

The Wonder of Robson Valley ... And You!

East of Prince George, British Columbia, lies a landscape that is one of the wonders of planet Earth, an Ancient Rainforest of giant trees, hundreds of kilometres from the Pacific coast where you might expect to find them. This is the Robson Valley, bounded by the snow-capped Rocky Mountains on the East and the Cariboo Mountains to the

West, the headwaters of the most magnificent and diverse river in North America, the Fraser. Features that make this valley a precious gemstone in nature's crown appeared in Part 1 of "Rainforest Conservation Corridor for Robson Valley" in 2002 (Save-The-Cedar League).

Here are just a few other features the Rainforest Corridor provides:

One of the world's last primeval landscapes. The exceptional Ancient Cedar trees are some of the oldest (1,500 years) and widest (14.5 ft.) Red Cedar known to exist anywhere. Ancient Cedar is one of earth's oldest and largest living organisms, nourishing the most productive ecosystems on earth, deserving our commitment to protect them.

A world-class Ancient Rainforest habitat needed by old-growth-dependent species, especially those needing low-elevation river valleys (Save-The-Cedar League 1996, 1997, 1998).

The last place remaining in the world outside of Parks where you can still see healthy "core populations" of all seven of these charismatic, "focal species" of conservation biology science living within an Ancient Rainforest: Mountain



Caribou, Chinook Salmon, Grizzly Bear, Wolverine, Lynx, Cougar, and Wolf (Craighead and Cross 2004).

The home to the world's largest remaining Mountain Caribou herd (750 animals, Wittmer et al. 2005), federally classified as "endangered" (The Mountain Caribou Technical Advisory Committee 2002). The Corridor provides the calving and wintering habitats of dwindling BC Mountain Caribou, and the calving-grounds for the dwindling, southern-most-remaining Alberta Mountain Caribou herd living outside of Parks. Six other large ungulate species live in the valley: Mountain Goat, Bighorn Sheep, Elk, Moose, Mule Deer, and White-Tailed Deer.

A connective link among nine existing Parks: Kakwa, Sugar Bowl/Grizzly, Bowron, West Twin, Erg Mountain, Ptarmigan Creek, Cariboo Mountains, Slim Creek, and Willmore Wilderness (Save-The-Cedar



League 2002).

The last watersheds remaining in the entire Rocky Mountains where you can still see Grizzly Bears fishing for wild, ocean-going Chinook salmon, that we call "Salmon-Grizzly" (Weaver and Zammuto 2004). The Corridor contains a world-class Grizzly Bear



gathering on Bearpaw Ridge where 25 Rainforest Grizzly Bears can be watched feeding over a weekend. They are

part of the highest density Grizzly Bear population in East-Central BC, including more than 150 Bears (Save-The-Cedar League 2002).

The home to 350 vertebrate species (Save-The-Cedar League 1997), the Slim-West Twin and Morkill-McKale Rainforests of 5000 sq. km, and some of the highest biodiversity in North America.

Clean air and oxygen we all breathe and pure clean water we all need. The Rainforest absorbs 16-50 times the carbon dioxide per hectare than the Brazilian Rainforest (Moore 1991) to reduce global warming and climate change. These vital Rainforest functions make all life possible, create our life-support systems, and maintain earth's climate, making the ancient cedar



Rainforest of overriding importance.

The home of the newly-discovered bird population of hybrids between Eastern Blue Jays and Steller's Jays (Zammuto 1997, Save-the-Cedar League 2002). The Corridor supports Western Grebe, White Pelican, Surf Scoter, Northern Goshawk, Prairie Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Great Blue Heron, Sandhill Crane, Long-Billed Curlew, Pomarine Jaeger, Short-Eared Owl, and other rare, large birds (Save-The-Cedar League 1997, 2002). The first endangered Whooping Cranes observed in the Rainforest Corridor during recent times were filmed at West Twin Park in 2003.

