
Friends of Ecological Reserves NEWSLETTER

Victoria, B.C.

July 1990

Happy Summer From the Editor

Summer in British Columbia is a busy and wonderful time for me. It means time on the coast, exploring, turning people onto our fantastic forests, seabirds, wildlife and wilderness. I hope that members of the Friends are getting out too, gaining strength and initiative to work on saving bits of our wilderness for generations to come.

Many thanks to the contributors to this issue of the newsletter. It is very satisfying to hear from people all over B.C. The number of conservation issues being raised is indicative of the pressure our remaining natural heritage is under. I'm heartened to know that all of you are out there working to preserve some of the diversity of B.C.'s ecosystems.

The amount of conservation work going on in Friends of Ecological Reserves these days is directly related to having Peter Grant working as office manager. Without his energy, persistence and continuity we wouldn't have been able to accomplish so much. We are especially proud of our factsheet on ecological reserves, and we hope that this publicity will help B.C.'s Ecological Reserves Program get the support it deserves.

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Trudy Chatwin

In This Issue

Annual General Meeting	2
New Faces on Our Board	3
Office Manager's Report	3
Mt. Tzuhalem Field Trip	5
Spring Island Summer Camp	6
Skwaha Lake Field Trip	7
New Ecological Reserves	10
Development in the Klaskish	10
Report from the Khutzeymateen	11
Herb Hammond and the Foresters	13
Research on Marbled Murrelets	14
Cleland Id. and Baeria Rocks E.R.s	15
The Imperilled Tsitika Valley	16
Nimkish Island's Tall Trees	17
Ambrose Lake E.R. Addition Touted	17
B.C.'s Traffic in Bear Parts	18
Oak Groves on Hornby Island	18

Friends of Ecological Reserves Newsletter

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F.E.R. is a non-profit society in British Columbia
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From January to December

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN ARREARS?

If so, you have received two notices,
and this is your last.

To continue to receive the newsletter
and other benefits of membership in
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Business

Annual General Meeting

The weather co-operated for an outdoor meeting of Friends of Ecological Reserves on Saltspring Island on May 6. "Peggy's Place" has a big moss-covered knoll, and here 15 Friends gathered for the 1990 AGM. The minutes of the meeting are on file at the Friends' office. Highlights:

- * The Friends number 220 paid members. Increased membership would be an advantage when approaching agencies for funding.

- * The past year was full of projects and achievements for the Friends.

Jane Watson continued sea otter research in Kyoquot with our assistance, and we supported ongoing stickleback research in the Queen Charlottes. The Friends put money towards an underwater camera for Pearson College, and it looks as though the camera will be purchased this year. There were numerous field trips, and we published three newsletters. The Friends sponsored talks at the Newcombe Theatre, notably an Old Growth Forests presentation by Fred Bunnell (U.B.C.) and Ken Lertzman (S.F.U.). Other achievements are detailed below. The Friends nominated Paul George of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee for a B.C. government environmental award for his contributions to conservation.

- * Officers elected at the meeting (with home phone numbers) were:

President	Bristol Foster	537-9774
Vice President	Trudy Chatwin	592-3559
Secretary	Mary Rannie	383-8207
Treasurer	Bob Fahrig	479-4570
Directors	Vicky Husband	478-0388
	Stephen Ruttan	478-0659
	Peggy Frank	537-9710

- * We had \$28,245 cash on hand at year end, and a \$5000 donation from the Eden Conservation Trust followed, along with a \$585 "class grant" from Environment Canada. Our 1990 budget totals some \$22,000. Approved funding for research and other projects include:

- Wayne McCrory's and Erica Mallam's continuing work in the Khutzeymateen Valley (a report to the Friends is in this newsletter) and Herb Hammond's final report on forest values;

- A biodiversity study of the Clayoquot Sound area, focussing on the Megin River watershed, following on a study by Keith Moore that identified the Megin as the only primary watershed on Vancouver Island larger than 20,000 hectares that remains unlogged; Tofino whale researcher and alderman Jim Darling will co-ordinate this major project;

- Marbled murrelet habitat studies (see Trudy's article following);

- Pam Stacey's and Robin Baird's research on transient killer whales in the Victoria area;

- Publication and distribution of the Ecological Reserves tabloid factsheet;

- Continuation of the Mt Tzuhalem fencing project.

Following the meeting those who were interested visited the Garry oak ecological reserve on Mt. Maxwell. The vegetation under the Garry oak stand that is protected by fencing was visibly more lush than outside. A beautiful junco nest was spotted within the protected area. There were few signs of sheep inside the fenced area but deer signs everywhere.

The outing ended shortly before rain, which had been threatening all day, became a torrential downpour.

Of the ballots mailed out to members before the meeting, 42 were returned, and 40 supported the slate of officers. (Two touted favorites.)

Comments received in the mail include:

"Thank you for all you do!"

"Sorry we cannot attend this year. We wish you well, and support all your efforts. Keep it up, 'WE NEED YOU' at this special time in B.C.'s history. Hope to see you on one of the field trips." J. David and Adele Routledge

Peggy Frank

New Faces and Loyal Volunteers

Two talented, enthusiastic people have joined the Friends' executive.

Mary Rannie, Secretary, plays the double bass with the Victoria Symphony Orchestra and is otherwise "greatly interested in whales, wildlife and the land." At one time Mary contemplated a career in biology. She has a special fondness for the Triangle Island Ecological Reserve, having assisted with Ann Vallee's field studies not long before her untimely death. Recently Mary spent two weeks in Kyuquot Sound and the Brooks Peninsula. She went on the expedition with Trudy and liked it so much she stayed to help the guides! Also in June she hiked to the Skwaha Lake Ecological Reserve. She'll spend nine weeks on a musical gig in Mexico this summer, and when she returns she will help with the Friends' project of increasing public awareness of the ecological reserves program.

Bob Fahrig, our new Treasurer, trained as a mining engineer and worked for an oil company for 24 years (with two years out to get a Masters degree in Business Administration) until his retirement in 1979. He first got involved with the Friends through our effort to protect the Khutzeymateen Valley. "I'm a preservationist," Bob says forcefully. "The Khutzeymateen is unique and a national treasure and should be left alone." He feels the same way about the Carmanah Valley. "I'm not even keen on having people marching through and trampling down the roots of the tall trees." A member of the Sierra Club, Western Canada Wilderness Committee and the S.P.C.A., Bob signed on as treasurer "to contribute something" to the Friends, and his first project will be fund-raising.

Wilf Medd has generously consented to continue donating his time as our membership secretary, and he is supported by **Josette Wier**, whose computer churns out gummed address labels when we have newsletters and other information to mail to our members and affiliates. **Diana Wootton** will continue as our contract bookkeeper.

Never A Dull Moment in the Office

I shipped aboard at the end of January to work part-time for the Friends. It's been a busy five months, producing and distributing two newsletters, an update and the tabloid, and generating publicity for Vicky's and Trudy's Clayoquot & Kyuquot Sounds slide show. There's always mail to clear, files to keep, telephone messages to take, and matters to refer to the appropriate executive officers for action. I'm in touch with our bookkeeper, the membership secretary and the executive. I report to Trudy.

