



## CANADIAN COUNTERCULTURES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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ISBN 978-1-55238-815-0

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## **“Good Ecology Is Good Economics”: The Slocan Valley Community Forest Management Project, 1973–1979**

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*Nancy Janovicek*

Scholarship on the contemporary environmental movement emphasizes conflict. The “War in the Woods” in British Columbia in the 1990s evokes images of confrontations between grandmothers and police, young hippies and loggers, and First Nations peoples and government officials. Disillusioned by the unwillingness of governments to implement policy that recognizes the urgency of the rapid depletion of the earth’s natural resources and the interconnectedness of ecological issues and social inequalities, many environmental activists and scholars have rejected the politics of compromise and coalition. Some believe that green democracy can only be achieved through autonomy from the state and in conflict with local stakeholders who make their living in the woods. As political scientist Laurie Adkin argues, “It is time to set aside the master’s tools of ‘sustainable development’ and turn our efforts toward the realization of ecological democracy.”<sup>1</sup>

Ecological justice, in this framework, is not compatible with economic development.

In contrast to this depiction of the divisiveness of environmental politics, this chapter examines a community-based research project conducted in the West Kootenays region of British Columbia in the 1970s that sought to bridge the divisions within the community. This project aimed to develop an ecologically sound land-use plan that accommodated the economic and political interests of environmentalists, loggers, recreationists, trappers, and farmers. The Slokan Valley Community Forest Management Project (SVCFMP), a project funded by the federal Local Employment Assistance Program (LEAP), began as a feasibility study to create new employment opportunities in the forest that did not harm the environment. Researching and writing the report was a deeply democratic process. The “new homesteaders,” who started to migrate to the Slokan Valley in the mid-1960s as part of the back-to-the-land movement, initiated the study, but its appeal to the residents of the valley rested on the coalitions that they built with people who had lived there for generations. As Kathleen Rodgers has shown, back-to-the-landers introduced new political theories and practices to the area.<sup>2</sup> I argue that they also built on the local political culture established by the Doukhobors, unions, and old left politics. Economic vulnerability, common in resource-based economies, and a sense of rural alienation from senior levels of government, which was ingrained in the West Kootenays, informed these politics. New homesteaders lived according to ideas associated with the counter-culture, such as local control over resources and government and a “DIY” approach to daily life.<sup>3</sup> These values resonated with the western Canadian co-operative tradition and the pacifist and communal beliefs of the Doukhobors. Most important, all people who wanted to build a life in the Slokan Valley agreed that government policy should ensure that valley residents be the primary beneficiaries of economic development and that their children enjoy the benefits of local resources. This applied to both the timber and the beauty of the woods.

The SVCFMP’s 1975 report to government officials and universities combined environmental stewardship and the protection of

forestry jobs as the foundation for economic development. The authors of the report argued that responsible forest management should be based on the “sustained yield of all resources, from fish to water to trees.”<sup>4</sup> Their proposal insisted that local economic independence could be achieved only with the complete integration of all of the valley’s resources: timber, agriculture, fish, furs, and water. Only by decreasing dependence on logging could the community ensure economic stability. A second edition of the report, published for community stakeholders the following year, added a proposal to conserve the Valhalla Range as a provincial park. The premise of the research was that “good ecology is good economics.”<sup>5</sup> This aspect of the forestry project supports recent research demonstrating that the tendency to pit environmentalists against workers does not capture the complexities of the history of the environmental movement.<sup>6</sup> This chapter also examines the relationship between local organizing and the state in countercultural and environmental politics. The federal and provincial initiatives in the early 1970s that promoted local civic engagement as a means of solving social and economic problems gave this community-based project political credibility. Those who were involved in the local consultations to produce the report did not reject government involvement in the development and implementation of economic policy; rather, they insisted that the government follow the direction of local people because they were the most knowledgeable resource managers.

The radical environmental politics of the final report of the SVCFMP, which scholars attribute to the new ideas that came from the back-to-the-land movement, has received cursory attention in studies about British Columbia wilderness politics that focus on conflict.<sup>7</sup> My analysis takes a different approach. I argue that the radical environmental politics that the report proposed drew from existing economic development plans that emphasized local control over resource management. The new homesteaders respected the knowledge and experience of people who had worked in the woods for generations and collaborated with them to develop a forest management proposal intended to address the economic and cultural goals of all

constituencies in the valley. Like the activists who led the campaign to stop herbicide spraying on Denman Island that Sharon Weaver discusses in this volume, the SVCFMP sought to mobilize all valley residents. The Valley Resource Society became a coalition among groups with disparate political goals, but it emerged from conflict. I begin by examining the development of the coalition between the back-to-the-land community and long-term residents who were upset by forestry practices that threatened the future economic viability of the valley. A central argument of the SVCFMP report was that single-use resource management, focused on “timber mining” for foreign profit, had destroyed local businesses that had managed the woods in an ecologically sound manner. Rapid exploitation of a single resource had created a precarious economy. Economic planning, the report argued, had to follow “enforce[d] guidelines based on Nature’s ability to regenerate” in order to prevent the destruction of “both our forests and the Slocan Valley community it supports.”<sup>8</sup> The SVCFMP recommended an alternative model to wasteful logging practices that accommodated the different needs of loggers, farmers, recreationalists, and trappers.

Moreover, the proposed integrated resource model insisted on protecting the Valhalla Range, an area of the Selkirk Mountains that was treasured for its old-growth forests and spectacular summits. Pre-contact artifacts of the Salish-speaking Sinixt First Nation and the remnants of early twentieth-century logging equipment make this area an important cultural heritage site. This wilderness was also the habitat of endangered species. Thus, conservation became a core principle of economic development in the Slocan Valley.

