

Tatshenshini in a century or a millennia? The question that must be asked is: What discount period should be used when calculating present worth? Clearly, when such a long term perspective is taken, even sites that seem costly to acquire now, will be considered the bargains in just a few decades.

Proper economic valuing of proposed and existing pristine areas is crucial for two reasons:

- 1) it will enable land use decision-making that responds both to development-oriented economic as well as survival-oriented environmental priorities,
- 2) it will strengthen the case for more financial resources to be made available now by government to acquire pristine areas.

FACILITATING PRISTINE AREAS ACQUISITION

In fact, given that the pristine sites we protect today can never be re-created - they are the legacy of natural processes developed without human intervention - their worth will be beyond monetary value. But ironically, it is not clear if we today have the financial resources necessary to complete our pristine areas systems. Despite the priceless value that these biodiversity, scenic, wildlife, recreation preserves will represent for future Canadians, despite the fact that such reserves may prove crucial to determining whether our civilization thrives and despite the fact that as the remaining intact natural areas of our nation get quickly scarcer and drastically more expensive to acquire, the funds we have presently allocated to complete the pristine areas system now seem quite inadequate.

For example, while the Green Plan talks of completing the terrestrial national park system by the turn of the century with the acquisition of 16 new national parks, the total funds budgeted to do this (which would still have to be approved by Treasury Board and Cabinet) is only \$47 million, over 6 years. Considering that establishment of South Moresby National Park Reserve involved \$126 million for the compensation and regional development package, clearly this present pristine areas budget is inadequate to enable achievement of the stated Green Plan preservation goal.

Recalling that beyond the Green Plan, only 1/4 of 1% of the federal budget is allocated to the Canadian Parks Service, such limited funding seems to be generating a mentality that systems completion will be dependent upon whether the financial means exist to "purchase" potential sites. By this approach the decisions made to bestow a disappearing, irreplaceable and essential natural heritage to future ages will be determined by budgetary rather than scientific priorities. The prospect therefore is for an inadequately