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Vancouver



THE SOUTHERN CHILCOTIN MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS SOCIETY

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**RECOMMENDATION FOR THE
DESIGNATION OF A
PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA
IN THE
SOUTHERN CHILCOTIN MOUNTAINS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains area (Map 1) is a superb wilderness recreation region only 200 km north of Vancouver. The area has unlimited wilderness and tourism values, nominal timber values, and no apparent mineral values. We recommend that the unique combination of natural attributes, outstanding spectrum of wilderness recreational pursuits, and non-exploitive commercial values be maintained by designating the area in Map 2 as a Provincial Recreation Area. The area should be managed as a wilderness zone by the Ministry of Parks. The total area proposed for Recreation Area is 131,000 ha, including 88,500 ha in the Lillooet Forest District and 42,500 ha in the Williams Lake Forest District.

In November 1987, the Ministry of Forests proposed an 82,000-ha Wilderness Area in the Lillooet Forest District. At the same time, a representative of the Williams Lake Forest District stated that the Upper Big Creek/Taseko River areas within his District would quickly be included in this Wilderness Area. The boundary of the proposed Wilderness Area is similar to the boundary that we are proposing for the Recreation Area. The Honourable Dave Parker, former Minister of Forests, has stated that "Our priority for future wilderness is definitely Spruce Lake. The area has exceptional wilderness, recreation and wildlife values."

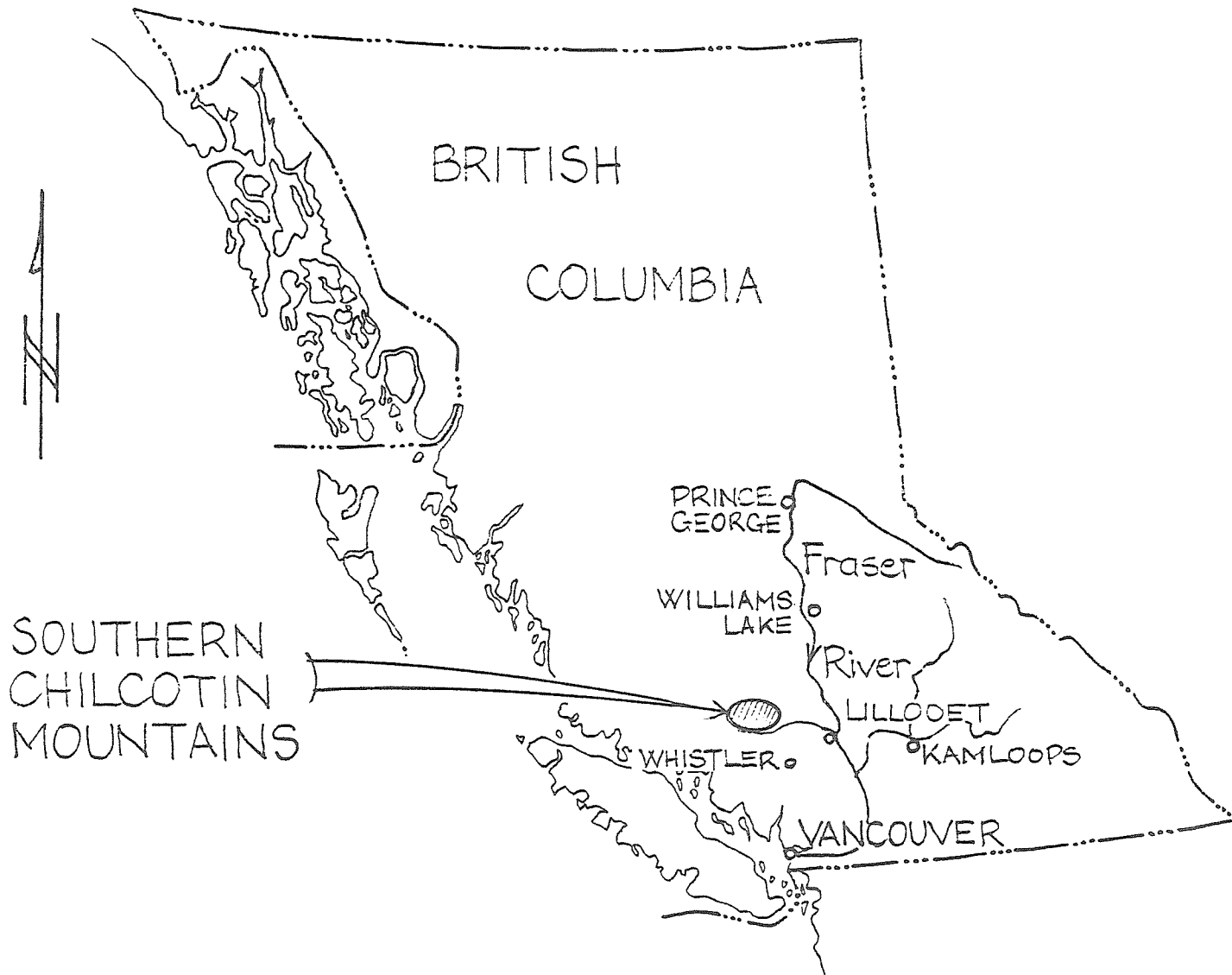
Although mining claims exist in the area, decades of exploration have produced no significant discoveries. Mining exploration should be limited to 10 years after establishment of the Recreation Area.