Alternative economic opportunities needed by Rainforest communities for their sustainability. The Corridor has some of the highest conservation and recreational values in the



world, enhancing the scientific, economic, and recreational values of the largest, inter-connected protected-area-network in Southern Canada (more at No. 4. below).

The heart of the only Inland Temperate Rainforest in the world that is threatened with extinction right now (Goward 1994, 1995, 1996).

Large volumes of pure, clean water are contributed to the Fraser River from watersheds of Robson Valley forests (Bocking 1997). Headwaters in some of these ancient forests significantly contribute to the Fraser's biological processes. The Fraser is the world's most productive, free-flowing, salmon-bearing river, and 10 percent of its giant Chinook salmon spawns in Robson Valley, hundreds of kilometres from the ocean. The high volume of quality, pure water flowing from some of the oldest forests remaining on earth gives this Rainforest paramount importance.

With the world's special places shrinking and degrading, with species disappearing at an unprecedented rate, it is obvious that the Robson Valley, this life-giving planetary treasure, should be preserved as a significant source of hope for the future of the natural world. For this is one of the most biologically-rich natural environments on earth, an irreplaceable ecosystem that produces oxygen, absorbs carbon dioxide, cleans our air and water, sustains our wildlife, fisheries, and human society.

A vibrant Inland Rainforest stretched through much of southeastern BC just a few decades ago. Today, however, much of that Rainforest lays in ruin, while many of its once vast wildlife populations are mere tattered remnants. Industrial profiteers are bringing the Ancient Inland Rainforest to the edge of extinction, for the short-term benefit of a select few, at a huge long-



term loss to the many. This Rainforest provides resources needed for human survival, yet it is being destroyed much faster than nature can restore



it. After thousands of years of exuberant productivity, the survival of the Inland Rainforest is in doubt.

Clearcutting of the Rainforest has caused silting and warming of many salmon streams that is devastating the salmon fishery. Unsustainable forestry practices have pushed the Mountain Caribou to the edge of extinction by destroying its habitat. Our challenge is to stem the tide of extinction that is threatening Ancient Rainforest Cedar, some of the rarest and most ecologically-significant trees on earth, along with many other plant and animal species of the Rainforest.

WHAT MUST WE DO?

1. Protect Robson Valley's Walker Rainforest Wilderness, the largest Rainforest Wilderness East of Prince George.

Why?

