ECOTOUR®

of the Trans-Canada Highway

Kamloops - Golden

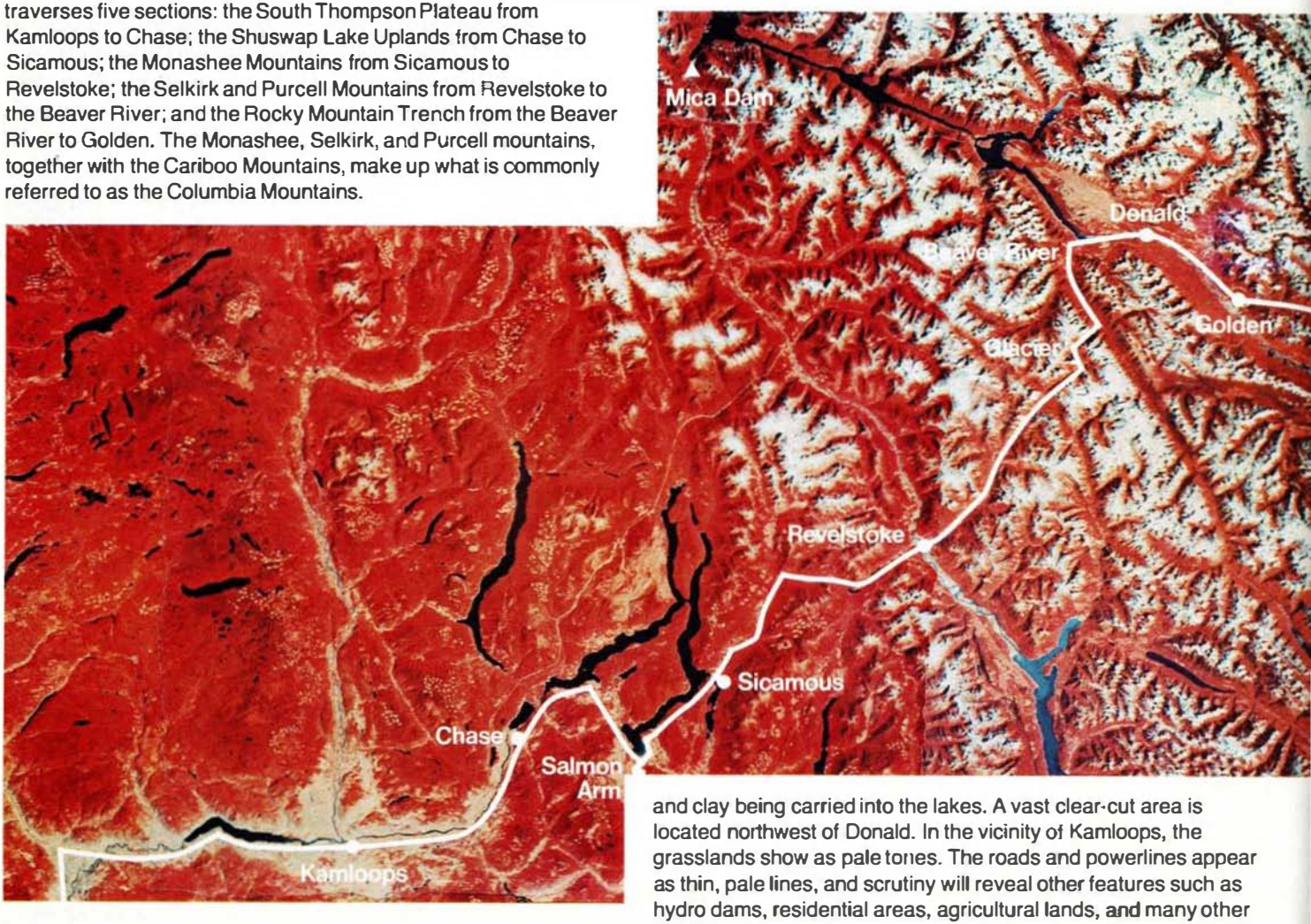
A word about this Ecotour

This Ecotour is one of a series of brochures presented by the Canadian Forestry Service to provide the Canadian public with knowledge of the country's landscape and of the economic and social importance of lands, forests, and wildlife resources, as well as to enhance the appreciation of associated environmental problems.

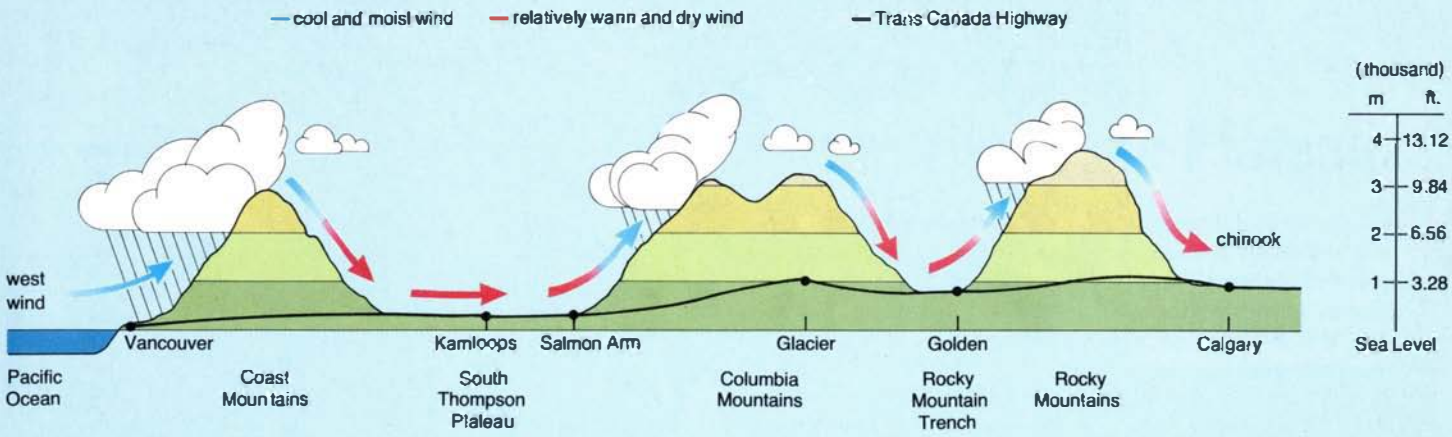
The route described in this publication encompasses 358 km (222 mi.) between Kamloops and Golden, British Columbia and traverses five sections: the South Thompson Plateau from Kamloops to Chase; the Shuswap Lake Uplands from Chase to Sicamous; the Monashee Mountains from Sicamous to Revelstoke; the Selkirk and Purcell Mountains from Revelstoke to the Beaver River; and the Rocky Mountain Trench from the Beaver River to Golden. The Monashee, Selkirk, and Purcell mountains, together with the Cariboo Mountains, make up what is commonly referred to as the Columbia Mountains.

Landsat Photo

The ecotour route is shown on the color infrared satellite photograph recorded by Landsat circling 800 km above the earth. The recently logged areas stand out as groups of light patches contrasting against the darker tones of forested land and the almost white tones of glaciers and snow fields. The lakes and rivers appear in shades of blue; light blue indicates suspended silt and clay being carried into the lakes. A vast clear-cut area is located northwest of Donald. In the vicinity of Kamloops, the grasslands show as pale tones. The roads and powerlines appear as thin, pale lines, and scrutiny will reveal other features such as hydro dams, residential areas, agricultural lands, and many other details.