Our proposal has long been supported by the Ministry of Parks, which has assigned the Southern Chilcotin Mountains highest priority for the Southern Interior Region within its System Plan. The Southern Chilcotin Mountains represent unique bio-physical types presently not included in British Columbia's Provincial Parks system. This area represents the transition zone between the Coast Mountains and the Chilcotin Plateau. It is a region of outstanding recreational potential, capable of accommodating virtually the entire spectrum of winter and summer wilderness recreational pursuits. Its broad U-shaped valleys, rounded ridges, and well-developed trail system make the area suitable for family enjoyment.

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains were first proposed as a provincial park in 1937, and are becoming increasingly well known for their diversity of wilderness recreational opportunities including historical trails, outstanding scenery and geological formations, hiking, fishing, horsepacking, hunting, cross-country skiing, heli-hiking, heli-skiing, ecological study and photography. The Southern Chilcotin Mountains are easily accessible by air from Pemberton and Whistler, and can be reached in less than five hours by road from Vancouver.

At least five guide-outfitters, Tyax Mountain Lake Resort, and heli-skiing/heli-hiking firms in Whistler and Gold Bridge depend on wilderness values in the proposed Recreation Area for their economic livelihood. These values are seriously threatened by planned clearcut logging, as all merchantable timber in the proposed Recreation Area remains within the Annual Allowable Cut. We support commercial recreation use of the proposed Recreation Area, as long as regulations and planning preserve wilderness experiences for all users.

We recommend that the Southern Chilcotin Mountains be designated as a Provincial Recreation Area, in recognition of its outstanding recreational opportunities, natural attributes, and economic values. Recreation Area status will conserve wilderness values and guarantee continued optimum economic benefits.

