

BC Spaces FOR NATURE

Committed to conserving wilderness in British Columbia

Mission

BC Spaces for Nature protects world class wilderness, forests, wildlife, and rivers in British Columbia. Strategic and solutions-oriented, we have developed an innovative Jobs and Environment Program which demonstrates how Nature can be protected while achieving diversified, revitalized, and sustainable rural economies.

History

For almost 30 years, BC Spaces' staff have taken a leadership role in conservation campaigns throughout British Columbia, resulting in the protection of over 6 million acres (2.5 million ha). BC Spaces evolved from the Tatshenshini Wild organization which headed up the highly successful international campaign to preserve the 2.3 million-acre (1 million ha) Tatshenshini-Elsek Park. Tatshenshini became the heartland to the world's largest complex of international parks and United Nations World Heritage Sites (including Wrangell St. Elias, Glacier Bay, and Kluane National Parks). As Tatshenshini Wild we established a continental wilderness campaign network—Tatshenshini International—which linked together the 50 lead conservation organizations in North America, with a combined membership of 10 million people.

Currently BC Spaces for Nature conservation priorities focus on our *Great Spaces* Campaigns—namely the Chilcotin Ark and Back of the Panhandle, and our solutions-oriented Jobs and Environment (J&E) Campaign. This J&E initiative promotes a sustainable economic vision for rural British Columbia through the development of ecoforestry, ecotourism, and conservation alternatives.

BC's Great Spaces

BC Spaces for Nature pioneered the *Great Spaces* concept during the Tatshenshini Campaign. Great Spaces are vast areas of global conservation significance, large enough to ensure that entire ecosystems, and especially predator-prey wildlife populations, will survive over time. Based on Conservation Biology principles, this *Great Spaces* program focuses on protecting vast world class BC wilderness comparable to Africa's Serengeti and the U.S. National Parks of the Colorado Plateau.

The Back of the Panhandle

Stretching for 375 miles (600 km) down the Canadian side of the Alaskan Panhandle, the Back of the Panhandle *Great Space* extends from the Tatshenshini-Elsek Park in the north, through the Taku watershed, to include the Stikine-Iskut drainage in the south. Currently our watershed campaigning focuses on the Stikine and Taku rivers.

The Stikine flows 400 miles from its headwaters in the 1.75 million acre (700,000 ha) Spatsizi Park (protected by BC Spaces staff in 1974). In its midsection, the Great River (as the Tahltan First ►



Back of the Panhandle

Tatshenshini
Park

Yukon

British
Columbia

Alaska

Spatsizi
Park



Nations know it) cuts a 60-mile, 1,000 foot deep Grand Canyon through lava rock which flowed from the volcano of nearby Mt. Edziza Park. In its lower reaches, the Stikine courses powerfully through the Coast Mountains, where confined by glaciated peaks it travels a broad valley forest that grades from interior aspen, through BC's finest cottonwood forest, to hemlock/cedar rainforest. Over the BC border, the Stikine crosses through Alaska's LeConte Wilderness to reach the Pacific Ocean. The Stikine drains a 20,000 square mile watershed that remains in a nearly pristine state, and which supports intact predator-prey relationships in a variety of biogeoclimatic zones, or habitats.

Currently the region is undergoing a government sponsored multi-stakeholder land use planning process, expected to complete in 2000. BC Spaces' staff are working closely with the local and regional conservation organizations—especially the Friends of Stikine—in the current government process to ensure that this river remains forever wild.

BC Spaces is also active on the team working to safeguard the Taku River from a potentially damaging proposed copper mine.

The Chilcotin Ark

The Chilcotin sweeps 350 miles (565 km) from the Coast Mountains and Tweedsmuir Park (in the west) to the Fraser Canyon. This spectacular 7.5 million acre (3 million ha) region features 30-mile long turquoise lakes, the wilderness portion of the Fraser Canyon, coastal rainforest, old growth interior Douglas fir forests, grasslands, the highest peaks in BC's coast mountains (over 13,000 feet/4,000 m), exceptional populations of threatened woodland caribou, California big horn, grizzly, cougars, and wolves, and 9 of BC's 14 major ecosystems (or biogeoclimatic zones). The size of the European Alps, the Chilcotin Ark is the largest remaining unprotected wilderness in southern Canada.

Having worked for the past 10 years to preserve 1.2 million acres (500,000 ha) in the Chilcotin Ark, BC Spaces is intent on completing the protection of this *Great Space*. To retain the Ark's long-term biodiversity, existing core wilderness parks must be surrounded by buffer zones and linked with wildlife migration corridors in accordance with Conservation Biology Principles. To do this, already designated Special Management Zones flanking the parks must become places where ecoforestry and ecotourism supplant industrial clearcut forestry.

However, time is running out. Before 1980, there was only minor industrial logging in the Chilcotin. Today, in less than 20 years, 40% of the old growth forests have vanished from a territory the size of Switzerland. Within the next five years all major valley systems will be sacrificed to clear-cut logging, if protective action is not taken now.

To prevent this, BC Spaces intends to apply our Jobs and Environment strategy in the Chilcotin Ark. Based on sustainable logging, tourism and increased conservation, this will ensure that environmental integrity and a sustainable rural economy will be retained in this stellar wilderness.

Our Track Record

For over 25 years, BC Spaces for Nature staff have played a leadership role in successful conservation campaigns which have led to the protection of more than 6 million acres including:

- Nitinat Triangle of Pacific Rim National Park, the first citizens' wilderness, and rainforest campaign in Canada
- Tatshenshini, North America's Wildest River and the heartland to the largest World Heritage Site complex on the planet
- Spatsizi Wilderness Park, an exceptional wildlife area, long known as British Columbia's Serengeti (1.6 million acres / 640,000 ha)
- Purcell Mountains, the largest protected wilderness in southern BC (500,000 acres / 200,000 ha)
- Height of the Rockies, which links to Banff National Park on the Great Divide

BC Spaces for Nature

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