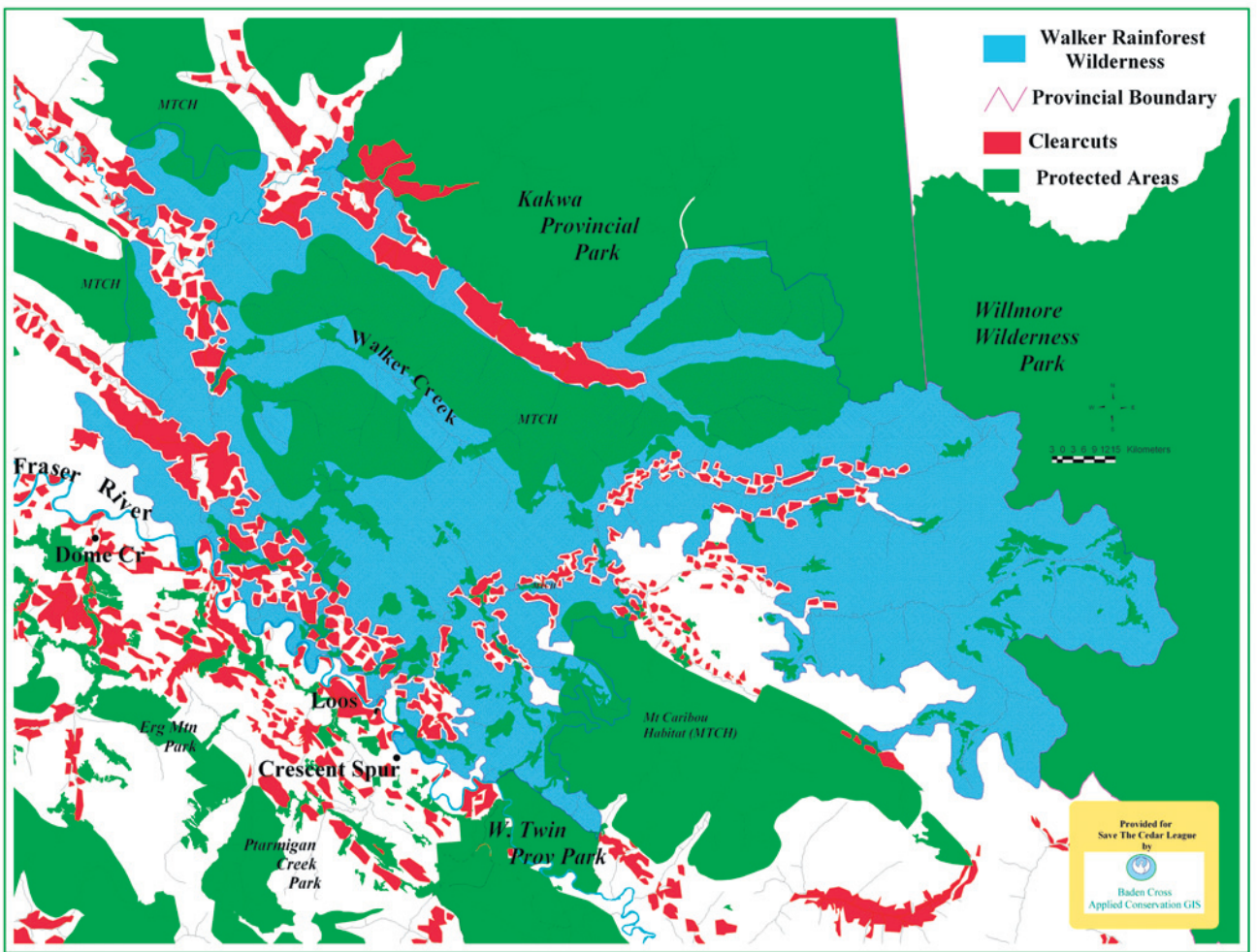
At 2006 sq. km (774 sq. mi), the Walker Rainforest is the largest wilderness remaining anywhere in the world outside of Parks that includes Ancient Inland Rainforest, Mountain Caribou, Salmon-Grizzly, and ocean-going Chinook Salmon (See the blue on the map below; Prince George is to your left, Jasper to your right).



It was licensed for logging several times yet all licenses were abandoned due to economic inoperability (Chief Forester 2006).

It is proposed for protection by many scientists, conservationists, local Rainforest communities and residents, and there is a growing desire among many others throughout the world to safeguard it from commercial development.

Local Rainforest Communities need the Walker Rainforest



Wilderness (WRW) protected to maintain their sustainable, alternative economic activities and opportunities.

The WRW contains 40 key Chinook salmon, Bull-Trout, and Rainbow Trout spawning grounds - up to 5,000 Chinook Salmon spawn here each year (Department of Fisheries and Oceans 1990). It contains a critical, bottle-neck, wildlife travel corridor used annually for migration by 15 large migratory mammals. It contains Morkill Falls, the largest waterfall with the largest Chinook salmon raceway in the region, adjacent to two other waterfalls over 300 ft. high. Salmon-Grizzly feed on spawning salmon among the large boulders strewn along the magnificent raceway beneath these three falls. The WRW also contains the magnificent Bull Trout spawning ground and canyon at Hellroaring Creek Rainforest Falls.

Scientists documented the WRW's critical importance so convincingly that the BC Government legally protected 529 sq. km of Mountain Caribou Reserves and 163 sq. km of Spatial Old Growth Management Areas within the WRW during 2003-2006 (Carson et al. 2003, Stevenson et al. 2003, Thibeault et al. 2006).

