

DELIVERING THE SUPER, NATURAL GOODS:
COMMODYING WILDERNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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Abstract

This thesis places the values shared by recreational hikers, backpackers, kayakers, and others within the British Columbia Forest Debate in the second half of the twentieth century. Using the 1985-86 Wilderness Advisory Committee as a case study, it argues that the interpretation of the concept of “wilderness” expressed by these outdoor enthusiasts can only be understood through the study of North American consumer culture. They valued “wilderness” as a commodity, not unlike the ways that forest and mining companies did, yet also expressed environmentalist concerns about protecting “wilderness” areas from resource exploitation and overdevelopment.

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Delivering the Super, Natural Goods: Commodifying Wilderness in British Columbia

Advertised as “Beautiful,” “Super Natural,” and “The Best Place on Earth,” the province of British Columbia is known for its majestic natural environment. The question of how citizens and decision-makers can best manage, utilize, and preserve the province’s natural resources is a complex issue and a source of fierce debate. An article written in 1979 by Uwe Meyer in *Beautiful British Columbia Magazine: Land of New Horizons* provides a useful introduction to how many contemporary British Columbians thought about “wilderness” and their relationship to the natural world.

It’s the little things that disturb you in the wilderness: cigarette filters and beer bottle caps carelessly tossed aside. At Symphony Lake [near Tweedsmuir Provincial Park], there were none of these things; the only giveaway that people had visited before was the presence of a cooking pit. It was a great feeling to live in harmony with nature.¹

Inherent in Meyer’s mind is an understanding of what “wilderness” is; however, the concept of wilderness in the North American context is much debated. The type of wilderness that Meyer refers to, as historian William Cronon has argued, derives from a particular mixture of nineteenth century American romanticism and popular environmentalism in the wake of Rachel Carson and Greenpeace.² Rather than seeing the natural world as something to be conquered or to provide raw material for extraction, Meyer sees the human place in nature as one of stewardship, of

¹ Uwe Meyer, “Journey into Wilderness,” *Beautiful British Columbia: Land of New Horizons* (Summer, 1979), pp. 2-3.

² William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), pp. 70-79.

visitation, and of responsibility.³ However, Meyer's "wilderness experience" also implicitly includes facets of modern society, in the form of recreational equipment and amenities.

While the presence of cigarette filters or bottle caps may have disturbed Meyer's "wilderness experience," he does not speak about how his party reached Symphony Lake in fibreglass canoes, camped underneath polyester tarpaulins, or recounted his tale in *Beautiful British Columbia Magazine* through a myriad of colour photographs. How do some artifacts of consumer culture (cigarette butts and bottle caps) disrupt wilderness while others (canoes, tarpaulins, and a camera) are integral to experiencing it?

This thesis seeks to place outdoor recreation as a specific manifestation of North American consumer culture within the broader environmental movement. Those who enjoy outdoor spaces for leisure purposes value the natural environment in a very particular manner, one that environmental scholars rarely interrogate.⁴ Over the course of the twentieth century, the type of people who spent their leisure time outdoors, and the ways they related to the natural world, changed dramatically. This was especially so following the Second World War. While many Canadians still hunted, fished, and climbed mountains, a growing number came to know

³ Roderick Nash's *Wilderness and the American Mind* presented a new way of thinking about nature, the environment, and the concept of "wilderness" to the American public in the 1960s, one which did not see "wilderness" as something to be conquered, controlled, and exploited. Since the book's first publication in 1967, Nash has concluded that revolutions in information, equipment, and transportation have expanded the ways that North Americans can experience and access wilderness. Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*. 4th edition. Yale: Nota Bene Books, 2001, pp. 316-320.

⁴ Jeremy Wilson, for example, has written about the rise of environmentalism as a reaction to British Columbia's forest industry during the postwar period in *Talk and Log: Wilderness Politics in British Columbia, 1965-96* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998). While Wilson identifies the operations of such diverse groups as the BC Wildlife Federation, the Federation of BC Naturalists, the Friends of Clayoquot Sound, and the Federation of Mountain Clubs, by grace of their common opposition to the province's forest industry, he examines them as one under the umbrella of the BC Wilderness Movement for the purposes of his book. See Chapter 3 "The BC Wilderness Movement," pp. 43-63.

the outdoors through new modes of recreation. A burgeoning public desire for new forms of athleticism spurred the growth of downhill and cross-country skiing, cycling, kayaking, and more. And new technologies, especially synthetic clothing and affordable, lightweight alloys and plastics, allowed more people to enjoy movement on foot in its many forms – jogging, running, hiking, and backpacking. Specific rules emerged within magazines like *Whiskey Jack* to determine how the outdoors could be experienced. Phrases like “Take only Pictures, Leave only Footprints,” and “If you pack it in, you pack it out” became gospel for outdoor enthusiasts who sought to preserve their natural spaces in an age of mass consumption.⁵

As the environmental movement continued to grow in British Columbia from the 1970s through the 1980s, outdoor recreationalists worked alongside environmental preservationists who wanted to conserve and protect the natural world from human exploitation. In a province where the forest industry thought of “wilderness” as spaces from which timber resources could be extracted, a series of Royal Commissions, Tree Farm Licences, and sustained-yield policies promoted the best, long-term method of managing the province’s forests as an economic resource.⁶ However, rising public concerns about environmental issues forced the provincial government to consider shifting its approach to forest management. Such was the case in 1985 when Environment Minister Austin Pelton appointed a Special Advisory Committee to address the issue of wilderness preservation within the province. Established to decide the fate of

⁵ Both these phrases were part of “A Message from the BC Mountaineering Club and the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC” within the pages of *Whiskey Jack* magazine, a British Columbian publication that provided recreational information to Vancouverites from 1977 to 1982. *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 2, No. 2, Spring 1978), p. 10.

⁶ See, for example, “Sloan to Probe B.C. Forestry,” *Vancouver Sun* (January 4, 1944), pp. 1 where Premier John Hart founded the commission to determine “the best method to be used in the manufacture and logging of forest products, the proper care of forests, parks, reforestation and other matters appertaining to what may be considered as perhaps B.C.’s most valuable natural resource.”

twenty-four specific “wilderness” regions, the Special Advisory Committee (later known as the Wilderness Advisory Committee or WAC) was attacked by BC’s environmental protectionist groups who saw the government-appointed committee as an ineffective body that had no power to force the provincial government to adhere to their recommendations.⁷ While many who enjoyed hiking and camping considered themselves to be “environmentalists” when recreational groups expressed their concerns regarding the fate of “wilderness” to the WAC, their interests differed from those of the province’s environmental protectionist groups. The distinction between preserving “wilderness” and using “wilderness” was captured by one presenter who thought that “many of the written and oral submissions present an overly demanding view of what is and what is not a wilderness area. In [his] opinion the rigid description put forth by many presenters would render many present wilderness areas unsuitable for wilderness recreation.”⁸ The stance taken by many recreational users of BC’s forests during the WAC show that they are a unique type of environmentalist, who oppose human actions that defaced the landscape (such as littering or clearcut logging), yet embrace a certain measure of human activity in it.

By drawing out the characteristics that distinguish recreational groups from the broader environmental movement, we will see that for many environmentalists the concept of wilderness was built not upon notions of a static and unpeopled nature but instead privileged a natural world

⁷ See the article in the *Vancouver Province* “Wilderness ‘process’ prejudiced?” written by Sharon Chow, Director of the Sierra Club of Western Canada. In this article, Chow explains with frustration how the provincial government had continually failed to implement the recommendations of environmentalists following public-hearing processes similar to the Wilderness Advisory Committee in 1985. *Vancouver Province* (9 March 9, 1986), p. 28.

⁸ “Presentation of T. Meland,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Lytton, 13 January 1986), p. 195.

where certain human activities were present.⁹ In making this distinction, this thesis builds upon William Cronon's call to do away with the notion of a totally "wild" wilderness that is devoid of a human history.¹⁰ When seeking the "wilderness experience" in British Columbia, recreationalists did not object to all signs of civilization; roads, trail markers, and even historic buildings could be accepted within the wilderness landscape.¹¹ For them, wilderness had to be modified to be useful. In this way, the demands of recreationalists on the natural world had something in common with the province's forest industry (although recreational use was certainly less visually and ecologically destructive than clearcut logging).

In fact, although "no-trace" outdoor activities are often thought of as non-consumptive, the manner in which outdoor recreationalists placed demands upon British Columbia's wilderness is best understood as a form of commodity use. Unlike the province's traditional industries that extracted timber, mineral, and fish resources, BC's tourism and recreation industries commodified natural space itself, turning it into something that could be enjoyed for leisure. The work of environmental historian Gregory Summers is useful for exploring how the growth of North American consumer culture changed how people related to the environment around them. Summers argues that the concept of "[c]onsumer society ... is perhaps best used to describe a world in which the role of nature as a means of production had all but disappeared

⁹ Bruce Braun, "Picturing the Forest Crisis: Immutable Mobiles, Contested Ecologies, and the Politics of Preservation," Chapter 6 in *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power on Canada's West Coast* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp. 213-255.