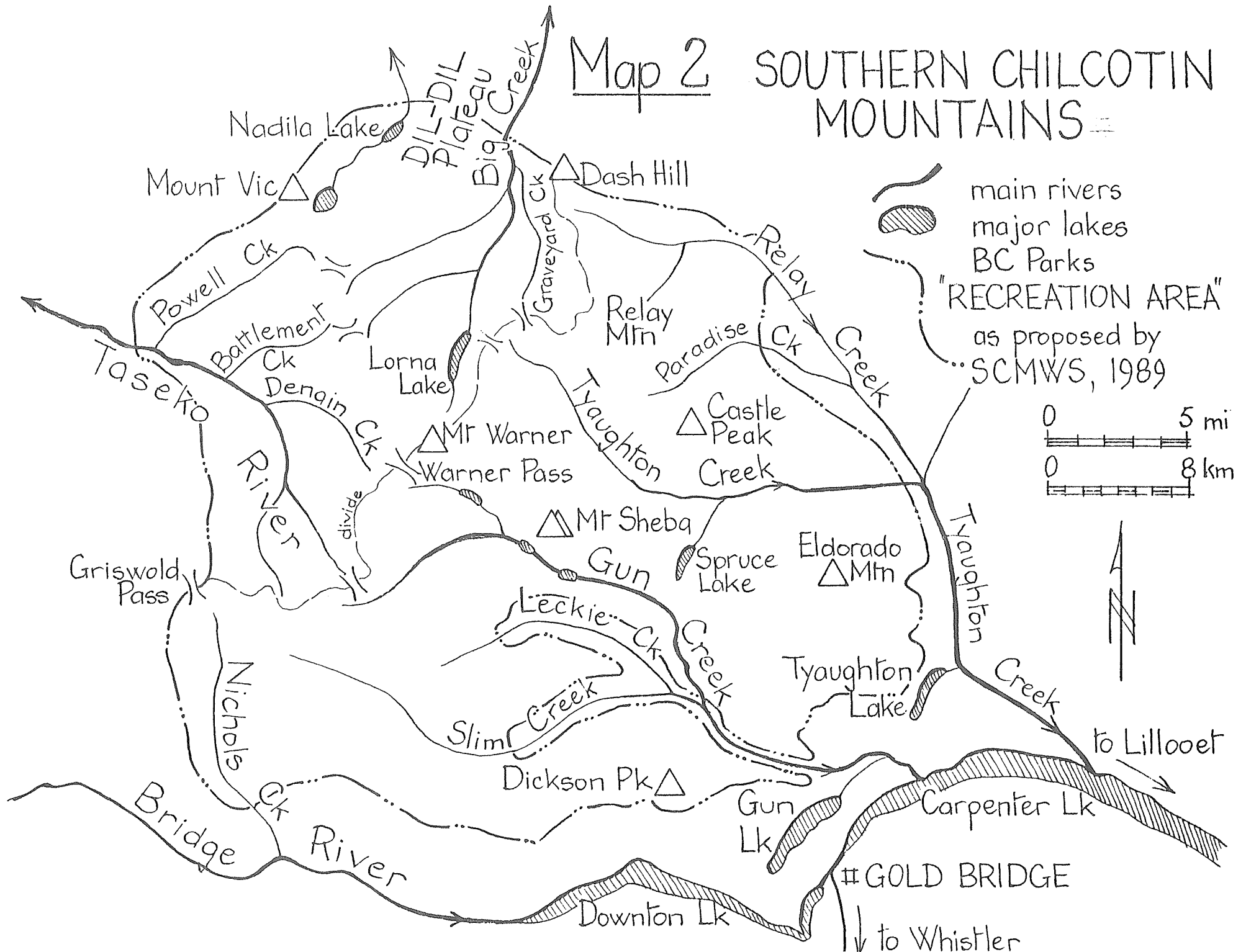


Map 1

Location of

SOUTHERN CHILCOTIN MOUNTAINS

Map 2 SOUTHERN CHILCOTIN MOUNTAINS



main rivers
 major lakes
 BC Parks
 "RECREATION AREA"
 as proposed by
 SCMWS, 1989



GOLD BRIDGE
 ↓ to Whistler

to Lillooet

Warner Pass



Slim Creek



Spruce Lake



Nadila Lake, Dil-Dil Plateau



Lorna Lake



Eldorado Basin



1. INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains area (Map 1) is a superb wilderness recreation region located only 200 km north of Vancouver and 80 km west of Lillooet. Surrounding Spruce Lake, the area covers the watersheds of Gun, Tyaughton, Relay, Leckie, and Slim Creeks in the Kamloops Forest Region, and the headwaters of the Taseko River and Big Creek in the Cariboo Forest Region.

Recreational use of the Southern Chilcotin Mountains occurs primarily within the area shown on Map 2 and includes most of the Ministry of Forests' Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Management Plan Area. We recommend that the unique combination of natural attributes, outstanding spectrum of wilderness recreational pursuits, and non-exploitive commercial values be maintained by designating the area in Map 2 as a Provincial Recreation Area. The area should be managed as a wilderness zone by the Ministry of Parks.

The boundary of the proposed Recreation Area is similar to a boundary proposed for a Wilderness Area by the Ministry of Forests, Lillooet Forest District, at the Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Management Planning Committee meeting in November 1987. The Ministry's proposal was for an 82,000 ha Wilderness Area. Our recommended adjustments to the Ministry of Forests' proposed boundaries were verbally accepted by the Ministry, except for Bonanza Basin, which was left open for discussion. At this same meeting, a representative of the Williams Lake Forest District stated that the Upper Big Creek/Taseko River areas within his District would quickly be included in this Wilderness Area. The total area we propose for Recreation Area equals 131,000 ha, including 88,500 ha in the Lillooet Forest District and 42,500 ha in the Williams Lake Forest District.

2. BACKGROUND

Since 1937, the Vancouver Natural History Society (VNHS), has advocated the designation of a Provincial Park in the Southern Chilcotin Mountains. The first VNHS presentation to the Government of British Columbia supported the boundary recommended by Charles Cunningham of Bralorne; in later years the area that he suggested for park or park reserve came to be known popularly as the "Charlie Cunningham Wilderness."

There are many factors that support special recreational designation in this area. The Southern Chilcotin Mountains represent unique bio-physical types presently not in British Columbia's Provincial Park system. This area represents the transition zone between the Coast Mountains and the Chilcotin Plateau. It is a region of outstanding recreational potential, capable of accommodating virtually the entire spectrum of winter and summer recreational pursuits. Its broad U-shaped valleys and rounded ridges are easily travelled, making the area suitable for family enjoyment. Its relatively low snowfall melts quickly, thereby opening the area for recreational use early in summer.

During the summer of 1976, the Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia conducted a Public Input Inventory of recreational features in the Charlie Cunningham, Tchaikazan and Chilko Study Areas. This inventory was requested by the Parks Branch as part of an inter-governmental committee preparing a Chilcotin Park Study. The Council submitted its inventory to the Minister of Recreation and Conservation and the Environment and Land Use Committee in December 1976, with the specific recommendation to "establish a Class A Park or wilderness area for the headwaters of Tyaughton, Relay and Big Creek as well as for the rest of the Charlie Cunningham area."

