone to friendship. According to Helmut Godau’s British wife, Una, Beryl Hooper “was my friend... Then we asked them for tea, they were English.” Helmut met Roy Hewitt by chance: when Helmut got his power saw stuck on the Hooper Loop, Roy came along, and returned home to retrieve his chainsaw.

Bomb Squad members bring to the task their valuable human capital, in the form of social skills, work skills, ability, equipment, and transportation. The human and social capital linking Roger Taylor, a long distance runner and master carpenter, to the Bomb Squad serves to illustrate how members are connected through interdependence and the different skills and services they can offer. Taylor provides knowledge of carpentry and structures and originally supplied most of the equipment until other members bought some of their own. The Bomb Squad uses Roger’s tool box, and newer members are asked to carry this box in to the worksite, likely because they are younger. As John Carlson explains, this tool box contains

a sledgehammer, two crescent wrenches,... plus a couple [of] claw hammers, tapes, levels, everything else, you know. Which you don’t really need all the time. But he insisted on bringing this into the bush. So everybody doesn’t like to pack it, and they’d always give this to the new guy in the block.

³⁴ John Wilson and Marc Musick, “Who Cares? Toward an Integrated Theory of Volunteer Work.,” *American Sociological Review* 62 vol.5 (October 1997), 699.

[If it's] an hour's hike in there, well that's too bad.³⁵

Another member drives Roger to the work site most weeks, but depends on Roger telling him what site they will work at that day.³⁶

The accomplishments of the Bomb Squad are shaped by the previous work experience and skills of the members. Four of the seven interviewees had worked at the mill and held positions at different times as engineer, superintendent, paper maker, electrician, carpenter and millwright. Roger Taylor composed "Roger's Rules," that the Bomb Squad follows to construct solid and safe bridges. Taylor's mill work involved working with some of the same basic structures that also apply to bridge construction.³⁷ John Hooper, a millwright, contributed his ideas and woodworking skills. Niels Voss worked as a carpenter as a young man, became an engineer and superintendent at the mill, and has contributed his knowledge of "structures, mechanics, [and] strength of materials." Roy Hewitt worked as a policeman in Britain then an electrician at the mill, and said that he did not use any of his professional skills with the Bomb Squad, because he "learned to walk much earlier on in life, and that's mostly what we did with the Bomb Squad."³⁸

Bomb Squad members also come from other occupational groups. Helmut Godau worked at various jobs around the province before retiring as superintendent of operations for the school board in Powell River. His forte has been planning routes, naming them, and making the signs. John Carlson owned a concrete company and

³⁵ Carlson adds: "And then Roger would always have, well we might need some extra nails, so we'd have eight inch twist nails, twelve inch twist nails, well we'd need a bunch of six inch nails, too. And we might need some four inch nails. So he always ended up putting in too much... So that was your apprenticeship, packing in the tool box."

³⁶ Dr. Andy Davis, personal interview, 24 May 2007, Powell River.

³⁷ Roger Taylor, personal interview, 25 May 2007.

³⁸ John Hooper, personal interview, 24 May 2007; Niels Voss, personal interview, 26 May 2007; Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007.

donated concrete to the Squirrel Crossing bridge. Dr. Andy Davis, an internal medicine specialist, comments that because of the danger posed by chainsaws and power saws it is helpful to have a physician onsite. Although the Bomb Squad suffers few accidents, Dr. Davis provided support and accompanied a member to the hospital when a falling tree fractured that man's arm.³⁹

On Bomb Squad projects members learn new skills from each other, and gain knowledge about the natural environment. Dr. Davis learned how to use construction tools and build bridges. John Carlson joked that Roger's Rules must be memorized, "or you'd fail." Roy Hewitt learned about bridge design from Roger Taylor, and the two of them found out "how to cut trees down, how to get out of the way!" Helmut Godau "learned how to appreciate my fellow man" and get "along with other people." Roger Taylor has learned about the properties of different kinds of woods than are sold at the local lumber store. He explains that "this is something you learn in your trades, that you look at everything that's possible, from every angle... You just automatically observe everything."⁴⁰

Although relations within the Bomb Squad are egalitarian, it is an exclusively male group. This may be an offshoot of the sexual division of labour in resource-dependent towns where men worked primarily in trades, production or management in the forest sector, and women usually worked as housewives, or in the clerical or service sectors.⁴¹ Once they retired, these men built with physical labour the trails and bridges

³⁹ Several members continue to work part time in their retirement: for example in municipal politics, operating a whale watching company, doing contract work, or picking and selling mushrooms.

⁴⁰ Dr. Andy Davis, personal interview, 24 May 2007; John Carlson, personal interview, 26 May 2007; Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007; Helmut Godau, personal interview, 28 May 2007; Roger Taylor, personal interview, 25 May 2007.