¹⁰ William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," pp. 80-85.

¹¹ William Cronon has explored the concept of "rewilding" on the Apostle Islands on Lake Superior, where "natural and human histories are intimately intermingled." Cronon uses the presence of historic buildings within a wilderness environment to question to boundary that many wilderness advocates draw between nature and culture, advocating for the true history of a landscape over efforts to remove or erase evidence of human presence. See William Cronon, "The Riddle of the Apostle Islands," *Orion* (May/June 2003), pp. 36-42.

from the ordinary experience of daily life.”¹² Through the twentieth century, as populations became centred in urban areas, as work became more regulated and globalized, and as the number of consumer products became more pervasive in everyday life, the relationship between individuals and the natural world around them changed. The connection between manufactured commodities and the natural world from which they came was broken; consumers failed to associate the products they enjoyed with the environmental destruction that they opposed. By considering the debate and discussion surrounding the Wilderness Advisory Committee, the distinct form of consumer culture that tourism came to represent, and the ways that *Whiskey Jack* magazine readers came to negotiate human presence within remote wilderness areas, we can see how British Columbian outdoor enthusiasts are a particular type of North American environmentalist.

I. The Wilderness Advisory Committee

On 18 October 1985 Environment Minister Austin Pelton announced to the province the appointment of a Special Advisory Committee on wilderness preservation, which shortly after became known as the Wilderness Advisory Committee (WAC). The formation of such an organization represented a dramatic shift in British Columbia forest politics. Prior to the 1980s, successive provincial governments had dealt with forest issues by establishing Royal Commissions – inquiries headed by an individual justice minister that weighed the economic effects of diverse forest management plans. As the governments that established these

¹² Gregory Summers, *Consuming Nature: Environmentalism in the Fox River Valley, 1850-1950* (Kansas, University of Kansas Press, 2006), p. 7.

commissions were concerned primarily with maximizing the economic output of BC's forests, the conclusions brought about in 1945, 1956, and 1976 solidified the dominant place of the forest industry within the forests of British Columbia. The establishment of the Wilderness Advisory Committee changed that relationship.

The Wilderness Advisory Committee differed from previous government appointments primarily because it approached the issues of provincial resource use from multiple perspectives. The committee was chaired by Bryan Williams, a Vancouver barrister, and included a variety of experts from segments of BC society that embraced alternative views on how provincial forests should be managed. The other original committee members were W.R. Derrick Sewell, a Professor of Geography at the University of Victoria; Valerie Kordyban, Vice-President of the Prince George based Carrier Lumber company; Peter Larkin, Vice-President of Research at the University of British Columbia; F.L.C. Reed, a professor in the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia; Saul Rothman, former President of the BC Chamber of Mines; and Roger Stanyer, President of the Duncan local of the International Woodworkers of America.¹³ Ken Farquharson, a well-known Vancouver engineer and founding member of the Sierra Club of Western Canada, was later appointed to the committee in order to provide an environmentalist's perspective to the debate.¹⁴ Compared to the previous attempts at negotiating British Columbia forest politics, the committee members of the WAC seemed to represent all parties that had valid interests in the committee's conclusions: the province's major universities

¹³ Wilderness Advisory Committee, *The Wilderness Mosaic: The Report of the Wilderness Advisory Committee*. (Vancouver, March 1986), p. 1.

¹⁴ The lack of an environmental perspective was a heated topic within the *Vancouver Sun*, *Vancouver Province*, and other provincial newspapers during the fall of 1985. See "Critics condemn wilderness study," *Vancouver Sun* (19 October 1985), p. A1; "Sierra Club gets representative on park committee," *Vancouver Sun* (9 November 1985), p. A3.

were well represented, as were the forest industry and labour. Not until the committee had begun its public hearings did the short-sightedness of its organization become apparent.

The Wilderness Advisory Committee's goal was to strike a balance between the interests of forest, mineral, agricultural, water, and fisheries resource users and specific recreational, ecological, or aesthetic considerations that might warrant an area's exclusion from resource extraction. Importantly, the committee was not concerned with British Columbia "wilderness" in general but rather with the resource potential of twenty-four specific regions in the province. Sixteen of these regions - of which South Moresby Island was the first listed and most high profile - were areas proposed as wilderness preservation spaces. Furthermore, the committee was to review the boundaries of seven existing provincial parks and Pacific Rim National Park.

In comparison to earlier commissions on forest use and management, the Wilderness Advisory Committee offered an unprecedented level of public participation in land use decisions in the province. In addition to reviewing over 1000 written submissions from various individuals and organizations, the committee held fourteen public meetings at Lytton, Skidegate, Sandspit, Terrace, Prince George, Nanaimo, Cranbrook, and Vancouver through January and February 1986. Written and oral submissions came from British Columbians representing industry, labour, community councils and chambers, First Nations peoples, recreational clubs, environmental and ecological groups, and tourist organizations. Such varied participation immediately suggests that many British Columbians saw the Wilderness Advisory Committee as a long-awaited forum to express individual opinions that demonstrated how public concerns had

changed since the last Royal Commission on Forest Resources in 1976.¹⁵ However, as will be discussed below, an examination of the proceedings of the public hearings reveals that the Wilderness Advisory Committee had to contend with much more than divergent opinions on wilderness allocation in British Columbia.

In British Columbia, the problem with wilderness is that it is closely associated with seemingly endless forests, and that such forests are connected to a long history of use by Aboriginal Peoples and by logging and resource development companies. Minister Pelton recognized that a growing segment of BC society valued the forests of British Columbia for something more than the timber, pulp, and other raw material extraction. Contemporary British Columbians valued the forests in different ways, for providing a livelihood, for inspiring nostalgia and a sense of remoteness, or both. Pelton noted:

I have been the recipient of strong representations concerning many areas in the Province. On the one hand, there are those who argue for total preservation. On the other, I have heard from equally respected British Columbians who advocate maximum resource use – even to the point of urging resource extraction in those areas which are currently subject to special preservation status.¹⁶

Pelton was emphasizing the dichotomy between total preservation and maximum extraction; he clearly internalized “wilderness” management issues in binary terms. The province could treat

¹⁵ While the Wilderness Advisory Committee followed a public hearing format similar to that of the Pearse Commission of 1976, the attention paid to individuals and groups who had alternative interests in wilderness areas was much different than it had been a decade before. Commissioner Pearse noted how the forest industry, being “the group whose economic interests are most directly affected by public forest policy,” was the most prominent segment of society present during public hearings. The benefits derived from the presence of conservation, environmental, and recreational groups, while providing Pearse with “a broad spectrum of information and advice,” was not central to the original mandate or conclusions of the 1976 Royal Commission. See Peter H. Pearse, “A Note on the Public Hearings,” Appendix F of *Timber Rights and Forest Policy in British Columbia: Report of the Royal Commission on Forest Resources*, Vol. 2 (Victoria, 1976), pp. F1-F4.

¹⁶ ----. “Original Press Release, October 18, 1985,” Appendix A in *Wilderness Mosaic: The Report of the Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Vancouver, March 1986), p. 1.

wilderness areas in one of two ways: either as raw material to support the livelihoods and lifestyles of citizens, *or* as spaces to be left untouched. The initial terms of reference for the Wilderness Advisory Committee stressed the need to strike a balance between these two outlooks.

As the members of the Wilderness Advisory Committee realized, conceptualizing “wilderness” management in such “either/or” terms masked an increasingly complex view that included elements of both perspectives but was not fully consistent with either. While the WAC outlined their project as one of managing conflict between resource extraction and wilderness preservation in the twenty-four areas specified by their mandate, advising the Minister of Environment on the issue of wilderness was not a straight-forward task. As mentioned in the opening section of the final report of the WAC, *Wilderness Mosaic*, “The concept of wilderness is varied and elusive, both to its devotees and to its sceptics. Put in words, any definition of wilderness seems to fail to grasp the essence because everyone describes it in a different and personal way.”¹⁷ While individual respondents during the proceedings of the Wilderness Advisory Committee shared varying and sometimes divergent opinions of what “wilderness” meant to them, Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan, speaking on behalf of the Association of Professional Biologists of British Columbia, perhaps presented the issue of wilderness best. For him, the concept of wilderness is first something that had undergone dramatic change throughout the twentieth century: whereas Banff National Park was established nearly a century earlier as “a bastion of civilization in a sea of wilderness,” by the 1980s wilderness was seen as a depleting resource in North America. Secondly, McTaggart-Cowan recognized the need to distinguish

¹⁷ *Wilderness Mosaic*, p. 6.

wilderness objectives from those of forest, wildlife, and fisheries management: “Wilderness should not be compromised to include other objectives, but should be distinct from other uses, and of sufficient size to accomplish its unique objectives.” That is, by deciding the fate of specific wilderness areas in the province, McTaggart-Cowan believed that the WAC should be deliberately setting aside land for the purpose of “wilderness,” which would remain “inaccessible and lacking in a visible and obvious human influence.”¹⁸ “Wilderness” was a land use in its own right, not simply the absence of other land uses such as logging, mining, or park land.