## **BUILDING A COALITION**

Between 1966 and 1971, the population of the Slocan Valley increased by 420 persons, a trend that reversed years of outmigration. According to the SVCFMP final report published in 1976, 225 young families had arrived in the valley since 1970, comprising about 15 per cent of the population.<sup>9</sup> Drawn to the Kootenays by cheap land, these families moved to the country to get away from the rising cost

of living and pollution in the cities. They hoped that by growing their own food and living a simpler life they would be self-sufficient and that they would be able to develop local alternative economic models based on mutual aid. There were angry, and sometimes violent, clashes between the newcomers and long-time valley residents who opposed their values. The final report acknowledged these hostilities, but observed that “deeper than these feelings, however, is a unifying and commonly shared feeling of love for the Valley landscape, its hills, waters, wildlife.”<sup>10</sup> Back-to-the-landers and people who had lived in the valley for generations learned that they shared a commitment to locally controlled economic development that was attentive to the environmental impact of a resource-based economy.

At the individual level, mutually co-operative relationships developed between new homesteaders and their neighbours, especially with Doukhobors.<sup>11</sup> These friendships did not lead to the general acceptance of the back-to-the-landers, though. The people who moved to the Slocan Valley from cities in the United States and Canada introduced political ideas, family forms, and lifestyles to the Slocan Valley that challenged the area’s predominantly conservative social values. Despite the hippies’ efforts to co-operate with the community, a small and vocal group insisted that these newcomers were an immoral influence on the area. They were angry at the influx of young people who lived alternative lifestyles, used illegal drugs, and practiced public nudity. Further, many back-to-the-landers worked part-time or seasonal jobs and therefore relied on unemployment insurance. This angered some long-time residents, who believed that they were abusing social welfare programs to avoid work. Back-to-the-landers often referred to these unhappy neighbours as “the Anglos”—or, more pejoratively, “the rednecks”—to distinguish them from the supportive Doukhobors who taught them rural and farming skills.

Federal and provincial initiatives that encouraged civic engagement helped the back-to-the-landers establish programs and institutions based on their values.<sup>12</sup> Those who resented the influx of Americans and hippies in the valley viewed their use of such programs as another abuse of the system. In 1973, a long letter to the editor

of the *Nelson Daily News*, signed by thirty residents, described the newcomers as “freeloaders” who had “no intent in proving that they were willing to live in harmony with us ‘native people’ of this valley” and, further upsetting the residents, had begun “receiving grants in astonishing amounts for some of the most ridiculous projects imaginable.”<sup>13</sup> Local lumberman Don Sutherland organized valley residents to “stop the grants, unemployment, nudism, drugs and unfair law enforcement.”<sup>14</sup> This group opposed the newcomers’ bid to join the Civic Action Committee, a provincial initiative intended to encourage local governance, and changed the mandate of the committee to focus on removing the “hippie element” from the valley.

Sutherland, a member of the International Woodworkers of America, had initially supported the application for research into alternative economic models for the valley’s forestry industry. He withdrew his support because he was outraged that the newcomers were receiving government funding for projects that he deemed to be of little value. When Michael Pratt, a member of the SVCFMP, went to collect literature about the community forestry project that Sutherland had agreed to distribute, Sutherland punched Pratt and threatened him with a club because he refused to leave without the documents. Pratt was not a “typical hippie.” A Canadian who had emigrated from England as a child, he was forty-one at the time of the altercation with Sutherland. Pratt was a father of four, held a PhD in natural biology, and had left a government job in Vancouver to move with his family to the valley for health reasons. His children went to the Free School, and this association with the local counterculture may have compelled Sutherland to call Pratt a “filthy stinking hippy” and to push him when he refused to leave.<sup>15</sup> Because of the increasing tensions concerning federal funding for projects sponsored by the newcomers, the SVCFMP decided to delay applying for LEAP funding to support its research until the next year.

Conflicts between the “hippie sect” and “the Valley natives” created deep divisions in the community, but the SVCFMP persisted and managed to attract people from the Doukhobor and “Anglo” communities who supported the idea of local management of the forestry



*Back Row, Left to Right:*  
William Ash, Frans Braal, Sam Verigin, Frank Nixon, Tell Schreiber, Victoria Manchester, M. L. Thomson, Gladys McLeod

*Front Row, Left to Right:*  
John Braun, Bob Ploss, Rick Bockner, Dan Armstrong, Conrad Evans, Peter Bloodoff, Jr.

3.1 Slovan Valley Community Forest Management Project Steering Committee. Source: *SVCFMP Final Report*, 2nd ed., back cover.

industry. In 1974, the group received a fifty-thousand-dollar LEAP grant to raise community awareness about how government policy on economic development affected the lives of area residents and to promote economically and ecologically sustainable forest management. The original SVCFMP committee had included twelve people, but it grew as people learned about the project. As a photo of the steering committee (figure 3.1) subtly underlines, the committee included representatives from the three key communities in the valley: Sam Verigin and Peter Bloodoff Jr. were Doukhobor; John Braun was a local woodsman, hunter, and trapper who joined the group along with his friend Jim Warner (not shown), a millworker; Frank Nixon was a farmer and sawmill worker; Tell Schrieber, M. L. Thomson, Bob Ploss, and Conrad (Corky) Evans were new to the valley. The committee hired Evans to be the administrator for the project. Evans recalled



that he was selected over applicants with PhDs because of “people like Jim Warner and Johnnie [Braun]. . . . I was logging, and they could relate to that. So I had an urban life . . . [and] I had work experience that they could relate to. So I was kind of a compromise.”<sup>16</sup> All of the employees of the project were young adults as stipulated by the LEAP program, but Evans also observed that the wages allowed by the federal job-creation program were too low to attract professional people.<sup>17</sup>