In 1979, with the area facing logging and more intensive mineral exploration, 14 British Columbia outdoor groups created the Coalition to Protect the Southern Chilcotin Mountains. The Coalition has evolved into the Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society. In 1980, the Coalition requested that the Environment and Land Use Committee preserve the core Charlie Cunningham Area. No decision was made at that time, though, and the Ministry of Forests formed the Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Management Planning Committee in 1980 to develop criteria for compatible resource and recreation use within the area.

We believe, however, that the area's recreation potential has not been adequately planned for by the Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Management Planning Committee, and that immediate action is required to maintain wilderness values that are seriously threatened by logging activities.

3. SUMMARY OF WILDERNESS RECREATION VALUES

Scenery

In a 1968 letter, the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists indicated that the scenic vistas of glacier-hung peaks in the Southern Chilcotin Mountains rival that of the Grand Teton Mountains in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and many of the best Swiss settings.

Because of the relatively gentle topography compared to the Coast or Rocky Mountains, however, even inexperienced wilderness visitors can follow trails for many kilometers, through open valleys and lush meadows rich with wildflowers, past pristine lakes toward the mountain passes.

Geology

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains provide an interesting diversity of geological formations. Elevations range from 1000 m in valley bottoms to over 2750 m. Bedrock consists primarily of igneous and metamorphic rocks of the Cretaceous Period. Limestone outcroppings at lower elevations are rich in fossils, including ammonites and bryozoa. Most peaks in the region, of which Castle Peak and Cardtable Mountain offer spectacular examples, are erosional remnants of volcanic rock that poured in immense sheets over the Chilcotin Plateau 30-40 million years ago during the Tertiary Period. These lava flows are interbedded with fossiliferous sandstones and shales.

Uplifted grano-dioritic batholiths of the Coast Ranges, in the southern section of the proposed Recreation Area, have subtended and warped upward the Cretaceous bedrock. Dickson Peak is representative of these batholiths. Volcanic ash from the Plinth Mountain eruptions approximately 2,400 years ago is also present within the area.

Lakes

Five large lakes exist in the area, suitable for camping and fishing. Spruce Lake is the focal point for most pack trips and fly-in camps because of its excellent trout fishing. Hummingbird, Trigger, and Warner Lakes, accessed by the Gun Creek trail, provide outstanding destinations for hikes into the back country. Lorna

Lake, accessed by the Tyaughton or Big Creek trails, sits in a spectacular basin, flanked by glaciers and cliffs. These large lakes, as well as numerous smaller lakes and streams existing throughout the region, provide excellent fishing for cutthroat, dolly varden, and rainbow trout.

Historical Trails

Before European settlement in British Columbia, native peoples penetrated the Southern Chilcotin Mountains along travel routes between Taseko Lakes and the Bridge River. One of the most active of these trading and hunting trails originated in the Nemaia Valley, east of Taseko Lakes, climbed east over the Warner pass, then proceeded down Gun Creek to the Bridge River. The present hiking trail on the north-east side of Gun Creek overlaps this historical route, winding through splendid grasslands clothing the south-facing shoulder of Mt. Sheba. Spring displays of floral colours match those found anywhere in southern British Columbia, including Garibaldi and Manning Provincial Parks. Graveyard Valley also provides historical interest, as local lore attributes the valley's name and century-old graves either to the site of small pox deaths of native Indians, or to inter-tribal battles.

Flora

Some of the mountain peaks remained above maximum ice level during the last glaciation, thereby offering refuge to local plant species. Investigations on these peaks located such species as: a poppy (Papaver lapponicum), a fleabane (Erigeronpurpuratus) and a buttercup (Ranunculus gelidus), which occur 400 km from their nearest known botanical equivalents. Although none are currently considered endangered, all three species are classified as rare in British Columbia.

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains lie in the lee of the Coast Mountains, which creates a climate substantially drier than normally associated with coastal regions or wet interior zones such as in Manning Park. The flora reflects this climate, and contains plant species characteristic of both coastal and continental vegetation. Moreover, because the mountain peaks rise above a broad, central plateau, plant species representing both temperate vegetation to the south and boreal vegetation to the north commonly occur in proximity. The region is perhaps unique in British Columbia for its floristic diversity, representing ecological transitions along north/south and east/west transects.

For example, on steep, south-facing slopes above Gun Creek, bluebunch wheatgrass (Agropyron spicatum) and spring sunflower (Balsamorhiza sagittata), two plants normally associated with sagebrush vegetation of Kamloops, grow luxuriantly at 1550m. Yet, on nearby dry ridges and on more moist sites, alpine flowers such as Lyall's lupine (Lupinus lyallii) and yellow avalanche lily (Erythronium grandiflorum) are commonly found.