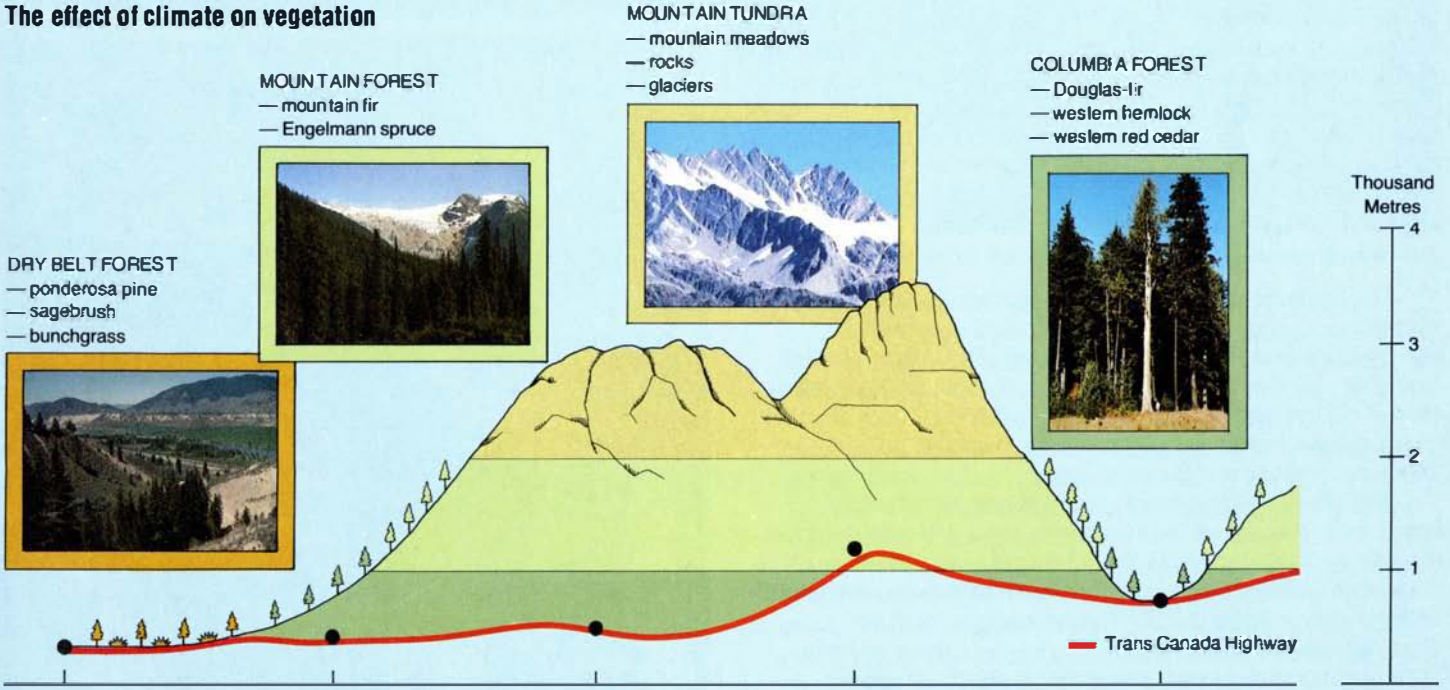


The Effect of Mountains on Climate



The difference in climate among the various localities is caused by the presence of the mountains. They force the moisture-laden wind from the Pacific Ocean to rise, cool off, and release precipitation on the windward side; the descending wind on the leeward side becomes warmer and relatively dry. A well-known wind of that nature is the Chinook.

The effect of climate on vegetation



Kamloops	Salmon Arm	Revelstoke	Glacier	Golden	
345 m	366 m	456 m	1248 m	787 m	Elevation
254 mm	559 mm	1118 mm	1473 mm	508 mm	Annual Precipitation
21°C	20°C	19°C	14°C	18°C	July Average Temp.
−6°C	−5°C	−6°C	−10°C	−11°C	January Average Temp.

Climate is principally responsible for differences in vegetation cover. The traveller will notice the contrast between the dry, sparsely treed, and sagebrush-covered South Thompson River Valley and the moister, densely forested areas throughout the Columbia Mountains. In the Rocky Mountain Trench, the effects of the descending wind are also noticeable, particularly when one compares the amount of precipitation recorded in the trench with that recorded in Glacier, just west of Rogers Pass.

B.C. Provincial Archives, PABC No. 88640

Interior Salish Indians

B.C. Provincial Archives, PABC No. 11132

Thompson River Indians

B.C. Provincial Archives, PABC No. 52264

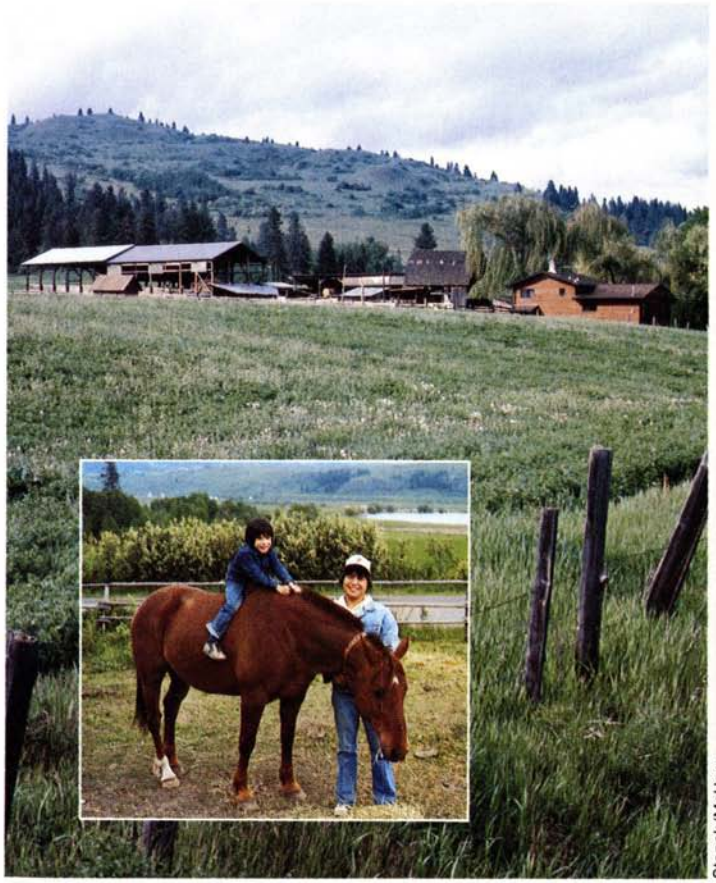
Indians on Arrow Lakes

The Environmental conditions, particularly climate and vegetation cover, are responsible for the wildlife species distribution. Under the harsh conditions existing in the Columbia Mountains, numbers of species and size of populations are small. Most of the mammal and bird species are found in association with forested areas, riparian sites, and wetland sites of the South Thompson Plateau and Shuswap Lakes.

The Thompson and Adams river systems are of prime importance for reproduction of sockeye, coho, and spring salmon. In addition, the streams have many other species. The lakes of the Thompson drainage (especially the Shuswap, Adams, and Murtle lakes) contain lake trout, Dolly Varden, rainbow trout, and especially kokanee.

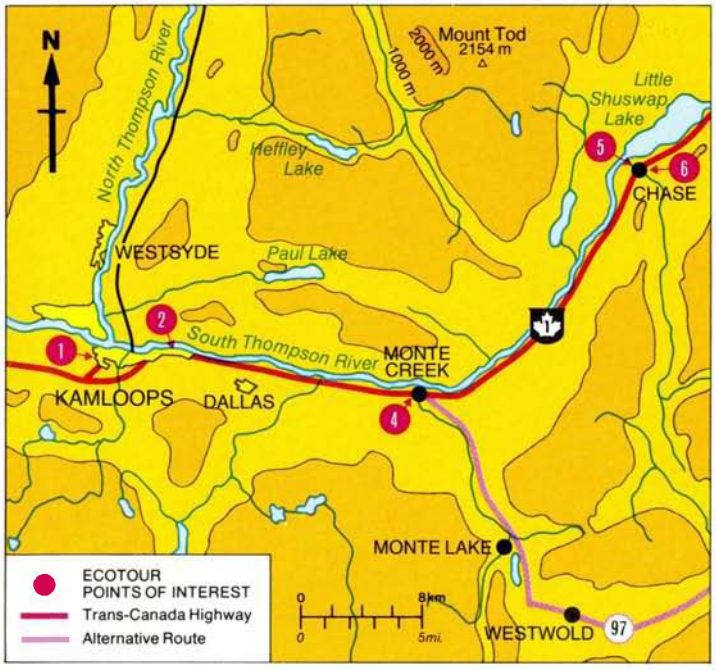
Human history of the Ecotour area is scanty. Available evidence points to an initial settlement of the Thompson Plateau area by a pebble tool-using culture of the hunting-gathering type around 6000 B.C. Subsequent occupation of the Thompson-Shuswap area and possibly of the Rocky Mountain Trench seems to have been relatively extensive.

The recorded history of the Ecotour area begins with the pioneering explorations of David Thompson in the early 19th century and the establishment of a network of trade routes through the valleys of the Columbia, Kootenay, and Thompson rivers during the period 1810 to 1840.



Stanek/McHarg

Modern Indian ranch



W. Stanek

Kamloops City. (1)

R.F Sheperd

South Thompson Plateau

The South Thompson River cuts deeply into the rolling plateau of ancient sedimentary and volcanic rocks and into the younger (about 150 million years old) Jurassic intrusions. The entire plateau was extensively modified during several ice advances. Ice-age glaciers retreated from this area about 10 000 years ago.

Climate here is dry continental. Precipitation rarely exceeds 400 mm (15 in.), one-third of this in the form of snow. Vegetation is affected by climate, topography, and, in extensive areas, by grazing. In arid exposures of the valley, open range with grass, sagebrush, and occasionally opuntia cactus (prickly pear) occurs. Where growing conditions permit, Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and lodgepole pine become established. Above about 1100 m, Engelmann spruce and alpine fir form stands. In the spring and summer, range cattle graze in the open forests, seeking out grasses beneath the forest canopy.

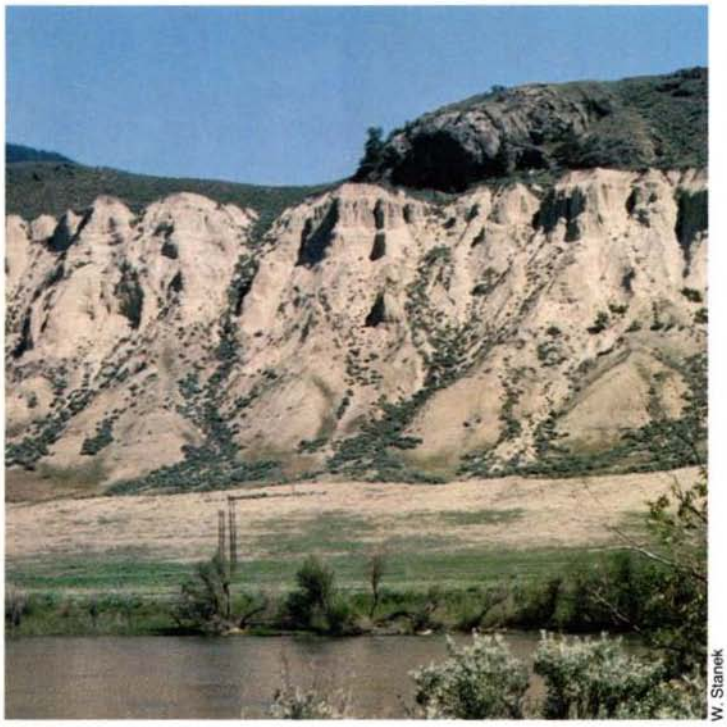
When the first white settlement was established in 1812 near what is now Kamloops, local Shuswap Indians were hunter-gatherers depending primarily on local fish such as sockeye and kokanee. Discoveries of gold in the mid-19th century gave impetus for further exploration and settlement.

