

THE ENVIRONMENT

Wilderness Area Set Aside in BC

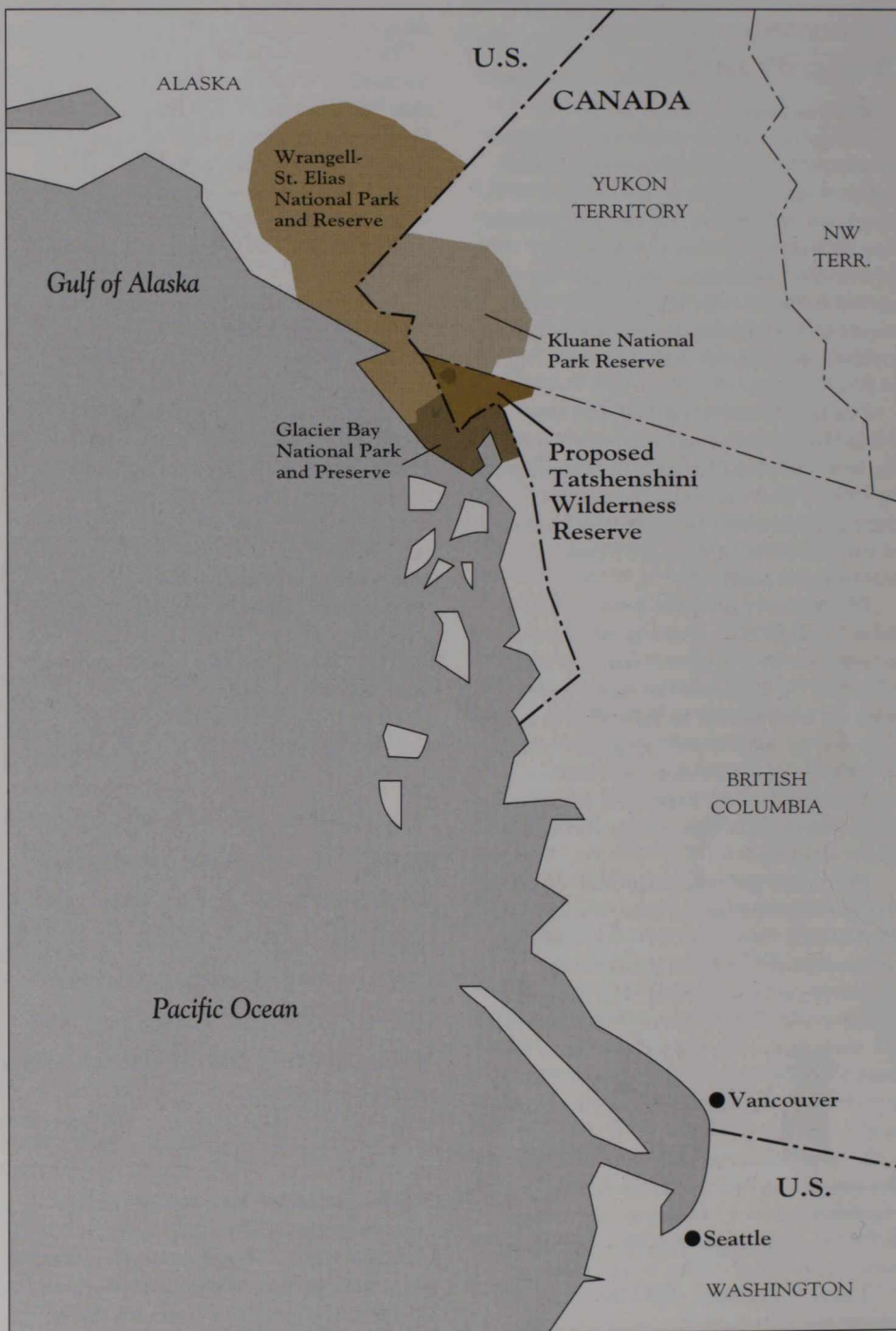
The British Columbia government has decided to preserve a remote wilderness in the northwestern corner of the province, Premier Mike Harcourt announced on June 23.

The government will create a park out of the Tatshenshini-Alsek region, a 2.5 million-acre watershed that is home to grizzly and glacier bears, wolves, bald eagles and salmon. The region, which is more than twice the size of the Grand Canyon, lies adjacent to Kluane National Park in Canada's Yukon Territory and two parks in Alaska, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Glacier Bay National Park. Together the three parks would make up the largest protected area crossing national boundaries. The existing parks have been designated as United Nations world heritage sites, and Harcourt said the Tatshenshini park would be nominated for that status.

The decision effectively puts an end to the proposed Windy Craggy project, a \$550-million open-pit mine that would have tapped an estimated \$8.5 billion of gold and copper reserves in the region.

Premier Harcourt said, "We came to the conclusion that the preservation of wilderness and the proposed mining activities could not co-exist." Environmentalists claimed that acid draining from the giant open pit mine would disturb the area's ecosystem and could harm salmon fisheries.

U.S. Vice President Al Gore praised the British Columbia premier for acting "boldly and with foresight to protect and preserve the natural heritage of one of the world's most important rivers." Tom Cassidy, chief counsel for American Rivers, one of the environmental groups fighting the proposed mine, said, "We see this as one of the great conservation victories in decades."



CANADA QUARTERLY

Canadian Embassy
501 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
Tel.: (202) 682-1740
Fax: (202) 682-7791

Edited by Judith Webster
Designed by Musikar Design

If you wish to change your address,
please include your mailing label.



BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WASH., D.C.
PERMIT NO. 1451

Address Correction Requested

Printed on recycled paper