Wildlife

Despite the region's proximity to population centres of British Columbia, including Kamloops, Williams Lake and the Lower Mainland, the Southern Chilcotin Mountains still provide a wilderness setting. Wildlife is plentiful and easily seen. There are numerous mule deer (the area is prime summer range). Other wildlife includes black and grizzly bears, great hoary marmots, silver and red foxes, bobcats, lynx, wolverines, wolves, moose, mountain goats, and coyotes. The area is also home to one of the larger bands of California bighorn sheep in British Columbia.

Guide-outfitting services are readily available for resident and non-resident hunters.

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains are also located on a major flyway. Bird species commonly seen include grouse (spruce, blue, and ruffed), eagles, ospreys, hawks, loons, ptarmigan, and British Columbia's provincial bird, the Steller's jay. Peregrine falcons are also seen. Recreation Area status, with a restriction on road construction, is needed to protect and conserve wildlife populations and habitats.

Outdoor Classroom for Ecological Education

The region is extremely well-suited for ecological education because of:

- its accessibility to the population centre of the Lower Mainland
- the well developed trail system that connects all 5 major watersheds
- its ecological transition between coastal/interior and temperate/boreal habitats

This ecological variety supports a combination of animal, plant, and bird life that is unique in British Columbia. Moreover, because of the low rainfall, mountain peaks are often exposed, easily revealing geologic formations and history. During

the summers of 1980, 1988, and 1989 the Vancouver Natural History Society held its annual 7-day camp in the Southern Chilcotin Mountains, and concluded that the area is unsurpassed in its potential for outdoor ecological education.

4. SUMMARY OF WILDERNESS RECREATIONAL PURSUITS

Access to a Myriad of Recreational Values

The proposed Recreation Area already has a well-developed trail system that interconnects valleys, alpine meadows, and mountain passes. Access to the back country is gained along any of the 5 major watersheds drained by the Taseko River, Big, Gun, Tyaughton, and Relay Creeks. The area is ideally suited to both summer and winter recreation, including hiking, horsepacking, mountaineering, camping, backpacking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hunting, fishing, photography, snowmobiling, heli-hiking, heli-skiing and ecological study.

This extensive trail system encourages recreational use to be widely dispersed, thereby minimizing concentration of campers, hunters, hikers, anglers, and people on horseback. Beyond the trails, the extensive alpine zone allows easy route-finding above 2,000 m. The many alpine passes also permit various circle routes, which adds to the quality of the wilderness experience. The comparatively gentle terrain of the high-elevation trails is virtually unique in southern British Columbia, and provides an attainable wilderness experience for all families.

In a 1985 study, Dr. Hamish Kimmins, R.P.F., a private forest consultant stated that the proposed Southern Chilcotin Mountains Recreation Area would complement Manning Park, and relieve some of the pressure that is reducing the value of Manning Park for wilderness recreation. He concluded that "Of the three recreation-resource use conflicts that I have had some contact with in the past three years, the South Chilcotin Mountains Park Proposal...(has)...the greatest merits for a resolution in favour of parks and recreation." In fact one of the other two areas, he referred to, was the Cascade Wilderness, now part of Manning Park.

5. POTENTIAL OF WILDERNESS TOURISM IN REGION

Accessibility to Population Centres

The nearest community, Gold Bridge, can be reached year-round through the Fraser Canyon via Lytton and Lillooet, or by the Sea-to-Sky Highway via Pemberton. Both routes require approximately equal driving time (5 hours) from Vancouver to the primary trail-heads.

The area is only 3 hours driving time from Whistler. Travel times will be reduced when the Duffey Lake road between Pemberton and Lillooet and the Hurley River (Railroad Pass) road between Pemberton and Gold Bridge are upgraded. Recreationists can also reach the area by air from Pemberton or Whistler, providing quick access for a large adventure travel and wilderness tourism market which is increasing at a rate of approximately 15% per year in British Columbia.

Well over 1000 people per summer visit Spruce Lake (source: British Columbia Forest Service backcountry ranger).

Economic Value of Wilderness Recreation versus Timber Harvest

The October 1986 Lillooet TSA Options Report indicates that the Spruce Lake Option, which removes the Spruce Lake Area from the Annual Allowable Cut, reduces long-run sustained yield (LRSY) by 15,000 cubic metres per year. This reduction equals only 3.4% of total LRSY, and corresponds to stumpage revenues of only \$43,000 per year. Moreover, the annual loss in direct logging employment equals only 18 person-years, or 5.5% of the total.

These relatively low employment and stumpage levels are substantially exceeded by direct employment in tourism and wilderness recreation (more than 50 people per year) that would be jeopardized by logging the Spruce Lake area (Letter to the Editor; Vancouver Sun; April 19, 1988). Tyax Mountain Lake Resort alone has 29 permanent employees and over \$1,000,000 in annual revenues, and exists because of its proximity to the Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness. Additionally, employment in tourism is permanent and local, whereas logging jobs are more transitory, and are often contracted to people outside the TSA.