1. At the junction of the North and South Thompson rivers, the first inhabitants (a Shuswap band of Salish Indians) named the location "Kahmo-loops," meaning "meeting of the waters." Although established as a fur trading post in 1812 by David Stuart, Pacific Fur Trading Co., Kamloops did not begin developing into a major mining, forest industry, ranching, and tourist center until early 1960's.

   With a population of 67 000, Kamloops is now expanding in all directions along the valleys and terraces of the North and South Thompson rivers. Every spring, cattlemen come from all over Canada and the United States to participate in the provincial "Bull and Sale Show." Originating more than 60 years ago, it is the largest cattle show in British Columbia.

   Kamloops, within the dry belt area, offers many days of blue skies for recreational activities.

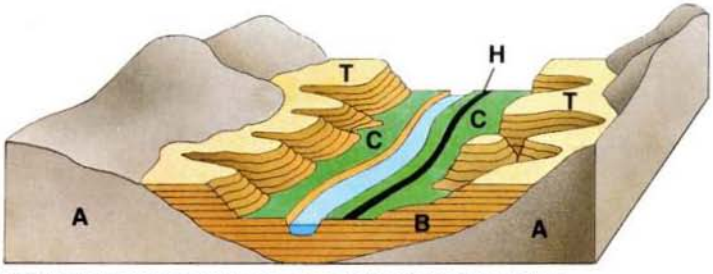
Periodically, within the South Thompson Plateau, stands of Douglas-fir are attacked by the larvae of the Douglas-fir tussock moth. The infested trees can easily be identified in midsummer when the damaged needles turn reddish brown. Repeated defoliation could lead to death of the trees.



W. Stanek

Hoodoos along South Thompson River. (2)

2. During the final stages of the last ice age, beds of silt many metres thick settled in the enormous melt-water lake. When the lake retreated, erosion began. After 10000 years, the erosional terraces and pillarlike "hoodoos" are all that remain of the former lake bed.



Formation of hoodoos and terraces along the South Thompson River.

A-A Section of valley after glacial ice retreat
B Sediment deposited by meltwater lake
T-T Former lake bottom now forming terraces and hoodoos
C-C Present floodplain
H Trans-Canada Highway

W. Stanek

Terracettes. (3)

3. On steeper slopes of mainly bunchgrass areas, a striking pattern of terracettes may be observed. This phenomenon is related to soil type, slope and cattle grazing along, rather than up and down, a hillside. Some people will tell you it is caused by the mythical side-hill gouger.

Sagebrush Stipa Bunchgrass Pinegrass

Pine grass — occurs in interior Douglas-fir zone and grows openly to a height of 1 m.
Bunchgrass — occurs in bunches associated with ponderosa pine. Bunchgrass and *Stipa comata* are grassland species. Overgrazing leads to grass being replaced by sagebrush.

B.C. Ministry of Tourism

Watch out! The opuntia cactus spines penetrate shoe soles easily. (3)

Sidehill gouger.

D. McHarg

Cabbage field at Pritchard, B.C. (4)

4. At Monte Creek, the alternative route 97 to Armstrong and then north to Salmon Arm or Sicamous may be taken. This route offers a scenic drive through fertile valleys and past Monte Lake. Armstrong is famous for its cheddar cheese and the surrounding orchards and gardens form an attractive pastoral landscape. Some of the farms just north of Armstrong produce asparagus that appears on the market in May. At Pritchard, wholesale vegetable production continues into the fall.

John G. Woods

Columbian ground squirrel.

Bighorn Sheep

W. Stanek

Trestle bridge, Chase, B.C. (5)

5. Chase, with its main street paralleling the railway and its busy sawmill, is typical of many small communities in the southern and central Interior. The town was named after Whitfield Chase, an early prospector in this area. Discovering, like many other gold seekers in the 1860's, that few miners ever struck it rich, he turned to farming this very fertile portion of the Thompson Valley. More than a century later, the area is still noted for its production of fruit and vegetables and its rich pastureland.

6. At Chase, one may observe the striking difference between the open range with grass, sage, and scattered Ponderosa pines occupying the valleys west of town and, just east of town, the moister and cooler Columbia forests of Douglas-fir, western hemlock, and western red cedar.

W. Stanek

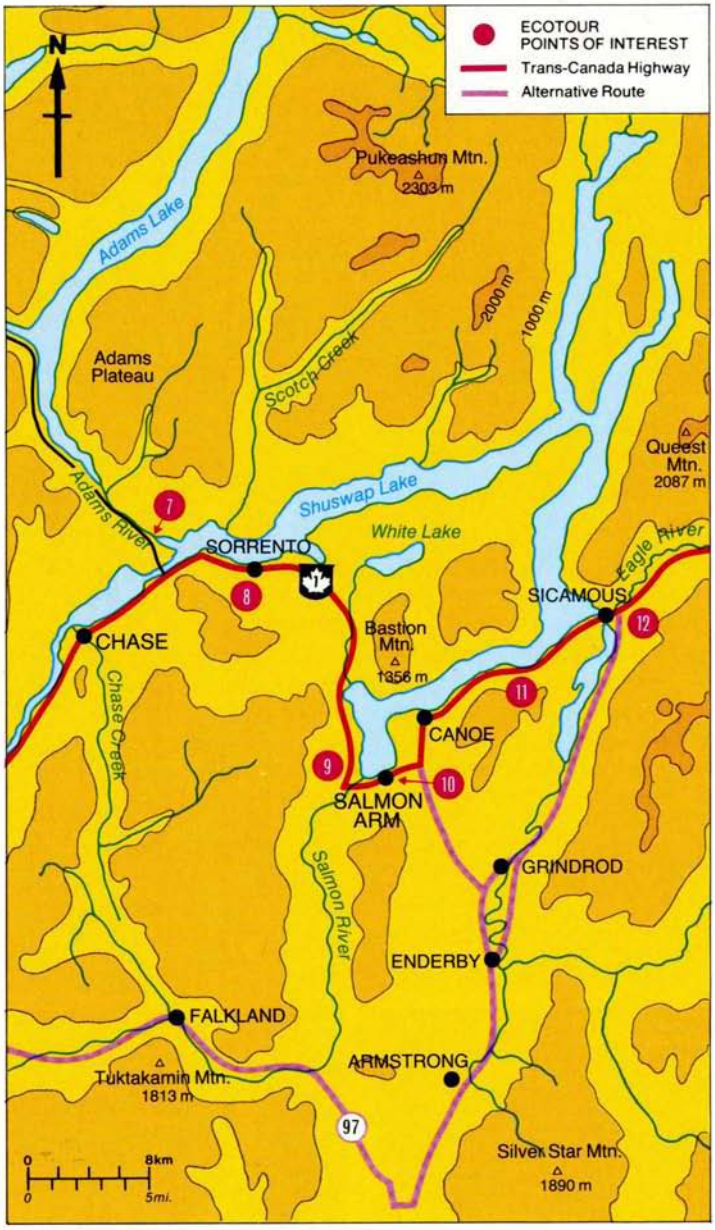
D. McHarg

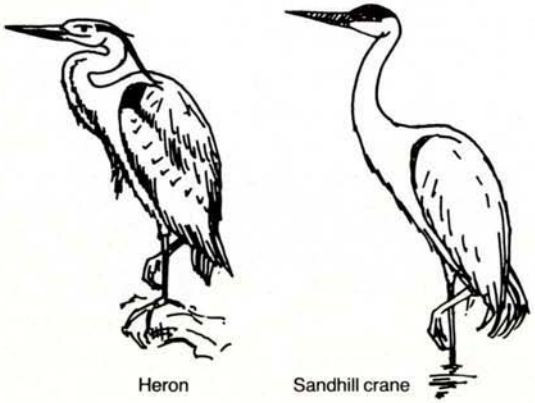
Ponderosa pine cones.

D. McHarg

Douglas-fir cones.

Can you tell the difference between Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir? (Compare the cones or needle-like leaves) (5)





Heron Sandhill crane

Shuswap Uplands

The Trans-Canada Highway skirts the indented shoreline of Shuswap Lake, winds through the hills of the adjacent uplands and, in places, intersects the northernmost portion of the fertile Okanagan Valley system. Columbia forests occupy most of the valleys, and at higher elevations mountain forests of spruce and alpine fir are a valuable resource. Bear and deer, not always conspicuous, inhabit the forests of the zone, while bighorn sheep range the mountains near Adams Lake. The rivers and lakes of the Shuswap system support waterfowl and fish, especially sea-run salmon, trout, and kokanee.

