

Protecting wilderness for Canada's future

By HEIDI HARLEY

Canada has an unparalleled chance to preserve wilderness areas on the North American continent before development starts to whittle away at them. *Endangered Spaces: the Future for Canada's Wilderness* is a book designed to point out this chance, and explain the necessity of acting on it.

The book is a collection of essays by Canadian environmentalists addressing the multiple facets of the issue for Canadians. Essays cover topics from regional parks systems, lobbying battles to get land and marine areas protected, and to native cultural viewpoints. Intermingled with the text are colour photos of the

spaces and species whose safety the book's authors hope to help insure.

Currently, Canada has 1.8 percent of its land area contained within its national parks system, which is generally recognized as being half-complete. When it is completed, therefore, approximately 3.6 percent of Canada will be safe from development and exploitation. A World Parks Congress in Bali in 1982 established an international consensus that a figure of 10 per cent is a reasonable minimal target figure.

Compared to the United States, Canada has a huge amount of undeveloped land available for such protection. 72 per cent of the

country is roadless, compared to 11.7 percent of the US (including Alaska, which makes up about half of that figure). Still, the US protects 500,000 square km of its land area, while Canada has only 182,000 square km within its national parks system.

The essay placing Canada within a global context lists ethical, environmental and economic reasons for the establishment of more protected areas. It points out that Canada contains many unique ecological systems, the preservation of which is a global concern, especially in Arctic and coastal areas. (Canada has the longest coastline of any country in the world).

Many of the essays in the book are "human interest"-type compositions, long on appeal but perhaps a little short on numbers and names. There's an essay recounting the success story of the effort to save South Moresby in B.C., and an essay about the problems of getting things done within government structures - bureaucracy takes a lot of time many environments just don't have. There's another about the respect native peoples have for the land, and one encouraging private landowners to take responsibility for protecting their own land. All are clear, well-written and inspirational, but perhaps

a little less hard-hitting than I would like.

Endangered Spaces is a useful resource book, but because of this shortcoming might prove less helpful to activists than it could. It also serves as an incitement to action and a fanner of concern flames, but at \$39.95 probably won't reach a broad base of people. Still, all royalties from the sale of the book go to the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, so its purchase directly benefits the struggle to preserve Canada's wild areas. It is available in bookstores or from the Endangered Spaces Campaign

The Muse

Thinning ozone layer could tan us all more than we want

By CHRIS ST CROIX

How would you like to be able to get a tan in your backyard any time you wanted to? Even if it was the middle of December? Well, if the current trend towards use of ozone damaging chemicals continues you might have that chance.

First, a simple run down of what ozone is and what it has to do with the colour of your skin.

About 20 kilometres above the earth is a relatively thin layer of ozone (O3) which is virtually all the protection we have against ultraviolet (UV) radiation emitted from the sun.

It is these UV rays that cause the change in skin colour when you tan. The big problem now is that this layer is very susceptible to certain chemicals, and this is going to create a drastic change in weather patterns and UV levels unless we do something about it.

If you have read anything in the newspaper about the ozone you

know that the biggest immediate concerns are the holes in the ozone layer that appear over the Arctic and Antarctica.

In September of 1987, there was a meeting of the scientific community in Montreal to discuss the ozone layer and the effects that airborne chemicals, specifically chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were having.

CFCs migrate into the upper atmosphere and with the help of the UV radiation break down the ozone.

At this meeting, twenty-seven nations signed an agreement to reduce CFC release by 50 percent by the end of the 20th century. Unfortunately this was only a temporary and unrealistic decision. Since that time major companies have responded to consumer pressure to reduce or remove CFCs from their products.

CFCs are most often found in the styrofoam packaging used to

fast-food chains and as the propellant in aerosol containers.

In October, 1978 CFCs were banned as a propellant in the United States but loopholes remain, and CFCs are still used in other applications.

A breakthrough in the CFC war came in August of 1987 when McDonald's Restaurants announced that they would begin a complete phase-out of CFCs in their packaging. According to a representative for the company, this phase-out was 100% complete in Canada by February of this year.

Why all this concern? Studies have shown that there is a direct link between UV radiation and certain types of skin cancer. Scientists project that for every 1% decrease of ozone in the stratosphere there would be a 5% increase in nonmalignant skin cancer cases.

Of course the big question is what you can do about it.

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Photo by Sue Rigney

In your everyday life you can take small measures to reduce your CFC consumption. Purchase non-aerosol or pump brands of hairspray, deodorant or cleaners. Frequent businesses which advertise a non-CFC policy or use cardboard or paper containers. Companies like "The Second Cup" and "The Body Shop" promote environmentally conscious shopping, and do not use

chemicals which are dangerous to the ozone in their products.

If you wish, you can contact environmental groups such as Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth for more information.

Bother the government and companies using CFCs with letters expressing your displeasure at their practices.

As the slogan says, "Be Ozone-friendly".

Driftnets raping our oceans without our notice

VICTORIA (CUP) -- Driftnet fishing.

"It's killing our oceans, its killing everything," says Taryn O'Gorman of the Victoria-based Association for Wildlife Aid Research and Education (AWARE).

Liz Gay, president of AWARE, said "I think People in Canada are willing to accept environmental standards as an important part of daily life, therefore they must accept that the environment and the economy must work hand in hand to be successful."

Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan are using drift net fishing to catch tuna and squid. Fishing vessels deploy the nets, 30 to 80 km long and 30 feet deep, and draw them in, trapping any thing larger than a grapefruit, including dolphins, whales, turtles and seals.

Most of the "by-catch" dies, but some are butchered for market though it may be illegal because they are protected species.

The nets are invisible to sonar so if one gets tangled, it is cut loose. It then drifts around the

ocean as a "ghost net", still catching until it finally sinks with the weight of the catch. When the catch rots, it rises again to continue the cycle.

Every year, for six to seven months, 1200 to 1500 ships deploy their nets in international waters. By 1990 there will be enough 'ghost nets' to circle the world once at the equator.

Driftnet fishing depletes fish stock rapidly, including B.C. salmon as they return from the Pacific to their spawning grounds.

New Zealand and Australia patrol their own waters to prevent driftnet fishing.

AWARE is a small group, donating their time and money to help raise awareness and eventually put a stop to driftnet fishing.

"We're small, so we've basically taken the bureaucracy out of the organization," said Gay.

AWARE wants to organize an international conference on the environment with driftnet fishing as the central theme.

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