Legislation in 2004 adopted that there should be an additional 17,700 ha (68 sq. mi) of high elevation old-growth Spruce forest mapped and protected in the Landscape Units containing much of the WRW to maintain the forest (Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management 2004). About 6000 ha of this 17,700 ha is needed to protect all of the WRW within the Humbug Landscape Unit. Local residents and communities publicly request the 6000 ha of ESSF be mapped as Spatial Old Growth Management Areas, as a necessary follow-up to the 2004 legislation (see definitions below).

Scientists have documented that if old forest adjacent to

Caribou habitat is logged, deer and moose move into the logged area, and then Wolves and Cougars follow them, gaining new access to nearby Caribou, which they then kill in numbers so large they wipe-out whole Caribou

populations. This chain of events is a leading cause of the decline of Endangered Mountain Caribou populations (Wittmer et al. 2005, The Mountain Caribou Technical Advisory Committee, 2002). We estimate more than 100 Mountain Caribou, 14% of the 750 Caribou living

East of Prince George will be wiped-out from this chain of events if the WRW is further roaded or logged instead of being protected, especially along Upper Walker Creek. This is particularly critical since the WRW contains the only watershed in Canada that is home to three federally-recognized sub-populations of Woodland Caribou at risk of extinction (the Southern Mountain, Northern, and Alberta Mountain ecotypes).

The WRW is the largest remaining undeveloped watershed-cluster in the entire Rocky Mountains where Grizzly Bears can still be watched fishing for wild, ocean-going salmon. Our DNA analysis showed these "Salmon-Grizzly" depend upon Chinook salmon for 20% of their diet in the WRW (Weaver and Zammuto 2004).

We have a duty to maintain outstanding, rare wild places of the highest biodiversity like the WRW, leaving to future generations a world enriched by our stewardship.

The BC government took a step in the right direction to protect Mt. Caribou from hunting in 1996, and after consultation with the Federal Government's Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), the BC government protected some Mt. Caribou winter range in WRW in 2003 (Stevenson et al. 2003). Government and many

others have documented that logging old forest adjacent to Mt Caribou habitat causes an increase in deer and moose, which leads to more predators, and more dead caribou. Therefore the WRW should not be further roaded or logged since this will cause the watershed to be occupied by too many deer, moose, elk, and their predators, causing the extinction of the Caribou population of around 50-100 animals within the WRW, some 10-15% of the entire population remaining East of Prince George.

The extraordinary WRW is the largest, unprotected, unfragmented Rainforest with Chinook salmon, salmon-grizzly, and mountain caribou remaining within the entire 14 million ha Inland Rainforest Region of BC. Protecting the WRW will be a major step towards the long-term sustainability of what remains of Canada's globally-unique

Inland Rainforest. The challenge is immediate because the phenomenal WRW is in jeopardy from development. In the map of the WRW above, the blue-coloured area should be protected and added to the green-coloured areas that are already protected. The logged landscape surrounding the WRW (coloured red, above) shows a shocking amount of Rainforest fragmentation. It is a matter of good fortune that the WRW with 69% old-growth forest (Cross 2006) has remained as intact as it is, so late in its history. Therefore, our opportunity for its conservation should not be squandered through poor planning, neglect, and apathy, but we must immediately seize this opportunity to protect the entire Walker Rainforest Wilderness today!



2. The "Aspatial" Old Growth Management Areas (OGMAs) should become "Spatial" OGMAs in the Ancient Rainforest.

Why?

"Aspatial" OGMAs are not mapped on-the-ground until a future date, whereas "Spatial" OGMAs are mapped on-the-ground and legally protected. Aspatial OGMAs contain millions of the largest and oldest Ancient Red Cedar trees known to remain in the world, some are 14.5 feet in diameter and 1,500 years-old. These Aspatial OGMAs must be mapped by government for protection from logging, when they will then be called Spatial OGMAs.