The project collected questionnaires from people in the valley as well as letters from people interested in the project. This enthusiasm for an alternative to the New York-based Triangle-Pacific (Tri-Pac), which controlled 90 percent of the logging tenure in the area, certainly reflected concerns about high unemployment in the region.<sup>18</sup> Federal and provincial promotion of local citizen engagement—albeit for political reasons that may not have accorded with the goals of valley residents—also shaped the debates about who should control the local industry. Provincially, the New Democratic Party (NDP) government that came into power in September 1972, under the leadership of Dave Barrett, supported local involvement in policy decisions. The goal of the Community Resource Boards Act, passed in 1974, was to empower citizens to identify social problems and use their knowledge of local needs to develop solutions and services.<sup>19</sup> The provincial government’s encouragement of local political engagement extended to land policy. The Agricultural Land Commission established in 1973, held public forums to determine which land should be protected from development to sustain the agricultural sector. Although these hearings were controversial and caused divisions at the local level, they demonstrated a commitment to decentralized decision making.<sup>20</sup> In his analysis of forestry policy and the environmental movement in British Columbia, Jeremy Wilson explains that the Barrett government introduced policies that challenged the government-industry pact and insisted that British Columbians deserved a larger share of their resources. For instance, Bob Williams, the minister of lands, forests, and water resources, did not support the sustained yield policy of previous governments. This central tenet of forestry policy, which dated back to the Sloan Royal Commission in 1945, held that

old-growth forests were a rotting resource that needed to be harvested and replaced with scientifically managed tree farms. Ultimately, the NDP government did not introduce radical environmental policy. But Williams's support for diversified control of the industry, as well as his belief that talented laypeople were best equipped to manage their resources, created political spaces where citizens could present alternatives to government policy that was not attentive to local needs.<sup>21</sup>

Those who joined the SVCFMP brought a range of experience and educational expertise to the research, but most of them had no formal training in silviculture. Their vision for ecological forest management rested on their experience in the logging industry and their anxiety about the negative impact of increased mechanization, introduced in the 1960s, not only on the logging industry but also on other businesses, especially agriculture, trapping, mining, and recreation. Both long-term and new residents witnessed waste, human-caused flooding, and the destruction of wildlife habitat caused by clear-cutting and poorly planned access routes.

They also brought different views about environmentally sensitive economic development, ranging from deep ecology to pragmatic conservation. Evans recalled that he built bridges among people by asking them to role-play the different constituencies in the community. Drawing on his background in community theatre, Evans challenged them to defend interests of a group to which they did not belong so that they would learn to understand other people's positions. He explained why this was a productive method:

If you're in a room with a bunch of people, it's better if they're kind of actors than if real loggers—because if they're real loggers and miners they're terrified, right, that “you're going to hurt me.” . . . But if you're acting for the miners, then you go, “there's a bunch of silver here. What do you mean you want to make this into a park?” . . . And there's no fistfights because you're articulating a position, which everybody can see is real. . . . The fact that Peter Bloodoff Sr. and Johnnie and Jim and I don't remember who else

was in the room—it had a big moderating influence on our impetuosity, or youth or whatever *you* were trying to make happen. You knew that on Saturday it was going to have to be saleable to everyone who had been trying to do it all their life. [If] you said trapping was evil, as some urban people are likely to do, you're going to have to say it to Johnnie, you know.<sup>22</sup>