The Wilderness Advisory Committee gave British Columbians a new forum in which to express their concerns about land use issues. As evidenced from the public proceedings, divergent views of what wilderness meant – both in definition and significance – were heard and appreciated during the public meetings, and the committee members genuinely sought a consensus that would balance the needs and wants of different interest groups. More generally, the Wilderness Advisory Committee was important because it reflected shifting social concerns about the direct economic effects of land use decisions on the forests. As Terry Simmons, founder of the Sierra Club of British Columbia, said while speaking to the WAC as President of Humboldt Research Associates:

“[W]e’ll begin by saying briefly that the fact that this Committee exists is, in itself, important. This is the first time that wilderness has become an explicit public natural resource issue in and of itself. It has always been around.... This Committee, in that respect, is a departure. In addition, the fact that we’re talking about wilderness says a lot about the wilderness resource, if you want to use that. [That] wilderness is finally

¹⁸ “Presentation of Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan, Association of Professional Biologists of British Columbia,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Vancouver, 28 January 1986), pp. 323-327.

being seen as scarce and valuable in British Columbia ... is, in itself, significant ...”¹⁹

For many people who did not work in the province’s forest industry, the Wilderness Advisory Committee was a welcome forum that expanded the discussion of forest use in British Columbia.²⁰

While the committee made recommendations that were distinct to each of the twenty-four areas of study, the *Wilderness Mosaic* also offered general conclusions regarding land use, wilderness protection, and decision-making processes for the province as a whole. Specifically, committee members outlined the need for a provincial policy on wilderness. They pointed out that mechanisms to deal with conflicts between government and non-government agencies were deficient; they saw the need for master plans and strategies when developing and sustaining parks and wilderness areas; and they recognized the need to expand communication and public consultation in order for government to react to changing public opinion.²¹ This last point is important, for it reflects a significant shift in how the provincial government, the public, and the natural world related to one another through the remainder of the twentieth century. The Wilderness Advisory Committee recognized that the forests of the province could no longer be regulated and allocated by a coalition comprised of forest industry companies and the Ministry of Forests, as had been the case following the first Sloan Commission of 1945. Nor could land use decisions continually be sidetracked or removed from the public eye. In the closing section of

¹⁹ “Presentation of Terry Simmons, President of Humboldt Research Associates,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Vancouver, 28 January 1986), pp. 407-408.

²⁰ See for example “Presentation of Frances Van Dyke, of the Lytton Village Council,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Lytton, 13 January 1986), pp. 11-12; “Presentation of Trudy Frisk, Greater Kamloops Outdoor Recreation Committee,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Lytton, 13 January 1986), pp. 82-86.

²¹ “Chapter 4: Decision-Making for Wilderness,” *Wilderness Mosaic*, pp. 20-21.

Wilderness Mosaic, committee members urged that the public be involved in decisions concerning their province: “if the delays that have characterized the past decade are repeated, the public will be continually frustrated. Wilderness is now a major public issue in British Columbia and will not go away.”²²

However, not all members of the public believed that the Wilderness Advisory Committee represented the best way to solve the problems of land use management in the province. Numerous critiques of the WAC arose during the public meetings held during the winter of 1986. Criticism came in many forms, from environmental activist and recreational groups to tourism associations and private citizens concerned about the fate of wilderness areas in their province. Two important areas of concern stand out from the proceedings of the public forums: first, British Columbians were anxious about the haste with which the WAC was expected to research and publish its recommendations; and secondly, leaders from the tourist industry were not satisfied with the way that the committee represented their sector’s interests.

The time frame within which Environment Minister Pelton expected the Wilderness Advisory Committee to produce its report was short, and many presenters expressed dissatisfaction with this. The committee had begun reviewing over 1000 written submissions in October 1985, held fourteen public meetings in eight cities in January 1986, and produced its final report on 7 March. Twenty-four wilderness and park areas across the province of British Columbia were reviewed in under six months.²³ Many people, including Wayne Harling of the

²² “Chapter 6: Concluding Comments,” *Wilderness Mosaic*, p. 131.

²³ In fact, the original mandate for the Wilderness Advisory Committee was only three months, a time frame which Jim Rutter of the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC thought was “a ridiculously short period in which to

Nanaimo and District Fish and Game Protective Association, thought that the short period of time the committee

... had to deal with all of these issues ... is an indication of this government's total lack of commitment to, or concern about, environmentally sensitive land issues. ... [W]e suspect that ... recommendations are going to be ignored or altered if they deviate from the preconceived notions of politicians more concerned with the next election than with future generations.²⁴

While committee members accepted submissions and heard oral presentations from any individual, organization, or business that wanted to address the issue of wilderness in British Columbia, the six-month mandate left many members of the public concerned about how well certain interests groups would be represented.

Carol Martin, a Hornby Island resident who spoke to the Wilderness Advisory Committee in Vancouver, commented on how the committee's format disenfranchised those who used wilderness and park areas the most. Martin spoke on behalf of a small group of Hornby Island hikers who were not affiliated with a province-wide organization or club, who certainly had an interest in wilderness preservation, but who had no means to speak formally about it. "Many people," Martin said, "who quietly and consistently use and enjoy these many natural areas either don't read the city papers, and never saw your ad, or aren't politically oriented, or adept at guessing the process and likely couldn't have the wherewithal to write briefs, or to travel

report on the areas in question." See "Wilderness committee can have no credibility," *Vancouver Sun* (7 November 1985), p.A5.

²⁴ "Presentation of Wayne Harling of the Nanaimo and District Fish and Game Protective Association of the BC Wildlife Federation," *Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Nanaimo, 22 January 1986), p. 32.

to the city and read them anyway.”²⁵ Similarly, Juri Peepre of the Outdoor Recreation Counsel of British Columbia commented on how the WAC’s reliance upon prepared submissions favoured those who presented statements on behalf of government organizations or the forest industry:

One of the major difficulties with our committee process is the parity of information and resources used to prepare submissions. Those representing industry and government have used all available resources to produce volumes of facts and figures ... The defenders of wilderness, on the other hand, are most often the ordinary citizens of British Columbia. Their submissions are based on personal conviction and ethics and are derived from hours of volunteer labour. Although the arguments for wilderness are persuasive, they are under-represented and do not reflect the depth of concern I believe exists in this province. Your committee must not succumb to simply analysis of numbers, for these are frequently incomplete, inaccurate and representative of single interest perspectives.²⁶

While compared to previous commissions on forest issues in British Columbia the Wilderness Advisory Committee offered a ground-breaking forum for public input into provincial land-use decisions, the proceedings suggest that many people and groups were dissatisfied with the format and time frame mandated for deciding the fate of wilderness in the province.

That wilderness was an important issue for public debate was not in question; however, in addition to general displeasure over the format taken by the Wilderness Advisory Committee, many doubted whether the committee would have any real power to alter wilderness land use decisions. For the WAC to provide constructive conclusions that truly represented the interests of British Columbians, it would have to challenge the economic interests of the forest industry

²⁵ “Presentation of Carol Martin, Resident of Hornby Island,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Vancouver, 27 January 1986), pp. 98-100.

²⁶ “Presentation of Juri Peepre, Chairman of the Outdoor Recreation Counsel of British Columbia,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Vancouver, 29 January 1986), p. 329.

within provincial park areas. Michael M’Gonigle, an environmental lawyer and political economist, drew attention to ways that the committee might achieve this:

The Wilderness Advisory Committee has a lot of proving to do. From the radical environmentalists to the editorial boardrooms of the *Vancouver Sun*, this committee has already been dismissed as a political vehicle. Its report will be dismissed should it fail to question conventional wisdom and take a larger long-term view. Trading off ten lesser known areas for 1 or 2 high-profile wilderness areas [such as Haida Gwaii or the Stein Valley] is inadequate. What will justify this committee is one thing only – a vision of the future which preserves wilderness – and on a grand scale – while also offering constructive suggestions for a forest industry in critical condition and in need of radical treatment.²⁷

M’Gonigle’s doubts about the power of the WAC to change forest industry practices or protect wilderness on a province-wide scale were well founded. Without the power to force government or industry to take action in any of the twenty-four areas of study, committee members could only offer broad recommendations about the need for intensive studies and extensive master plans within the designated wilderness regions. Following the publication of *Wilderness Mosaic*, critics of the WAC continued to argue for the preservation of specific areas that they deemed to be in need of protection, and conflict remained focused upon challenging the claims of forest company tree farm licences. The Social Credit government under Premier Bill Vander Zalm did follow specific recommendations in low-profile wilderness regions and added over 500,000 hectares of land to the park system. However, in its primary task of shifting British Columbia forest politics away from an area-specific, special-interest-group-driven focus to a

²⁷ “Presentation of Michael M’Gonigle,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee*, (Vancouver, 29 January 29 1986), pp. 248-249.

grander, province-wide agenda for defining land use decisions, the Wilderness Advisory Committee failed to develop a comprehensive plan that would actually be implemented.²⁸

Yet, despite its inability to effect significant change in provincial land use, the Wilderness Advisory Committee must not be viewed as an unqualified failure. Presenters at the public meetings such as Terry Simmons, founder of the Sierra Club of BC, saw how the WAC represented a significant shift in the way British Columbians were able to talk about their forests and wilderness spaces. Prior to the WAC, no province-wide forum had been held on the issue of wilderness (with the exception of editorial debates within the pages of the *Vancouver Sun* and *Province* newspapers). That the WAC was able to develop a working definition of “wilderness” is also significant, and many regional land use studies published later in the decade drew upon the work of the committee to establish their findings. Students of the Natural Resources Management Program at Simon Fraser University, for example, cited the WAC’s *Wilderness Mosaic* as a useful way to negotiate forest industry, tourist industry, recreational, and environmental concerns in setting aside land for wilderness preservation in British Columbia.²⁹

II. Tourism and Consumer Culture

One of the WAC’s achievements was to open a discussion of tourism in British Columbia. The lack of any representative of the province’s tourism and recreation industry was

²⁸ Jeremy Wilson, “‘Have a Good Day, and Try Not to Damage the Grass’: Wars in the Woods, 1986-91,” Chapter 9 in *Talk and Log*, pp.234-239.