My priorities are to update our factsheet on the Khutzeymateen Valley, getting all our mail answered and our volunteers working, updating and upgrading the office filing system, and more, more, more fund-raising!

The Friends occupy a small but important niche in the environmental advocacy field. We enjoy cordial, supportive relations with the provincial government and have a track record of support for ecological research and other field work that must be unparalleled for a group our size in Canada. We also speak about wilderness preservation issues with a consistent and uncompromising voice that is heard and noted in the councils of the mighty. I'm proud to be part of such a dynamic organization and even prouder to be working for you. Members can call me at 595-4813 any time with comments, suggestions or information.

Introducing Our Ecological Reserves Factsheet

The Friends' tabloid *Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas for Tomorrow* is hot off the press, in a run of 80,000 copies. Its purpose is, first, to raise public awareness of the ecological reserves program and the need to complete the system and, second, to broaden our membership and base of financial support for ecological research, protection of reserves and public education. Many people have contributed to the publication's development. Special thanks are due to George Heffelfinger, Susan Duhamel and production staff at Monday Publications, Victoria, for contributing their time and expertise, and to the environment and conservation committee and board of directors of Mountain Equipment Co-operative in Vancouver, who have made a generous grant of \$4500.

We're counting on our members to help distribute the factsheet. Contact the Friends' office with your requests, and we'll send some to you. Easiest to handle is a bundle of 200.

Mt. Tzuhalem Fencing Project, Part 3

The Friends' fencing project for the Mt Tzuhalem reserve will continue this summer. Last winter foreman Dan Bate's intrepid crew, supported by the Environment Youth Corps (E.Y.C.), drilled numerous holes in bedrock -- truly challenging, unpleasant work, often in standing water -- and set more than 800 feet of 5- and 7-foot chain-link fencing along the eastern boundary of the 18-hectare reserve. On completion, some \$2780 remained of the Cowichan Valley Naturalists' contribution of \$3500 (raised by reserve warden Syd Watts and administered by the B.C. Conservation Foundation), and B.C. Parks had about 585 feet of mesh on hand. The Friends voted to add \$1000 to the fund and filed another application for support from the E.Y.C., which was approved late in June. The project is now in the hands of the United Native Nations, whose E.Y.C. regional coordinator, Andrew Leach, is planning to hire a crew for several Duncan-area projects early in July. The crew will set an additional 900 feet along the north and east boundaries of the reserve by the end of September.

Peter Grant

Calendar

Field Trip to East Redonda Ecological Reserve

September 1 to 3 (tentative)

This beautiful reserve, on a dramatically-contoured island north of Desolation Sound, features a range of west coast ecosystems from

tidewater to subalpine forest and even alpine tundra. The views from a 1570-metre-high peak are magnificent. We're hoping that wardens Heather and Rolf Kellerhals can guide. Meanwhile, the trip is on a tentative footing. The plan is to depart by small boats from Quadra Island on Saturday morning and camp two nights in Pendrell Sound. Participants will need to bring sleeping bags, tents, camping equipment and preferred foods. A per-person charge of about \$50 will cover boat charter and meals for two days. Since a strenuous all-day hike from tidewater to peak and back is involved, physical fitness is essential! There may be a limit to the number we can transport. To reserve a space, contact trip co-ordinator Henry Bauld in Victoria, 721-5962. You'll be contacted mid-August.

Field Trip Reports



Mt. Tzuhalem Ecological Reserve

May 5th was a beautiful day for a jaunt up Mt. Tzuhalem, near Duncan, and the spring birds and flowers were at their best. We were led by Rebecca Finley and Joyce Lonsdale and joined by botanists and naturalists from Vancouver, Lasqueti Island and Duncan.

White-crowned sparrows, olive-sided flycatchers, dark-eyed juncos and Townsend's warblers hailed from every tree. Violet-green swallows were very active near their nests in Douglas fir snags at the top of the reserve.

Kelly Sekoun and other naturalists identified some interesting plants:

- *Orobanche uniflora*, the one-stemmed cancer root, a parasitic plant that grows on shooting star;
- *Mnium miniatum*, a gorgeous red moss growing in seepage;
- *Lotus micranthes* and *Lathyrus spaericulus*, small vetch like plants;
- *Delphinium menziesii*, a native delphinium;
- *Mimulus alcinoides*, the miniature monkey-flower;
- *Voila nutallii*, an unusual hairy violet;
- *Sanicula graviolens*, an odd snake-root;
- *Yerba buena*, 'the good herb.'

I learned to tell the difference between the three species of camas that bloom so prolifically in the reserve. The early camas, *Camassia quamash*, has blue flowers which die separately, while the great camas, *C. leichtinii*, bears close-packed buds which twist together at death. These two species were harvested extensively in a sustainable fashion by the Salish people as an important source of carbohydrates, while they judiciously avoided the white or death camas, *Zygadenas venenosus*.

Many flowers for which the reserve is famous were in bloom: sea-blush, mouse-eared chickweed, snake-root, spring gold, *Lupinus bicolor*, corn salad, *Veronica arvensis*, and the balsam-root, *Balsamorhiza deltoidea*.

We had a look at the fence constructed this February and March, with the Friends' support, and it looks solid, indeed.

Many thanks to Rebecca and Joyce.

Trudy Chatwin

Spring Island Field Camp, Near Kyuquot

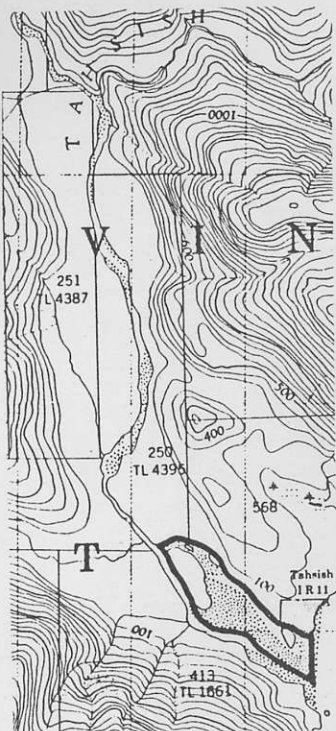
Wilderness at its best... adventure... discovery... tranquility... It's difficult to capture all the experiences of our first summer field camp with West Coast Expeditions in a few words. Jerry, Rupert, Violet, and other volunteer staff hosted an action-packed week of spectacular wildlife viewing, culinary delights, exploration of ancient forests, rugged islets and remote beaches. Eleven Friends -- Nadine Adam, Violet Carlaw, Henry Bauld, Max and Jacqueline Yas, Sue Carr, Mary Rannie, Joan Cartwright, Eve Howden, me and our five-year-old daughter Julia -- will remember our week in this beautiful area for years to come.

June 10: Rain on the journey to Fair Harbour. Didn't dampen our spirits. Sighted three marbled murrelets at the dock -- a portent of coming adventures. Boat trip to Spring Island a blur of mist and seaspray. After settling into our tents, donned rain gear and headed out to explore some of many bays and reefs of the island. Spring flowers... found three glass balls... wild west coast views... a close view of a foraging sea otter.