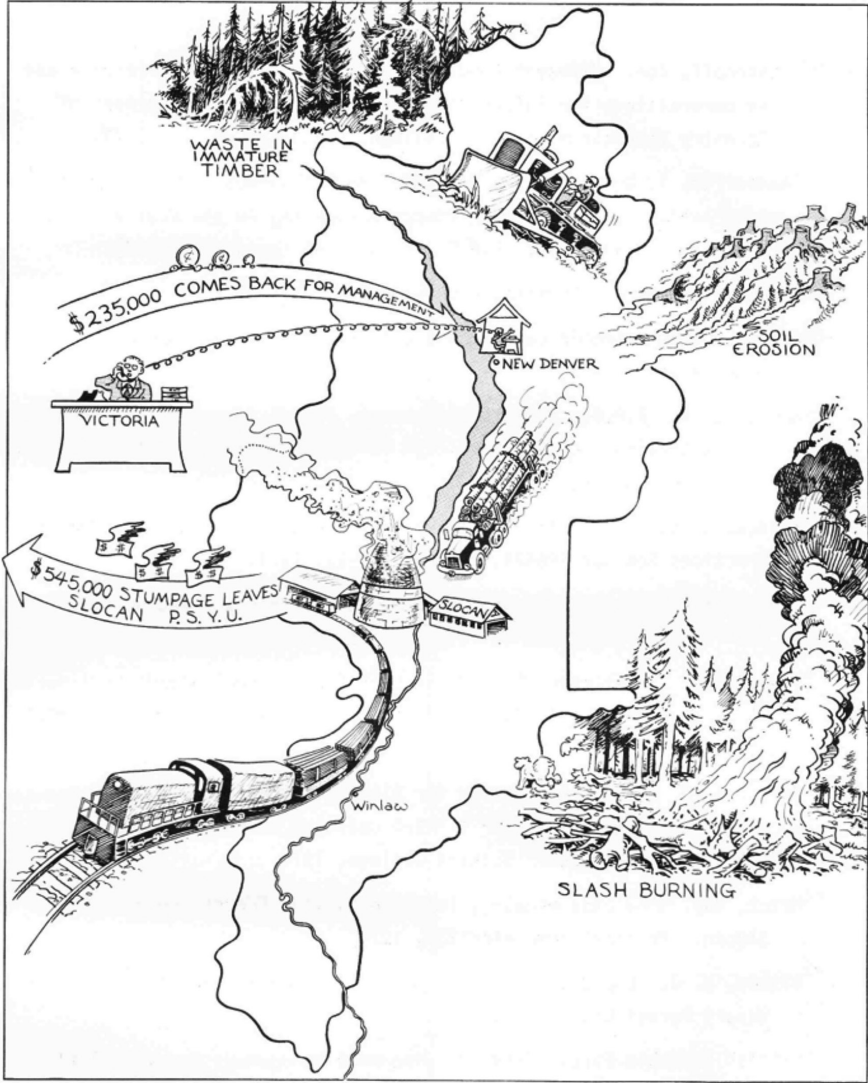
The final report, written by Dan Armstrong and Bonnie Evans, explained why this process was effective. In the group's first meetings, members had been assigned responsibilities based on their personal expertise and interests. However, they realized that this process prevented people from compromising with those who held different views: "*Placing labels on people*, such as 'the economist' or 'the conservationist' defines and therefore limits their involvement in the problem."<sup>23</sup> Corky Evans's method compelled people to defend disparate positions, helping them to understand the interrelationships between different economic sectors and the natural environment.

Working in the same room also meant those who had recently moved to the valley learned to appreciate the experience and views of their elders. They had to compromise. Using data from the Canadian Land Inventory, a project that produced aerial photographs of the country, members of the community gathered around a large table with a sheet of vellum placed over a base map of land forms and traced the different types of land use onto the map. Evans explained that this allowed the group to "figure out where things could happen with less conflict or what things shouldn't happen."<sup>24</sup> Most important, all of the people working on the project lived in the valley. Their investment in creating a viable alternative to single resource management that prioritized logging over other industries helped to overcome some, though not all, of the disputes over land use in the valley. The final report endorsed economic diversification and defended the protection of less profitable businesses, such as agriculture and trapping, by explaining how different industries and cultural groups had historically worked together in the Slovan Valley.

## PROPOSING AN ECOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVE

The fundamental argument of the report was that decentralized control over the logging industry was the only responsible way to manage the valley's timber resources. Unlike multinational companies, which were primarily concerned with increasing their profit margins, the community had an investment in the continued viability of all resources. The report recommended an economic model based on integrated resource management that recognized the changing interrelationships among different resources. The proposed economic plan made space for local businesses and independent loggers who had been pushed aside by Tri-Pac's virtual monopoly. It also defended "non-tangible" resources—in particular, the bucolic scenery in the Kootenays—which were becoming increasingly valuable as more people developed an environmental consciousness.

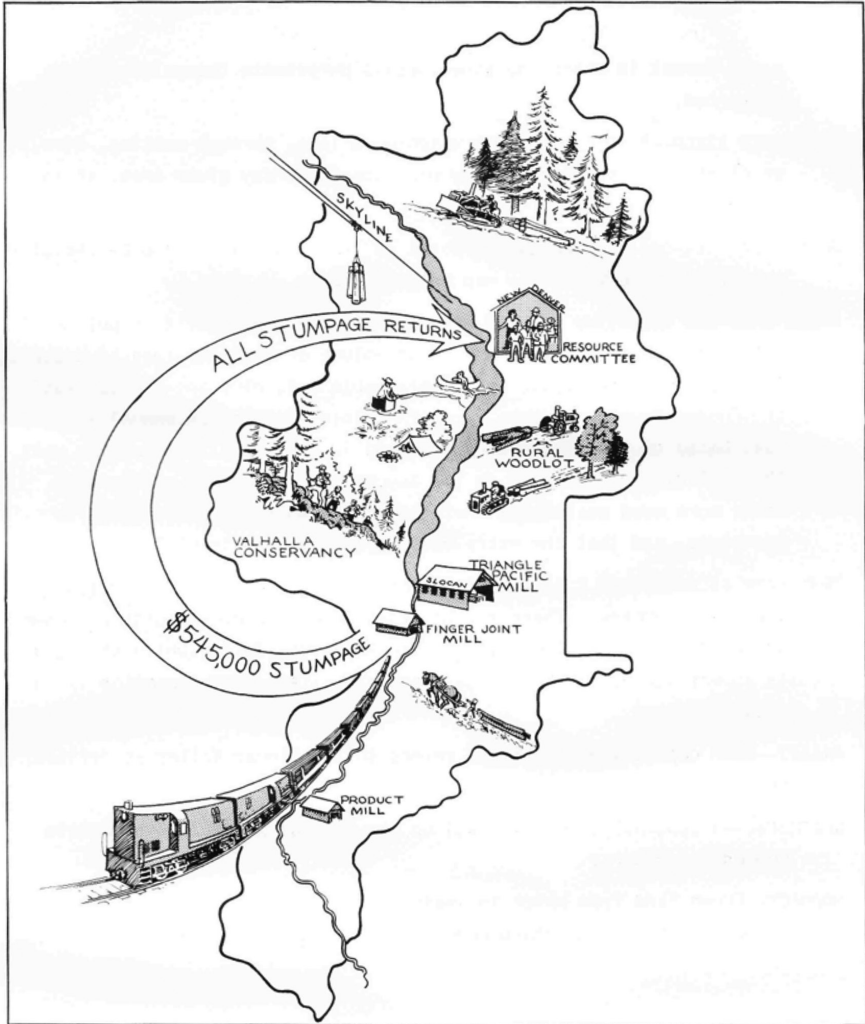
The argument for integrated resource management was grounded in history. Evans recalled that when the committee began to discuss community-based land-use policy, they followed industry models that focused on economic use. Peter Bloodoff Jr. intervened to suggest that they begin by examining the nature of the landscape and the history of the community. Ultimately, the report reflected Bloodoff's suggestion: it opens with a discussion of the natural history of the valley and explains the development of both climax forest, characterized by the achievement of a stable ecosystem of self-sustaining forests, and successional forests, which establish themselves when floods or fires disrupt the closed system of the former. The arrival of humans caused the "seemingly backward evolution" that had resulted in the predominance of successional forests over climax forests, especially in the previous one hundred years.<sup>25</sup> The authors then discussed the different groups of people who had lived in the valley, including the Sinixt, Anglo-Saxon homesteaders and miners, Doukhobors, interned Japanese Canadians during World War II, and back-to-the-landers. The histories of these groups demonstrated how subsistence and local market farming, logging, and mining were historically interconnected. A key criticism levelled in the report was that the emphasis on