Aspatial OGMAs surround the Western edge of the world-famous Primordial Grove (Save-The-Cedar League 2002), but these 200 ha must become Spatial OGMAs or Primordial Grove can be destroyed by wind, exposure, drying, insects, or other forces if the Western edge is logged.

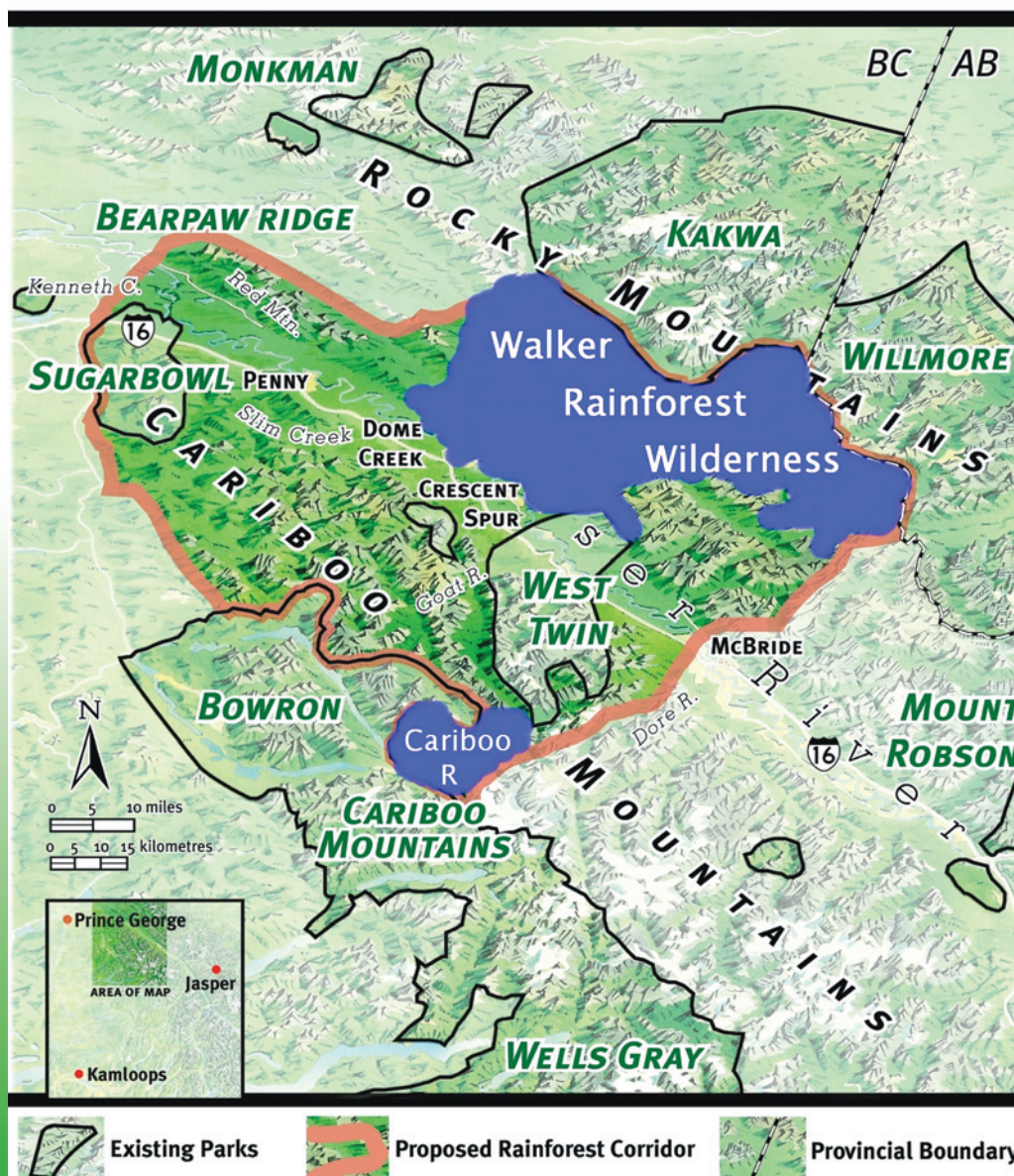
The 100 ha Ancient Forest Trail must be protected as Spatial OGMA since it has some of the largest and oldest known Ancient Cedar trees known to exist in Robson Valley. Additionally, the "McBride Area Guide" (2006) published by many communities, businesses, and the Chamber of Commerce promotes ecotourism of the Ancient Forest Trail and promotes the associated alternative economic activities in the nearby Dome Creek Community. The Ancient Forest Trail was featured in a community-based film called "Block 486," when the trail's protection was supported by many BC communities, conservation groups, nature and hiking clubs, yet instead this prominent area is slated for logging to make a few fence posts and ornamental mulch (TRC Cedar Ltd. 2001).