⁴¹ At least two wives of Bomb Squad members that I spoke with worked in secretarial positions in town. On the sexual division of labour in forest towns, see Brian Egan and Susanne Klausen, "Female in a Forest

their wives could use for leisure. Yet, women played an important role in creating the Bomb Squad. Beryl and John Hooper built the “Hooper Loop” before the Bomb Squad was started. Una Godau and her friend initiated the Wednesday hikers. As she explains, “I liked hiking. I used to have a dog. And I found my own little trails up into the bush, (that) I could walk from our home.” The Wednesday hikers began by taking short hikes in the morning; others wanted to go further but the trails were not available. On the weekends, Una showed her husband Helmut where they had been hiking, and “he’d say, well you can do this and you can make this longer, and joined up these different little tiny trails.” Their hiking area expanded as more people joined with knowledge of different short trails, and “when the husbands started getting interested then they wanted to take their tools, make it longer and more difficult.” Before he retired, Helmut’s time was constrained by his employment and working on the house, but when he got interested in the trails, he says, “It was boring for us because we wanted mountains.” Although women were avid weekday hikers, they left the building to their husbands. When John and Beryl Hooper and Helmut and Una Godau took off one Sunday to scope out a trail to the rock bluff they had named Gibraltar, the men “went out and tagged an area that we knew of,” while “the girls made a fire and made coffee.”⁴²

Women supported the Bomb Squad and encouraged their husbands to participate, but their own participation was minimal, or an anomaly. John Carlson commented that retirement abruptly left men at home with little to do. His wife has supported his involvement because she thought it made him healthier. Helmut Godau’s “wife always

Town: The Marginalization of Women in Port Alberni’s Economy,” *BC Studies* 118 (Summer 1998), 7. See also Patricia Marchak, *Green Gold: The Forest Industry in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983).

⁴² Una Godau speaking at Helmut Godau interview, 28 May 2007; John Hooper, personal interview, 24 May 2007.

said, there was peace in the house when I came home [from working with the Bomb Squad]. There was a happiness there.” When asked whether women helped with the building, Roy Hewitt answered “Not really, no. I would like to have said yes, to that. They were behind us all the way, in a lot of ways, but didn’t actually come into the bush and work with us in there, no.”⁴³ At one time a woman brought donuts out to the Bomb Squad every Thursday, and each member suspected she was interested in himself. Only one member, surveyor Dick Donnelly, was single. This woman eventually married Donnelly on the Sweetwater trail at a site called “Beautiful.”

The Bomb Squad lies somewhere between a formal and an informal volunteer group. It is formal in the sense that it is a defined group with a consistent membership that operates one day a week for a particular purpose. It also has a website, consisting mostly of photographs, and a “loose association” with other groups such as the Forest Service and Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society.⁴⁴ It is informal in the sense that it grew out of a group of friends, acquaintances and workmates who have rejected such organizational trappings as a president or regular planning meetings. Members appreciate the lack of hierarchy and leadership. “One of the beauties” of the Bomb Squad, according to Dr. Andy Davis, is that it has “no bureaucracy.” Decisions are made by consensus, and new projects can be proposed by anyone and chosen by the group. Rather than having a leader, the group takes advice from those who have knowledge of carpentry and structures, and anyone can contribute ideas.

⁴³ Wives helped with trail maintenance, i.e. raking the trails. John Carlson, personal interview, 26 May 2007; Helmut Godau, personal interview, 28 May 2007; Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007.

⁴⁴ The Bomb Squad website is www.squad.ca. For the Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society, see <http://www.sunshinecoast-trail.com/prpaws.htm> (Accessed 19 May 2009).

Bomb Squad members go to work in the bush every Thursday for a variety of reasons, most having to do with a common good or the enjoyment of a cooperative effort. Several members said how important fellowship and camaraderie were in their decision to work with this group, which was as significant as the bridges and trails they build. As Niels Voss states, “We enjoy each other’s fellowship, and we enjoy the activity, being outdoors, that’s the primary motivator.” From the beginning, the Bomb Squad has responded to community need in extending trails that their wives hike or replacing single-log bridges where a hiker has slipped. They have carefully built an almost fool-proof network, with signs and reflecting markers, so that people less familiar with the forest can go out and not get lost.

The men I talked to enjoy different types of hiking. Some hike with family and friends while others join organized groups on hikes near Powell River. Groups are identified by the days of the week, including the Wednesday hikers, a social group composed of “housewives, older people and recently retired males;” the Thursday hikers, a more exclusive group of naturalists and environmentalists; the weekend or Sunday hikers who do longer more strenuous hikes in alpine areas; and the Alpine Club.⁴⁵ Some trail builders no longer do a lot of hiking because of health problems. John Carlson would not define himself as a hiker, however he enjoys walking on the Bomb Squad trails with his family because those are “a nice little stroll.” The Bomb Squad trails are well marked and range from easy and level to more difficult, with tree roots exposed, making them accessible to a wide range of people.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Helmut Godau to author, personal communication, 6 August 2007.

⁴⁶ “Duck Lake/Mud Lake Trails” Map, Trail Descriptions. Map sponsored by Weyerhaeuser Company Limited, Pacifica Papers Inc., The Corporation of the District of Powell River, and the Province of British Columbia Ministry of Forests. The map (without trail descriptions) is available online at “Powell River:

One of the original philosophies of the Bomb Squad was to create access to the bush without spending a great deal of money, or if possible, none at all. The result is low-cost recreation for the builders, the community, and hikers. Bomb Squad members use and share their own tools and build bridges and trails for the most part with materials found on site. They generally carry in all the equipment they need from the logging road to the worksite, although on rare occasions the Forest Service has arranged to transport equipment or people by helicopter.