²⁹ Michael M’Gonigle, Thomas Gunton, et al. *Wilderness and Forestry: Assessing the Cost of Comprehensive Wilderness Protection in British Columbia*. Master of Natural Resources Management Program, Simon Fraser University, 1990, pp. 1-6.

a glaring omission to the committee's terms of reference. None the less, time and time again presenters reminded committee members of the important place that tourism had in British Columbia, both as an industry that rivalled the giant resource-extractive industries of forestry, mining, and fishing, and as an activity that identified British Columbians with the natural world around them.³⁰

By the 1980s, tourism in British Columbia had matured to a state where its proponents could argue that the interests of the tourism industry equaled those of the forest industry. Within the context of the Wilderness Advisory Committee, tourism advocates were perplexed as to why no industry leader had been included among the committee panel, especially since the provincial government promoted "Super, Natural British Columbia" as a world-wide tourist destination. In his presentation, Paul Sneed, the owner of Wildland Explorations, summed up the apprehensions of many tourism advocates. None disputed that tourism contributed substantially to the province's economy:

It's the fastest growing industry in our province and in the world. Our [P]remier has already made that point very clearly. It is the brightest area in the future of the world right now and in BC in terms of potential employment, while our other industries such as forestry and mining and supposed high tech developments are eliminating through technological change many jobs and creating a high degree of unemployment.³¹

³⁰ Michael Dawson sees the intervention of the provincial government within local tourism efforts in creating what we would today call a tourism "industry." Crucial to this development was the expansion of advertising campaigns, the intensification of consumer market research, and the creation of a hospitality industry. Dawson also points out role played by the citizens of British Columbia, who through provincial literature were "taught" to be respectful and hospitable hosts to tourists coming from outside the region. See "From Tourist Trade to Tourist Industry," *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), pp. 211-216.

³¹ "Presentation of Paul Sneed," *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Terrace, 20 January 20 1986), p. 240.

As a growing industry that required guides, hospitality workers, retailers, and many other workers, tourism offered a means to diversify the BC economy.³² It was time, in the opinion of Ann Pollock of the Tourism Industry Association of BC, for the other industries in the province to consider tourism a legitimate endeavour and to take its interests seriously:

We do not see tourism as the panacea for our economic world, but a contributor to growing health. We are not opponents of the resource extractive industries – on the contrary, we recognize the contribution they have made to the development [of] this province But in recognition of our rapidly changing economy, we insist that our leaders develop fresh, thoughtful and innovative approaches to the way we manage our land resource. Furthermore, we request that in light of its importance, tourism be officially recognized as a legitimate economic activity and its government ministry and private sector representatives be involved in future land use decision.³³

What further inspired advocates of BC's tourism associations was the link between preserving wilderness areas for recreation and British Columbia's identity. Since the 1950s and 1960s, British Columbians had been spurred by their provincial government to think of their province in terms of its natural beauty. In 1964, BC motorists first saw their license plates adopt the slogan "Beautiful British Columbia." On newsstands and in grocery aisles, the government-sponsored magazine *Beautiful British Columbia: Land of New Horizons* showed citizens colourful snapshots of their province while encouraging them to visit these regions on holiday. For British Columbians, then, preserving "wilderness" during the 1980s was not only important for environmental reasons. By protecting wilderness from logging and mining operations, the forests of British Columbia could be enjoyed by many others in ways that still promoted the

³² See Michael Dawson, "Tourism as a Public Good: The Provincial Government Manages the Postwar 'Boom,' 1950-70," *Selling British Columbia*, pp. 178-210.

³³ "Presentation of Ann Pollock, Tourist Industry Association of British Columbia," *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Vancouver, 28 January 1986), p. 303.

province's economy (through tourism) and was essential to the provincial identity.³⁴ In "Super, Natural British Columbia," wilderness itself is, indeed, a commodity.

The commodification of wilderness spaces as spaces of recreation is a result of the pervasiveness of consumer culture in North America.³⁵ Historians often point to the decades following the Second World War when expanding economies – in British Columbia, driven by a growing forest industry – dramatically altered the ways that North Americans lived their lives. Greater disposable personal incomes, admittedly for some and not others, led to greater demands for personal products, and more leisure time led to more demands for experiences that enriched the time spent away from work.³⁶ One way to visualize the commodification of a recreational space is to compare it to a more obvious consumer space: the North American mall.³⁷ Despite their differences, these are both spaces where every person enters as a temporary visitor; the number of visitors exceeds the number of people who know the space through their labour; and

³⁴ Susan G. Davis has explored the relationships between tourism and regional identity in Southern California. She identifies the dual nature of tourism in California where state-sponsored infrastructure projects develop hand-in-hand with tourist attractions and services. See "Landscapes of Imagination: Tourism in Southern California," *The Pacific Historical Review* (Vol. 68, No. 2, May 1999), pp. 173-176.

³⁵ Several historians of consumer culture and the environment have shown how our understanding of what is "natural" and "unnatural" has been entirely altered by marketing and advertising. In *Spectacular Nature*, Susan G. Davis explains the logic of North American society: "a theme park about wild nature is either so peculiar that it makes no sense, or contemporary culture is so thoroughly rationalized that it makes perfect sense." Susan G. Davis, *Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997), p. 8. For further reading, see Jennifer Price, "Looking for Nature at the Mall: A Field Guide to the Nature Company," *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, William Cronon, ed. (London: W.W. Norton & Company), pp. 186-203; Susan G. Davis, "Touch the Magic," *Uncommon Ground*, pp. 204-217; and Matthew W. Klinge, "Spaces of Consumption in Environmental History," *History and Theory* (Vol. 42, No. 2 December 2003), pp. 94-110.

³⁶ Social scientists have linked the ability to participate in a modern consumer culture, which offers choice, entertainment, and fulfillment in the pursuit of purchasing products and services to ideas of democracy, liberty, and modernity. Different spaces of consumption, from shopping malls to amusement parks, offer examples of how consumer spaces relate to variances in economic affluence and power; they also speak to the roles played by gender, class, and race in shaping everyday experiences in North America. See Lawrence B. Glickman, "Born to Shop? Consumer History and American History," Introduction to *Consumer Society in American History: A Reader* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 1; Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), pp. 3-16.

³⁷ Jennifer Price, "Looking for Nature at the Mall," pp. 186-203.

nobody is expected to live there permanently.³⁸ Like the mall, wilderness recreational spaces are physical and social constructions: they are shaped, enclosed, and patrolled by institutional forces over which the visitor has no control.³⁹

Sociologist John Urry's concept of the "tourist gaze" helps us to think about how parkland and wilderness spaces are constructs of North American consumer society. For tourists and recreationalists, the anticipation of an outdoor experience - of getting away for a weekend or imagining a great outdoor vista - is as critical as the journey to a location itself. Gazes are directed at specific townscapes and landscapes to make them into extraordinary sights of consumption; if viewed without this tourist gaze (as, for example, a resident) the site appears otherwise ordinary.⁴⁰ The gaze of the viewer is informed by a network of tourist and non-tourist media long before they see the site that they will visually consume through postcards, magazine advertisements, guidebooks, and television newscasts.⁴¹ This helps to create a heightened sense of anticipation about an experience, one where the anticipation and "imaginative pleasure-

³⁸ The idea of an "uninhabited wilderness" is a twentieth-century addition to the debate surrounding the concept of "wilderness." Theodore Binnema and Melanie Niemi have argued that the expulsion of Stoney First Nations during the creation of Banff National Park at the end of the nineteenth century predated any public desire to see national parks as "uninhabited wilderness" areas. Instead, Binnema and Niemi suggest that the removal of First Nations peoples was done in the interests of tourist promoters, conservationists, sport hunters, and Indian assimilationists. See Theodore Binnema and Melanie Niemi, "Let the Line be Drawn Now": Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park in Canada," *Environmental History* 11 (October 2006), pp. 726-750.