THIS IS SINGLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT--

Forest management is geared for timber extraction at the expense of our other resources. Short-sighted policy drains the community of its natural bounty. We see waste, environmental damage, and a limited return of management funds for resource agencies in Nelson and New Denver.

3.2 George Metzger, "Single Resource Management." Source: *SVCFMP Final Report*, 2nd ed., pp. 3-98.



THIS IS INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT-

Recommendations based on long-term considerations of all our resources have been implemented. Forest management proceeds on a true "sustained yield" basis, while the needs of the local community and its surrounding environment are met in an ecologically sound way.

3.3 George Metzger, "Integrated Resource Management." Source: *SVCFMP Final Report*, 2nd ed., p. G-4.

logging as the region's economic stimulus destroyed good agricultural land. Protecting farms was important because arable land was restricted to the valleys along the rivers and lakes. Even though agriculture did not drive the local economy, it was vital to many family economies.<sup>26</sup>

This historical overview laid the foundation for the analysis of the inadequacy of single resource management and defended the proposal for integrated resource management. The differences between "the existing situation" and the "proposed situation" are captured in George Metzger's illustrations (figures 3.2 and 3.3).<sup>27</sup> Damaging logging practices, such as clear-cutting and slash-burning, destroyed watersheds. Wasteful logging also threatened the continued viability of logging because it destroyed the conditions that would make forest rejuvenation possible. Moreover, government management plans did not consider the importance of resources besides wood fibre, and they ignored the negative impact of irresponsible logging on agriculture, recreational land use, trapping, and fishing.

The report was equally critical of the consolidation of small, locally owned logging mills in the hands of foreign-owned multinationals. Increased harvests under these larger companies improved economic stability for most people in the valley, but "the virtual exclusion of the independent small operator from any forest activity has had ecological and sociological effects that have been unnecessary and damaging."<sup>28</sup> Logging happened on publicly owned Crown land, which should have instilled a sense of community responsibility for the resource. Instead, people considered "the forest as an economic extension of 'the company,' and not as their own environment, and therefore see little reason why they should worry about 'the company's trees.'"<sup>29</sup> Foreign ownership and government policy also meant that all of the profits from the region's key resource left the valley. In comparison to other North American jurisdictions, stumpage fees in British Columbia were very low. Most of this money went to the provincial coffers, while the funds that returned to the Slokan Valley went to the logging company's managers, who did not have a stake in the future vitality of the region. The SVCFMP criticized modern

“efficient” logging practices that wasted most of the wood as well as the failure to produce diversified secondary industries. The report emphasized the urgent need for change: “We are sitting on one of the largest and most varied, as well as the last great North American, forests. We are cutting it as fast as we can, with little thought to the future, selling it too cheaply, in semi-furnished form, or wasting it, and then paying exorbitant prices (plus duty) for the manufactured items other nations make out of our wood.”<sup>30</sup> The timber resources from the West Kootenays were producing secure employment in other nations, and this increased dependence on external markets created job insecurity at home.

Only local control over the forest could reverse these destructive practices. The SVCFMP argued that the valley’s lumber resources were overcommitted ecologically and demanded a reduction of the allowable annual cut. Referring to a 1955 report by Ray Gill on logging in the Slocan Valley, the group argued that the government had long been aware of the negative impact of logging on the region. They recommended the implementation of Gill’s recommendations, which had pointed to the need for selective logging in sensitive areas.<sup>31</sup> Integrated resource management was the only ecological alternative. The community was an important resource, too, because it “possesses an attribute that is often overlooked in forest management, that of permanence.”<sup>32</sup> In contrast to the bureaucrats in the provincial capital, Victoria, and the owners of the logging companies, residents of the community would have to live with the consequences of good and bad policy. The report recommended the establishment of a resource management committee made up of local residents. In public hearings to promote the findings, Evans insisted that local residents would be less likely to exploit and destroy land than international companies, who were not invested in the community.<sup>33</sup>

The committee rejected forestry management that viewed the woods as a “boundless source of timber” and called for policy that “allow[ed] the nature of our resources themselves to dictate their utilization.”<sup>34</sup> To diversify and decentralize the forestry industry, the report suggested a system of rural woodlots, ranging from 10 to



1,500 acres, to help supplement the incomes of people who farmed. Farming—a “common denominator” for most of the people living in the valley—needed to be preserved “in these days of escalating food prices and debate on the nutritional value of many retail foods.”<sup>35</sup> The rural woodlot system would also protect ecologically sensitive areas by adopting older technologies such as horse logging. The development of mills to produce other materials, such as wood chips and cedar shingles, would ensure that the entire tree was used, thus reducing waste.