When the Bomb Squad builds a bridge, the group follows a general pattern. One of the members suggests an area that might need a bridge, for example where a railway grade extends to a creek and the trestle has rotted away. The men will assess the site and look for materials. The bridge sits on two long straight bridge logs, or stringers. The stringers and the handrails are normally the only parts of the bridge that are cut down, while the rest is salvaged from downed wood. Care must be taken in the selection of the stringers – they should be tall and straight and not much narrower at the top than at the base. The stringers are carefully felled with chainsaws and gradually pulled into place with the use of a tirford jack, a pulley system attached to the log that moves the log a few centimetres each time the lever is moved forward and backward. Next, the men make decking for the length of the bridge from fallen cedar that was cut to a standard length of 42 inches when the area was first logged, but not removed from the forest, possibly because these pieces were flawed and it was not economical at the time to remove them. Decking is made by cutting grooves in the end with a chainsaw and driving wedges down the length of the log with sledgehammers to separate the planks. Sometimes the planks

have to be smoothed off with an adze. Originally 42 inches, the deck planks are trimmed to 36 inches when they are secured in place.



Picture 7.1: Decking on Squirrel Crossing Bridge.⁴⁷

Photographer: Christian Lieb, May 2007.

Photograph used with permission.

Interspersed with the three-foot planks are seven-foot-long ones that the hand rail posts stand on. These hand rail posts are braced with diagonal beams from the outer edge of the longer planks. Two young cedars are cut and smoothed off to make handrails. To ensure that hikers have a firm footing on the bridges in wet weather, the Forest Service provided the Bomb Squad with iron grating, and more recently, lighter aluminum grating. At the end of a project, the Bomb Squad cleans up the stray cuttings and burns them in a bonfire. With wieners and champagne, the men celebrate the completion of a bridge and plan their next project. If there is stormy weather over the winter, the men and sometimes

⁴⁷ The decking made from cedar slabs, which were cut at the end with a chainsaw then split with a wedge. Iron grating from the Forest Service is nailed on top.

their wives will return to completed trails and clear fallen trees or rake debris from the trail. Recent projects have incorporated new designs, such as a pagoda-style shelter in the middle of a bridge called Edge's Way, tree roots recovered from a stream and fit together as a handrail, and a viewing platform at Kelly Falls (see Pictures 7.3-7.5).



Picture 7.2: Squirrel Crossing Bridge.
Photographer: Christian Lieb, May 2007.
Photograph used with permission.



Picture 7.3: Edge's Way Bridge.

Photographer: Christian Lieb, May 2007 – Photograph used with permission.



Picture 7.4: Handrail at Edge's Way.

Photographer: Christian Lieb, May 2007 – Photograph used with permission.



Picture 7.5: Kelly Falls.
Photographer: Christian Lieb, 2007.
Photograph used with permission.

Most of the trails and structures the group builds are on lands managed by the Forest Service. When the Bomb Squad started its work, the two groups were somewhat distant in their ideologies and wary of one another. Despite a local desire for longer, more interesting trails, the Forest Service was reluctant to have another group add on to its trail system. Government officials thought the existing park system was adequate and did not

want a renegade group building trails through the bush. Rather, local hikers were supposed to “Go to the park, go home.”⁴⁸

For their part, in the beginning the Bomb Squad did not ask permission to build their trails and did not investigate land tenure. One of the earliest trails, Hooper Loop, gradually disappeared because it was built on private land that was subdivided for housing lots. Bomb Squad members treated the undeveloped bush as their own playground. Making use of a Forest Service map, two members located “a small pool of water... where no one had ever been before. No trails, no roads, no nothing.” They dammed the pool, “unknown to the Forestry,” and went swimming there.

When the Forest Service found out about the Bomb Squad trails and bridges, it was supportive. Roy Hewitt describes the initial meeting with Forestry:

Forestry was very good to us. When we first started off, we sneaked into the bush and did these different things. We almost went around on tiptoe. And we didn't want to be told you can't do this, get out. And so we were very careful. And then we realized, that the bosses down there knew all about what we were doing, and were very quietly watching what we were up to. And we went in to see them at their invitation, and they said, really, shortcut the whole conversation: you are doing what we are really supposed to do... So they decided that they would finance it by giving us the hardware, nails and so on, and we proceeded from there, in with them. It's a good relationship.⁴⁹

Since then, Forestry has provided some support and attempted to establish limited control over the activities of the Bomb Squad. The Forest Service set up bank accounts for the Bomb Squad, which does not want to handle money, so members could purchase supplies. When a woman slipped on an early Bomb Squad bridge, the group went in and tried to rough up the bridge surface with chainsaw cuts but Forest Service Recreation Officer Bob Rabantad gave them metal grating, which they now use on all the bridges.

⁴⁸ John Carlson, personal interview, 26 May 2007.

⁴⁹ Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007.

The Forest Service wants to have a record of where the trails will be located. It “approves” the trail locations but has not really denied any proposals to date. Roger Taylor explains that the Forest Service would “take over” the trails in the sense of incorporating them into the Forest Service system and maps, although the Bomb Squad continues to maintain these trails. Helmut Godau describes an early attempt of the Forest Service at surveillance:

When we built the Phantom Bridge, Forest Service wanted to regulate us, but they wanted to do it the gentle way, so they thought they’d go in a delegation. They had cookies and whatnot, and they got lost. And we were waiting for them. And I don’t think they ever brought it up again, the regulation.⁵⁰

Sometime after Helmut left the group, the Forest Service made a stronger effort to keep track of the Bomb Squad’s activities. According to Roy Hewitt,

Now it’s a little bit different. Forestry has a little bit more control, in that they have a lady who was on the contract to Forestry, and she goes out with them every time they go out, so Forestry is aware all the time of what they’re up to.⁵¹

Coordination with the Forest Service has its benefits though, in the form of materials, occasional helicopter transportation, and sporadic cooperation with logging companies.

