

Land

B.C. RESOURCE MAGAZINE



LAND is a new and exciting magazine devoted entirely to reporting all aspects of resource management in British Columbia. LAND also represents a highly economical (a few cents per reader) and attractive means of communicating this information to you. In this and ensuing issues, we will present the problems of resource management and the philosophies of those involved and affected by resource decisions. You will be able to keep up-to-date and well informed by reading LAND. Future issues will include articles on water resources and the problems of pollution control; how petroleum and mineral resources are managed; how recreation areas are determined and where they are; the principles of land management will be discussed; you will read about agriculture, forestry, wildlife, fish management and more. Resources are the basis of our quality of life in British Columbia, so take the time to read this first issue. If you like the idea of the magazine, its format and method of presentation, fill in the attached card and mail it today. You then will receive LAND four times a year, free.

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Cover photo taken near Vancouver by Don Pierce, clearly illustrates the prominence of the sun from a visual aspect. But we sometimes fail to see the sun in its real role of supplying us with a limited amount of natural resources, vital to our survival. Close attention to our impact on natural resources will assure us of our future, but we are at a point in history where this decision must be made.

LAND is a quarterly publication of the British Columbia Environment and Land Use Committee and is mailed free of charge to interested groups and individuals.

Its objective is to increase and disperse knowledge concerning the formulation and application of the principles of natural resource management in British Columbia.

Articles and photographs are contributed by the provincial departments of: Lands, Forests and Water Resources; Agriculture; Recreation and Conservation; Mines and Petroleum Resources.

Gerry Graham
Editor

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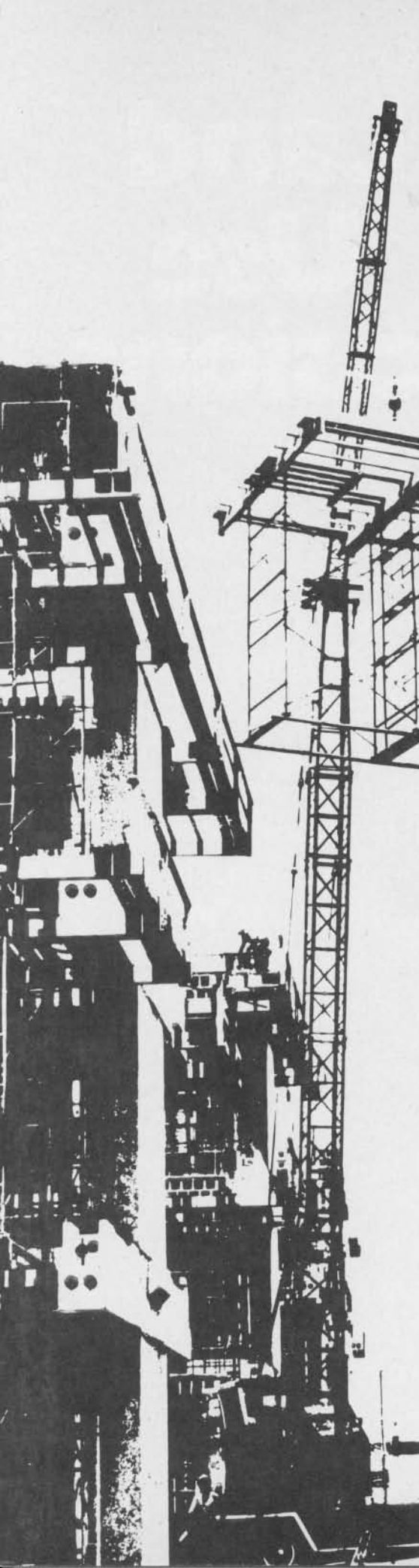
Land Use Decisions

by Alistair Crerar



In the past, in British Columbia, the land and its products were so vast and bountiful, the people and their requirements so few and modest, that it was possible to accommodate most demands with a minimum of conflict or discrimination.

Today, there are more people, both here and abroad who need the products of the land. At the same time qualities of space, the natural environment and the wilderness experience are being sought by increasing numbers, just when these qualities are more and more difficult to find.



When a product is in surplus and demand is low, decisions about its utilization are relatively simple and the consequences of mistaken judgments relatively trivial. But, in a province whose well-being is based on resource development, the need for improving the ability to make decisions about the use and allocation of resources is imperative.

Traditionally, decisions about resource development and land use have been left to individual, specialized agencies, each charged with protecting and promoting one aspect of resource development; a forest

service for forestry, an

agriculture

department

for agriculture,

a parks service for

recreation and so on.

This has been necessary, indeed essential. Each discipline

has accumulated so

much information

and expertise that

specialization is re-

quired. Increasing

understanding dic-

tates that even more

specialization will be required in

the future.

Though this is essential for understanding the detailed mechanisms of the resource base, we must appreciate that the resource base we are dealing with is a seamless web and that an action in one area or discipline will have repercussions in another.

These conflicts have surfaced in the disputes between forestry and recreationalists, dams and fisheries, agriculture and urban expansion. For each one that becomes sufficiently serious to come to public attention there are many more that do not, though cumulatively these are probably more significant.

So governments have been seeking methods of improving the quality of decision making, to provide for ways in which the detailed knowledge of specialist departments could be combined with a total view of the whole resource base. The most common solution has been to create a department of the environment or a department of resources.

British Columbia however has tried a different approach by maintaining the individual specialist departments and bringing together the Ministers responsible for the individual departments in a committee of cabinet known as the Environment and Land Use Committee. One of the advantages of this approach is the ability to include other non-resource departments whose actions nonetheless are strongly affected by, or strongly affect, the resource departments. The Environment and Land Use Committee consists of the Ministers of Agriculture; Lands, Forests and Water Resources; Mining and Petroleum Resources and Recreation and Conservation (the resource departments) and the Ministers of Economic Development; Health; Highways; Municipal Affairs and Northern Affairs (departments whose activities affect the resource base).

Initially, the Committee was assisted by a Secretary/Co-ordinator who worked through a Technical Committee consisting of the Deputy Ministers of the same departments to provide staff support for the Minister's Committee. This was a cumbersome device. As an alternative, the Ministers' Committee decided to establish a Secretariat which could act as a full time continuing staff arm to the Committee.

The Secretariat was initially organized in two divisions — Resource Planning and Special Projects — each with a small, five/six person, multi-disciplinary professional staff. These two units have the same aims and objectives; to examine problems and potentials in the resource development field, to identify alternatives and to assess the direct and indirect consequences that are associated with each of the alternatives.

The Resource Planning Unit focuses on areas and regions in its approach to resource management, while Special Projects focuses more on kinds or classes of resource use conflicts, such as power projects or developments in estuaries.

It is essential for each resource department to continue developing its capability, to consider the resource for which it is responsible,