The 200 ha "Parthenon Grove" on the alluvial fan of Humbug Creek contains the last remaining stand of high-density Ancient Cedar of the ICHwk3 biogeoclimatic zone within the Humbug Landscape Unit of some 1000 sq. km. Scientists, conservation groups, and hundreds of people wrote government to protect this Grove, but were ignored.

Legislation in 2004 adopted that there should be an additional 31,800 ha of old Cedar forest protected East of Prince George to maintain the world-unique Rainforest ecosystem (Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management 2004). We find only some of this 31,800 ha needs to be mapped as Spatial OGMAs to protect the best-remaining Ancient Cedar of the Walker Rainforest Wilderness, of Primordial and Parthenon Groves, of the Ancient Forest Trail, and of the Slim, Dome, Humbug, Crescent Spur, Lower Morkill, and Lower Goat Landscape Units where the remaining Ancient Cedar are found.



Rainforest Conservation Corridor For Robson Valley



3. The Upper Cariboo River should be added to Bowron Park.

Why?

Most of the 33,000 ha watershed has been determined to be important endangered Mountain Caribou habitat that scientists and others say should be protected from development (Recovery Implementation Group 2005).

The Robson Valley's Allowable Annual Cut (AAC) was reduced by 3% per year in 2006 due to the BC Chief Forester, Industry Foresters, STCL, and others finding evidence the Upper Cariboo is inoperable, costing more to log than all the logs in the watershed are worth (Chief Forester 2006). Therefore the

entire Upper Cariboo River can be protected for sustainable alternative economic activities, tourism, and biodiversity conservation without any loss to the forest industry.

The Upper Cariboo River is used by tourists who paid \$800 million to the Tourism Industry over a few decades (Coopers & Lybrand Consulting 1995). It has been acknowledged that the Upper Cariboo's prime tourist attraction is its wilderness quality, yet the wilderness integrity of adjacent Bowron Park will be compromised by logging of the Upper

Cariboo watershed. Degrading the value of the wilderness experience by logging the Upper Cariboo will reduce the willingness to pay tourism dollars by those seeking such recreation; a considerable loss of revenue from tourism while simultaneously losing biodiversity. Clearly, protecting the rare, endangered wildlife and old-growth forest of the Upper Cariboo River conserves biodiversity sustainability, tourism, and economy.

4. The Walker Rainforest Wilderness, Spatial Old Growth Management Areas, and the Upper Cariboo River should all be added to the largest, inter-connected Protected Area Network in Southern Canada.

Why?



The protected ecosystem straddling the BC/Alberta border (Banff, Jasper, Kakwa, Kootenay, Mount Robson, Willmore, Yoho, and several other smaller Parks) is an international treasure of 31,674 sq. km (12,224 sq. mi). It is the largest, inter-connected, protected-area in Southern Canada! Many key mammal, fish, and bird species would already be extinct were it not for forward-thinking citizens, communities, governments, and others who had the foresight to protect their habitats in this magnificent region. Yet some species are still being decimated as their habitats are destroyed by unsustainable industries adjacent to this international treasure.