The Forest Service generally acts as an intermediary between the Bomb Squad and logging companies. The members I spoke with had little direct contact with these companies. At one point, the logging roads were almost cut off to hikers when MacMillan Bloedel gated the roads. Originally there was a manned gate at the main logging road, where hikers could sign in on the weekend, then all the roads were gated. The group talked to MacMillan Bloedel and after that the company either left gates open for hikers or gave them a key. In return, hikers reported vandalism, an arrangement that

⁵⁰ Helmut Godau, personal interview, 28 May 2007.

⁵¹ Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007.

worked well. Godau found that Weyerhaeuser was more cooperative with the Bomb Squad when it took over logging in the Powell River area, even making sure that trail builders had radios when they went in during logging work time.⁵²

The Bomb Squad trails are at the mercy of logging operations: sometimes the clearcuts avoid the trails, and sometimes they cut right through. The Bomb Squad was involved in “several mini-battles” with logging companies to try to increase the distance between clearcuts and trails, but they were “never too successful” since these decisions were made on a voluntary basis by logging companies. One strategy is to build trails near the water’s edge because logging operations are required to leave a margin there.⁵³ Another way to avoid these conflicts has been to inform the Forest Service where the group plans to build a trail, and the Forest Service will tell them if they know of a conflict. Several trails have been cut over by a clearcut, for example the Blackwater Trail had to go through a clearcut, and in other cases the Bomb Squad cleans up after logging, because logging companies “don’t have the funds allocated for trail maintenance by their own crews. Which would be fairly expensive. Whereas we’re volunteer labour and we work very cheaply.”⁵⁴ In some cases, though, logging companies “would cooperate very nicely,” for example coordinating clearcuts with the Far Side Trail.⁵⁵ The trails are generally intended to “give people access to the out-of-doors” rather than as a conservation tactic. However, in one case the Bomb Squad felt strongly that a stand of timber should be preserved, at Confederation Lake, and the Forest Service agreed to

⁵² Helmut Godau, personal interview, 28 May 2007. On the history of MacMillan Bloedel, see Donald MacKay, *Empire of Wood: the MacMillan Bloedel Story* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1982).

⁵³ Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007.

⁵⁴ Niels Voss, personal interview, 26 May 2007.

⁵⁵ Roy Hewitt, personal interview, 24 May 2007; John Carlson, personal interview, 26 May 2007. The Powell Forest Canoe Route is managed by logging companies but contracted out to a local operator. The Bomb Squad has done work on this trail for the logging company which provided supplies.

that.⁵⁶ Confederation Lake is currently protected as part of Inland Lake Provincial Park (established in 1997), formerly a Forest Service Recreation Area.⁵⁷

In June 2008, Sliammon elders held a ceremony to honour Bomb Squad members, indicating a level of cooperation between local First Nations and trail builders. The Bomb Squad has also been working to rebuilding a section of the Sunshine Coast Trail through a logged woodlot on the reserve.⁵⁸ Although it is common for outdoor clubs to give Aboriginal names to natural features, the Bomb Squad is unusual in that Godau consulted Sliammon community members such as a school trustee and a carver/electrician, who recommended names for sites and trails.⁵⁹

Trailbuilding in Powell River is connected to the “rural informal economy” through Bomb Squad members who learned about the land and flora by participating in this economy. Bomb Squad trails also facilitate the current harvest of non-timber forest products. Members have a previous knowledge of the woods around Powell River from their experiences hiking, hunting, and picking salal.⁶⁰ Roger Taylor, who came to Powell River as a child in 1922, would follow logging roads and trails in the 1930s to go hunting in the Olsen Valley. When John Carlson returned to Powell River in 1962 after serving in the American navy, he tried to make a living harvesting salal. Brush pickers then could earn one to three hundred dollars a day if they were skilled. Mill workers supplemented

⁵⁶ Niels Voss, personal interview, 26 May 2007.

⁵⁷ BC Parks Website, “Inland Lake Provincial Park,” http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/inland_lk/ (Accessed 19 May 2009), “Inland Lake Provincial Park Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan,” December 2002, http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/planning/mgmtplns/inland/inland_ps.pdf (Accessed 19 May 2009).

⁵⁸ Pfeiff, “Bomb That Brush: Renegade Retirees.”

⁵⁹ Helmut Godau, personal interview, 28 May 2007.

⁶⁰ One member, Dick Donnelly, was familiar with the woods through his work as a surveyor. The volunteer work of the Bomb Squad, and some members’ involvement in informal and formal forest-based work, shows how rural residents know nature through both work and leisure. For an alternative perspective on knowing nature through work, see by Richard White, “Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?: Work and Nature,” in William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996) 171-185.

their income by picking brush in the evenings and weekends. Carlson found that picking salal was more complicated than he had expected, even though he had advice from an expert. So much of what he had gathered was discarded by buyers that he soon gave it up. Some Bomb Squad members do not show up in the fall for their volunteer trail building because they are “making too much money... picking pine mushrooms or chanterelles.” Other plants that are harvested locally include yew and ash branches (for canes) and yew bark (for Taxol, an anti-cancer drug), ferns, and huckleberries.⁶¹ The bush around Powell River also provides space for an ‘illegal economy.’ Plantation Row was named for a marijuana plantation that the Bomb Squad found. One member’s response to this plantation is representative of a general sense of fun that Bomb Squad members share: he marked every plant with a coloured ribbon similar to that used by the Forest Service.