An interesting aspect of this report was its insistence on the maintenance of the diversity of wildlife as a key component of the integrated management of resources. The protection of this habitat was not restricted to conservation areas, but also included places where responsible logging could occur. The report identified “critical wildlife areas,” which had been “compiled by local knowledge and observation over many years,” that needed special protection.<sup>36</sup> Local woodsmen and naturalists were concerned that logging activity had depleted the population of mule deer, white-tailed deer, mountain goats, and caribou, as well as fish stocks. Even though the local grizzly bear population was healthy, logging was posing a serious threat to its habitat. Protecting grizzly habitat was necessary because those bears were less adaptable than black bears; this was a key reason for the proposal to preserve the Valhalla Range as a conservancy area. Local recognition of the need to preserve wildlife habitat reflected a shift in government conservation policy after 1970, which asserted that saving endangered species depended on the conservation of the places where they lived.<sup>37</sup>

Conservation of the Valhalla Range did not comfortably comply with the key goal of ensuring that people could make their livelihood in the woods. The committee explained that “parks, in general, are certainly inconsistent with our vision of land use, but so is Victoria, so we decided to play it safe and protect this very special place.”<sup>38</sup> Adding the proposal for a conservancy area demonstrated that a significant number of valley residents believed old-growth forest should be regarded as “a sanctuary, a museum of and a monument to the natural history and scenic beauty of the region.”<sup>39</sup> Unlike earlier proposals for

a park, which had come from people who did not live in the valley, this report accommodated the traplines that currently existed in the proposed conservation area because furs were a renewable resource. It also supported properly managed sport hunting.<sup>40</sup> However, this accommodation of older valley lifestyles was unacceptable to activists who had joined the SVCFMP to conserve the Valhalla Range.<sup>41</sup> Many of them left the Valley Resource Society in 1975 to form the Valhalla Wilderness Society, to focus on banning logging in the range and to lobby for the creation of a park (which they achieved eight years later).

One of the most important recommendations for the committee—and most likely the reason why politicians did not endorse the report—was that a local resource committee should have control over the annual \$545,000 in stumpage fees. In an interview with Jeremy Wilson, Bob Williams praised the work of the SVCFMP: “I still think it is probably the finest social economic analysis in modern history in British Columbia. . . . So I was impressed with it. But I was still a pragmatic politician, saying ‘How far can we go?’ We were talking about the Crown jewels and all those ragamuffins up in this nowhere, beatnik valley want the jewels.”<sup>42</sup> Evans recalled that when they presented the report to Williams and asked to manage the timber he responded, “Not on your life!” The SVCFMP rejected a counteroffer for a locally owned sawmill that would have created twenty jobs. The delegates insisted that until the annual allowable cut was reduced, the future of the industry would not be protected. When the NDP lost power, Williams invited Evans to present the SVCFMP report to a class that Williams was teaching at Simon Fraser University. Evans agreed to speak to the class—on the condition that Williams come to the Appledale Community Hall and apologize to the community for rejecting the report. He did.<sup>43</sup>

After their unsuccessful lobbying of the provincial government, which advised them that they were “‘pretty naïve’ if [they] thought that [they] could control [their] own destiny,” the committee formed the Valley Resource Society to continue the discussions about land-use policy and resource management.<sup>44</sup> Members of the community debated the recommendations of the report at public meetings held

throughout the valley that involved government officials and representatives from Tri-Pac. These meetings were well attended; according to media reports, 40 to 150 people showed up to discuss the plan.<sup>45</sup> Activists advised people to take control over public land, which was owned by the residents of the Slocan Valley, not the government or the logging multinationals. An article in the *Arrow*, an alternative newspaper published in Castlegar by back-to-the-landers, insisted that all valley residents needed to work together to implement the recommendations of the report: “And know your allies. Most of the people involved in the Forest Industry, from fallers to Foresters to Government workers to Educators are *good* people. Looking for bad guys is dissipation of energy.”<sup>46</sup> The Slocan Valley elected members to serve on the resource management committee, but they were not successful in gaining control over forestry. And they could not prevent the massive layoffs in the industry in the 1980s when the Kootenay Forest Products sawmill closed.