The Shuswap Lake system, with its sandy beaches and pleasant climate, attracts vacationers and tourists, as well as lakeside dwellers who commute to the nearby towns of Armstrong, Enderby and Vernon.

B.C. Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing

Sockeye spawning in Adams River. (7)

7. The Adams River, which flows into Shuswap Lake, is world-renowned as a major spawning ground for sockeye salmon. Fertilized eggs hatch during the winter and develop to the "fry" stage by May or June. Most then enter Shuswap Lake for one or more years before emigrating to the sea as "smolts", 8 to 15 cm long. Many then travel hundreds of kilometres westward in the North Pacific Ocean, feeding and growing rapidly. After one or more years of ocean life, they return to spawn and die in the same streams where they were born. In October of every fourth year (1982, 1986, etc.) when the salmon runs are particularly strong, the river presents a remarkable spectacle as the fish return to spawn.

B.C. Ministry of Tourism

Sailboats on Shuswap Lake. (8)

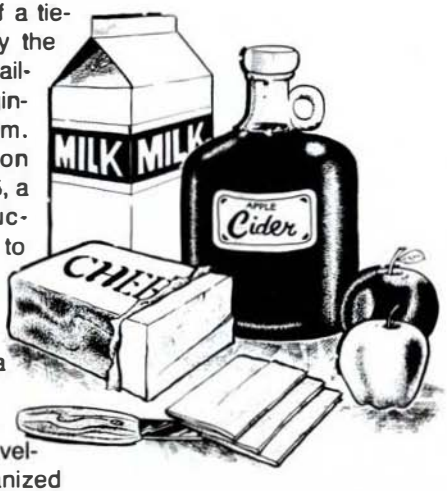
W. Stanek

Burned hillside, Salmon Arm. (9)

8. Tourism has become an industry of rapidly increasing importance, especially since the opening of the Rogers Pass section of the Trans-Canada Highway. Within this area, Shuswap Lake and its over 1000 km of shoreline provide excellent facilities for boating, camping, and swimming, while fishing, hunting, and hiking are also available. All of the towns within the zone contain motels and other tourist facilities; there are provincial campsites at Sorrento and on the north shore of Shuswap Lake. During the summer, sudden storms may whip the normally smooth and pleasant waters into a frenzy.

9. On September 11, 1973, a fire in the hills west of Salmon Arm escaped control to grow into a holocaust that roared down the mountainside enveloping the Glen Eden Valley residential and farming district. Snag-covered hillsides west of the highway remain to this day.

10. The establishment of a tie-cutting mill to supply the Canadian Pacific Railway marked the beginning of Salmon Arm. With the completion of the railway in 1885, a number of construction workers stayed to farm the rich bottomlands of the Salmon River. Salmon Arm was a major fruit-growing centre until the 1930's when the development of mechanized irrigation supplied the water needed for large-scale fruit production in the warmer and more productive but drier south Okanagan. Salmon Arm now depends largely on dairy and vegetable farming. Much of the produce goes to the Kamloops area where hot dry conditions and urban competition for suitable land make local produce farming uneconomical.



PABC No. 67613

Paddlewheelers on South Thompson River, 1886.

D. McHarg

Old farm on Shuswap Lake. (11)

11. Some of the lakeside farms date back over 100 years to a time when the main source of transportation and supplies was the paddlewheeler. These paddlewheelers were hastily constructed during the Columbia River gold rush (1864 to 1865) and serviced lakeside farms and communities for many years.

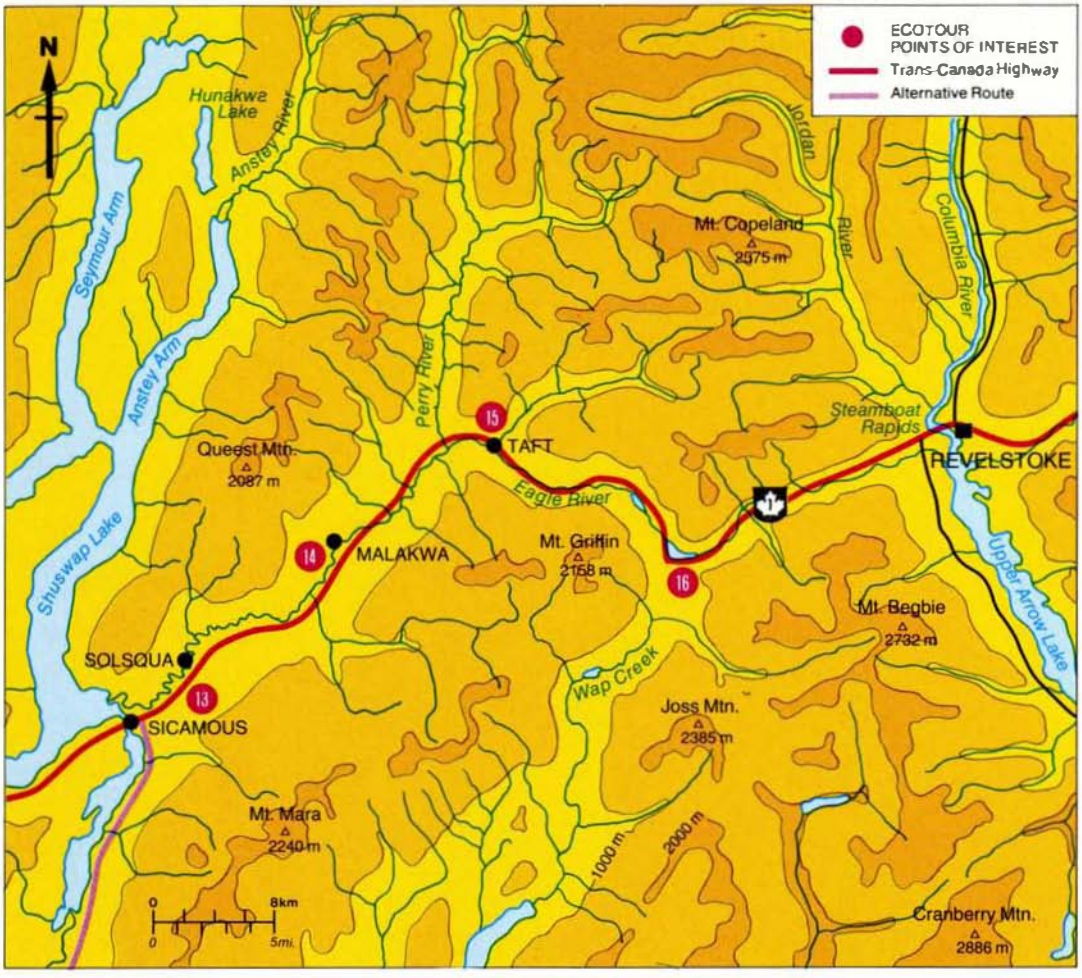
B.C. Ministry of Tourism

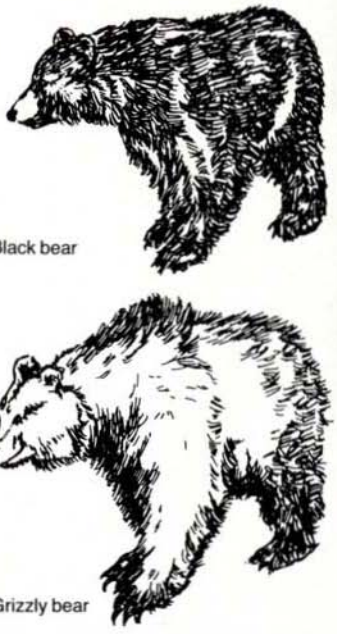
Sicamous, B.C. (12)

12. Until the 1880's, this area remained almost completely uninhabited, apart from wandering trappers and prospectors and a few farmers on the lower reaches of the Eagle River. Sicamous, originally Eagle Pass Landing, was established in 1883 as a construction base for the Canadian Pacific Railway and a port for the shipment of materials from the west coast. The town has recently acquired a new identity as a haven for yachtsmen on Shuswap Lake, as well as a stopover and service centre for traffic on the Trans-Canada Highway.


CARIBOO MOUNTAINS
100 Mile House
THOMPSON PLATEAU
Adams Lake
Kamloops Lake
Kamloops
Chase
SHUSWAP LAKE UPLANDS
Shuswap Lake
Salmon Arm
to Armstrong


SELKIRK MOUNTAINS
ROCKY MOUNTAINS
PURCELL MOUNTAINS
ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRENCH
Kinbasket Lake
Big Bend Hwy. to Mica Dam
Columbia River
Rogers Pass
Golden
Field
Revelstoke Dam
Revelstoke
Pass
Arrow Lake
Radium Hot Springs
McHarg





Black bear — coat brown or black, muzzle is brown, short claws.

Grizzly bear — large hump over shoulders, long foreclaws, brown with white tipped fur.