June 11: Early risers heard the morning songs of fox sparrows, hermit thrush, song sparrows, and the odd Swainson's thrush in the wet woods. After a hearty breakfast, stalked (up to my armpit!) the elusive geoduck clam and marvelled at moon-snail egg cases. Had an adventuresome low-tide launch heading to the Brooks Peninsula. Stopped to see Stellar sea lions at their summer haul-outs. Observed well over 50 marbled murrelets en route. Anchored in a lovely protected bay near Jacobsen Point on the south-east side of the Brooks, hiked through forest and emerged on a wide beach. Mary found more glass balls, while the rest of the group followed Violet and Rupert up a stream to a beautiful waterfall. Jerry and his friend Dave caught enough fish to feed an army. On way back saw a Minke whale near Gull Islet in the Bunsbys. Feasted on steamed rock cod with black bean sauce and lingcod tempura. Side of stir-fried sea asparagus.... mmm!

June 12: Explored pools at low tide... found giant green anemones, hermit crabs, ochre stars, tidepool sculpins, and gorgeous algae. After lunch the weather took a turn for the better, and we headed south-west to the Mission Group and the Volcanic Islets. Co-operative pelagic cormorants, pigeon guillemots, tufted puffins provided good photo opportunities. Spent rest of afternoon exploring Grassy Islet -- found ancient fossils of ammonites, bivalves and brachipods, gull nests, beautiful pools lined with mimulus. Wet and bumpy ride back to camp, battling a nor'westerly wind.

June 13: A sunny day for Mary's birthday. More sightseeing, heading west past the Bunsbys. Saw foraging otters, some very unsightly and wasteful logging on the extinct cinder cone of Mt. Paxton. Stopped at an abandoned village site on the Acous Peninsula. Facing south and overlooking a myriad of small islets and reefs, the site has an aura of warmth and peace. Old cedar poles amidst spruce and berry bushes. The West Coast people hunted the abundant marine mammals in the Checleset Bay area. Crept up on a sleeping mother black bear and her three cubs. Observed her foraging for invertebrates on the beach -- from the boat. Thence to Battle Bay for lunch. Henry located a sea lion carcass. Uncertain whether shot, killed by accumulated toxins or by disease. Over to Greenhead Rock to another ancient village of the Checlesets -- the most picturesque village site I have ever visited. Surf, sea-foam and sun made fantastic views. The beauty of this place! Fresh spring salmon for dinner.



June 14: Dawned sunny. Headed to the Tahsish River. This fine west coast ecosystem has been identified of critical importance to salmon, Roosevelt elk, bears, wolves, many birds. Some of the largest Sitka spruce in the world (next to Carmanah) and probably the northernmost Douglas fir on the coast. In its rich estuary -- now protected by an ecological reserve -- we saw baby prawn larva (we feasted on prawns caught off the mouth of the Tahsish for dinner) and many beautiful and edible plants. The rest of the floodplain and valley slopes are to be logged. One small proposed ecological reserve will not ensure the integrity of this ecosystem. Broad gravel bars, floodplain islands and steep banks attest to the instability of the river. Logging can only accelerate erosive processes, endangering estuary and tall trees and removing wildlife habitat. Protection needed for the entire lower Tahsish ecosystem! Write to Premier Vander Zalm requesting a moratorium! Hiked up-river through thick salmonberry and across river channels to some very big spruce. Used trail made by Pearson College students. Needs improvement to allow people to see the best stands of trees. Rupert and I forged ahead and found bigger spruce stands. Found good site for marbled murrelet observation.

Departure day came all too soon. Made the most of it by getting up with the birds to look for rafts of sea otters. Gorgeous morning light over mountains and islands as we headed over to Thornton Group. Excellent views of a mother otter attending a pup, bald eagles on their nest, four black oystercatcher nests. Leach's storm petrels just beginning to nest on these beautiful islands. Many glaucous-winged gull nests. Back to camp for breakfast and packing up. Visited Kyuquot village, then headed to Fair Harbour and our cars.

Trudy Chatwin

Some places are still available for the July 29 - August 3 camp and other dates. Total cost is \$640 from Fair Harbour. Send \$150 deposit to West Coast Expeditions, 1348 Ottawa Ave, West Vancouver, B.C. V7T 2H5.