In winter, powder snow offers superlative back country ski-touring. Multi-day traverses or cabin-based trips in this type of snow will attract ski-touring enthusiasts from throughout North America, with the Whistler ski resort providing a convenient access point. For all of these reasons, we are convinced that the comparatively nominal economic values related to logging will be more than offset by maintaining the wilderness values of the Southern Chilcotin Mountains.

Other regions in western North America have already documented the economic value of outdoor recreation. A Colorado study in 1980 revealed that the wilderness preservation system in that state had an economic present worth of U.S. \$1.5 billion. In a 1985 report to the Provincial Cabinet Committee on Economic Development, the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society reported that logging in the Podunk and Paradise Valleys north of Manning Park would realize a financial loss of \$9.5 million over a 10-year period, compared to revenues of \$1.0 million for tourism and recreation over a 5-year period. Indeed, tourism is already the second largest industry in British Columbia, with most of our international advertising extolling the "Super Natural" qualities of our formerly undisturbed landscape.

Economic Value of Wilderness Recreation Versus Mineral Resources

Although mining claims exist in the area, decades of exploration have produced no significant discoveries. One geologist from the British Columbia Mines Branch, and one from the University of Washington informed the Vancouver Natural History Society at their 1988 Summer Camp at Spruce Lake that mining potential is low. Conflicts between wilderness users and mining activity within the Recreation Area are, therefore, unlikely.

We recommend that mining exploration be limited to 10 years following establishment of the Recreation Area.

6. FAILURE OF INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TO PROTECT WILDERNESS VALUES

The Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP) designated 3 zones of resource extraction based on potential conflicts with wilderness values. In reality, however, this management plan tacitly condones the eventual elimination of

wilderness in the Southern Chilcotin Mountains, as all merchantable timber in the area continues to be included in the Annual Allowable Cut.

The three zones are described below:

Zone 1

The most economic timber was included in Zone 1. Clearcut logging continues in areas such as Mud Creek West, Lower Tyaughton Creek, Lower Gun Creek, Relay Creek West, and portions of both Slim and Leckie Creeks. A new logging road was constructed on the west side of Gun Creek in 1986. Despite assurances by the Ministry of Forests to minimize the visual impact of logging, a large cut-block at the Gun Creek trail-head has ruined the wilderness vista. Because of this activity, which we believe violated the spirit of the Integrated Resource Management Plan, one of the guide-outfitters lost several clients who no longer perceived a true wilderness experience.

Zone 2

The IRMP permits this zone to be logged beginning in 1990. This includes Bonanza Creek, upper Relay Creek and portions of Paradise Creek. Although this zone is highly sensitive visually from a recreational perspective, the Ministry of Forests, when approving logging plans, is constrained only in Paradise Creek, where input from a landscape architect "may" be considered.

Zone 3

Zone 3 is the most environmentally fragile and highest-value recreational category, as identified by the Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Management Plan.

Nonetheless, according to the IRMP, all of Zone 3 could be logged beginning in the year 2,000. This includes Eldorado Creek/Taylor Creek, Upper Gun Creek/Warner Creek, Spruce Lake and Upper Tyaughton Creek.

The proposed Recreation Area includes all of Zone 3, virtually all of Zone 2 and much of Zone 1.

7. COMMERCIAL RECREATION FACILITIES AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

We support existing commercial recreation groups using the proposed Southern Chilcotin Mountains Recreation Area, assuming that such use is carefully managed to preserve wilderness values. At least five guide-outfitters are active in the Southern Chilcotin Mountains.

Tyax Mountain Lake Resort has quickly gained an international reputation for outdoor adventures, which are now threatened by plans for clearcut logging in prime access corridors and high-use areas. As wilderness throughout the world becomes more scarce, its significance for British Columbia residents and world tourism will become even more valuable.

We support controlled, planned, use by commercial recreation groups in the Southern Chilcotin Mountains, as long as high-quality, wilderness experiences are preserved for all users.

8. CONCLUSION

The acceptance of the 1937 recommendation by the Vancouver Natural History Society must not be delayed. The "Southern Chilcotin Mountains Recreation Area" proposal is supported by the Ministry of Parks, which has assigned the Southern Chilcotin Mountains highest priority for the Southern Interior Region within its System Plan. Additionally, the Honourable Dave Parker, former Minister of Forests, has stated that "Our priority for future wilderness is definitely Spruce Lake. The area has exceptional wilderness, recreation and wildlife values."