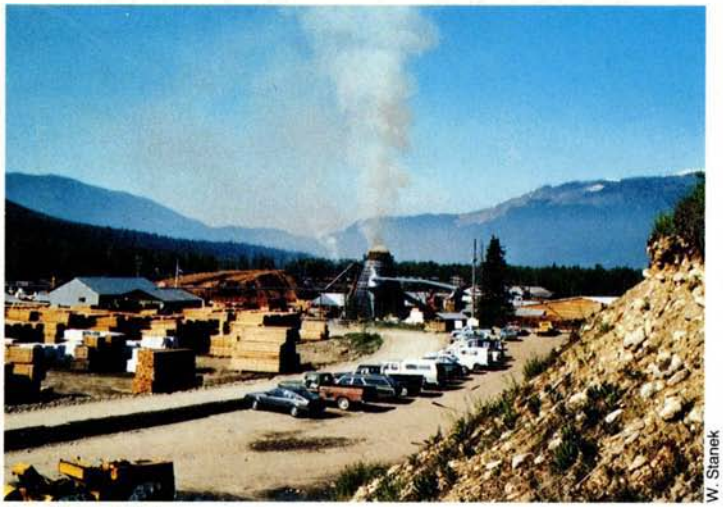
Monashee Mountains

From Sicamous (an Indian word meaning "in the middle"), the Trans-Canada Highway threads its way along the Eagle River and through the Monashees (Gaelic, "peace") to Revelstoke. In this zone, snowfall is heavy, often exceeding 10 m on upper mountain slopes. Forests are dense, especially on moist lower slopes where fallen logs and tangled shrubs make tough-going among the tall western red cedar and western hemlock. Upper slopes and areas of well-drained soil are covered in mixed forests of Douglas-fir, trembling aspen, and western white pine, while floodplains are dominated by cottonwood with the occasional western red cedar. Much of this area is uninhabited and the mountains and valleys harbor many species of wildlife, including both grizzly and black bears, mule deer, moose, and mountain goat.

W. Stanek

Old barn on Eagle River. (13)

13. The lower Eagle River Valley was first settled by disappointed gold seekers who turned to the land for subsistence. Occasional floods and harsh winters made life precarious for these pioneers but they hung on. Now, with new markets and modern farming practices, the old farms are prospering as never before. Most of the barns you can see along the highway were built long ago of logs or hand-hewn timbers.



W. Stanek

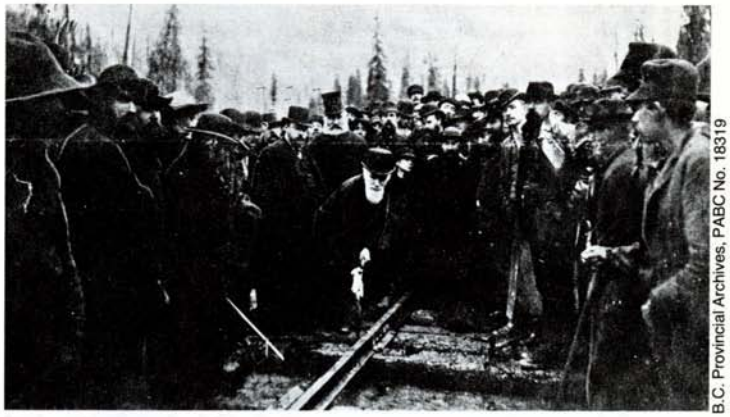
Sawmill near Malakwa. (14)

14. Around Malakwa, a thick layer of coarse gravel covers the valley floor, and farms are faced with the triple disadvantages of poor soil, long cold winters, and long distances from markets. For this reason, logging and sawmilling are important in this heavily wooded area, and a number of wood-utilizing industries provide work for local people. A conical "beehive burner" disposes of sawmill residue. The technique is no longer used in parts of British Columbia where there is a steady demand for wood chips by the paper industry. Burning sawmill residue wastes valuable energy and creates pollution.

15. Craigellachie, the name of a high rock in Morayshire, Scotland, was the location of the beacon fires which summoned the clan Grant in time of battle. G. Stephens (later Lord Mount Stephens) and Donald Smith (later Lord Strathcona), major investors in the Canadian Pacific Railway, chose this name for the location where the east and west links of the Canadian Pacific Railway joined. The "last spike" was driven here on November 7, 1885, marking the completion of Canada's first transcontinental railway.

16. In 1865, Walter Moberly, a government surveyor, explored the Monashee Mountains to find a railway pass which would link British Columbia with the rest of Canada. It is said that Moberly observed a flight of eagles which he claimed indicated the location of the pass. With the discovery of Eagle Pass, Moberly secured a route from the Pacific Ocean to Revelstoke. Bald eagles continue to be seen in the area to this day.

    Eagle Pass is the watershed between the Thompson-Fraser drainage to the west and the Columbia drainage to the east. The Eagle River originates from a lake in the Eagle Pass. It flows west and forms a series of picturesque lakes.



B.C. Provincial Archives, PABC No. 18319

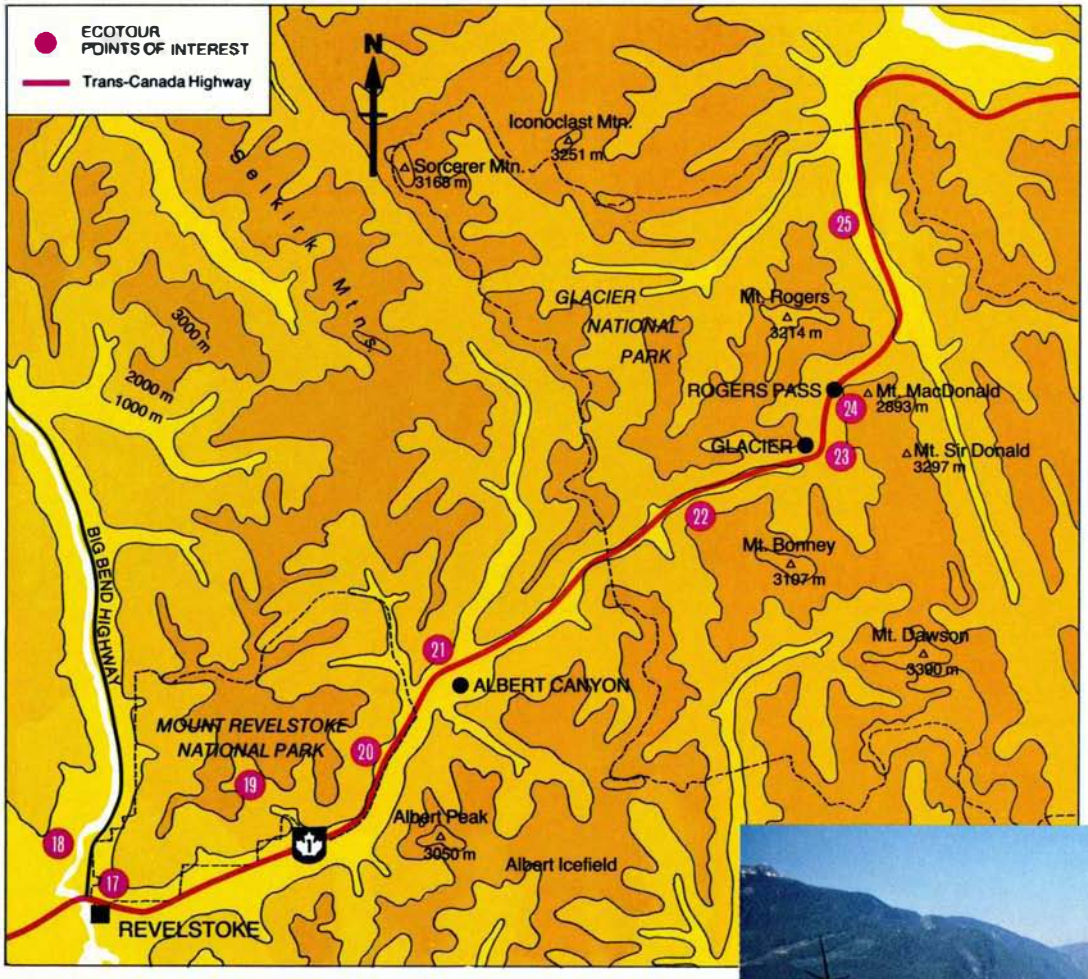
Driving of the last spike, Craigellachie.

W. Stanek

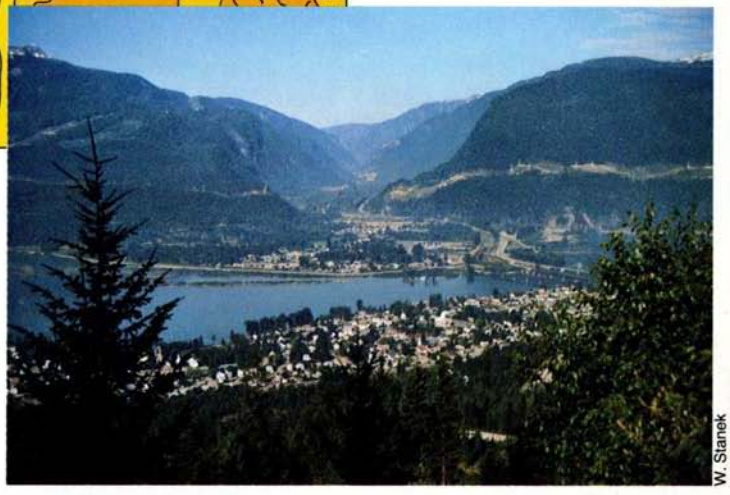
Last spike monument. (15)

D. McHarg

Griffin Lake. (16)



Wapiti (elk)



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Revelstoke from summit road. (17)

Selkirk Mountains

The Selkirks make up some of the most rugged terrain in British Columbia. Here, high mountain peaks tower above massive glaciers, hanging valleys, moraines, steep forested slopes, and yawning canyons. Winters are characterized by heavy snowfalls. Glacier (el. 1040 m), near the summit of Rogers Pass, receives an average snowfall of nearly 10 m. Snow avalanches thunder through these mountains in the winter.