The trails provide additional economic benefits for Powell River, beyond access to NTFPs. Niels Voss emphasizes that the community of Powell River, the Forest Service and the logging companies “get really good value for their money,” because the labour is volunteer and the wood is salvaged from the forest. The trail network provides a recreation area for local people and draws out-of-town visitors who stay for longer than planned or decide to return.⁶² Local companies who benefit from the work of the Bomb Squad have demonstrated their appreciation. For example, a bed and breakfast owner from Lund who offers guided hikes on these trails bought Bomb Squad members coffee, a nature retreat boarded members while they were building trails nearby, and the local

⁶¹ John Carlson, personal interview, 26 May 2007.

⁶² In response to an online article about the Bomb Squad, one reader posted this comment: “When we were looking to move up here to Powell River 10 years ago we were amazed that there were so many great trails to choose from. And, the bridges that they have created are incredible! These guys have made it possible to get into many beautiful areas. They should all be highly commended for their service.” Pfeiff, “Bomb That Brush: Renegade Retirees.”

Esso station owner, also a hiker, gives the Bomb Squad free gas and oil for their chainsaws.⁶³

Shaped by Powell River's history as a mill town, the Bomb Squad demonstrates the continuing importance of voluntarism and common land to the viability of outdoor recreation in British Columbia. Hiking for leisure seems to have gained popularity here in the late 1970s and 1980s. In response, residents of Powell River built a trail system whose quality, extent and proximity to settlement arguably rivals that of any other comparably-sized town in British Columbia. Powell River's forest-based industry shaped the landscape available for trails and the skills of Bomb Squad members. These trails may also be a creative response to downsizing and restructuring at the mill, and a recreational offshoot of the rural informal economy. Bomb Squad trails are built, as much as possible, outside the formal economy, instead drawing on social and human capital. The group avoids hierarchical organization and welcomes ideas from all members. Unhampered by tenure, they have exhibited a creative resistance to forms of authority in Powell River, in particular the Forest Service, by originally building their trails without permission on Crown and "unused" private land. Although Forest Service funding and control are both increasing, the Bomb Squad continues to choose its own sites and build trails and bridges at an impressive rate, ensuring that the public has free access to Crown land, and at the same time boosting the informal and tourist economies of Powell River.

⁶³ Niels Voss, personal interview, 26 May 2007; Helmut Godau, personal interview, 28 May 2007.

Conclusion

The logging industry has been putting food in our belly, clothes on our back and a roof over our heads our whole life. Now it is supporting our children. We are not asking to stop all logging but that the logging companies stop and think about the communities that they support and that support them. Gold River is a beautiful spot with some of the best biking trails in the world. We would like to preserve these trails and the tourism they bring here.

Living next to accessible old growth is an amazing draw for people to move to Gold River, or just enjoy it as they pass through. It is also what might keep Gold River on the map when logging isn't the big draw. We need these areas to stay a part of our community; we appreciate that we have been allowed to use them freely. Now it is more important than ever to keep these trees standing, lakes peaceful and trails accessible for eco-tourism, local kids to explore and use as outside classrooms and allow elk, deer, cougars and other wildlife to retain some of their natural environment.

The same thing is happening near Lake Cowichan and Mesachie Lake. An area previously known as 'Sleepy Hollow' isn't so sleepy anymore. It used to be a mushroom picker's paradise - the mossy hillsides were covered with chanterelles and scores of other wild mushrooms. It has all been cut down, and none of those mushrooms will grow there anymore. To add insult to injury, the companies have no intention of letting firewood cutters salvage the considerable waste they are leaving behind. As I speak, they are piling logs into huge piles for slash piles for burning.¹

An article in Victoria's *Times Colonist* newspaper in March 2009 addressed the recent move by logging companies to cut timber adjacent to such Vancouver Island communities as Gold River and Parksville. The article elicited comments from residents of those communities and of the Cowichan Valley, who face similar local deforestation. In recession conditions, companies argue, they need to move large accessible trees out to

¹ Comments from residents of Gold River and Cowichan Lake, in response to an article on logging old growth forests adjacent to resource-based communities on Vancouver Island. Judith Lavoie, "Old Growth Forests Fall in Tough Economy," *Times Colonist*, 7 March 2009. Accessed 10 April 2009. <http://communities.canada.com/victoriatimescolonist/blogs/soundoff/archive/2009/03/07260092.aspx>

market. In doing so, however, they are cutting down trees on land that residents use for recreation and as a source of drinking water, as happened when Island Timberlands recently cut old-growth trees on an island in Englishman River. On the east coast of Vancouver Island, private ownership of forests reaches back to the 1884 Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway land grant to Dunsmuir and associates. On the west coast, logging companies control land through tree farm licenses. A representative of Western Forest Products, operating near Gold River, emphasized that the company allows the public to use its lands because “We think it is a socially better choice to let communities use the land between rotations. The alternative, which I don't like, is closing the land to public use so people don't develop expectations.”²