## CONCLUSION

Scholarship on countercultural communities of the 1960s and 1970s tends to focus on their rejection of social conventions and advocacy of lifestyles outside of the mainstream.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, the history of the environmental movement makes a clear distinction between the conservation movements in the early and mid-twentieth centuries and the contemporary environmental movement. The social movements of the 1960s certainly changed political engagement, but there is much to learn from the continuities between the new radicalism and older forms of political protest. In the West Kootenays, many of the back-to-the-landers came to respect the knowledge of the elders in the community. This story reminds us that in terms of environmental politics, it is important to examine the contributions of people who work in the woods. The SVCFMP represents a moment when people with diverse political positions worked together to try to protect the valley for future generations. This process of political engagement also taught them to find allies in their neighbours and to recognize

that these people were their best teachers. This is perhaps best illustrated in the report's dedication, which reads, "to John Braun and Jim Warner and others like them. If we did a good job, it's because of your vision. If we didn't, it isn't as if you didn't try."<sup>48</sup>

The democratic processes that the Valley Resource Management Society demanded did not lead to the implementation of co-operative policy development in the 1970s. But it was a precursor of subsequent provincial government policy. In an effort to bring peace to the War in the Woods that defined BC environmental politics in the 1990s, Mike Harcourt's NDP government established the Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE) in 1992. CORE's mandate was to facilitate community involvement in regional planning in order to advise the government on land-use policy and environmental regulation. The commission instigated planning groups in four regions, including West Kootenay–Boundary Table.<sup>49</sup> Basing government policy on collaboration with community stakeholders was a strategy designed to build consensus among government, industry, labour, First Nations peoples, and environmentalists. In his analysis of CORE's deliberations in the Slocan Valley, Darren Bardati argues that despite the government's commitment to engaging local residents in policy making, community and government were not on a level playing field. As a result, local residents felt betrayed by a process that was not able to break the industry's control over forest management plans.<sup>50</sup> In part due to criticisms of the CORE process, the NDP government later implemented smaller-scale Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) consultations with regional groups to make recommendations on land-use policy, a process that Wilson calls "hyperconsultative."<sup>51</sup> The LRMP process was more successful. The Kootenay-Boundary Resource Management Plan, tabled in 1995, recognized agriculture and ranching as important industries and laid out a strategy to integrate forest management and agricultural land-use policy.<sup>52</sup>

These provincial consultations have carved out spaces for community forests. Today, logging co-ops coexist with multinational companies in the West Kootenays. One example is the Harrop-Procter

Community Co-op, which runs a community forest located on the south shore of the west arm of Kootenay Lake, twenty-five kilometres east of Nelson. Founded in 1999, the co-op has developed ecologically sustainable logging methods and is committed to providing local people with “socially and economically equitable” jobs.<sup>53</sup> Their land-use strategy draws on ecosystem-based plans to develop a diversified economic foundation that also incorporates agricultural development and ecotourism, a land-use strategy that echoes the goals of the Valley Resource Society. Clear-cutting continues, and neighbours are still divided on how to manage the region’s resources, but these co-operative models prove that sustainable forestry is viable and that good ecology is indeed good economics.

NOTES

- 1 Research for this chapter was supported by the Social Sciences and Research Humanities Council of Canada. Laurie E. Adkin, “Preface,” in *Environmental Conflict and Democracy in Canada*, ed. Laurie E. Adkin (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), xii.
- 2 See her contribution to this volume and her longer study, *Welcome to Resisterville: American Dissidents in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014).
- 3 Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle, eds., *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and ’70s* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
- 4 Valley Resource Society, *Slocan Valley Community Forest Management Project Final Report*, 2nd ed. (Winlaw, BC: Slocan Valley Resource Society, 1976), xiii (hereafter *SVCFMP Final Report*).
- 5 *Ibid.*, xi.
- 6 Eryk Martin, “Class Politics, the Communist Left, and the (Re) Shaping of the Environmental Movement in BC, 1973–1978” (paper presented at the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, 30 May, 2010). For a discussion of the division between environmentalists and workers, see Richard White, “Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?: Work and Nature,” in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 171–85.
- 7 Jeremy Wilson, *Talk and Log: Wilderness Politics in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 144–45; Darren

- R. Bardati, "Participation, Information, and Forest Conflict in the Slocan Valley of British Columbia," in Adkin, *Environmental Conflict and Democracy*, 103–22.
- 8 *SVCFMP Final Report*, 2–42.
- 9 Myrna Kostash, *Long Way from Home: The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1980), 118; Katherine Gordon, *The Slocan: Portrait of a Valley* (Winlaw, BC: Sono Nis, 2004); *SVCFMP Final Report*, 2–22.
- 10 *SVCFMP Final Report*, 2–22.
- 11 This is based on my interviews; other historians working on the back-to-the-land movement note similar co-operation with longer-settled neighbours. Sharon Weaver, "First Encounters: 1970s Back-to-the-Land, Cape Breton, NS and Denman, Hornby and Lasqueti Islands, BC," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 30 (2010): 1–30; Jinny A. Turman-Deal, "'We Were an Oddity': A Look at the Back-to-the-Land Movement in Appalachia," *West Virginia History* 4, no. 1 (2010): 1–32. See also the interviews conducted by Ryan O'Connor on Prince Edward Island: Alan MacEachern and Ryan O'Connor, *Back to the Island: The Back-to-the-Land Movement on PEI*, on NiCHE website, 2009, accessed 4 September 2015, <http://niche-canada.org/member-projects/backto-theisland/home.html>.
- 12 Matt Caver's chapter in this volume examines the origins of federal programs that targeted young people in another BC locality as well as criticisms of these programs.
- 13 "Signed by 30 [unnamed] residents," letter to the editor, *Nelson Daily News*, 16 June 1973.
- 14 Peggy Pawelko, "Death Threats, Hatred Cloud Slocan Valley," *Nelson Daily News*, 26 June 1973.
- 15 "The Sutherland Trials," *The Arrow*, August 1973; Michael Pratt, interview with the author. Nelson, BC, 21 October 2010. On the debates about the Free School, see Nancy Janovicek, "'The Community School Literally Takes Place in the Community': Alternative Education in the Back-to-the-Land Movement in the West Kootenays, 1959–1980," *Historical Studies in Education* 24, no. 1 (2012): 150–69.
- 16 Corky Evans, interview with the author, Winlaw, BC, 9 October 2010. Evans was born in Berkeley, CA, and moved to Vancouver with his wife and two children in 1969 or 1970. He worked as a longshoreman and logger and moved to the Slocan Valley to take a job as a surveyor in Castlegar in 1972.
- 17 These federal programs generally imposed an age limit of twenty-eight to qualify for the programs. Thanks to Kevin Brushett for this information.
- 18 *SVCFMP Final Report*, 2–42.
- 19 Josephine Reckart, *Public Funds, Private Provision: The*