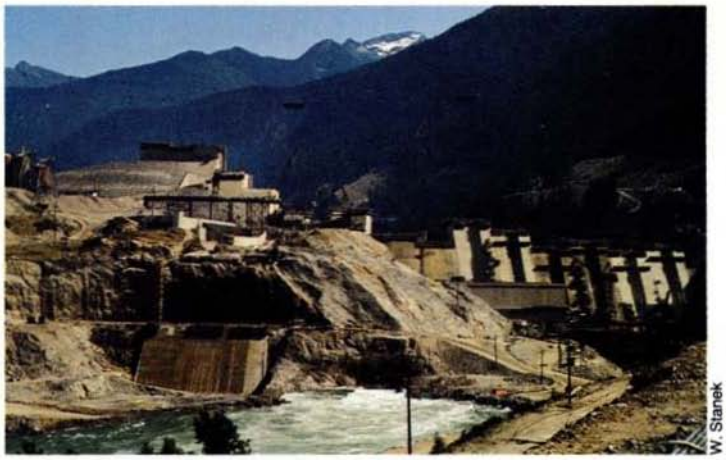
The interior wet belt forest covers the valleys and river bottomlands. In higher elevations, the forests of mountain fir, mountain hemlock. and Engelmann spruce provide the transition to the mountain meadows and barren peaks.

In both the Mount Revelstoke and Glacier national parks, all wildlife is protected, but the severe climate creates harsh living conditions.

The Proterozoic and Lower Paleozoic rocks include erosion-resistant materials such as quartzites which constitute many of the towering (over 3000 m) high peaks.

17. Revelstoke was established in 1883 as a railway construction camp on the east bank of the Columbia. It was then called Farwell. Its position as a shipping point for the rich mines of the Arrow Lakes area to the south resulted in rapid growth. Completion of the Rogers Pass Highway and construction of hydro dams have further affected Revelstoke's economy.

    Many of the houses in the town have steep-pitched aluminum roofs. These prevent heavy buildups of snow and minimize the danger of collapse, in an area where heavy snowfalls are very frequent.



W. Stanek

Revelstoke Dam under construction, summer 1982. (18)

18. Just a few kilometres north of the town, the construction site of B.C. Hydro's Revelstoke Dam may be viewed. The giant earth dam is a part of a system of dams on the Columbia River, the energy of which is converted into electricity. A vast network of powerlines carries that resource to consumers in Canada and the United States. Environmental impacts of the dams, particularly on migrating fish populations and on the key winter ranges of large mammals such as moose, are considerable.

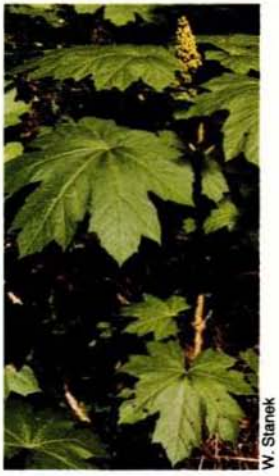
J. Woods

View of alpine meadows, Mount Revelstoke summit. (19)

19. Mount Revelstoke National Park was established in 1914 and covers an area of 260 km². The unique Summit Road starts just east of Revelstoke on the Trans-Canada Highway and climbs to the top of Mount Revelstoke. Along the 26 km drive and the effects of changing elevation on vegetation may be seen. Trails on the summit probe the mountain meadows and tundra.

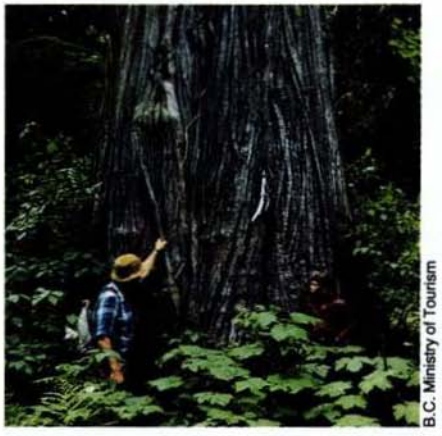
John G. Woods

Giant skunk cabbage. (20)



W. Stanek

Devils club. (20)



B.C. Ministry of Tourism

Giant cedars. (20)

B. Merilees

Devils club stem (20)

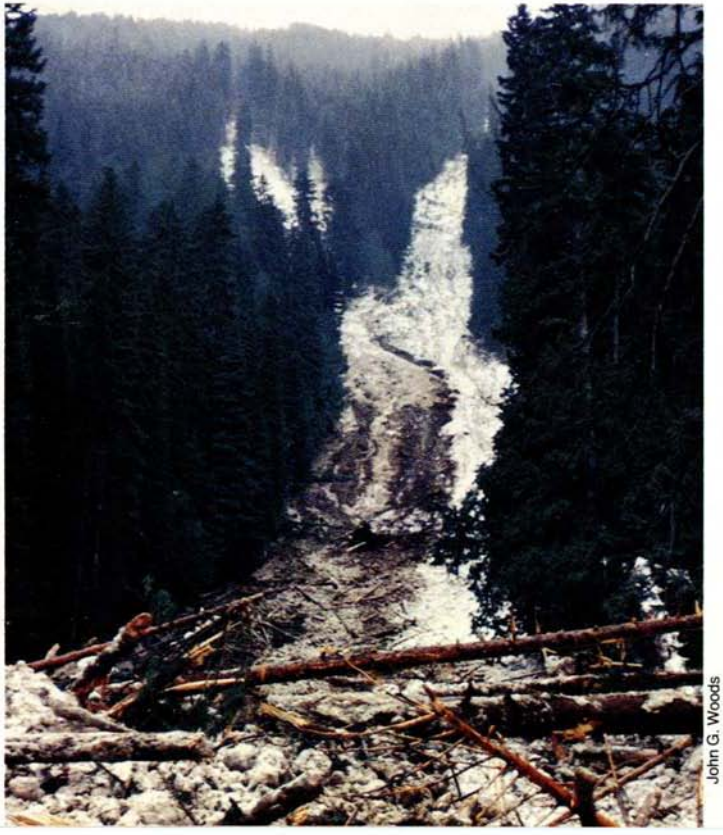
20. The Giant Cedar Trail and the nearby Skunk Cabbage Trail provide an opportunity to examine the vegetation of the interior rain forest at close range. Imagine tramping through these forests and marshes for days, weeks, and even months with no highway or railway as a guide and no place to buy food or find shelter from the rains. Heavy undergrowth often including impenetrable thickets of the spiny "Devil's Club", hordes of mosquitoes, treacherous rocks and torrential mountain streams made the early explorations a maddening, exhausting, and dangerous task.

W. Stanek

Illecillewaet River Valley. (21)

21. Throughout Illecillewaet (Indian word for "running water") River Valley, the railway is located below the highway and occasionally one may catch a glimpse of the tracks winding along the cascading river or turning a bend in a gorge. The former railway stations, at one time famous, are abandoned and nature has begun to take back the territory once claimed by man. In many locations the characteristic pattern of cutovers may be seen where logs are "skidded" across the ground to a "landing". Skidding, while inexpensive, may cause soil erosion on steep slopes, especially where rainfall is high. The talus cone at the foot of the gulch is formed of avalanche and torrent debris.

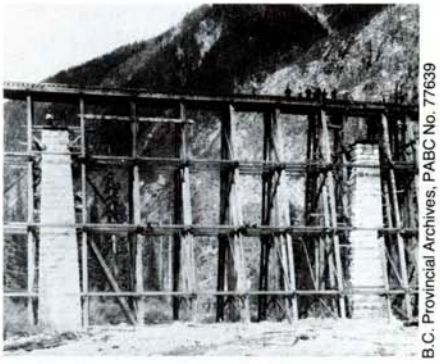
Avalanche debris. (22)



John G. Woods

22. In the mountains, the many avalanche paths can be identified during the summer as strips of pale green alder and willow running up the slope; in the winter, they are paths of death and destruction. They stand out against the dark conifers of the steep valley walls. Along the road shoulders, the traveller may spot circles used to position a 105 mm howitzer operated by the Canadian Forces and directed by a park avalanche team. The exploding shell will trigger avalanches and thus protect the highway traffic from dangerous surprises.

In May, one may spot, on the avalanche tracks, bear searching for snow-killed animals and feeding on the lush new plant growth.