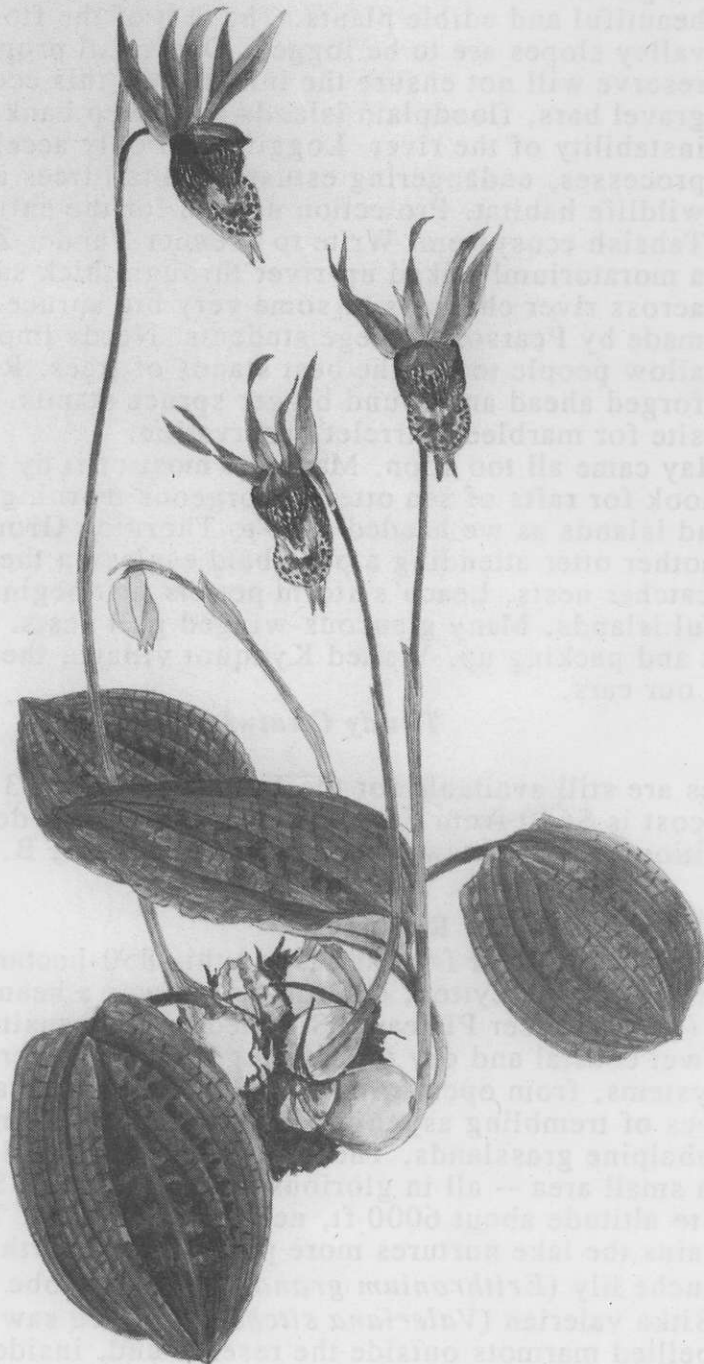
Skwaha Lake Ecological Reserve

Some 15 Friends and their friends visited this 850-hectare reserve in the Botanie Valley, north of Lytton, on June 24. It was a beautiful day in the Clear Range (of the Fraser Plateau.) Situated in the transition zone between the wet coastal and dry interior regimes, the reserve encloses several ecosystems, from open forests of Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir through groves of trembling aspen to Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir forest and subalpine grasslands. These revealed remarkably diverse plant life in such a small area -- all in glorious summer bloom. Some of the group hiked to altitude about 6000 ft, near Skwaha Lake. The steep-sided creek that drains the lake nurtures more plant life on north-facing slopes: yellow avalanche lily (*Erithronium grandiflorum*), globe flower (*Trollius laxus*) and Sitka valerian (*Valeriana sitchensis*). We saw bighorn sheep and yellow-bellied marmots outside the reserve and, inside, red crossbill, kestrel, junco and raven. Many thanks to Hans Roemer, who led this field trip, and to Adolf Ceska, our co-ordinator and botanical expert.

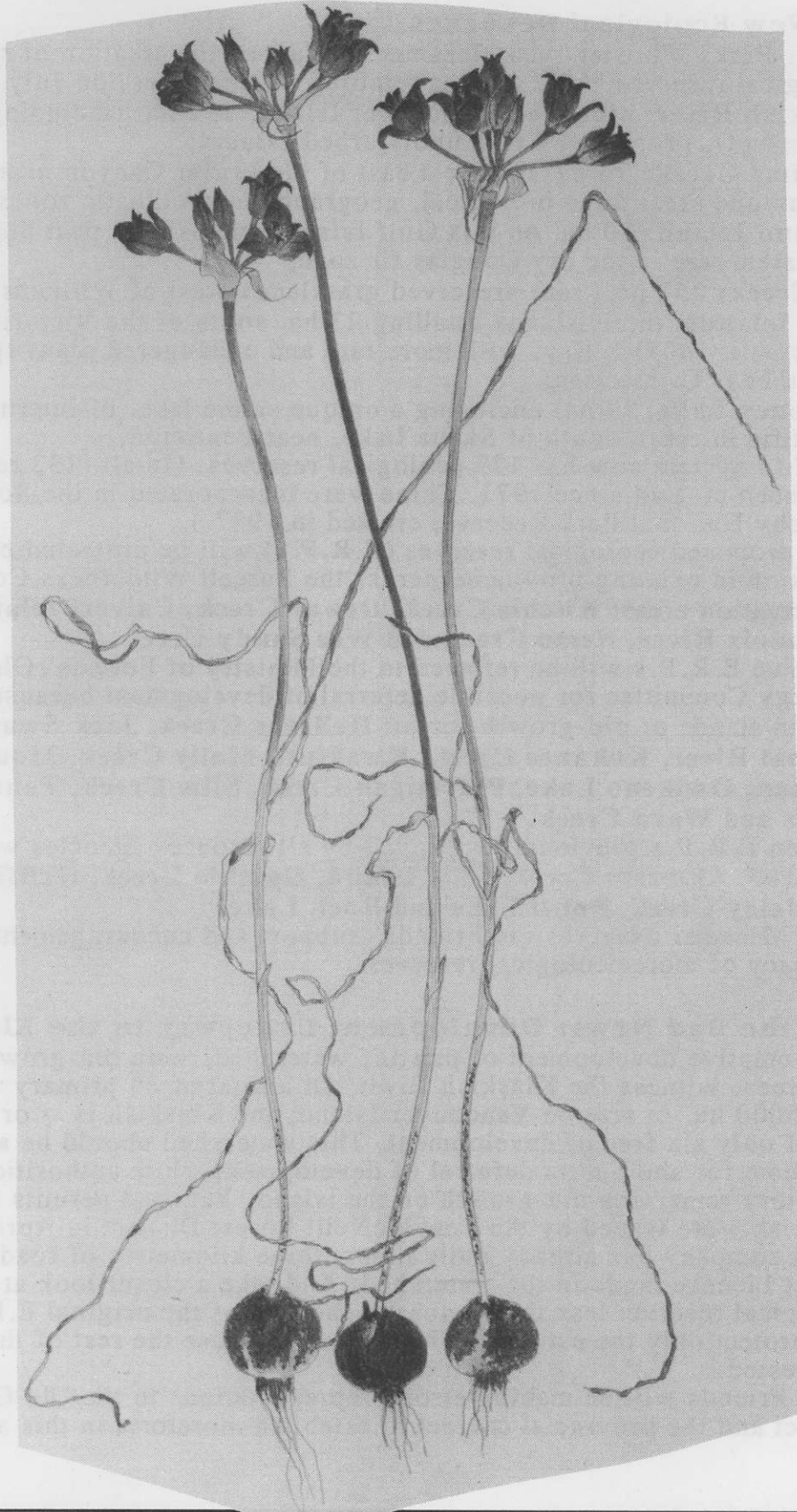
Henry Bauld

Drawings by Oluna Ceska

Calypso bulbosa - fairyslipper



***Allium acuminatum* - Hooker's onion**



News of the Ecological Reserves Program

Six New Ecological Reserves

B.C. Parks Minister Ivan Messmer announced the creation of six new ecological reserves, with an area totalling 547 hectares, on July 5:

Klaskish River: northwest Vancouver Island, 132 ha. (including 22 ha. of tideland), protecting a rare undisturbed estuary;

Stoyoma Creek: 76 ha. of forest east of the Fraser Canyon near Boston Bar; unique area: three biological, geographic and climatic zones meet;

Galiano Island: 30 ha. on this Gulf Island, enclosing a peat bog ecosystem rare in the dry Douglas fir zone;

Big Creek: 257 ha., rare preserved grasslands west of Williams Lake;

Trial Islands: three islands totalling 23 ha. south of the Victoria municipality of Oak Bay, with more rare and endangered plant species than any other B.C. location;

Mahoney Lake: 29 ha. enclosing a unique saline lake, of international scientific interest; south of Skaha Lake, near Penticton.

B.C.'s system now has 129 ecological reserves. (In all, 132 reserves have been created since 1971. Three were incorporated in the South Moresby National Park Reserve, created in 1987.)

Six proposed ecological reserves (E.R.P.s) will be protected by inclusion in existing provincial parks, the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy or recreation areas: **Kitchie Creek, Dewar Creek, Calvert Island, Gitnadoix River, Nemo Creek and Wee Sandy Creek.**

Twelve E.R.P.s will be referred to the Ministry of Forests' Old Growth Strategy Committee for possible deferral of development because they contain stands of old-growth forest: **Hellroar Creek, Jack Swart Creek, Kitimat River, Kokanee Creek, Kwakiutl, Molly Creek, Mount Herman, Owikeno Lake, Ptarmigan Creek, Slim Creek, Tahsish / Kwois and Ward Creek.**

Seven E.R.P.s previously approved by all resource agencies will be reviewed: **Akunam Creek, Ellis Island, Gamble Creek, Griffin Island, Mandalay Creek, Punt Lake and Rock Lake.**

Mr. Messmer deserves the Friends' support and encouragement for his advocacy of more ecological reserves.

