

Protect South Moresby

Negotiations toward establishment of a new National Park in the South Moresby area of British Columbia's Queen Charlotte Islands were given a boost at the Sept. 22 meeting of the federal Environment Minister Tom McMillan and the BC Minister of Environment and Parks, Austin Pelton.

The two ministers expressed their desire to sign a Federal-Provincial agreement as soon as possible and agreed that a solution must be found by the end of the coming year. They have instructed senior officials of both governments to meet immediately to complete the negotiations.

A major obstacle to establishing a National Park in South Moresby has been removed. Mr. McMillan informed Mr. Pelton that Environment Canada would pay \$25 million and interest as the Federal Government's share of compensation for the forest lands of Pacific Rim. The Ministers accepted the proposed boundaries of the Phase III addition to Pacific Rim National Park, including the famous West Coast Trail and Nitinat Triangle.

Both Ministers expressed optimism that preservation of the wilderness character in the spectacular area of South Moresby would be an international attraction.

Mr. McMillan calls the park "the highest single priority of the Parks Service of my department, reflecting as it does a recognition of the distinctive flora and fauna and scenic beauty of this wilderness paradise."

Mr. McMillan said that in seeking park status for the South Moresby area, a principle of the Federal Government in the negotiations is that Haida land claims not be prejudiced. He highlighted the natural, historical and cultural significance of the South Moresby archipelago and its importance to the Haida people. He indicated that once the two governments have reached a preliminary understanding on the terms of an agreement, Environment Canada and Haida representatives will meet to discuss Haida involvement in park planning and management.

Polar Bear Pass

LOCATION MAP



The first National Wildlife Area in Canada's far North was established in September on Bathurst Island, Northwest Territories. The area will be called Polar Bear Pass National Wildlife Area. Located approximately 150 km northwest of Resolute, the site stretches from Goodsir Inlet on the east coast of Bathurst Island to Bracebridge Inlet on the west coast, along a fertile inland valley. Environmentalists around the world have called for protection of its rich ecology, citing its value as musk-ox habitat, as a nesting place for many bird species, and as a travel route used by polar bears. Peary caribou, a threatened species, are also found in the area. Polar Bear Pass

is a breeding habitat for Atlantic Brant (a small goose) that migrate, by way of Iceland, to spend winters on the coast of Iceland.

The site has been described as an Arctic oasis by scientists from the National Museums of Canada, which maintains a research station nearby. Polar Bear Pass is the most extensively vegetated area on Bathurst Island, the basis of its value to wildlife.