

EXTEND THE MORATORIUM ON LOGGING OF THE TSITIKA WATERSHED !

Statement of Position by the Committee to Extend the Moratorium

Sunday, March 19th, 1978

The Committee to Extend the Moratorium on Logging of the Tsitika Watershed is supported by the following organizations:

- United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union - Local 24
- Federation of B.C. Naturalists (Vancouver Island Region)
- Sierra Club of Western Canada
- Outdoor Club of Victoria
- Environmental Committee, Victoria Labor Council
- Federation of Mountain Clubs of B.C.
- Mount Douglas High School Students Committee

We are a relatively new Committee which held its first meeting on February 21st. As can be seen from its composition, the Committee is a coalition of representatives from the labor movement, outdoor groups and students. We feel that, in addition to the formal composition of the Committee, our views reflect the sentiment of many people in B.C. concerning the proposed logging of the Tsitika Valley. The following statement has been developed within the Committee, concerning the cutting plan shortly to be announced for the Tsitika.

We believe that an excellent case can be made for completely preserving the Tsitika watershed for all of the reasons that were given at the public hearings held in 1975 on Vancouver Island. The Tsitika is a river valley which has remained practically unchanged and virtually unlogged since historic times. As everyone knows, on Vancouver Island, on the East Coast, all the others are gone. Many ask why cannot we save the last one? We on the Committee, unlike certain spokesmen for the logging companies, are not upset that virgin trees remain in the Tsitika watershed. We do not describe them as "decadent" and "overmature". We are not upset that a fully mature forest would be left for future generations to come. We also feel that the existence of an unlogged watershed on Vancouver Island, like the Tsitika, does give a necessary base point of comparison for any efforts directed at improving wildlife resources, in other river valleys cleared of original first growth timber.

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But the Committee to Extend the Moratorium wishes to emphasize that it is not against ~~future~~ logging of the Tsitika, provided such logging can be justified. Logging is the main source of livelihood in B.C. To be justified for us means:

a) The logging methods used will be of an entirely new type, i.e. pro people, pro wildlife and pro environment. We do not regard begging some "concessions" from the logging companies as being logging operations of an entirely new type.

b) That the decision to log the Tsitika is looked at in the general context of the rapidly developing overcutting crisis in the B.C. forest industry. The Tsitika watershed contains virgin timber. The lumber industry wants it. But there is a crisis in the industry caused by massive overcut, improper utilization, and inadequate reforestation. After we cut the Tsitika wood, what then? The basic problem remains. For this reason, the Committee believes that an extension of the moratorium on cutting in the Tsitika watershed could allow a reappraisal of the existing situation in the woods and, perhaps, the development of a realistic long-term rate of harvest on what is left. Rushing to log the Tsitika might suit the immediate plans of the forest companies involved, but does it suit the long-term interests of the people of B.C.? Does it suit the long-term interests of the loggers in the woods?

Attitude Towards the "Tsitika River  
Integrated Resource Planning Committee"

This Planning Committee was established by the provincial government after the political decision was made to log the Tsitika. This decision in fact ended the moratorium on logging and road building in the Tsitika watershed which was established February 1973. Technically, the moratorium is still in effect, but the Planning Committee is almost ready to unveil its cutting plans for the watershed at a series of public displays to be located in Port McNeill, Kelsey Bay, Campbell River, Nanaimo, Victoria and Vancouver. Public meetings are being organized in these locations, with the exception of Victoria and Vancouver. They will not be "public" in the sense ordinary people understand the meaning of the word.

A letter signed by R.T. Ostby, chairman and co-ordinator of the Planning Committee (B.C. Forest Service) to the Director of the Environment and Land Use Secretariat, dated January 24, 1978, noted, "we are looking for a polished individual to chair the public meetings", and that "the format for the public meetings will not be an open forum type of discussion". The letter went on, "by avoiding an open forum we hope to escape a reiteration of the various opinions offered during the public hearings". The "polished individual" eventually chosen, was Erik Karlsen, Acting Assistant Director of the Secretariat.

The Committee to Extend the Moratorium on Logging of the Tsitika Watershed is completely opposed to sham democratic "public" meetings of the type illustrated here. We demand "open forum" discussions. We demand that the character of the public meetings be changed so that the full exchange of views on the proposed cutting plans for the Tsitika watershed, can take place in front of everyone.

