

give a clear role to the Nuu-chah-nulth in managing the forest, decreasing gradually the wood harvest from the area, and ending clearcutting altogether on the Sound. Environmental groups and the Nuu-chah-nulth are monitoring logging companies operating in the region to assure their compliance with the agreement, and are exploring ways of permanently protecting the Sound such as designating it as an International Biosphere Reserve.⁴⁸

Other protests have occurred. The Haida Islands were successful, after a twenty year battle, in blocking logging of a 50 mile long archipelago in the Queen Charlotte Islands. The Haisla Indians gained protection for 400,000 acres of their ancestral lands on the central coast.⁴⁹ Protests by First Peoples are not limited to the West. In Ontario, the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation tribe clashed with provincial police over control of the Ipperwash Provincial Park where tribal ancestors had been buried. One Indian was killed, the first death in modern Canadian history of an Indian protesting land policy.⁵⁰ Another group of militant First Peoples were involved in a shoot-out with Royal Canadian Mounted Police when they took over a privately owned lakeshore site near Gustafsen Lake that they claimed as an ancestral homeland. Chief Joseph Gosnell of the Nisga'a Indian band warned after talks with British Columbia officials to settle a land-claim dispute recently collapsed due to a federal-provincial fight over cost-sharing that violence might occur there as well.⁵¹

The B.C. government's commitment to double the size of the province's wilderness lands from six to twelve percent is, from one perspective, a major environmental achievement. As of 1996, it was half-way to that goal, having protected nine percent of the land as wilderness. Some environmental groups have supported the government's position. It is the first time the provincial government has expressly promised to double protected lands, and is more ambitious than other governments have been around the world. A number of environmental groups, funded by U.S. foundations, formed the B.C. Wilds coalition to work with the government.

Critics argue that patching together enough lands to preserve 12 percent of the province is not sufficient to protect its biodiversity and its role in the global biosphere. How much wilderness is needed to preserve some species such as salmon, grizzlies, or wolves? We should not gamble with the preservation of these species, but should protect enough to ensure their survival. One group has argued for preservation of 40 percent of the province. One problem is the legal ability of the province to protect the lands. Some of the lands belong to First Nations, and the government has agreed to finally sign treaties with them. The first agreement, with the Nishka, included about six percent of B.C. About 90 percent of the province is Crown or provincial land; the federal government owns only a small portion of the province.⁵²

The provincial Ministry of Forests, environmentalist critics charge, is nothing more than an arm of the timber industry. It facilitates the cutting of 500,000 acres of trees a year, most of which are shipped to Asia and the United States to be turned into pulp for newsprint. Some 25 percent of the forests lining the coast and inland waterways has been clearcut. Vancouver Island forests have been logged everywhere except in a few popular tourist spots. Industry-provincial government ties are particularly tight. The ministry is the largest single