Now the Bad News: Development Underway in the Klaskish

Pre-emptive development of pristine watersheds with old-growth forest continues, witness the Klaskish River. Of a total of 89 primary watersheds over 5000 ha. in size on Vancouver Island, the Klaskish is -- or was -- one of only six free of development. This watershed should be a prime candidate for short-term deferral of development while authorities inventory remaining old-growth on the island. Yet road permits for the Klaskish were issued by the Port McNeill Forest District in April, and a forest company has already built almost three kilometres of road through Forest Licence lands in the watershed. And take a closer look at that new ecological reserve: less than a quarter the size of the original E.R.P., it will protect only the estuary. Why? Likely because the rest of the E.R.P. is forested.

The Friends will be making strong representations to the Old Growth Project and the provincial cabinet to establish moratoria in this and other

watersheds because of the galloping loss of biodiversity. We need to preserve sizeable tracts of old-growth forest before it's too late.

Ecological Reserves Program and Personnel

Ecological reserves are the responsibility of the Planning and Conservation Services Branch of the Ministry of Parks. Derek Thompson is branch director. **Louise Goulet**, manager of system planning and policy (telephone: 387-4596), has ecological reserve proposals as well as park proposals in her file. **Hans Roemer**, ecological reserve conservation biologist (387-4599), is in the conservation services group managed by Denis Moffatt. John Pinder-Moss was seconded to the Royal B.C. Museum for six months beginning June 1, and **Laurel Nash** has taken over as technical assistant (387-4608), reporting to Louise.

Research Reports

News from Rain Forest Grizzly Valley, the Khutzeymateen, B.C.

The Khutzeymateen Valley was a far busier place this May than three years ago when we camped by ourselves, sheltered from the rain forest drizzles by our "recycled" 1967 wall tent, and conducted our field studies in a leaky \$150 inflatable with a temperamental motor that required 30 pulls to start.

Over the past year, with the assistance of some funding by F.E.R. and the Valhalla Wilderness Society (V.W.S.) we continued to document grizzly bear use of the estuary and fjord, monitor the bear-viewing program's success and document disturbances to bears by humans, motorboats and aircraft. We also documented old-growth-dependent species but, as expected, did not locate forest nest sites for the elusive marbled murrelet, the small auk-like sea bird. In May a feeding aggregate of about eight pairs was observed on the fjord. All this information will be used to update our consultant's report for the spring of 1992.

This spring we have observed three new landslides along the Khutzeymateen fjord-- related to older logging, including by helicopter -- and at least one new natural mudslide within the proposed grizzly bear sanctuary. These add to the considerable evidence of erosion, natural and logging-related, that has gathered in the past three years. The landslides often wash whole pieces of hillside into the ocean and scour to bedrock, attesting to the highly unstable topsoils of the steep valley walls. Herb Hammond and Erica Mallam, funded by World Wildlife Fund, documented some of these last fall, for incorporation into the final forestry report for the Khutzeymateen conservation coalition. Even possible helicopter logging has frightening implications for the proposed sanctuary.

Tom Ellison and Dave Freeze of North-South Tours are running an excellent bear-viewing conservation tour from the sailboat *Ocean Light*. Charlie Russell, son of *Grizzly Country* author Andy Russell, guides.

As the valley receives more media exposure, public support continues to escalate for saving the Khutzeymateen as Canada's first grizzly bear reserve. CBC's *The Fifth Estate* aired its well-documented 13-minute program in October, 1989 and again in April. On Boxing Day the NBC *Today Show* aired an excellent 5-minute clip. We are working on a composite video which will be available from the V.W.S. for \$20.

In May, we assisted Jeff and Sue Turner of Skyline Films of Princeton, B.C. to obtain movie footage of grizzly bears and the valley for the CBC *Nature of Things* program. The grizzlies were more co-operative than the old-growth-dependent birds. Jeff and Sue obtained superb footage of subadult male grizzly bears playing; a mating sequence; lying on backs on a snowslide; and footage of a mother grizzly with two yearlings feeding, playing and using the ocean for cooling and drinking. They also documented the use of old-growth for nesting by Canada geese, red-breasted sapsuckers and alder flycatchers. The team expects to return in the fall to complete their coverage. The program, hosted by David Suzuki, will be aired in a year.

The Wildlife Branch researchers with the B.C. government's interagency study of the valley are busy for the second year. Headed by Grant MacHutcheon, they again baited, snared and radio-collared grizzlies this spring, since some bears dropped their collars from last year. They now have nine radio-collared and are proceeding with their habitat work.

The Wildlife Branch dropped a plan to put coloured collars on all other grizzlies captured after considerable concern was expressed that visible collars on too many bears would reduce or eliminate the high film-making and other media interest, as well as the bear-viewing tours -- all extremely important factors in increasing public awareness of the special qualities of the Khutzeymateen Valley. Already, three of the grizzly bears most filmed and most observed by the public have radio-collars.

The first-year results of the study confirm the high grizzly bear values of the Khutzeymateen that our study documented. Biologists confirmed the presence of at least 36 grizzly bears in the 39,600-hectare valley. High spring and early summer use of the estuary is confirmed by sightings of up to eight grizzlies at one time.

In early May, Derek Thompson, Mike Murtha and Greg Jones of B.C. Parks did a three-day survey of the Khutzeymateen as a candidate for an ecological reserve. It was originally proposed as such 18 years ago.

In April we met with Wildlife Branch officials in Victoria to discuss our concerns about the narrow scope of the government's study. The biologists are doing a credible job, but there is mounting concern that the study focusses too much on timber values, road costs and the impacts of logging on grizzlies. The public should be suspicious of the 1988 promise of then-environment minister Bruce Strachan that there will be no logging there if it is shown to cause undue impacts to grizzlies. So far there is no mandate to review the option of protecting the valley and associated tourism values. B.C. Parks is not even part of the study team. If these values continue to be left out, it may be too late after the study is completed, in March, 1992.

Concerned persons should write the B.C. government asking that:

- * the entire Khutzeymateen Valley be fully protected as an ecological reserve, with marine park protection for part of the fjord,
- * B.C. Parks be made part of the interagency study team, and
- * the study's terms of reference be expanded to include a full review of the preservation option and associated tourism values.

Letters should be sent to
Premier Bill Vander Zalm,
Hon. John Reynolds, Minister of Environment,
Hon. Ivan Messmer, Minister of Parks,
Hon. Claude Richmond, Minister of Forests,

c/o Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
Please send copies to F.E.R. and V.W.S.

Funding is urgently needed to continue our efforts. Co-ordinating the conservation effort alone costs about \$10,000 a year. Please send donations to F.E.R. or V.H.S., Box 224, New Denver, B.C. V0G 1S0.