In recent years, recreational use of the area has grown rapidly, as accessibility and recognition has increased among residents and tourists throughout the world. Immediate action is required to maintain wilderness values that are threatened by logging. We recommend that the Southern Chilcotin Mountains (shown in Map 2) be designated as a Provincial Recreation Area, in recognition of its outstanding recreational opportunities, natural attributes, and economic values.

Appendix

SUPPORTING GROUPS

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society was founded as the Coalition to Protect the Southern Chilcotin Mountains in 1979.

The Society was incorporated in 1984 with a mandate to protect the area through designation as a wilderness park. The following groups and their approximately 100,000 members support the society:

Alpine Club of Canada
British Columbia Horse Owners Association
British Columbia Mountaineering Club
British Columbia Wildlife Federation
Citizens Association for Predator Conservation
Ecosummer Canada
Environmental Interest Group - U.B.C.
Federation of British Columbia Naturalists
Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia
Guide-Outfitters Association of British Columbia
Gun Lake Ratepayers Association
Kamloops and District Fish and Game Association
Orienteering Association of British Columbia
Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia
Sierra Club of Western Canada
Simon Fraser Outdoor Club
Society Promoting Environmental Conservation
Valley Outdoor Association
Vancouver Natural History Society
Western Canada Wilderness Committee



Bighorn Sheep

only uneconomic deposits. The Spruce Lake Plan of 1981 does nothing to protect the area from further such ravages.

While the sub-alpine areas have been spared from logging until the year 2000, the logging of the lower valleys is expected to commence imminently. It is mandatory to preserve these lower valleys as a buffer zone to the alpine regions.

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains are on the verge of extensive exploitation.

Your Help Is Urgently Needed

Although the Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society has 17 member organizations, including the Sierra Club, B.C. Wildlife Federation and the Gun Lake Ratepayers Association, as well as many individuals, it is not enough! Only with your letter, and support, do we have a chance to preserve the unique wilderness grandeur of the Southern Chilcotin Mountains for B.C.'s future generations. We must consolidate our efforts.

- I wish to join the Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society. \$5.00 individual—\$25 group.
- Enclosed is my donation of \$_____ (tax deductible)

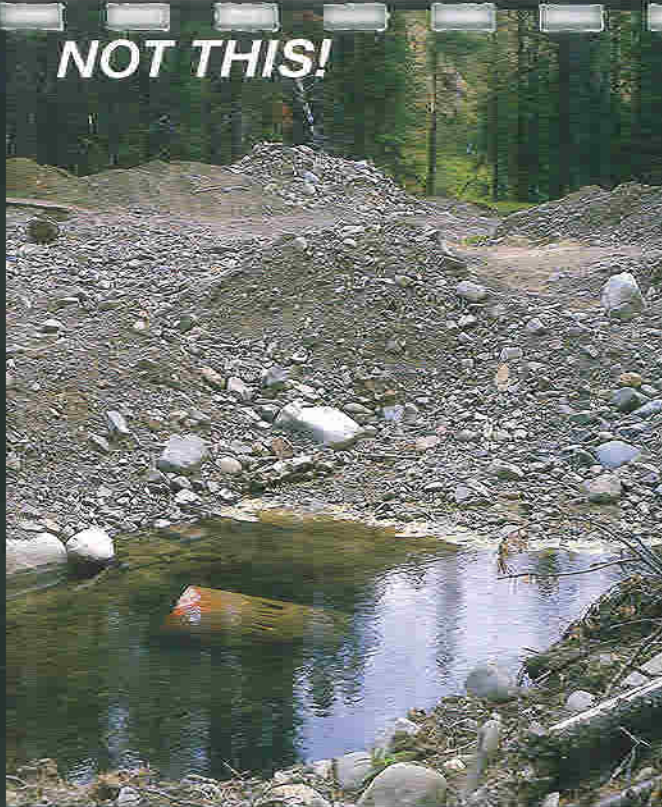
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Address: _____

Prov.: _____ Postal Code: _____

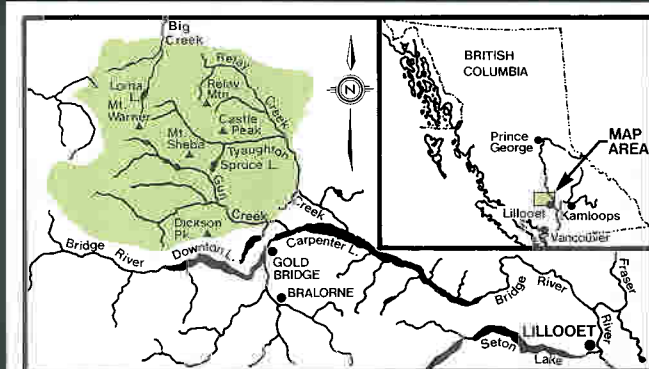
Please return to: The Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society
 General Delivery, Gold Bridge, B.C.
 V0K 1P0

Please make cheque payable to WESTERN CANADA WILDERNESS COMMITTEE / S.C.M.W.S.