B.C. Provincial Archives, PABC No. 77639

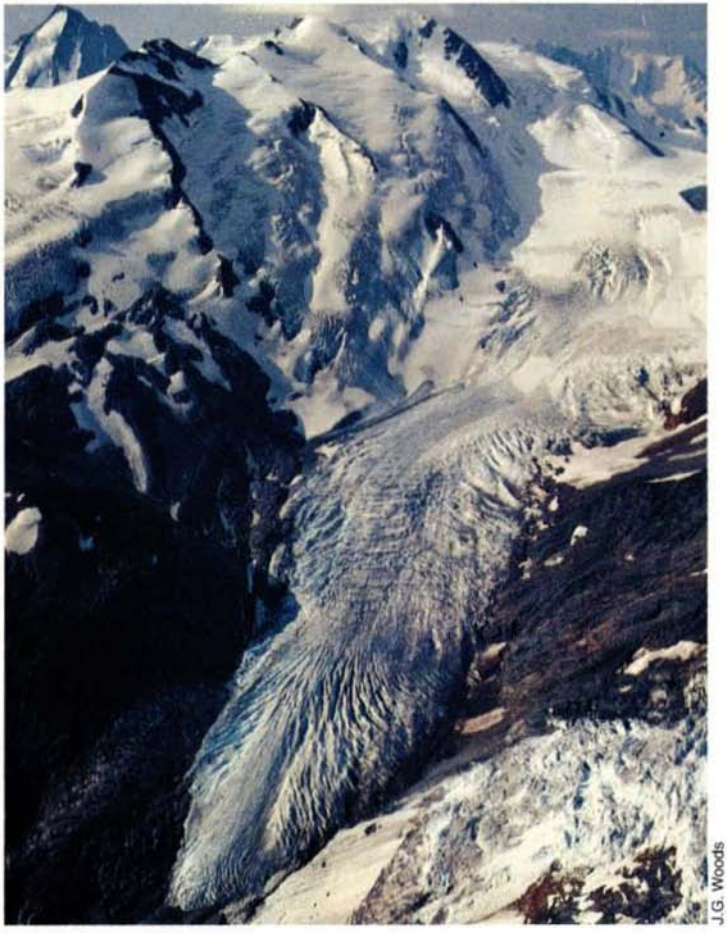
Trestle columns remain intact to this day.

B.C. Provincial Archives, PABC No. 67578

Snowshed below Glacier, 1886.

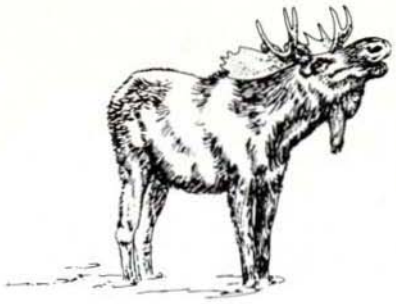
23. The construction of the railway across Rogers Pass took three years and was completed in 1885. The railway had 6.5 km of snowsheds, structures similar to those on the highway, to protect it from avalanches. In 1910, an avalanche killed 62 people. The construction of the 8 km long Connaught Tunnel, eliminated Rogers Pass — the most dangerous portion of the railway and improved the grade and efficiency of the railway. In 1982, to cope with the ever-increasing traffic, the Canadian Pacific Railway proposed the construction of a second, approximately 15 km long tunnel. The west portal will be located near the Cougar Brook, the east portal near the east portal of the Connaught tunnel. Careful planning and execution of the project will ensure the greatest protection of the park environment against construction impact and will allow the railway to operate without unduly disturbing the park environment or the public.

The present Rogers Pass Highway was completed in 1962. Before that, the only road link between Revelstoke and Golden was a rough gravel track following the "Big Bend" made by the Columbia River as it loops north of the Selkirks.



J.G. Woods

View of Great Glacier. (24)



Moose

25. East of the highway is the Beaver River Valley. The moose prefer this area as a wintering ground and corridor for winter travel. The low snow depths on the river, in contrast to the deep snows of the wooded areas, make this an attractive wintering habitat.

J. Rogers

Beaver River valley. (25)

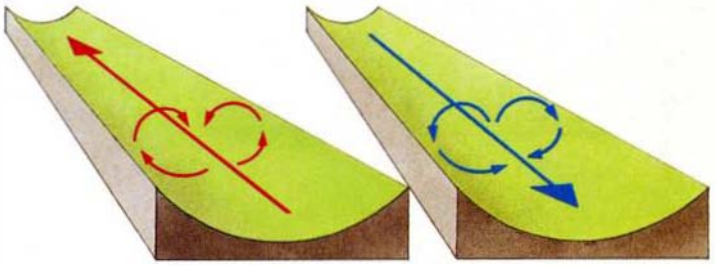
24. In 1865, A. Perry, one of Walter Moberly's men, while surveying for the Government of Canada (see point no. 16), ascended the Illecillewaet River and reported on a possible pass through the Selkirks. However, it was not until 1881 that a party led by Major A.B. Rogers, surveyor for the Canadian Pacific Railway, discovered the pass now called Rogers Pass.

"Such a view! Never to be forgotten! Our eyesight caromed from one bold peak to another for miles in all directions. The wind blew fiercely across the ridge and scuddy clouds were whirled in the eddies behind the great towering peaks of bare rock. Everything was covered with a shroud of white, giving the whole landscape the appearance of snow clad desolation," wrote A.L. Rogers, nephew of A.B. Rogers, upon discovery of Rogers Pass.

Glacier National Park was established in 1886 to establish a nature preserve. At present, it includes 1350 km² of rugged mountains, glaciers, avalanche paths, forested slopes, and lush river meadows.

The park staff have erected signs at points of interest, and the Rogers Pass Centre near the summit of the pass is a museum and provides information for a more thorough appreciation of the park as a nature preserve, as well as a place of history.

Wind Patterns Observed Within Valleys



Warming of the slopes by the sun initiates the slope-up-wind. Sometimes this wind reaches speeds of up to 4 m per second. The slope wind circulation is responsible for wind blowing up the valley.

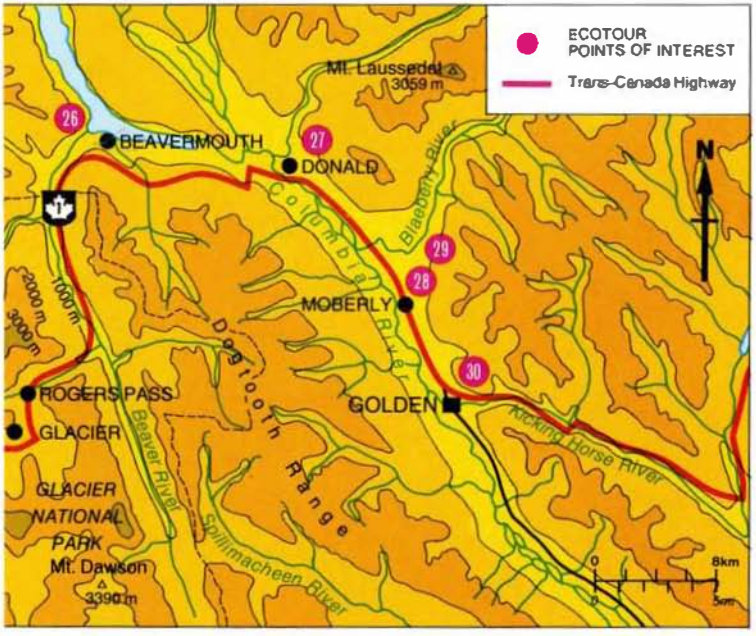
At night the winds down-the-slope are much gentler than the day winds. The cooled-off air descends and starts the wind moving down the valley.

Rocky Mountain Trench

The Rocky Mountain Trench, including the part between Golden and Beavermouth, follows a major geological fault line that appears at the 49th parallel and follows the west boundary ofthe Rocky Mountains for about 1500 km. The Selkirk and Purcell mountains to the west of the trench consist of ancient metamorphic rocks, some of them of Cambrian origin; while the Rockies to the east are composed principally of limestones and other sediments of the Triassic age. The floor of the trench consists of deep layers of glacial till and fluviogiacial material, much of it re-sorted by recent river activity.

The valley has been settied for nearly a century. Presently, logging, milling, and tourism are of economic importance. The bottomlands of the Columbia, except where cleared and drained for pasturing, are a mosaic of cottonwood groves, marshes, and islands of white spruce. On top of terraces, there are stands of Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and spruce. The trench is an important breeding area for waterfowl. Wildlife such as moose, elk, and deer depend on the trench for winter range.

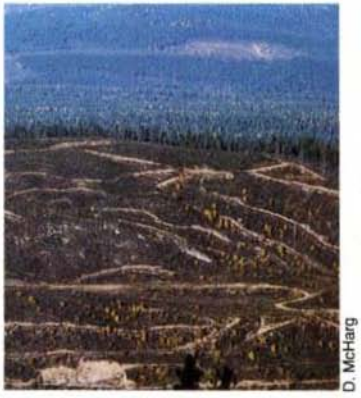
The approaches into and out of the Columbia Valley offer spectacular mountain views and scenery. Outside of the national parks where logging may take place, one will frequently encounter sites where vast areas, even very steep slopes, have been denuded of timber by clear logging.




Kinbasket Lake. (26)

W. Stanek

26. From its origin in the Columbia Lake, the Columbia River flows northwest along the Rocky Mountain Trench into the Kinbasket Lake which is contained by the Mica Dam. From there, the waters of the original Columbia River flow into the confines of the Revelstoke Dam. The Mica Dam is the second largest earth-filled dam in the world — second only to one in the U.S.S.R. — and is capable of generating 2 000 000 kw (2 000 Mw), an amount roughly equal to the present demand of the British Columbia lower mainland. Both the Revelstoke and Mica dams can be reached from Revelstoke via Highway 23 (Big Bend Highway).