Wayne McCrory and Erica Mallam

Consultant Harassed by Foresters Association

Herb Hammond, R.P.F., our consultant on forest values in the Khutzeymateen Valley, received a letter of apology from the Association of British Columbia Professional Foresters (A.B.C.P.F.) in March, following unfounded accusations over his 1988 preliminary report to the Friends, *Economic and Ecological Feasibility of Forest Management in the Khutzeymateen Watershed*. The ABCPF accepted a complaint by three principals of Wedeene River Contracting Co -- the firm that has lobbied for permits to log in the Khutzeymateen for seven years -- despite the fact that none are Registered Professional Foresters, on the basis that Herb failed to provide accurate information on the timber values in the valley, thereby misleading the reader of the report. (This information is from a summary Herb passed on to us of three ABCPF cases he has had to address in the past three years.) The case was investigated and dismissed as unfounded -- but not before the association's president, Brian Zak, accused Herb in a letter in March 1989 of exercising "very poor judgement" in allegedly not advising the Friends that the report was preliminary in nature and should therefore not be made public. Herb did, in fact, so advise us, but the investigating committee didn't bother to ask him or to meet with him at all. Herb engaged legal counsel to request a retraction and apology. The letter of apology from ABCPF president Norman Godfrey states that its accusation was "both unfair and unfounded, and is withdrawn completely and without reservation. Further, your Association offers an apology for having allowed such an accusation to be made against you without having been certain that the Investigations Committee had clear evidence to this effect." The ABCPF will not, however, release the report of its committee to Herb.

In a prior complaint the ABCPF undertook against Herb, concerning his study of forest management practices in the Nass Valley blocks of Tree Farm Licence 1 for the Nisga'a Tribal Council, the association also committed breaches of procedural fairness -- making accusations without giving Herb an opportunity to defend himself -- then withdrew the complaint. For detailed analysis of the ethical and technical issues surrounding that case, see extensive articles in *Forest Planning Canada*, January/February 1988.

A third complaint, filed in June 1988, accused Herb of several breaches of the Foresters' Code of Ethics with respect to a report he prepared for the Nisga'a Tribal Council in their appeal of a pesticide use permit to spray the herbicide Roundup on their traditional lands. Herb did not know the particulars of the charges until April 1990, when the ABCPF informed him of an impending public inquiry. The inquiry has been delayed pending a judicial review of all ABCPF complaints, for which Herb and his legal counsel have applied in an effort to end what he terms "harassment" by the ABCPF. The critical thrust of Herb's studies of conventional forest management appears to be the only reason for the association's actions.

None of its accusations has stuck. The Friends continue to hold Herb's forestry skills and professional conduct in the highest regard.

Peter Grant

North Coast Forester Urges Protection for the Khutzeymateen

The Spring issue of World Wildlife Fund Canada's newsletter *Working for Wildlife* reprinted a letter to Forests Minister Claude Richmond from Fred Philpott, R.P.F. of Terrace, B.C., outlining his reasons for protecting the Khutzeymateen Valley. Mr. Philpott worked for a logging company surveying and cruising the valley in 1970 and has "travelled widely by foot, canoe, ocean kayak and aircraft throughout the North Coast, Northern B.C. and the Yukon... I can honestly say that the grizzly bear population and quality of habitat of the Khutzeymateen are not to be found anywhere else that I have been... A compromise solution permitting some logging while attempting to preserve some quality habitat will result in uneconomic logging operations and a degraded ecosystem for the grizzly population; both sides will be losers... Once the valley is logged, or even partially logged, it will never again be the same.... It is not a place for a compromise solution."

The Mysterious Marbled Murrelet

For more than a century biologists searched for the nest of the marbled murrelet without ever finding one. A first few nests were found in California and Alaska, typically located on horizontal moss-covered branches of old-growth trees. One nest was discovered on a treeless islet in Alaska. Although marbled murrelet pairs are commonly seen in the water along our coast, even off places like Victoria and Vancouver, their nests have yet to be found in British Columbia. A group of dedicated B.C. researchers led by Mike Rodway is setting out to solve the mystery of this elusive bird. Supported by a number of volunteers, the researchers are conducting boat surveys, habitat preference surveys and fixed-station morning counts in the Queen Charlotte Islands, and they are trying to capture birds for radio-transmitter work. They are a very dedicated and hard-working crew. I joined the researchers for a week in June and learned more about its habits.

The marbled murrelet is a smallish (overall length averages 9.75 inches), squat seabird that is black and white in winter and, in summer, a marbled, brownish colour. As a member of the alcid family, the marbled murrelet is a diver, with webbed feet set far back and pointed V-shaped wings, which it uses for "flying" underwater. The bird's most common call is a distinct "keer" that is easily recognized and relied on to detect its presence. Fishermen often call them "tip yer arse birds" due to their habit of tipping over and diving out of sight on the approach of humans.

Marbled murrelets can be seen at sea year 'round. They seem to be a coastal bird, preferring bays, inlets and sounds rather than the open



ocean, as do many other seabirds. Their diet is composed of sand lance and other small fish obtained by diving. In June and July one can see murrelets on the water and in the air with fish in their bills, presumably to feed their young. But do you think we can follow these birds to their nest? So far, attempts at capture and radio-collaring have failed.

To observe marbled murrelets at their most active and record behaviour, we got up an hour before dawn each morning -- in the Queen Charlottes around summer solstice, that's 2:30 AM! -- and waited in the forest. Weary marbled murrelet watchers were we, especially when dusk watches ended about 11:00 pm! But it was exciting to see small brown streaks whiz in and out of the forest and circle over the spruce stands. Their calls filled the air, slightly dimmed by the dawn chorus of thrushes. It was still too dark to locate nests. By full morning light the murrelets were in the water or tucked safely into their mossy nests -- wherever they were! Researcher Audrey Pearson thought she had a nest tree pegged. Maybe by now they have established the first marbled murrelet nest record for B.C.!

How many marbled murrelets are there? How threatened are they? We just don't know. In California, where battles are raging over threatened old-growth redwood stands, biologists are attempting to have the marbled murrelet listed as a threatened species. In Washington, a program initiated by the Department of Wildlife is alerting the public to record nest sites in the forest. Rodway's recent report for the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) suggests that there may be 45,000 marbled murrelets in B.C. -- or twice or half that number. The heaviest concentration is believed off the west coast of Vancouver Island. B.C. may be the centre of the marbled murrelet's range. If most of the bird's old-growth nesting habitat is cut down, what will happen to populations of this unique sea-bird?

Because of the association of marbled murrelets with old-growth forest, the Friends are funding three projects researching the birds this summer:

- * Irene Manley is working in the Carmanah Valley. Last July, Moira Lemon of the Canadian Wildlife Service recorded more marbled murrelet detections in the Carmanah than any other B.C. place under study. Having heard murrelets in Carmanah when our family camped there in July 1988, I'm especially keen on supporting this work.
- * Wayne McCrory and Erica Mallam are conducting marbled murrelet surveys in the Khutzeymateen Valley. This work will help fill some of the large gaps in murrelet records for the mainland coast.
- * The major study headed by Mike Rodway, supervised by the Canadian Wildlife Service and administered by the B.C. Conservation Foundation. They have focussed on the Queen Charlotte Islands, but we hope they can work on critical watersheds in Clayoquot and Kyuquot Sounds on Vancouver Island next year.