Some of the themes expressed by the newspaper readers quoted at the beginning of this chapter echo sentiments expressed by residents of small and mid-size BC communities at earlier points in the twentieth century. They underline the fact that non-metropolitan residents use, enjoy, and hope to benefit from their forested hinterlands. The commentators from Gold River tolerate the logging operations that have contributed to their livelihoods, but argue that they have the right to enjoy the forests like anybody else and that not all forests should be cut. Natural landscapes helped draw workers and families to resource-based towns. Greenspaces contribute to the quality of life and keep workers happy in their leisure time. There is a sense of community ownership of local greenspaces and the desire to maintain these for future generations, despite control or ownership by logging companies. These lands are not just valued for recreation, but also as wildlife habitat. Nor are these recreational areas distinct from economic purposes,

² From Judith Lavoie, “Old Growth Forests Fall in Tough Economy,” *Times Colonist*, 7 March 2009. Accessed 10 April 2009.

<http://www.timescolonist.com/growth+forests+fall+tough+economy/1364932/story.html>

which range from tourism to harvesting non-timber forest products such as mushrooms. People who heated their homes with salvaged waste wood, that is now being burned on the spot where it was cut, view local forests as a common resource. These comments challenge the notion that residents of hinterland communities, although dependent on resource extraction for their livelihoods, do not appreciate unworked nature. They also challenge resource company control of these lands, since local residents use them for multiple common purposes, including recreation, tourism, and low-impact foraging.

Citizen use and enjoyment of a forested commons, and the integration of leisure with informal economic activities (harvesting non-timber forest products), and with formal economic activities (tourism), are central themes in this dissertation. Through outdoor recreation, local residents modified and enjoyed recreational spaces as producers and consumers. Recreational spaces contributed to local economies with food, fuel, plants and minerals that could be sold, and opportunities existed to start tourism-oriented businesses or for employment. These are also sites to build healthy bodies and community spirit. Local residents formed hiking and mountaineering clubs, and built community through trails, bridges and cabins. The residents' belief in rights to recreational hinterlands has prompted persistent negotiations with provincial and federal governments over land management. Over time these lobbying efforts became more pointed, more creative, and more inclusive of a broader range of local voices.

The case studies examined here show the significance of different themes over time. Boosterism and tourism promotion played a role in the creation of Mt. Revelstoke National Park in 1914, and in the interwar use of the Forbidden Plateau, which did not become parkland until 1967. These alpine areas were enjoyed by members of local

mountaineering clubs. The social and antimodern motifs of the British rambling movement appeared locally among the enthusiastic youth who used the Forbidden Plateau.

Two middle chapters consider provincial parks created at lakes in the 1940s and 1950s. During the Second World War, logging took precedence over park-making. Yet the Penticton Fish, Game and Forests Protective Association challenged this prioritization as part of a longer-term struggle to keep Fish Lake public and aesthetically pleasing for fishers and hunters. After the war, government and park planners re-ordered their priorities somewhat to favour small parks, associating camping with the good life and the advantages of democratic citizenship. Lake parks like Champion Lakes and Lakelse Lake became a way to offer industrial workers and other British Columbians constructive, egalitarian recreation on the weekends.

Yet, the initiative for park development continued to come from the grass roots. As the campaign for a wilderness preserve in the Purcell Mountains picked up momentum, residents of the West and East Kootenays applied new tactics to negotiate for recreational space, including building a trail, publishing hiking guides and protest poetry, organizing public meetings and writing letters. Responding to local sentiment, the Minister of Forests placed a moratorium on logging, and commissioned the Purcell Range Study. The establishment of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy in 1974 was made possible by a shift in provincial governing parties, rifts between provincial ministries, provincial and, especially, federal funding for youth projects, Canadian nationalism and American immigration.

The importance of woodcraft and links to the informal economy, especially significant in the interwar period, appear again in the trail and bridge building efforts of retired men on Crown land around Powell River. The postwar economic boom attracted workers to Powell River who retired when the mill was restructuring and decided to building trails in their spare time. The Bomb Squad points to new directions for nature-based tourism strategies that can help company towns adapt to new economic configurations.

By examining a number of British Columbian case studies, this dissertation offers three main contributions to the study of Canadian and North American environmental history in terms of understanding relationships between non-metropolitan citizens and their nearby recreational countryside. First, it argues that hinterland residents saw recreational nature as a fluctuating combination of commons, commodity, playground and wilderness. Second, it shows how the material culture of outdoor recreation followed a similar trajectory from woodcraft to “leave no trace” but that woodcraft persists and still plays a role in our physical relationships with nature. Finally, this study argues that recreational democracy operated in two directions, from the state to the local citizen as reforms to encourage citizens to participate in recreation, and from the local citizen to the state, in increasingly inclusive and varied projects to pressure the state to provide recreational spaces or to recognize local rights. Negotiations over recreational democracy created both tension and common interests between heartland politicians and experts, and hinterland recreationists.

These case studies highlight changing attitudes towards local nature over time. Nature was a shifting blend of commodity, commons, playground, and wilderness.