Relay Creek

Send your letter today to:
Premier of British Columbia
 Parliament Buildings
 Victoria, B.C.
 Canada
 V8X 1X4
 (with a copy to your MLA)



NOT THIS!



**THE SOUTHERN
 CHILCOTIN
 MOUNTAINS**

**WILDERNESS
 PARK
 OR
 DEVELOPMENT?**

Castle Peak



Spruce Lake

The Area

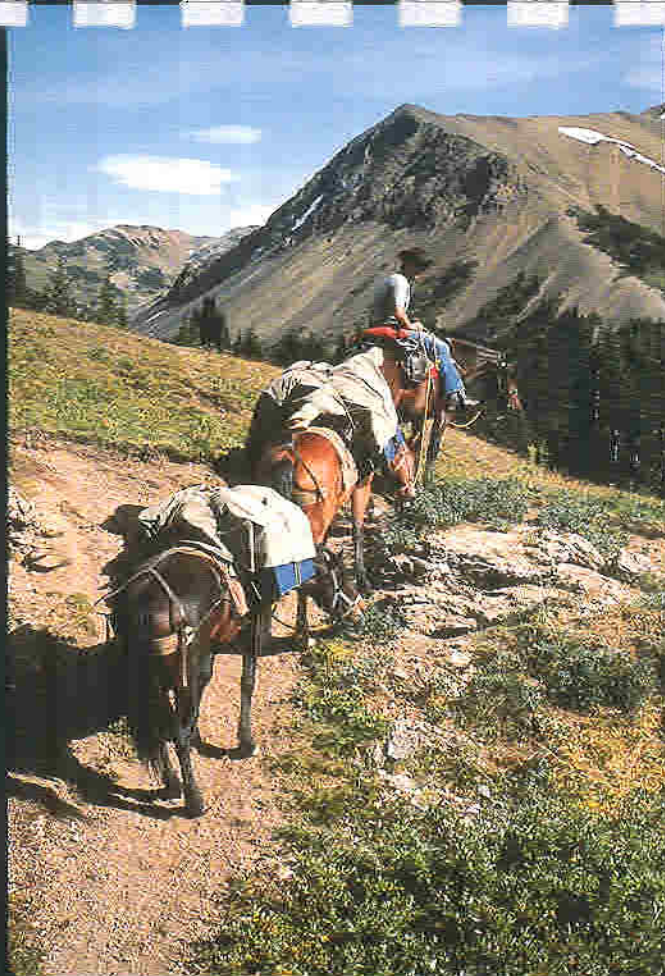
The Southern Chilcotin Mountains are a spectacular vista of rivers, lakes and mountains that rival, if not surpass, anything in British Columbia's park system.

Only 125 miles from Vancouver, this 300,000 acre country is the unique alpine transition zone between the Coast Mountains and the Interior Plateau. Here even a novice backpacker can follow trails for miles, through open valleys, lush meadows rich with wildflowers, past pristine lakes toward the mountain passes.

Home of one of the largest remaining bands of



Tyaghton Valley



Eldorado Basin

California bighorn sheep, the Southern Chilcotin Mountains are also the natural habitat of a wide variety of animals including cougar, wolverine, moose, wolf, mountain goat and grizzly bear. Until now these mountains have retained their wilderness grandeur.

Now all this may change!

The History

The alpine nature of the Southern Chilcotin Mountains makes it a fragile and vulnerable land, as does its proximity to large population centers. Only wilderness park designation can save it.

Since the 1960s there have been many efforts to have the area set aside as a wilderness park. In 1976, a study done by the Outdoor Recreational Council at the request of the provincial government described it as "...one of the prime areas in British Columbia as regards recreational potential," and recommended the area be preserved as "a wilderness core." In the same year a B.C. Parks study called the area "incredibly beautiful."



Upper Gun Creek Valley

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness Society was formed in 1979 to preserve, in its natural state, this wilderness core area. In 1980 the Society's request for park status was denied. Later in the same year, a multiple use planning team was organized by the government. In 1981 the Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Management Plan was published by the Ministry of Forests, and stated:

"It is hard to identify an area of the province that has such a diversity of high recreational values in a relatively small area that is located roughly four hours from Vancouver or Kamloops."

The Threats—Mining and Logging

In recent years, a mineral exploration road was built into Bonanza Creek south of Tyaughton Creek. Debris and destruction that were left behind exist today. More recently, the alpine portion of Relay Creek, one of the three major river valleys, was extensively scarred by mineral exploration. Years of such exploration in the Southern Chilcotin Mountains have uncovered

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains Wilderness

Society needs your support to preserve this

area as wilderness

parkland.