Trudy Chatwin

Communications

A sampling from F.E.R.'s mailbag. The Friends receive regular mailings from Environment Canada, The House of Commons, the West Coast Environmental Law Association, the B.C. Environmental Network and other groups. All their recent literature is on hand at the Friends' office.

Cleland Island and Baeria Rocks Ecological Reserves

Cleland Island E.R.: This site, off the coast of Vancouver Island west of Tofino, is known to have been impacted by the *Nestucca* oil spill of December 1988 / January 1989. Local volunteers cleaned oil and oiled debris from the island. I believe Steve Lawson of Tofino reported on the efforts of the group he led there, and I recommend that this volunteer work be formally recognized and acknowledged by the Ecological Reserves management. The site has not yet been visited by myself since the spill, due mainly to the time commitments of my job. I am uncertain whether any follow up research has been conducted on the site to determine impacts on seabird nesting or habitat. Boat traffic -- particularly nature tour packages via power boat and kayak -- and low-level scenic flights continue to increase in this area as tourism grows. Cleland Id. is being approached almost daily during the peak season, and there are undoubtedly unauthorized landings there. The demand for access to puffin sightings by bird-watchers, coupled with the increasing awareness of this site as a puffin nesting area, is resulting in growing potential for conflict. There is a sea-lion haul-out nearby, which adds to the tour-boat traffic. More monitoring of access is needed.

Baeria Rocks E.R.: I am not aware of this E.R. (in Barkley Sound) having been directly impacted by the *Nestucca* spill. Dr. Alan Burger of the University of Victoria visited this site over the 1989 season and may be better able to report on its condition. He also conducted an oiled bird survey, patrolling beaches for mortalities using local volunteers, including myself, over the '89/'90 fall and winter, and may have some relevant results. In February / March '89, a number of dead sea lions were found washed up in the Imperial Eagle Channel area, where this E.R. is located. In September, another 16 sea lions washed up in Pacific Rim National Park, most of them on Long Beach. (A report on that by PRNP Wardens could not, unfortunately, be located to include with this.) Public use of this E.R. is also increasing. Sportfishing brings boaters to its immediate vicinity. Because this site is less subject to open ocean swells and weather, it is more accessible by kayakers, canoeists and other small boaters. A new lodge at the former whaling station at Seshart and increased *Lady Rose* traffic (anticipated as a result of the addition of a new ship to their fleet this year) will add to this effect. Again, more monitoring is highly advisable as tourist traffic increases in the immediate area.

Bill McIntyre

Lower Tsitika Valley Imperilled

Just in from the Western Canada Wilderness Committee of Victoria, *The Lower Tsitika Valley: A Case for Preservation - Report and Critique to the Tsitika Follow-up Committee*. Researched and written by Clinton Webb; summaries, appendices, graphs, maps, photos.

The report calls for immediate imposition of a one-year moratorium on all industrial activity in the lower Tsitika, while the overall state of Vancouver Island's old-growth forests is assessed. In a cover letter, Victoria director Derek Young urges action to "prevent the imminent destruction of the last major intact segment of an unlogged east coast

Vancouver Island watershed... If ever a genuine candidate for preservation of a special area of British Columbia existed, [it is] the Lower Tsitika."

WCWC's research found that:

- * Less than five per cent of the productive forest in the valley has been permanently preserved in ecological reserves;
- * MacMillan Bloedel Ltd includes critical deer winter ranges in the land base contributing to the AAC for TFL 39, contrary to the terms of the 1978 Tsitika Watershed Integrated Resources Plan (TWIRP!), also recreation reserves, soil-sensitive areas and protection forests;
- * MB logged 7 per cent more area than the TWIRP approved in its first six years of logging in the Tsitika and 16 per cent more than approved in the following four years, and it has obtained approval to log 35 per cent more area during 1990 to 94;
- * MB's logging operations have caused extensive damage in the Tsitika.

On May 30 Minister of Forests Claude Richmond released his ministry's rationale for permitting continued logging in the lower Tsitika in a 17-page news release and background. Permits were issued after one public meeting, in staunchly pro-logging Port McNeill, contrary to promises of wide public consultation. The Tsitika Follow-up Committee, which the government release says "is well-respected and viewed as performing an effective service," is widely viewed in conservation circles as a rubber stamp for the industry's determined campaign to log the lower Tsitika out.

Contact WCWC at 101 - 1002 Wharf St, Victoria V8W 1T4 388-9292.

Ongoing Damage in Nimpkish Island Ecological Reserve

A.C. Carder, a Victoria naturalist with a long-time interest in tall trees, wrote to pass on his impressions from a visit last summer to the Nimpkish Island Ecological Reserve, "that tall stand of Douglas firs and other species on a small island straddled by the Nimpkish River.

"I was curious to know what protective steps have been taken to preserve the Nimpkish trees from bank undercutting and wind-throw. At the time of my previous visit damage from both factors was taking place, and I was told by the environment minister that preservation measures would be undertaken. What I saw saddened me. After writing to the minister twice, I at length received a reply saying some work had been done on bank stabilization and more would be done when funds became available. It may be possible to prevent the stream-side erosion which has been brought about by large clear cuts up the Nimpkish Valley. About windthrow and other injury wrought by wind, I'm not sure what can be done. When I first visited the Nimpkish Trees, other virgin stands across the river offered protection, but they have been clearcut, exposing the trees on the island to the full force of the wind. I think this will in time have a pronounced effect on these trees, and the whole object of preserving them will be defeated. A lot of public money was put into acquiring the Nimpkish Trees. I have not viewed the Carmanah spruce forest, but from what I have seen at Nimpkish, even clearcutting a low percentage of the stands will lead to considerable damage to the rest."

Group Seeks Addition to Ambrose Lake Ecological Reserve

John Field of the Pender Harbour and District Wildlife Society wrote to ask for the Friends' support in an effort to have a small watershed that

empties into Ambrose Lake added to Ambrose Lake Ecological Reserve. The 228-hectare reserve, number 28, is between Agamemnon Channel and Ruby Lake, at the north end of the Sechelt Peninsula. Enclosed was a copy of the society's letter of November 6, 1989 to Hon Ivan Messmer, Minister of Parks, Victoria, asking that two parcels of Crown land, lots 5399 and 5400 in the New Westminster Land District, be removed from tenures held by Doman Industries Ltd. "There is an element of urgency involved as these lands are slated for logging within two years." Mr Field writes us. He is chairman of the Ambrose Lake Survey Committee and is at Box 220, Madiera Park, B.C. V0N 2H0, telephone 883-2807.