Before the Second World War, local promotion of Mount Revelstoke and the Forbidden Plateau shows the importance of attractive landscapes as commodities that could be advertised to tourists. Revelstoke residents pressed for and received an auto road all the way to the summit of Mt. Revelstoke while Comox Valley residents were divided on the value of a road directly into the Forbidden Plateau by 1930. The value of the plateau as a commons increased during the Depression as locals fished there and collected plants for sale. In the 1930s and 1940s, fish and game clubs throughout the province began to organize to maintain forests and streams as common property. The Penticton Fish, Game, and Forest Protective Association, for instance, lobbied for a park at Fish Lake to protect ongoing local use, not to package the uplands as a tourist commodity. In postwar negotiations between local residents and the provincial government, parks remained important for local employment and leisure for working families. Intervention into the nature of parks was feasible and acceptable. Plans to make the Champion Lakes more suitable for swimming and fishing included interventions into nature such as trapping and removing the beaver population; dismantling and rebuilding dams; and poisoning local fish species and introducing non-native game fish. Champion and Lakelse were not meant primarily to draw tourists from more distant points but were planned as a temporary escape on new highways from nearby hinterland and factory towns. In the 1970s, individuals writing about Fry Creek, south of the Earl Grey Trail, described the Purcell Mountains as a “wilderness” that offered psychological benefits to visitors in its “untouched state,” a treasure to be valued for future generations. “Pristine” nature was privileged over access and commerce in the Conservancy, which excluded roads, motorized transportation and most types of work. Rather than following this trajectory of

increasing the exclusivity of nature and culture, modern trail-builders in Powell River have designed a new relationship to nature. The territory where they volunteer, much of it second-growth forest, is as much a playground as a wilderness. Their purpose is to make the woods accessible for both locals and tourists. Use of the woods as a commons to harvest non-timber forest products preceded the work of the Bomb Squad and now takes advantage of it.

Non-metropolitan relationships to nature were mediated by the material culture of equipment and trails that enabled enjoyment of and access to recreational spaces. The material culture of outdoor recreation shifted dramatically over the twentieth century, but as the activities of the Bomb Squad attest, the story does not end with “leave no trace.” Ascertaining information about equipment and trail construction required interviews with the users and makers. They revealed that in the interwar Comox Valley, necessity and the absence of a local supply of recreational gear prompted creativity. Young people (or their parents) bought skis by mail order, but they also designed and built skis, toboggans, packboards and seal skin ski covers with material that they had on hand or could procure locally. Handmade outdoor equipment was one way to keep costs at a minimum. Local residents turned their ability to “make do” to electrical and mechanical innovations, such as Clinton Wood’s use of an old streetcar motor to harness upriver electricity for light and hot water at his high elevation lodge. After the war, Angus McMonnies rigged up army surplus material to build the hill’s first ski tow for skiers who were beginning to purchase specialized equipment.³ By the 1970s, a changing ethos and overuse of recreational areas resulted in builders of the Earl Grey Trail encouraging hikers to “leave no trace” by using campstoves instead of building fires. Trail construction material came

³ Angus McMonnies, personal interview, May 2006, Victoria.

from the immediate surroundings, but for cutting huge trees that had fallen across the overgrown trail, teenagers hauled in chainsaws and fuel. Yet, at the turn of the twenty-first century, the Bomb Squad still has links to the woodcraft tradition. Some members have spent many years in the same woods hunting and gathering plants. One member reported that the group tries to work as quietly as possible, enjoying the sound of conversation and the silence of the woods. Chainsaw use is kept to a minimum, and the group favours handtools and elbow grease.

Recreational democracy is a continuing theme in twentieth-century British Columbia. Since the early twentieth century, the state and reformers espoused the notion that outdoor recreation could build healthy, fit, and democratic boys and men. The urban playground movement touted the perceived benefits of constructive outside play for the development of youth. At the outbreak of the First World War, parks were intended as beneficial playgrounds for all classes and ages of male citizens, an escape from sedentary urban conditions, and more implicitly, as a training ground for soldiers. The Comox newspaper celebrated the extraordinary strength of young men who took to the mountains for multi-day marathon hikes. Through Boy Scouts and Girl Guides in the interwar period, young people learned the values of citizenship, teamwork and woodcraft skills. During the Depression, the Young Men's Forestry Training Program camps aimed to keep promising young men off the streets, employed and learning forestry skills. Like other moral reformers of the postwar era, experts at the BC Natural Resources Conferences repeatedly paired outdoor recreation with democratic citizenship. The establishment of new parks near single-industry towns and employing youth to build them was intended to prevent juvenile delinquency and to offer working families the

“good life.” Through such funding programs of the 1970s like Opportunities for Youth, the federal government intended to integrate alienated youth by involving them in constructive work for community improvement. This program went so far as to allow participants to propose and design the projects themselves. The initiative for Bomb Squad trails came entirely from its members and not from government. The Forest Service at first tolerated its trails, appreciating that the Bomb Squad was doing work that the Forest Service did not have the personnel for, and now provides some materials, such as metal grating, to increase the safety of bridges.

