

the environment, and, indeed, the quality of life in the broadest sense. New concepts have emerged that are difficult to quantify in economic terms. For example, what dollar values can be placed on the need to protect natural biological communities, to preserve scenery, to reduce noise, congestion, and the pace of modern urban life?

More readily quantifiable is the growing requirement for open space for outdoor recreation in a natural unspoiled setting by an increasing number of people with more leisure time. These new concerns reflect not only a desire for healthy, pleasant surroundings but also, and more importantly, a scientifically based understanding, as yet imperfect, of the need for caution in activities which affect the interlocking and mutually dependent elements that make up the global ecosystem of which man is a part. Despite the difficulty in quantifying these factors, Governments must take them into account in making decisions which, in terms of their effect on the environment, are irreversible.

It is against this background that the Government of Canada has assessed the importance of leaving the Canadian portion of the Skagit Valley in an essentially natural state. The essential elements of that assessment are derived from an attempt to consider the environmental characteristics of the Valley in a broad Canadian perspective.

Most of the people of British Columbia live in urban centres within 100 miles of the Canada-United States border. British Columbia's largest urban aggregation, which contains over one million people, is