B.C. Encourages Traffic in Bear Parts

Helmut Heft, a bear researcher in Wells, near Bowron Lake, sent copies of an open letter and a petition to the B.C. government decrying the traffic in bear parts, under export permit, for Oriental medicinal markets:

"I have seen a number of mutilated bear carcasses in different regions of the province. The paws and the male genitals had always been cut off, and the belly was always open and the animal's gall bladder removed. None of these animals had been skinned. In Japan and Southeast Asia these parts are valued as aphrodisiacs. There is no scientific evidence in support of this folk belief, but the demand for bear parts grows unabated. The numbers of bears killed seem to be increasing rapidly. There is reason to believe that an organized trade in bear parts is becoming more efficient.

"In Ontario, Alberta and many U.S. states, killing bears for their bladders, paws or genitals is prohibited. But in British Columbia hunters, trappers, guides and others are allowed to kill bears for the purpose of taking and selling any parts they want. Their export to foreign markets is legal, and the necessary export permits are provided by the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the B.C. Environment Ministry.

"It is imperative to reconsider the province's hunting and trapping regulations governing the legal status of bears in B.C. The 1989/90 hunting and trapping regulations classify black bears as "fur bearers," which means that trappers in most trapping areas have the right to kill any desired number of bears, even if he does not harvest the furs. This makes trapping a wasteful and ecologically-devastating business.

"Conditions for bears in B.C. are already deteriorating due to years of drought, increasing human activity in the wilderness, construction of 15,000 km of logging roads per year, control kills, poaching and the loss of large parts of bear habitat as a result of extensive clear-cut logging.

"The fact is that both grizzly and black bear populations have been declining steadily in the past two decades. Since 1973, when I started my bear observations, the grizzly bear has disappeared from much of its former range in the southern half of B.C. In central, coastal and northern B.C. the numbers of grizzlies are shrinking and so, contrary to common belief, are numbers of black bears.

"A bear conservation plan for British Columbia should include:

- * prohibition of harvesting bears for their gall bladders, genitals and paws
- * a complete ban on trade in bear parts in the province
- * refusal of export permits
- * reclassification of black bears as "big game" instead of as "fur-bearers."
- * shortening the open seasons for sport hunting and trapping and reduction of annual bag limits for both grizzly and black bears.

"Write to the government of B.C. and M.L.A.s to let them know that we demand better protection for bears than current regulations accord them."
Mr Heft's address: Box 171, Wells, B.C. V0K 2R0

Oak Groves on Hornby Island

Friends member Richard Martin, a licenced electrical contractor living on Hornby Island, wrote us about his current and projected environmental endeavours: "My special concern is educational -- helping the community discover, know and appreciate the incredible wild heritage all around us that is at terrible risk in this "cut and run" era. I'm revising, updating and expanding my Flora of Hornby Island and am branching out to provide a nature guide service here. Over the next two years I'd like to develop a guide to the wild plants of the Canadian Gulf Islands. My long-range project is to develop a guide to the wild plants of Vancouver Island -- something utterly exhaustive that would fill the gaps between C.P. Lyons, L.J. Clark (whose beautifully illustrated book is woefully incomplete) and the Provincial Museum guides to individual families, incorporating, for example, the many exciting floristic discoveries from northwest Vancouver Island" Wild Plant Services is open for tour bookings. Call Richard at 355-2419 or write to him on Hornby Island, B.C. V0R 1Z0.

The following article is adapted, with permission, from the Hornby Island Free Press First Edition, no. 103, March 1990. The topic is controversial, given a planned residential development on a tract of private land known as High Salal, adjoining Helliwell Provincial Park, with which it shares a grove of Garry oaks popular with hikers and naturalists.

The oak family is a large genus of about 500 species of trees and shrubs, growing world-wide, mostly in the temperate Northern Hemisphere and extending into the tropics in mountainous regions. In North America there are 53 indigenous species, of which 17 live on the west coast, concentrated in California. Of these, the only one that extends into Washington State and southern B.C. -- and only in open, grassy, summer-dry areas -- is the Garry oak or Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*). The Garry oak ranges from Marin County, California, where it is an insignificant shrub, to north of Hornby Island. In B.C. two exceptional mainland outlier groves occur at Yale, B.C., associated with an ancient Indian camping place along the Fraser River, and at Sumas Mountain. On Vancouver Island, Victoria, particularly Oak Bay, with the only extensive original stand, has a rich heritage of native oak preservation and ornamental oak introduction. The Saanich Peninsula is the most northerly stronghold of the Garry oak. A small inland grove of large trees survives near Headquarters Road in Courtenay. Unconfirmed references from early times suggest a stand of Garry oak grew in the Quatsino Sound area on northwest Vancouver Island. Curiously, the individual Garry oak attains greatest stature in the northern part of its range.

Recognizable remains of oaks from as early as the Cretaceous era (ca. 75 million years ago) have been found. Locally they are well represented in the fossil records of the Upper Cretaceous Nanaimo Group of East

Vancouver Island, in the coal beds intermittent from Nanaimo to Port McNeill. (See Olivia Fletcher's *Hammersmith*, a "biography" of Hornby.)

How the Garry oak first got to Hornby Island after the retreat of the last ice age is not known, but transportation of acorns by both native people and animals (including larger birds) is possible. Reproduction of oaks appears more chancy at the ecocline extreme than in the heartland of its range. The factors are complex. No young oaks seem to be coming along in the present groves on Hornby, and about 75 per cent of the relatively few acorns that they produce are wormy. The insect larvae that infest the acorns probably have complex cycles of predominance. Most oaks grow in grassy / mossy swards with fairly dense, integrated ground cover over shallow, summer-dry soils on rocky substrata. When a ripe, uninfested acorn drops onto the ground, it actually drops onto a tightly-knit web of vegetation. The long root of a sprouting acorn may not be able to touch and taste earth, and if it does, typically by late spring, the soil will have dried out, leaving the young root to perish. If a grass fire sweeps away the grassy barrier, the root could touch down and, in a wet spring / summer, get established. But it wouldn't survive if ungulate or livestock populations are large enough to chance upon it and graze it down. Historically, various areas of Hornby, including Helliwell Park, have been free range for domestic cattle. And deer populations are notoriously cyclical. Legend and early historical record alleges that the local native people that used Hornby periodically set fire to the brush to drive deer across the island as part of a hunting strategy. If so, or if natural or accidental grass / brush fires occurred during a wetter period of natural climatic cycles, they would furnish some of the necessary preconditions for oak regeneration.

Douglas firs and balsam firs appear to be crowding into the oak groves and threatening to limit or eliminate them. One can do the oaks a service by removing encroaching firs. But both species are relatively shade-intolerant, and over centuries the firs self-thin and offer new openings to further succession. Root rot, *Poria weirii*, is one of nature's ways of thinning uniform fir stands and promoting greater species diversity. Also, oaks are slightly more dry-tolerant, so that the encroachment is limited to the moister margins of the oak groves.

I believe the oak groves should be preserved to serve the whole community's spiritual needs and for themselves and the spirit they embody.

WANT AD: Seeks Companion For Floristic Inventory

Richard Martin is looking for someone to accompany him on a five-day survey of the East Redonda Ecological Reserve sometime between August 5 and 20. A possible approach is by kayak from Squirrel Cove, Cortes Island. Please call Richard (355-2419) if you're interested.