Recreational democracy worked in two directions – not only did the state and reformers encourage recreation but citizens also demanded it as a right. Local residents communicated with their elected representatives to keep community hinterlands public and accessible, partly because of their perception of nature as a commons. Initiatives to create access to recreational space was limited by class, gender and citizenship early in the century but later campaigns to keep nature public and protected became more inclusive of a broader spectrum of voices and a wider variety of approaches. At first, promoters, users, and builders formed three distinct, if overlapping groups. In Revelstoke and the Comox Valley, tourism promoters were male civic leaders, while trailbuilders were men on the margins of power such as enemy aliens or the unemployed. Although women played a limited role in tourism promotion, younger women were active participants in mountaineering clubs in both locations. Elsewhere in the province in the 1930s, fish and game clubs, which had been involved in fish stocking efforts, protested when resort developers or agricultural pre-emptors privatized lake shores. Members of these clubs sent letters and petitions to government representatives, and submitted briefs

to Forestry Commissions. Local pressure forced Chief Forester C.D. Orchard to go on a field trip to Fish Lake in the Okanagan with male “interested parties” to arrive at a compromise. After the war, women in the vicinity of the Champion Lakes took a more active role in lobbying their MLAs for domestic park spaces for their families, or employment for their husbands at new parks. In the West Kootenays in the early 1970s, preservation involved men and women; teenagers, parents and college professors; Canadian nationalists and American immigrants; residents of industrial company towns and of intentional rural communities. Residents of Argenta and Johnson’s Landing used provincial and federal funding to further their own interests – to pay for trail construction and to protect the trail corridor from logging and road building. Local residents helped make the decision over the Purcell Mountains public by organizing a meeting in Nelson and inviting government representatives. Bypassing bureaucratic routes of writing to request public access or protection, members of the Bomb Squad asserted their right to recreation by building their own trails through the forest on routes they wanted to take. Political activism may have been necessary if clearcuts threatened more of their trails, but many of the areas where they have been building for the last twenty years have remained woodlands, and only a few have been logged.

While we cannot assume that these cases represent all non-metropolitan communities, they do illustrate clearly how local residents initiated, shaped and enjoyed recreational spaces. Hinterland communities were not isolated from heartland ideas and newcomers, but they were located in closer proximity to recreational space, tried to keep these areas open for public use, and found ways to use these areas for economic benefit and for their own leisure. Their interest in recreational land use has resulted in persistent

negotiations with landowners and governments, and the creation of parks and trails that are available to the public today.

Residents of the communities examined here had a stake in local recreational areas, creating their own “mythopoetic spaces” close to home, organizing social groups to take advantage of and create access to these places, and creatively integrating these areas into the local economy. These characteristics of rural recreation offer ideas for land management. When creating parks, provincial and federal governments can recognize and foster local initiatives, as long as they do so in a flexible and respectful way, in order to create recreational areas that are satisfying to the local community. This might mean incorporating local design and using local materials rather than imposing a standard design. Several benefits could result from building on local recreational areas: communities may be more receptive to park establishment, and parks can benefit community economic health. Park managers should consider allowing relatively sustainable aspects of the formal and informal economies to continue to operate in these areas, although this decision must be made carefully based on the long-term ecological impacts of specific activities. Finally, if government encourages (but does not rely on) volunteer labour, this invites a wider spectrum of social and creative opportunities for local residents, and could increase access by eliminating park fees.

Historic rural recreation suggests new ways of integrating work and leisure, making a living and quality of life. Preservationists held a lofty ideal that people could separate themselves from some kinds of nature (such as parks) thereby saving that nature. Cultural historians, however, argue that people have never been separate from nature, and

to separate the two can lead to detrimental effects for both.⁴ Looking at nature as culturally constructed and ever the result of interactions with humanity contains the intellectual danger that a range of human modification of nature is acceptable. Do cultural historians risk replacing their environmental activism with relativism? Donald Worster reminds us that environmentalism was the original goal of environmental historians and asks us to think about how our work leads to an amelioration of environmental conditions.⁵ Rural recreation in BC is complementary to the concept of “social nature,” the “inevitable intertwining of society and nature in any and all social and ecological projects.”⁶ Social nature incorporates moral responsibility:

The notion that nature is socially constructed, rather than a pure identity external to society, forces us to take responsibility for *how* this remaking of nature occurs, in *whose* interests, and with *what* consequences (for people, plants, and animals alike).⁷

In several of these cases, nature was remade in the interests of some local residents who benefited by enjoying these spaces, initially with the labour of others and paid for by the government, but more recently with the labour of those who envision the recreational space. These areas are also intended to attract tourists, who are willing to pay to visit them. Using local materials for access, equipment and accommodation resulted in a lower ecological footprint. As a consequence of these initiatives rural residents took some control over the fate of their backcountry, engaged creatively with nature, and sustained

⁴ Bruce Braun points out that the idea of an external nature, such as that entertained by extractive capital and environmentalists alike, displaces people for whom what other people consider nature, is home. Braun, *Intemperate Rainforests*.

⁵ Donald Worster, Acceptance speech for the American Society for Environmental History Distinguished Scholar Award, American Society for Environmental History and the National Council on Public History Joint Annual Conference, Victoria, BC, Spring 2004.

⁶ Braun, *Intemperate Rainforest*, 10. Social nature denies that nature can be external and encourages us to think of our responsibility towards nature at our homes and in what we may consider wilderness areas, such as parks.

⁷ Braun, *Intemperate Rainforest*, 13.

economic opportunities such as harvesting non-timber forest products and promoting tourism. Telling an alternative story to projects that attempt to separate work and leisure, and nature and culture, these cases speak of an integrated multiple use of the forested commons, local creativity in shaping recreational spaces, and persistent community agency in asserting how these spaces should be managed.

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