- Role of the Voluntary Sector* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993).
- 20 Christopher Garrish, "Unscrambling the Omelette: Understanding British Columbia's Agricultural Land Reserve," *BC Studies* 136 (Winter 2002): 25–55.
- 21 Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 112–48.
- 22 Evans, interview.
- 23 *SVCFMP Final Report*, 3–91 (emphasis in original).
- 24 *Ibid.*; Evans, interview.
- 25 *SVCFMP Final Report*, 2–17.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 2–26. Good agricultural land in the Arrow Lakes was also sacrificed to make way for hydroelectrical damming. See Joy Parr, *Sensing Changes: Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953–2003* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), chap. 5.
- 27 The project commissioned these images to make sure that the report was accessible to all people in the valley. At the time, 37 percent of residents in the Slocan Valley were illiterate and would have struggled with the technical aspects of the report (Evans, interview).
- 28 *SVCFMP Final Report*, 2–29.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 3–26.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 3–47.
- 31 Ray Gill, *A Proposal for the Creation of a Public Working Circle in the Slocan Forest* (Nelson, BC: Nelson Forest District, 1955).
- 32 *SVCFMP Final Report*, 4–1.
- 33 Dave Richardson, "Local Resource Management," *Nelson Daily News*, January 1975.
- 34 *SVCFMP Final Report*, 1–2.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 4–48.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 4–14. Tina Loo emphasizes the continued importance of local woodsmen and conservationists despite the marginalization of local customs in government policy: *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006).
- 37 In his examination of the interaction of humans and bears in national parks, George Colpitts argues that new knowledge of bear behavioural science changed perceptions about the relationship between bears and humans in natural spaces and led to a growing respect for "bear country": "Films, Tourists, and Bears in National Parks: Managing Park Use and the Problematic 'Highway Bum' Bear in the 1970s," in *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911–2011*, ed. Claire Elizabeth Campbell (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011): 153–73. On changes in government policy, see Loo, *States of Nature*.
- 38 *SVCFMP Final Report*, ii.
- 39 *Ibid.*, A-2.
- 40 *Ibid.*, A-15.
- 41 Evans, interview; Bob Ploss, discussion with the author, Vancouver, 12 August 2010.
- 42 Williams, quoted in Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 145.

- 43 Evans, interview.
- 44 *SVCFMP Final Report*, i.
- 45 “Tripac Plans,” November 1974, Slocan Valley Clippings file, Sean Lamb Archives, Nelson, BC; Les Storey, “Access to Timber a Rural Direction: Farming May Provide Stable Economy,” *Nelson Daily News*, 4 March 1976; Phil Matheson, “Critique Given by Forester,” *Nelson Daily News*, 27 November 1974; “Forestry Plan Made by Tri-Pac,” *Nelson Daily News*, 26 November 1974; “Slocan Residents Named to Committee,” *Nelson Daily News*, 12 May 1975.
- 46 “Logging in Your Back Yard: Where Have All the Forests Gone? (A Long Time Passing),” *The Arrow*, October 1974 (emphasis in original).
- 47 Braunstein and Doyle, *Imagine Nation*; Stuart Henderson, “Off of the Streets and into the Fortress: Experiments in Hip Separatism at Toronto’s Rochdale College,” *Canadian Historical Review* 92, no. 1 (2011): 107–33; Stuart Henderson, *Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).
- 48 *SVCFMP Final Report*, v.
- 49 *Ibid.*; Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 266–70.
- 50 Bardati, “Participation, Information, and Forest Conflict,” 120–22.
- 51 Wilson, *Talk and Log*, 266.
- 52 Integrated Land Management Bureau, “Kootenay-Boundary Land Resource Management Plan Implementation Strategy—Agriculture Fact Sheet,” accessed 23 January 2013, [http://archive.ilmb.gov.bc.ca/slrp/lrmp/cranbrook/kootenay/news/files/implementation\\_strat/agriculture.html#V](http://archive.ilmb.gov.bc.ca/slrp/lrmp/cranbrook/kootenay/news/files/implementation_strat/agriculture.html#V).
- 53 HPCC mission statement, on Harrop-Procter Forest Products website, accessed 4 September 2015, <http://www.hpcommunityforest.org/hpcc/>. For discussions of the twenty-three-year campaign to found the co-op, see Colleen Shepherd and BCICS Research Group, “Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative” (Victoria: British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies, 2001), accessed 4 September 2015, <http://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cccb/assets/docs/galleria/Harrop-ProcterCommunityCooperative.pdf>; Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Society, “Community Forest Pilot Agreement Proposal: Application for a Community Forest Licence,” January 1999, [http://www.hpcommunityforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/pilot\\_agree.pdf](http://www.hpcommunityforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/pilot_agree.pdf), accessed 23 January 2013, <http://www.hpcommunityforest.org/home.html>.