³⁹ Karen R. Jones and John Wills, *The Invention of the Park: From the Garden of Eden to Disney's Magic Kingdom* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005), pp. 6-7.

⁴⁰ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage Publications, 1990), p. 3.

⁴¹ In the introduction to the second edition of *Exploring Manning Park* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1979), authors Andrew Harcombe and Robert Cyca demonstrate construction of the tourist gaze: "The park's attractions include many pleasant fishing and resting sports within a few paces of the highway, but the roadside view does not compare to the wonders lying behind even the first mountain rise or in the next valley. Only by penetrating the park can travellers find the clear rivers, cascading mountain streams, tumbling waterfalls, small remote lakes, and vast stretches of alpine meadows that combine to make up its variety."

seeking” of an experience is potentially more rewarding than the experience itself.⁴² This aspect of modern consumer society, of constructing an anticipatory element to activities and experiences, helps to explain why certain tourist destinations are designed and marketed as they are. By understanding BC’s “wilderness” areas through the framework of the tourist gaze, we can begin to see how even undeveloped “natural” locations can be commodified and marketed to the right kind of consumer.

Across the twentieth century, North Americans have come to relate to the natural world in perplexing ways. North Americans have been bombarded with advertisements and images of different forms of nature in their day-to-day lives, in manners so pervasive that distinguishing the natural from the unnatural has become a difficult, if not futile, task. No longer people whose primary interaction with the natural world is through physical work, few members of this consumer society see a disjuncture when they take objects from their daily lives into the natural world. With this frame work in mind we can begin to interrogate the outdoor recreational community in British Columbia during the 1970s and 1980s. In what ways did they distinguish the natural world from a consumer-based one? How did they justify their recreational activities and consumer amenities in the remote forests of the province? By asking such questions, we can develop a better understanding of what “wilderness” meant for the outdoor enthusiast.

⁴² John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, p. 13.

III. Whiskey Jack Magazine and the Well-Outfitted Outdoor Person

Print media provides a unique avenue for interrogating the relationship between consumer culture and the natural world in the years leading up to the Wilderness Advisory Committee in British Columbia. Printed magazines are themselves a product of North American consumer culture, and their editorials, articles, and corporate advertisements often contain evidence of associated consumer amenities. *Whiskey Jack* magazine, established in 1977 and lasting until 1982, demonstrated for outdoor enthusiasts in Vancouver and its surrounding areas how consumer culture and wilderness interact particularly well. Beginning in 1979, *Whiskey Jack's* front cover adopted the subtitle "British Columbia's Voice of the Wilderness." In so doing, it indicated the editor's belief that outdoor enthusiasts had a special relationship to the wilderness spaces where they spent leisure time, despite *Whiskey Jack's* associations with urban British Columbia. Finding evidence in the magazine of corporate-supported recreation is not unexpected, as advertisements for the newest sleeping bags, skis, or backpacks alongside recreational articles were by this time normal in outdoor magazines. Two particular editorial debates, however, suggest that British Columbian outdoor enthusiasts had concern with how consumerism and man-made constructions were entering their recreational spaces.

In the Spring 1979 issue of *Whiskey Jack*, editor Harold Colt reproduced a letter to Ian Lehman of the Lower Mainland District of the Provincial Parks Branch. In it, Colt addressed the need to construct electric lighting along several cross-country ski trails on Hollyburn Mountain in Cypress Provincial Park for the upcoming 1979-1980 ski season. The letter indicated that the benefactors of such a development would be Lower Mainland skiers, "so that people don't have

to travel to the Interior for the next 5 years before Hollyburn is lit.”⁴³ In the article, Colt also encouraged *Whiskey Jack* readers to write similar letters to lobby for trail improvements on Hollyburn. As evident from the Editorial in the subsequent Summer issue of the magazine, readers of *Whiskey Jack* felt a great deal of tension around “improvements” to their recreational spaces.

In some cases, recreational users objected to developments that would bring signs of civilization into so-called wilderness areas. Also, skiers who had enjoyed the trails on Hollyburn in relative isolation protested the opening of the region to greater numbers of users. The author of one letter to the editor “found a certain discrepancy between the top and bottom of the cover of your Spring Issue 1979: (top) British Columbia’s Voice of the Wilderness; (bottom) Lobby for lighted x-c trails for next season.”⁴⁴ Another reader responded to the issue by expressing concern about the long-term costs of building lights:

On the surface the idea would seem to be an excellent one. But the erection and maintenance of these lights is expensive, not to mention the cost of the electricity. I think that we could not expect to have this ‘for free’; it would almost surely mean the establishment of a user fee for the trails similar to that charged the downhill skier. We are accustomed to cross country skiing without direct cost. Are we ready to accept the possibility of a trail fee?⁴⁵

The debate surrounding the installation of lighting clearly involved more than extending the number of hours that cross-country skiers could enjoy their trails. The debate spoke to larger concerns about the uneasy relationship between British Columbia’s outdoor enthusiasts, their recreational spaces, and technology. Recreational users of cross-country trails wanted their

⁴³ -----, “Lobby for Improved and lighted trails on Hollyburn,” *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 3, No 2, Spring 1979), p. 35.

⁴⁴ June Binkert, “Letter to the Editor,” *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 3, No 3, Summer 1979), p. 6.

⁴⁵ Ruth S. Kihm, “Letter to the Editor,” *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 3, No 3, Summer 1979), p. 6.

spaces to be well maintained, yet free from overt development that would lead to overcrowding, trail fees, or a disruption of their “wilderness experience.”

Distance was also a consideration: as evident from Colt’s initial letter to the Provincial Parks Branch, skiers were frustrated with having to travel to the BC Interior to access their trails. Colt himself responded to several of these concerns, drawing attention to the close association that Hollyburn shared with the Vancouver area:

Had we proposed lighting and grooming the trails of Diamond Head or Callaghan Lake or any of the other fine wilderness trails, we would have expected harsh criticism. But the ‘wilderness’ area we are talking about is serviced by a paved highway reaching three lanes. This road ends with parking areas for hundreds of cars. A great power line cuts through the centre of the ski area.

It is evident when skiing at Hollyburn that the majority of skiers present are not wilderness skiers at all. Many are beginners, and families who do not require remoteness. For these skiers, in my opinion, a more developed centre is desirable. [Hollyburn can become a] training ground that will promote the sport and thus create more awareness of our outdoors.⁴⁶

For beginner skiers in Vancouver looking for recreation, Hollyburn offered a convenient space where they could ski and enjoy nature simultaneously. Hollyburn, however, was not a “wilderness area” devoid of urban development. It was a recreational space that was defined, in part, by its association with consumer culture. It was accessed by car, serviced by electricity, and frequented by skiers who enjoyed the activity more than the setting. As Colt suggested in his article, though, Hollyburn could not offer the right type of “wilderness experience” for the more experienced, more demanding cross-country skiers in the Vancouver area. By disassociating Hollyburn from other, more remote cross-country ski areas in the province, Colt

⁴⁶ Harold Colt, “Editorial,” *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 3, No 3, Summer 1979), p. 5.

was suggesting that the concerns of *Whiskey Jack* readers did not apply. They could sacrifice Hollyburn to the urbanites, and retain Diamond Head and Callaghan Lake for their more exclusive “wilderness” pursuits. It was the proximity of Hollyburn to Vancouver, the popularity of trails, and the presence of lights that made the mountain unattractive to wilderness skiers.

From lighting trails on ski slopes to constructing hiking trails for daily use in the backcountry of provincial parks, trail building and maintenance had been a high priority for many outdoor recreation organizations in British Columbia since the 1950s. Despite the necessity of trails for enthusiastic hikers, backpackers, skiers, and others, those who built trails often thought about the fundamental conflict of constructing a trail that recreationalists would use to enjoy nature. Through their construction, trails became a sign of the human presence in the outdoors, a presence which was the exact thing that many outdoor recreationalists had sought to escape when they entered the great outdoors. Moreover, trail building often necessitated the use of chainsaws, trucks, and other machines to help clear trees, build stairways, and fill unstable cliff sides so that they could support hikers. Recreational enthusiasts generally scorn the distinctive sounds produced by chainsaws and trucks within remote forested areas; the fact that most trails in and around the Lower Mainland of British Columbia were formed through the use of such technology would be problematic for outdoor enthusiasts.⁴⁷ Seeking a “wilderness experience” on a hiking trail might elicit a response similar to that of allowing snowmobiles within provincial parks or erecting lights on cross-country ski trails. However, leaders in the

⁴⁷ Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan distinguished “wilderness” from “wildlife reserves” based upon his belief that motorized vehicles, tools, and other equipment that make distinct, loud sounds do not belong within wilderness settings: “This means that the guides operating in there would not be able to bring their clients in by aircraft or helicopter. Snowmobiles would be prohibited. The use of chainsaws would be prohibited.” See “Presentation of Dr. Ian Taggart-Cowan,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Vancouver, 28 January 1986), p. 345.

outdoor recreation community developed creative ways to negotiate the relationship between trails, technology, recreation, and nature.