- interpretation); "Manner in which wildlife ranges are shown will depend upon the interpretation of the 1% withdrawal provisions."
- 5) Outside groups - environment/labor - were brought on the Planning Committee starting February 9, 1978 (Environment) and March 2-3, 1978 (Labor), too late to have any fundamental input into the resource plan. Their main function, from the government and logging companies perspective, is to give some respectability to the proposed cutting plan for the Tsitika watershed.
  - 6) The delegates from the Federal Fisheries and Provincial Fish and Wildlife have attempted to get the establishment of an independent committee or monitoring agency to see that what plans are agreed to in the Planning Committee will actually be carried out in the Tsitika watershed. But the main thrust in the Planning Committee is to emasculate such an idea.

The Committee to Extend the Moratorium on Logging of the Tsitika Watershed supports the establishment of an independent committee to oversee and enforce any cutting plans, if there is no extension of the moratorium. But the establishment of such a committee, must be supported by and have representatives on it of the loggers in the woods, in addition to fishermen, conservation groups and the general public. We do not accept the view that "a follow-up committee might be composed as per the planning committee".

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Wildlife and Environmental Questions for the Tsitika  
Watershed Remain Unanswered

Basic wildlife and environmental questions remain unanswered. The rush to complete the cutting plans for their April unveiling cannot conceal this. We would also make the obvious comment that how can the logging companies "manage" wildlife when their main interest is cutting as much wood as possible to maximize their profits.

The Fish and Wildlife Branch has moved from a position of proposing ecological reserve status in the Tsitika in 1972 to the existing situation of pleading for "a reduced rate of cut within the Tsitika drainage", and for the retention of a few hundred unlogged acres of mature timber cover for elk and deer winter range. What wildlife research has been carried out in the Tsitika, has concentrated on high profile animals like elk and deer. Other animals, like wolves, bear, cougar, wolverine and small mammals have not been seriously studied. The statements about lack of information apply even more to the bird and estuary life of the watershed. So how are adequate plans possible?

Historically, what does adequate wildlife management mean for the logging companies involved in the Tsitika watershed? Some examples are listed below:

- 1) Advocating clear-cut openings of up to 200 acres. (Canadian Forest Products Ltd. and MacMillan Bloedel Ltd., 1975) MacMillan Bloedel said in an April 1974 brief on the Tsitika: "The impact of clearcut harvesting on the aesthetics of a forest are undesirable. However, a change to the selection or group selection methods of cutting is uneconomic and probably biologically impracticable in these overmature forests."
- 2) "Woodpeckers may eventually have to be provided with nesting boxes, as in Europe." (Brief of MacMillan Bloedel, April 1974)
- 3) "Protecting" the salmon, steelhead and trout of the Tsitika river by upholding: "the schedule of logging is such that at no time is more than fifty percent of the streambank without forest cover". (Brief of Canadian Forest Products Ltd., 1975)
- 4) A serious proposal to give out winter feed for elk, advocated at the 1975 public hearings in Campbell River. As a representative of a Comox group noted, "putting fodder out for elk isn't quite what we had in mind when we talked about habitat for endangered species." (P. 92)
- 5) Spraying alders with herbicides, because they are undesirable.

The level of wildlife knowledge since 1974 and 1975 regarding the Tsitika has not basically changed from the representative statements listed below:

"Unfortunately, B.C. biologists cannot define the ideal and upper and lower environmental limits to maintain fish and wildlife populations." (Brief of MacMillan Bloedel, April 1974)

"At present biologists are telling logging companies where they may log, where they may not log, and how they may log, in order to protect wildlife and fish. In many cases these decisions are based on intuitive feelings and only a little bit of hard information. If it was ever to be fully known by some of the logging companies and public just how shaky the data base is for some of the decisions we are making, it would totally astound you ..." (Testimony of Mr. Jones, forest biologist for Canadian Forest Products, at the Campbell River Public Hearings, March 8, 1975, pp. 101-102)

"We find it incredible that, with the exception of one, small and federally initiated study in Barkley Sound, virtually no information is available on the fisheries or wildlife productivity of any Vancouver Island watershed in its pristine state". (Testimony of Mr. Harling for the Nanaimo Fish and Game Protective Association, at the Nanaimo Public Hearings, March 14, 1975, p. 65)

The Committee to Extend the Moratorium on Logging of the Tsitika Watershed believes that on the grounds of defence of wildlife alone there are sufficient reasons for extending the moratorium. We have to stipulate to the logging companies what is necessary to preserve the existing wildlife, fish population, birds and plant life. If the companies want to log, then they must follow these guidelines.