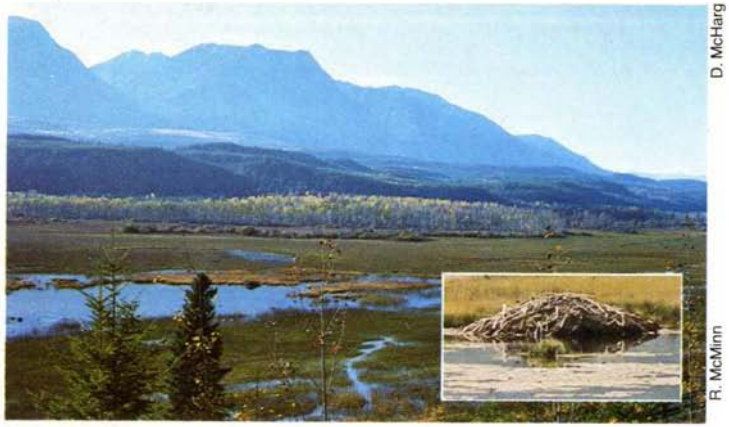

Clear-cut logging. (27)

D. McHarg


Seed trees. (27)

W. Stanek

27. David Thompson first explored this area in 1807 in service for the English North-West Company. In 1810, he discovered much farther north, the Athabasca Pass, an easier and more direct route to the lower Columbia. This portion of the trench was then left to the native Indian peoples for another fifty years, until Donald sprung up as a booming construction town. Today, it is the location of a large saw and planer mill. Both of these industries require a continual source of logs. To maintain a supply, active logging continues throughout the year. Logging and road construction frequently expose the slopes to excessive erosion. Now, the trend is towards more careful road construction and leaving some seed trees standing and reducing the impact of exploitation.



D. McHarg

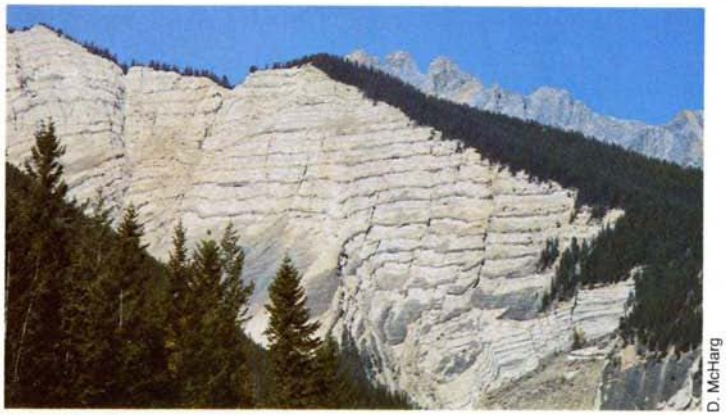
R. McMinn

Moberly marsh. (28)

28. North of Golden, much of the Columbia River floodplain is marshy — this area is known as the "Moberly marsh." Some years ago, the naturalists John and Caroline Bergenham donated to the Province of British Columbia 202 ha (500 acres) for the Bergenham Wildlife Refuge.

From the highway, muskrat lodges can be seen and occasionally one can observe the osprey, bald eagle, red tailed hawk, or a flock of Canada geese; when the water table drops in late summer, shore birds move into the marsh. The marsh is accessible behind the old Moberly railway station through dense undergrowth and beaver-felled trees. The unsuspecting should also be warned of the hordes of blood-thirsty mosquitoes.

In places, draining of these marshes for pasturage is being carried out, but local markets still seem too limited to justify the expense of a large scale land reclamation.



D. McHarg

Exposed rock layers. (29)

29. A side road along the Blaeberry River leads to the trail into Howse Pass through which, in about 1807, David Thompson crossed the Rockies. From the Blaeberry River B.C. Ministry of Forests recreation area, the observer may catch the view of landslide exposed rock layers bearing witness to the immense mountain-forming forces.

Howse Pass was briefly considered as a wagon route across the Rockies. Today, the pass provides excellent hiking for experienced backpackers.

Beaver

In contrast to the marshy mosquito-infested bottomlands of the Columbia River, the well-drained alluvial terraces of the Rocky Mountain Trench are preferred by the settlers and part-time farmers.

30. At the present site of Golden, James Hector, a member of the Palliser expedition in 1857, named the Kicking Horse River. By 1884, railway construction reached the mountains and construction camps were erected and, as with other boom towns, had their share of saloons, dance halls, brawls, and shootouts. After completion of the railway, Golden remained alive, while Silver City Summit and the rest of the camps faded away. Around the turn of the century, the Canadian Pacific Railway advertised Glacier National Park as the North American equivalent of the Swiss Alps. To substantiate their campaign, they "imported" several guides from Switzerland and built the ornate Swiss-style chalets that perch on the bluffs just northeast of Golden — a place called Edelweiss Village.

D. McHarg

Swiss-style chalet. (30)

Glossary

Archeozoic . . . refers to earliest era of geological history 1½ to 2½ billion years ago.

coniferous . . . cone bearing plants.

deciduous . . . trees and shrubs which seasonally loose their leaves.

ecology . . . . the study of interrelationships between organisms and their surroundings.

Jurassic . . . . refers to a period in geological history 136 to 195 million years ago, marked by the first appearance of birds.

kokanee . . . . a small nonmigrating sockeye salmon.

Paleozoic . . . . refers to an era in geological history approximately 230 to 600 million years ago, marked by the emergence of insects.

Proterozoic . . . refers to an era in geological history 600 million to 1½ billion years ago, marked by the emergence of invertebrates.

Shuswap . . . . name derived from the Shuswap Indians, part of the great Salishan family and largest tribe in British Columbia.

sockeye . . . . a species of migrating salmon which return from the sea to spawn.

Triassic . . . . refers to a period of the geological era 195 to 225 million years ago, marked by the earliest record of mammals.

volcanic . . . . of, relating to, or produced by a volcano.

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Ecotour Calendar

JANUARY . . good month to observe whistling swans and bald eagles along the South Thompson River between Kamloops and Chase.

FEBRUARY . . look for mountain sheep along the highway east of Chase; low elevations in the plateau may be snow-free while all areas in the Columbia Mountains still have a deep snow cover.

MARCH . . . . look for first spring flowers at low elevations on the Thompson Plateau; ravens, great horned owls, and grey jays nesting.

APRIL . . . . . migrating Canada geese conspicuous early in month; most local geese on nests; robins conspicuously moving through the area; rainbow trout spawning in many streams; best month for wild flowers in the Thompson River valley.

MAY . . . . . migrating land birds conspicuous; look for grizzly and black bears on avalanche paths in Glacier National Park; mountain goats often easy to see on cliffs above Three Valley Gap and around the snowsheds in Glacier National Park.

JUNE . . . . . many shrubs and trees flowering; yellow pollen conspicuous on the water; excellent bird watching month.

JULY . . . . . snow leaving high country; massive shows of Glacier lilies on Mount Revelstoke; best alpine hiking near the end of the month.

AUGUST . . . . first half of month is best time for alpine flowers on Mount Revelstoke; excellent month for alpine hiking; some birds starting migration south.

SEPTEMBER . kokanee spawning in many creeks connecting to large lakes; mountain ash berries are bright red; first significant snows in high country; many migrating birds; watch for flocks of sandhill cranes in the South Thompson River area.

OCTOBER . . . Pacific salmon spawning in Adams River; best years are 1982, 1986, 1990, 1994; autumn colors at their best; whistling swans returning to South Thompson River.

NOVEMBER . . snow comes to the low country; major snow avalanche season begins; blue-colored Steller's jays conspicuous along the highway in the Sicamous-Revelstoke-Rogers Pass area; most bears in hibernation this month.

DECEMBER . . winter finches often noticeable along highway picking up grit; main species crossbills, pine siskins, pine grosbeak; skis necessary for travel in much of the region.

Approximate Ripening Dates

Asparagus	May 15 to June 1
Cherries	June 28 to July 20
Peaches	July 10 to September 15
Apricots	July 12 to August 15
Apples and Plums	July 15 to September 15
Cabbages and Onions	August 15 to October 15
Potatoes	August 15 to October 15
Prunes and Pears	August 15 to September 15

Additional information may be obtained in:

Hosie, R.C. 1969. Native trees of Canada. Can. For. Serv., Dept. Fisheries and For., Ottawa. 380 pp.

McTaggart, Cowan I. and C.J. Guiguet. 1975. The Mammals of British Columbia. British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C. 414 pp.

Ormsby, M.A. 1971. British Columbia: a history. Evergreen Press, Vancouver, B.C. 566 pp.

or by writing to:

Canadian Forestry Service
Pacific Forest Research Centre
506 West Burnside Road
Victoria, B.C.
V8Z 1M5

Parks Canada
Mount Revelstoke and Glacier Parks
Box 350
313 - 3rd Street
Revelstoke, B.C.
V0E 2S0

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Credits

Interpretation and Production Supervision:
— W. Stanek, Canadian Forestry Service
Contributors:
— W.F. Hubbard, Biocon Research Ltd.
— D. McHarg, W. Stanek, Canadian Forestry Service
— J.G. Woods, Parks Canada
Technical Assistance:
— B. Baker, A. Craigmyle, D. McHarg, L. Milmine, J. Wiens, Canadian Forestry Service

Photography: as credited
Ecotour Calendar:
— J.G. Woods, Parks Canada
Landsat Color Composite:
— Y.L. Lee, Canadian Forestry Service
Editing:
— S. Glover, E. Teske, Canadian Forestry Service
Production Art:
— Osborne & Associates, Victoria, B.C.
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