One way that trails were navigated by recreationalists was to associate the construction of new trails with historic use. In an article written for *Whiskey Jack* magazine, for instance, David Macaree (author of *103 Hikes in Southwestern British Columbia*, released in 1973) notes the “pleasure to record new hiking trails close to Vancouver instead of the disappearance of old favourites in the face of ‘progress’.” He goes on to describe the Coast Crest Trail that takes hikers above the Vancouver skyline:

The trail itself has something of a history. The present one, indeed, is a re-creation of UBC’s Varsity Outdoor Club of the one-time route to the Lions before the days of road or rail along Howe Sound, when access even to Hollyburn and Mount Strachan was on foot from West Vancouver and the would-be North Shore mountains.⁴⁸

By associating the new Coast Crest Trail with a route that was used, though never developed, by earlier hikers, Macaree validated the development of a new space for recreational users in the Lower Mainland. Recreational users were well aware of the fact that their trails were man-made construction, and that this presented a problem for experiencing the wholeness of a forest, a mountain, or other elements of nature.⁴⁹ By accessing “wilderness” through trails, however, trail builders stressed that hikers were able to access the history of the environment around them. In this way, trails acted as corridors to the past, connecting recreational users with a part of their heritage that had been lost.

⁴⁸ David Macaree, “Coast Crest Trail,” *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 1, No 6, September/October 1977), pp.7-8.

⁴⁹ Macaree continues his article by stressing how signs of civilization lessen as the trail continues: “The car park by the Cypress chairlifts is at 3000 feet and some 8 miles into the valley of the creek that gives the park its name From here on, apart from the made trail, signs of human activity are lacking and the cool forest gives an idea of what the whole mountain used to be like.” *Ibid*, pp.7-8.

In writing "About Trails," Paul Binkert suggested that local ecosystems might benefit if trail builders cut only single trails through natural areas, thus filtering the impact of hikers and other recreational users on wilderness spaces: "We realize that in a way our trails are in interference with Nature. We believe, however, that with a trail we can limit this to one narrow strip."⁵⁰ The Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia, which organized the local clubs throughout the province, encouraged recreational users to volunteer to maintain the trails that they enjoyed using:

Most member clubs of the Federation now include regular trail work bees in their yearly climbing and hiking schedules, and have a list of volunteers.... They provide their own transportation; one brings his own chain saw; another will transport people and equipment up the logging road in his four-wheel drive truck.⁵¹

Trail builders realized the problematic association between human labour, mechanized technology, and recreation. However, unlike snowmobiles motoring through provincial parks, chain saws and four-wheel drive trucks were used only at one stage of the recreational experience in British Columbia. Once a trail was constructed, technological interference would only occur for scheduled, seasonal maintenance.

Most interesting of all is Binkert's opinion about the presence and construction of trails in the wilderness. He clearly realized the problematic issues relating to reconfiguring the natural world so that humans could experience nature.⁵² But he disassociated hikers and backpackers

⁵⁰ Paul Binkert, "About Trails," *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 3, No 3, Summer 1979), p.15.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 15.

⁵² Paul Sutter and David Louter have addressed an aspect of this problem with "wilderness" as it relates to the presence of roads within park and wilderness areas. Far from being technological artifacts of consumerism that could not blend with wilderness, Louter argues that cars and highways were considered "constructions that enabled

from other types of recreational users, notably those who incorporated technology directly into their form of recreation:

Trail markers and signs have to be put up. ‘Hunters’ demonstrate their marksmanship on these, vandals damage or even remove signs. Some unconcerned motorcyclists use the trails as an obstacle course, inflicting considerable damage.⁵³

The message was clear: firearms and motorcycles led to the abuse of the wilderness. Like the good outdoorsman who “takes only pictures, and leaves only footprints,” the proper users of backcountry trails in British Columbia will leave trails and trail markers intact for the enjoyment of other users. Furthermore, recreation must not be motorized or mechanized, nor should users damage or vandalize the spaces where they seek recreation. To limit the ways that one interfered with nature and wilderness only a certain type of recreation should be pursued.

While aiming to achieve a balance between recreation and natural settings, the new outdoor recreationalists of 1970s British Columbia were also modern consumers with a certain amount of disposable income and leisure time. Thus, it came as no surprise to the editors of and contributors to *Whiskey Jack Magazine* that their readership had a close connection to the retail world. Outdoor activities in the 1970s and 1980s required a certain level of commodity consumption, especially in specialized equipment. As one regular contributor to the magazine stated: “Outdoor people are part of the public. I find that a well outfitted outdoor person can be

people to know primeval nature better.” David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington’s National Parks* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2006), pp. 12-13. Also see Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight against the Automobile Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002).

⁵³ David Macaree, “Coast Crest Trail,” *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 1, No 6, September/October 1977), pp. 7-8.

one of the heaviest consumers in society.”⁵⁴ From synthetic hiking boots and aluminum frame backpacks to fibreglass kayaks, consumption had become an integral part of backcountry sports.

Whiskey Jack encouraged this consumerism, both by flooding its pages with advertisements from Vancouver companies and by publishing articles on how readers should think about their next equipment purchase. In the Winter 1978 issue, for example, the “calendar of events” page of cross country ski races and outings was flanked by two advertisements: one for Rossignol skis at Iver Williams Sporting Goods in Vancouver, the other for Roces “Moon” ski boots at North American Sports in Burnaby.⁵⁵ Readers were thus encouraged to associate the seasonal events of their sport with specific products and retailers. One of Canada’s biggest retail stores for outdoor recreationists, Mountain Equipment Co-op, ran its first advertisement in *Whiskey Jack* in 1979 in anticipation of the winter season: “It’s No Secret, [m]ore and more Canadians are finding the equipment they need to enjoy the outdoors at Mountain Equipment Co-op. They’re getting ready for cross country skiing, snowshoeing or just plain enjoying themselves outdoors this winter.”⁵⁶ Companies stressed the association between purchasing equipment and experiencing the outdoors to its fullest.

Furthermore, the massive growth in the number of retail stores and the selection of products offered to recreationalists during this period indicates that more and more people were enjoying British Columbia’s environment for recreational purposes. Randy Hooper, owner of

⁵⁴ Jim Boulding, “How Can All Outdoor People Pay Their Dues,” *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 2, No 4, Fall 1978), p. 15.

⁵⁵ *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 2, No 1, January/February 1978), pp. 27-28.

⁵⁶ *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 3, No 5, November/December 1979), p. 29.

Coast Mountain Sports and Coast Mountain Designs, explained the 1970s retail boom during his presentation to the Wilderness Advisory Committee in 1985:

In 1970 the three stores in Vancouver that sold any equipment for kayaking, hiking, backpacking, mountaineering, and cross-country skiing, Tepee, Albereg, and Scandia, had total sales of three-quarters of a million dollars. In 1985 the population of Vancouver, and its environs has nearly doubled, but sales of outdoor equipment at the retail level have grown 2,000 percent to over 15 million dollars.

In the span of fifteen years, Hooper estimated that over thirty new stores were established in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia to service the needs of outdoor recreationists.⁵⁷

Hooper was also a regular contributor to *Whiskey Jack*, and his “Report on Equipment Prices” at the end of 1979 speculated on the impact of the economic recession for outdoor recreationists. Fearing that outdoor sports might become “rich person” activities, Hooper recommended that recreationalists consider their purchases with care and become more forward-thinking consumers. “Look for products that will suit your needs years down the road, not just now.... More and more manufacturers guarantee their product for the lifetime of the original purchaser. That’s something to look for, because it gives you a guaranteed investment.” Stressing the longevity of equipment still enticed customers into recreational goods stores. Furthermore, Hooper encouraged consumers to maintain their links with the great outdoors, even during tough economic times: “Don’t try to wait out this economic nightmare, because every day you miss in the mountains is worth much more than you think.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ “Presentation of Randy Hooper, owner of Coast Mountain Sports and Coast Mountain Design,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Vancouver, 30 January 1986), pp. 375-378.

⁵⁸ Randy Hooper, “A Report on Equipment Prices,” *Whiskey Jack* (Vol 3, No 4, September/October 1979) p. 9.

With their growth in numbers and their close association to consumer society, outdoor recreationalists increasingly viewed the environment within the broader context of human society's relationship to nature. Juri Peepre, Chairman of the Outdoor Recreation Council, the umbrella organization of over forty conservation and recreation groups in the province, suggested to the Wilderness Advisory Committee that tourism and outdoor recreation were reshaping the ways in which individuals understood the great outdoors. Recreationalists were not from an exclusive sector of society, nor were they disassociated from an industrial, commercial British Columbia:

Outdoor recreationists come from all walks of life. We are corporate executives, miners, forest workers, government officials, and so-called environmentalists ... We believe that the goals of enlightened commerce can be united with an environmental ethic to achieve public support for wilderness preservation and an enviable quality of life.⁵⁹

Peepre's statement raises the question of the social identity of the outdoor enthusiasts who were presenting their "wilderness" values to the WAC. The committee members questioned whether preserving "wilderness" regions for outdoor recreationalists meant preserving these spaces for the wealthy elite. For instance, Dr. Sewell challenged one kayaker who estimated his equipment and transportation costs to journey on the Stikine River cost \$6,000.⁶⁰ However, recreationalists argued that any person could participate in their outdoor activities, despite their economic backgrounds, and that they were not the "privileged rich who can spend freely to go to wilderness areas for exclusive kicks."⁶¹ While a certain measure of disposable income and

⁵⁹ "Presentation of Juri Peepre, Chairman of Outdoor Recreation Counsel," *Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Vancouver, 29 January 1986), p. 326.

