

Of the 89 largest watersheds on Vancouver Island, only six have been left untouched by logging. All six are on the island's west coast and five of them have been slated for logging. There are two major centres of controversy: the Kyoquot/Brooks region and Clayoquot Sound.

In 1988 Clayoquot Sound sprang to the nation's attention when protesters blockaded road construction at Sulphur Pass. The road would have provided access to the trees around Sulphur Pass and Shelter Inlet, and opened up the pristine 24,000 ha Megin River. Local group Friends of Clayoquot Sound (FOCS) asked Fletcher Challenge Canada to stop the road construction until a sustainable management plan could be prepared for all of Clayoquot Sound.

Deaf ears

The plea fell on deaf ears, the company continuing with the road construction. Fletcher Challenge Canada forestry head Don McMullan says the local conservationists "don't have a stake in the industry," and that 200 people would have been affected if they had declared a moratorium.

The company then took a court injunction out against the protesters, making anyone interfering with the road construction in contempt of court. Over the next two months protesters defied the court order and thirty five were arrested. A Fletcher's contractor shot at a tree sitter with a pellet gun; his sentence was 20 hours of community work. Loggers started to fell a tree occupied by a protester lying in a hammock, stopping only when they became aware that they were being filmed. The protester spent 15 days in a maximum security prison; no action was taken against the loggers.

Bonny Glambeck, a director of FOCS, was one of six women who refused to pay their fines. As a consequence they were sent to a maximum security prison where they were incarcerated with two women charged with manslaughter. If it was the State's intention to terrify the protesters into submission, it has partly succeeded. The women had nightmares for months afterwards and no blockades have occurred since.

Glambeck views the sustainable management committee set up for Clayoquot Sound as achieving little except "drawing off a lot of energy."

Her view of Fletcher Challenge is one that is echoed by a number of Tofino residents: "FCC are exploiting our lack of government enforcement and treating us like a third world country."

Tourism entrepreneur Dorothy Baert is typical of a number of Tofino townspeople: from an early age she fell in love with the coastal town on visits and today she has chosen to make a living there running a sea kayak business. From her office she has an uninterrupted gaze across the sea to Meares Island and Vancouver Island's distant mountains. No environmental radical, she belongs to the local Chamber of Commerce and is the townspeople's representative on the Sustainable Development Steering Committee. She is no more complimentary in her estimation of Fletcher Challenge Canada.

"The company has no ties to the community. Our trees are simply cash flow and their objective is to liquidate the resource."

She says the message the people of Tofino

are trying to impart to the logging industry and government is that there should be enough forest left "to maintain the legacy of wilderness in all its complexity."

After two years on the committee Dorothy Baert has become sceptical about the industry's or government's desire to compromise. Instead of hammering out an overall strategy for the future, the committee spends most of its time arguing over where the loggers can go next.



About 10,000 black bears live on Vancouver Island, flourishing in the rich habitat provided by the varied vegetation of the rainforest. The key to their survival is found in the diversity of the old growth forests. Photo: Adrian Dorst

Natural history photographer Adrian Dorst is another Tofino resident who has made a career in a non-exploitive industry. When he arrived in what was predominantly a fishing village in 1972, he scratched out a living as a bird spotter and wood carver, meantime learning the art of photography. Today a burgeoning interest in natural history books and magazines has created a demand for his striking images.

A founding member and director of FOCS, Dorst has seen little change in the logging companies' approach during the 1980s.

"Clearcutting is clearcutting. It's just total destruction of the forest environment. FOCS would prefer to see single log extraction. They should shut the mills down if they are at the expense of the environment," he says.

However FCC say a recently-issued independent B.C. Forest Resources Commission report strongly endorsed clearcutting as an ecologically preferable method of harvest for the majority of B.C.'s forested ecosystems.

Such sentiments tend to play into the companies' hands as they use the spectre of environmentalist demands to drive a wedge between workers and environmentalists. But the truth is that timber workers have increasingly lost their jobs as a result of automation, and not because forests have been protected.

The timber industry argues that, without automation, far more jobs would have been lost through bankruptcies due to the industry's inability to compete in global markets.

Employment cost

Forestry writer Cameron Young has pointed out the cost, in employment terms, of B.C.'s

forest industrial strategy. The emphasis is on high volume automated production of timber and pulp, rather than value-added processing.

"Back in 1960, a work force of 68,500 cut and milled an estimated 34 million cubic metres of wood - a ratio of two workers for every 1000 cubic metres cut. By 1990 the work force was estimated to be around 90,000, and the volume of timber logged had risen to more than 90 million cubic metres. That meant the ratio had dropped to approximately one worker for every 1000 cubic metres logged. In other words, the rate of logging in B.C. has nearly tripled in the past 30 years while the rate of employment per volume logged has declined by half."

According to the industry, the figures are proof that it has become more productive and efficient.

The situation is bound to worsen as the old growth forest is cut out and replaced by second growth trees destined to be fodder for pulp mills within 60-80 years. Already around 60 percent of the trees logged on Vancouver Island by FCC are turned into pulp for paper.



A male wolf strides across the Arakun mudflats of Meares Island in search of prey. Efficient hunters, even of cougar kittens and bear cubs, the coastal wolves of Vancouver Island are smaller than the bigger silver timber wolves of the north.

Photo: Adrian Dorst

EARLY SPRING, and a meeting is called in Tofino by the Friends of Clayoquot Sound (FOCS) to discuss what action, if any, should be taken in the summer to stop further logging in the area. Most of those attending are young, alternative lifestyleers; some make a living from tourism; there is one native American. Dress tends to be uniform: artificial fibre gear is definitely *de rigeuer*.

Because the meeting has been advertised as public, four burly loggers from the "Share the Clayoquot Sound" group arrive with their wives. Conventionally dressed men and women, the loggers and their partners stand out like a clearcut in the midst of an old growth forest. "Share" groups are a North American phenomenon: started in the United States by disenchanted Sierra Club member Ron Arnold, the share groups spring up to counteract environmentalist demands. United States share groups' links to the right wing Centre for the Defense of Free Enterprise, the American Freedom Coalition and the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church are well documented. Fletcher Challenge Canada deny such links exist for the Canadian share groups.