Save-The-Cedar League launched “part 1” of a conservation project “Rainforest Conservation Corridor for Robson Valley” in 2002. This additional 10,000 sq. km connective corridor would include the heart of the world's only Inland Temperate

Rainforest, directly linking nine existing Parks (Kakwa, Sugar Bowl/Grizzly, Bowron, West Twin, Erg Mountain, Ptarmigan Creek, Cariboo Mountains, Slim Creek, and Willmore Wilderness), with Southern Canada's largest protected area network.

Our conservation vision, in collaboration with Rainforest communities, scientists, and others is to maintain the viability of the world's only Inland Temperate Rainforest and associated biodiversity for the long-term, by creating new and expanded protected areas that safeguard the sustainability of the Rainforest and all of its unique features. The Corridor offers a multitude of significant ecological, scientific, social, cultural, economic and other indispensable values and benefits. This Corridor is critical to the preservation of our natural biological diversity, the maintenance of vital ecological processes, and the nourishment of intact life-support systems. The Corridor

significantly contributes to the diversification of our economy through the growth of the ecotourism, wild-craft, retirement-home, wildlife, fishery, and recreation industries. It provides benchmarks for long-term scientific research, serves as a reservoir of genetic information, provides outdoor classrooms, and provides opportunities for people to experience, appreciate, and enjoy nature. Outdoor recreation in natural, wild, old growth such as the Walker Wilderness contributes to the mental and physical well-being of human beings. The aesthetic qualities of the Inland Rainforest are unsurpassed with its old-growth, ancient Cedar, mountains, lakes, rivers, and its panoramic views. In addition, rare wildlife, recreation, and tourism opportunities are overwhelming in the Corridor. Simply knowing that viable natural and cultural resources are held safely in trust for future generations is deeply satisfying for many people. Please help protect the Inland Temperate Rainforest!

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How You Can Help Stop the Destruction of the World’s Only Inland Temperate Rainforest

We have adopted an economic system that is devastating the natural world and human support systems. We are allowing the forces of destruction to prevail by not taking action. Please, actively participate by doing the following to ensure the Ancient Inland Rainforest, the Walker Rainforest Wilderness, and their biodiversity remain viable for the long-term:

- 1) Join Save-The-Cedar League (\$15), and make a tax-deductible, charitable donation.
- 2) Call (800) 663-7867 or write, to connect with Members of the BC Legislative Assembly and the Premier at: The Parliament Buildings, Government of BC, Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4. Tell them you want the ancient rainforest and biodiversity of the Robson Valley protected from logging for future generations, using Save-The-Cedar League's proposed Rainforest Conservation Corridor.
- 3) Refuse to buy Red Cedar wood products, shakes, posts, rails, or mulch. Many 500 year-old Cedar produce only a few fence rails, and many trees this age are cut down and burned without being used at all, even though they eat tons of Carbon Dioxide to reduce global warming.
- 4) Ecotour the Robson Valley Rainforest with us, or use your own STCL member's copy of our Robson Valley Ecoguide, containing vertebrate abundance and habitats, directions to special ecological sites, hiking trails, old growth driving sites, waterfalls, lakes, and salmon spawning grounds.
- 5) Get a VCR or DVD copy of our Rainforest Grizzly Bear TV Documentary to show your friends the Grizzly Bear gathering on Bear Paw Ridge (\$11 donation).
- 6) Elect politicians to your local, regional, provincial, state, and federal governments who support protecting Robson Valley's ancient rainforest.
- 7) Actively participate to protect ancient forests and habitats of endangered species by signing-up to distribute copies of this report to your friends, neighbours, schools, shopping malls, doctor offices, and other public places.



Your Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/Town: _____

Province/State: _____

Postal/Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

Phone/Fax: _____

Enclosed is \$15 for membership in Save-the-Cedar League and a tax-deductible donation of \$_____.

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