⁶⁰ "Presentation of Bruce Blackwell and Kevin Haberl," *Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Vancouver, 29 January 1986) p. 322.

⁶¹ "Presentation of Ray Pillman, speaking on behalf of the Sea Kayak Association of BC," *Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Vancouver, 29 January 1986), p. 360.

leisure time was necessary to enjoy BC's great outdoors, the activities of recreationalists hinged more upon lifestyle choices that set them apart from British Columbia's other industries than the individual economic wealth of outdoor enthusiasts.

The experiences of one member organization of the Outdoor Recreation Council, the Sea Kayaking Association of BC, illustrated clearly how the needs of outdoor recreationalists were seen to be incompatible with other industries in the province:

On our tour last summer we returned to Moresby Camp by the east coast of Louise Island, much of which had been recently logged. It was a most depressing sight. ... And Ecosummer Canada Expeditions Limited, which pioneered commercial kayak tours in the Charlottes back in 1978, and now has 25 tour programmes, tells us that they've had to cancel a northern South Moresby tour because their clients objected to paddling by logged over terrain. So in our view logging and tourism in proximity are not compatible.⁶²

What became apparent during the 1970s and 1980s was that more and more British Columbians valued non-urban spaces for their remoteness and proximity to a "wild" nature. Bruce Braun has explored how kayak outfitting companies operating in Clayoquot Sound have constructed this same "wildness" by distancing clients from "civilization" and other outdoor adventure tours.⁶³ Braun argues that the constructed artificiality of the recreationalist's "wilderness" is closely tied to the relationship between modernity and nostalgia for a lost landscape.⁶⁴ More importantly, individuals did not object to experiencing and enjoying "wilderness" through recreation, so long

⁶² "Presentation of Ray Pillman, speaking on behalf of the Sea Kayak Association of BC," *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Vancouver, 29 January 1986), pp. 359-361.

⁶³ Braun's discussion of outfitting companies like Ecosummer Canada Expeditions raises a subtle yet important distinction between adventure travel and ecotourism and the outdoor recreation discussed within this thesis. Whereas ecotourists typically travel to exotic locations from great distances, and enlist the services of local outfitting companies for guides and equipment, British Columbian outdoor recreationalists typically travel closer to home, are self-guided, and use personal equipment that they have purchased from local retail stores. Despite their differences, both ecotourists and outdoor recreationalists share similar values of "wilderness" use that are informed by the North American consumer culture discussed in this thesis.

⁶⁴ Bruce Braun, "Landscapes of Loss and Mourning: Adventure Travel and the Reterritorialization of Nature and Culture," Chapter 4 in *The Intemperate Rainforest*, pp. 134-141.

as the ways in which they interacted with the environment did not involve mechanized or motorized equipment. No longer were forests or oceans thought of in terms of the economic resources they could produce; instead these “wilderness” areas were valued for the experiences they could provide. “Wilderness,” for these recreational users, had become a contradiction: while they wanted to believe that “wilderness” areas were primeval and undeveloped by humans, in practice they were spaces of consumption authorized by a pervasive North American consumer culture.

IV. Recreational Values and Lifestyle in BC Politics

For many people, the recreational value of hiking is partly to escape the hectic constraints of urban life and to enter a world free of balance sheets, bottom lines, and profits and losses. Using lightweight and easily-affordable backpacking gear, it is possible to roam for days on end through the entire Watershed and contemplate an entire ecosystem which has never heard the whine of a chainsaw or the rumble of heavy machinery. Such a traveller leaves only footprints, takes only photographs, and faces the challenge of surviving in a natural environment according to self sufficiency.⁶⁵

This is how Steven Threndyle characterized recreational users of the Stein Valley Watershed in 1986. A representative of the Alpine Club of Canada, he was speaking to the British Columbia Wilderness Advisory Committee. While just one of hundreds of people to submit briefs to the Committee, Threndyle’s statement points to a new type of recreationalist in the British Columbia outdoors. This person was not a recreational hunter, fisher, or outdoorsman who drew food and shelter from the natural world, but a traveller with close relations to urbanity and commercial

⁶⁵ ----, “Presentation of the Vancouver section of the Alpine Club of Canada, brief prepared and presented by Steven Threndyle,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Vancouver, 29 January 1986), pp. 269-270.

consumerism.⁶⁶ The outdoor enthusiast to whom Threndyle is referring emerged in British Columbia sometime during the early 1970s when activities such as hiking, kayaking, and cross-country skiing – activities somehow different than older ways of experiencing the great outdoors, notably hunting and snowmobiling – gained in popularity.⁶⁷ The major reason for this was a perceived incompatibility between wilderness and loud, mechanized equipment. Now, however, there was no corresponding disconnect between natural surroundings and highly technical, commercialized products. Synthetic hiking boots and clothing, fibreglass kayaks, and cameras became acceptable, even required, to enjoy the great outdoors.

This rather peculiar relationship between technology and natural places is, as we have seen, best explained by the rise of a North American consumer culture. As Gregory Summers argues, as work and production in the natural world becomes more regulated throughout the twentieth century, and the number of consumer products in everyday life becomes more prolific, individual consumers lose touch with “nature” as the source of such products. This, in turn, leads individuals to adopt a “not in my backyard” approach to industrial development and resource

⁶⁶ Several historians have explored the gender relationship among hunters, fishers, and mountaineers. Christopher Dummitt suggests that members of the British Columbia Mountaineering Club pursued activities that reaffirmed their manhood in postwar BC as an alternative to their everyday suburban, white-collar (that Dummitt suggests is feminized) world in “Risk on the Rocks: Modernity, Manhood, and Mountaineering in Postwar British Columbia,” *BC Studies* (No. 141, Spring 2004), pp. 3-29. Douglas Harris explores the gender and race relationships among fly fishers and First Nations vying for fisheries rights on the Cowichan River at the end of the nineteenth century in “The Law Runs Through It: Wiers, Logs, Nets, and Fly Fishing on the Cowichan River,” Chapter 3 in *Fish, Law, and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), pp. 127-185.

⁶⁷ In a 1988 report on adventure travel in British Columbia, the Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia (ORC) commented on the rise of outdoor recreation in the province: “During the years since its formation in 1976, the ORC has seen the adventure travel industry grow rapidly, contribute to the economy of the province, provide employment and provide justification for conservation of the Super, Natural ‘wilderness resource.’” The ORC focused on a number of activities in its report; interestingly, though, hunting and fishing activities were excluded from the study, which further suggests that there was a new outdoor ethos developing among outdoor recreationalists in the 1970s and 1980s. See the Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia’s *Adventure Travel in British Columbia*, Volume 1 (Vancouver: March 1988), pp. 1-3.

extraction. They came to see the natural world as a space for recreation, not industry. Because “so few consumers took any direct role in creating them,” Summers argues, “it was all too easy to assume that using natural resources for production and enjoying the great outdoors were entirely separate and competing demands.”⁶⁸ North American consumer culture has so distanced the individual products consumed on a daily basis from the environment from which those products derive that we are not troubled when we return to nature with artifacts of our consumer culture in tow. This distancing allowed Steven Threndyle to exempt consumer products from his disdain for “the whine of a chainsaw or the rumble of heavy machinery” within the Stein Valley wilderness. As an urban-dwelling outdoor recreationalist, he consciously asserted that wilderness and industry were incompatible concepts but did not realize the irony that his wilderness experience is facilitated by consumer products fabricated by such industry.

In post-Second World War North America, outdoor recreation was shaped by the influence of consumer culture on spaces of recreation. Historian James Morton Turner has seen this shift in the United States as a popular response to the 1964 Wilderness Act. Tracing the developing of the national “Leave No Trace” program, Turner illustrates how consumer America encouraged “backpackers to practice ‘Leave No Trace’ in the wilderness and keep an eye out for the ‘Leave No Trace’ logo in the shopping mall.”⁶⁹ The place of consumer culture and individual consumer amenities, however, remained troubling for many recreational users. When they entered the “wilderness,” they wanted to believe that they entered a pristine, untouched, and primeval area. There was also a spiritual or emotional element that guided outdoor enthusiasts

⁶⁸ Gregory Summers, *Consuming Nature*, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁹ James Morton Turner, “From Woodcraft to Leave No Trace: Wilderness, Consumerism, and Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America,” *Environmental History* (Vol. 7, No. 3, July 2002), p. 479.

who sought the elusive “wilderness experience.” However, certain artifacts of consumerism, like manufactured transport and shelter, were needed to access this experience.

The assumptions that informed how British Columbian outdoor enthusiasts experienced the great outdoors during the early 1980s also found expression in public debates over the fate of the province’s forests. Returning to the proceedings of the Wilderness Advisory Committee, several specific responses of the BC recreational community stand out. The first is that it did not identify with either of the long traditions of wildlife conservation or hunting and fishing clubs that prevailed in the past, but pointed to the newness of its organizations and the sudden growth in numbers of people practicing outdoor activities. In this, outdoor recreationalists deviated from the province’s environmental groups who prioritized the preservation of wilderness areas from human development, be it clear cut logging or trail building. In commodifying wilderness, recreationalists constructed arguments that were much closer to those of tourism organizations. These two groups not only practiced similar activities within wilderness spaces, but also made similar economic arguments to justify their presence in BC’s forests as a viable alternative to forestry and mining. Most importantly, representatives from both recreational and tourism associations shared the belief that wilderness areas should be preserved for the enjoyment of people – whether residents of the province or visitors from elsewhere.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Several presentations to the Wilderness Advisory Committee from representatives of tourism, recreation, and regional groups outlined the important economic and lifestyle reasons for preserving “wilderness” spaces as areas for recreation. See, for example, “Presentation of Bernie Fandridge, Lytton Chamber of Commerce,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Lytton, 13 January 1986), pp. 13-15; “Presentation of Thomas J. Crowley, Mountain Management Committee, Alpine Club of Canada,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Lytton, 13 January 1986), pp. 87-91; “Presentation of Graham Farstad,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Prince George, 20 January 1986), pp.48-52; “Presentation of Mr. Wilkinson, of the Nanaimo Paddlers Canoe Club,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Nanaimo, 22 January 1986), pp. 357-369.

A comparison of the submissions given to the Wilderness Advisory Committee shows how, in 1980s British Columbia, the priorities and visions of environmentalist and recreational groups diverged. In her submission to the Committee, Rosemary Fox, associated with the Canadian Nature Federation, the Federation of BC Naturalists, and the Sierra Club of BC portrayed wilderness as a “treasured relic of unaltered land,” serving as crucial plant and wildlife reserves for the province. She argued that, in order to resolve the question of land use conflict, a proper process for land-use planning was needed. This naturalist prioritized wilderness preservation in the following order: to give people contact with nature; to protect complex plant and animal ecosystems; and to preserve the natural heritage of Canada. Lastly, Fox thought that wilderness should be preserved to promote BC as a tourist destination. However, she was quick to qualify this recommendation, as “it should be borne in mind that tourism can be environmentally degrading.”⁷¹ Conversely, at the WAC proceedings in Sandspit, Patrick Armstrong expressed a different set of priorities while speaking for local residents concerned with the fate of South Moresby Island. His concerns were first and foremost with the recreational potential of the wilderness areas in the Queen Charlotte Islands, followed by the cultural and heritage values of the people who lived in the area and, lastly, the potential of the region for timber production. Only in the middle of his presentation did Armstrong draw attention to South Moresby as an important ecological reserve. Instead, most of his brief concerned the importance of recreation and the destruction caused by logging.⁷² These two presentations are representative of the priorities people had for wilderness areas in BC. They

⁷¹ Presentation of Rosemary Fox, “*Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Terrace, 20 January, 1986), pp. 30-34.

⁷² Presentation of Patrick Armstrong, Moresby Island Concerned Citizens, “*Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Sandspit, Queen Charlotte Islands, 17 January 1986), pp. 53-57.

also illustrate how individual associations within a social movement may compromise their particular objectives in order to reach a common goal.

In order to effectively oppose the BC forest industry in the 1980s, many coalitions of environmentalists, naturalists, and outdoor recreationalists were formed. Most surprising was the youth of such organizations; the Save the Stein Coalition, for instance, had existed for less than ten years when it stood up against the forest industry during the Wilderness Advisory Committee. Consisting of, among others, members of the BC Wildlife Federation, the BC Naturalist Federation, the Federation of Mountain Clubs, and the Steelhead Society of BC, this coalition stressed the need to preserve the Stein Valley for its wildlife, heritage value, and recreational opportunities for residents of the Lower Mainland.⁷³ The Stein Action Committee agreed; the boom and bust cycles that forestry offered to the local community in Lytton did not compare to the economic potential of maintaining the Stein Valley as recreational space for Vancouverites.⁷⁴

Indeed, when arguing to promote wilderness recreation, few presenters to the WAC differentiated the economic potentials offered by outdoor recreationalists – typically equipped in the city and self-supplied during their trips – from tourists – travelling from much farther distances and requiring the services of local guides and outfitters. In Black Creek, located south of Campbell River, Betty Brooks saw first-hand how “[t]he growing popularity of nature touring, river rafting, canoeing, nature photography, family camping and so on is already generating

⁷³ “Presentation of the Save the Stein Coalition,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Lytton, 13 January 1986), pp. 128-133.

⁷⁴ “Presentation of the Stein Action Committee,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting, Wilderness Advisory Committee* (Lytton, 13 January 1986), pp. 134-136.

millions of dollars into this province.”⁷⁵ Her observations, which stressed the growing number of individuals and families who were enjoying the natural world for its recreational opportunities, were shared by many others. Ray Pillman, speaking on behalf of the Sea Kayak Association of BC, estimated that in 1985 alone kayakers spent some four million dollars directly in-province on equipment and tours, and an equal amount supporting local accommodations, restaurants, and transportation.⁷⁶

For British Columbians, the provincial government’s promotion of “Super, Natural BC” required that wilderness areas be preserved for recreational and tourist purposes, especially if residents were going to support the growing recreation and tourism industries. Ann Pollock, of the Tourism Industry Association of BC, asked: “Given the amount of money that has been invested in promoting BC in this way, as a destination for quality outdoor activities, based on a wilderness setting ... What steps are being taken to ensure that we can continue to deliver the super, natural goods?”⁷⁷ The paradigm that gave land-use priority to direct economic development through forestry, mining, and agriculture was now openly questioned in a consumer-driven BC. Parks could no longer be viewed as economically useless, wasted land. Yet, at the same time, preserving such park and wilderness spaces was, for many, not an exercise in environmental protection. Wilderness areas, outdoor enthusiasts argued, should be preserved from logging, mining, or other harmful industries *in order that* recreation and tourism could be promoted in the region. Such emphasis was made possible because British Columbia’s tourism

⁷⁵ “Presentation of Betty Brooks,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Nanaimo, 22 January 1986), pp. 141-175.

⁷⁶ “Presentation of Ray Pillman, speaking on behalf of the Sea Kayak Association of BC,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Vancouver, 29 January 29 1986), pp. 359-360.

⁷⁷ “Presentation of Ann Pollock, Tourism Industry Association of BC,” *Proceedings at Public Meeting*, Wilderness Advisory Committee (Vancouver, 28 January 1986), p. 302.

industry was maturing through the 1980s. Alongside this industry was a burgeoning community of outdoor recreationalists whose knowledge of the natural world was shaped by the consumer culture in which they lived. These were not outdoorsmen who survived in the wilderness through woodland craft alone. They sought new and exciting destinations made known through magazines like *Whiskey Jack* and *Beautiful British Columbia Magazine*. Accompanying them on their trips were guide books, equipment, and supplies purchased at stores in the province's major retail centres. Experiences and memories were recorded not through souvenirs taken home from the natural world, nor was evidence of their consumer culture left in the wild; these recreationalists took only pictures and left only footprints. The prints left by their boots, however, expressed the type of wilderness space that was to be preserved by such bodies as the 1985-86 Wilderness Advisory Committee. There was a consumer wilderness, one protected to promote the recreational enjoyment of nature by visitors, but not to separate land, plants, or wildlife from human contact.

Seeing outdoor recreationalists as a distinct group within British Columbia's environmental movement brings to light the importance of examining broad social movements for the individual organizations that they may contain. During the Wilderness Advisory Committee hearings in 1985-86, outdoor recreational enthusiasts, tourism promoters, and environmental preservationists fought for common goals within designated "wilderness" regions against forest and mining companies who sought to use such regions for resource-extraction purposes. However, when we look at recreationalists outside of the political forum, we begin to see that their desires to use forested space are not all that different from the province's forest industry. While outdoor enthusiasts abhor clearcut logging techniques, they nevertheless treat

forested wilderness spaces as a commodity. On their journeys into the wilderness, they are well equipped with products they bring with them from their urban homes. Such products facilitate their “wilderness experience,” yet they also collapse the space between wilderness and the city.⁷⁸ Understanding how these outdoor enthusiasts commodify the natural world is entrenched within the complexities of our consumer culture. Whereas the BC wilderness debate is normally balanced between industry and environmental preservation, at the end of the twentieth century recreation emerged as a third voice, adding a layer of difficulty to navigating this debate.

⁷⁸ William Cronon reaches a similar conclusion in his epilogue to *Nature's Metropolis*, drawing attention to the interrelated histories of Chicago's urban areas and its rural hinterland. See “Where We Were Driving,” *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), pp. 371-385.

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