

Tracking the Great Bear

How Environmentalists Recreated British Columbia's Coastal Rainforest

JUSTIN PAGE

FOREWORD BY GRAEME WYNN



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FOREWORD

Rethinking Environmentalism

Graeme Wynn

There are at least two good reasons to read this book. The first is for the story at its centre – the remarkable re-conceptualization of British Columbia’s mid- and north-coast timber supply areas as the Great Bear Rainforest. The complex, multifaceted, and momentous set of developments that brought this about are summarized here to provide context for, and perspective on, the second valuable contribution of this book – Justin Page’s careful explication of his particular approach to telling this story. Woven together as they are through the pages that follow, the tale and Page’s reflexive telling of it are reasons enough to find in this slim volume an invitation to think anew about the shape, form, and tactics of environmental activism and about human-environment relations.

Amid the groaning bookshelves and general clutter in my academic office, a large poster covers part of a room divider. It is no triumph of artistic design. The photograph that provides the background of the poster is striking. Taken in the Yakoun Valley of Haida Gwaii, it is all massive, gnarled Western Hemlock trunks with bright green ferns in the understory. But less than a third of this scene is visible, as text boxes and other images are superimposed upon it. Three photographs define a strong vertical axis in the upper centre of the poster. The topmost is an aerial view of the heavily forested Quaal River valley in Douglas Channel, near Kitimat; the lowest shows a “sub-adult” grizzly bear; and the centrepiece is a picture taken in the middle of a clearcut in the Natlamen watershed of Haida Gwaii. In the upper right quadrant of the poster are three maps showing the original North American distribution of coastal temperate rainforest,

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the extent of coastal rainforest in British Columbia in 1845, and the much-reduced reach of that forest in 1995. Balancing this on the left is a block of text, much of it in a small and nondescript font, detailing the provenance of the maps, pointing out that over 20 percent of the world's remaining temperate rainforests are in British Columbia, and informing readers that "this highly productive, severely threatened forest supports one of the most abundant fisheries on earth" and "provides a critical refuge for grizzly bears, salmon, and a rare white version of the black bear." All of this is drawn together, in a messaging if not an artistic sense, by a phrase prominently emblazoned across the poster, somewhere above its vertical midpoint: "ENDANGERED RAINFOREST." Beneath this is another, larger insert – a map of the BC coast and islands stretching from just south of Port Hardy to just north of Prince Rupert. This identifies the "Top 10 Threatened Areas" between Knight Inlet and northwestern Haida Gwaii under the title: "ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK – SOON TO BE LOST TO CLEARCUTTING AND ROADBUILDING."

Produced in the mid-1990s by BC Wild for the Canadian Rainforest Network, this poster took its place with a series of somewhat similar creations intended to rally support for the defence of wild places in British Columbia against the ravages of commercial exploitation. It appeared when the summer of protest in Clayoquot Sound, the pivotal episode pitting environmental protesters against logging operators in what came to be known as the "War in the Woods," was still fresh in peoples' minds. Between May and August 1993 well over ten thousand people had spent time at the protest camp set up alongside the highway to Tofino, and almost a thousand were arrested for blockading access to logging operations. Things were quieter the following year, but protest still simmered.¹

This particular poster may be somewhat less captivating, aesthetically, than most of its earlier counterparts, but it surely sparked memories in the minds of British Columbians and others who looked at it in the mid-1990s. The "Endangered Rainforest" prompted recollection of countless images in pamphlets and flyers, the pictures in newspaper advertisements, the strikingly beautiful full-scale posters, and even the magnificent coffee table books produced in the previous decade or so in support of campaigns to save the Stein, the Carmanah, and the Walbran Valleys, and to expose people to the splendour of Mearns Island, Clayoquot Sound, and Lyell Island.² The call to ban clearcut logging of old-growth forests across Canada, issued from the epicentre of the Clayoquot protest, had reverberated across the country, and the poster's visual declaration that endangered rainforest was on the chopping block echoed a familiar, confrontational refrain.

Yet the discourse of environmentalism was changing, even as the poster identified the ten most threatened sections of forest on the central coast. In the long economic boom that ran from the end of the Second World War into the 1970s, British Columbia's coastal forest industry prospered through the implementation of what some have described as the Fordist compact. This was an implicit agreement reached by corporate interests, organized labour, and the state to improve the efficiency of production, ensure good wages, and sustain the industry by the legislative sanction of logging operations and the implementation of a range of fiscal and social welfare policies.³ With strong and stable markets for construction-grade lumber generated by the North American housing boom, large capital-intensive operations harvested the rich temperate rainforests on government-granted tenures to feed giant mills that produced a markedly homogeneous set of products. The pace of the onslaught was fierce, increasingly mechanized clearcutting was standard practice, and residents of single-industry towns prospered. At the same time, logging's impact on the landscape grew ever more obvious, and wilderness lovers and others appalled at the devastation before them rose to mount a series of campaigns to protect particular locations from despoliation. The stakes were serious for all sides, but this was in some sense a game – a competitive activity with certain rules – that was a distraction for the companies (which by and large believed that there would always be new valleys to log) and a determined pursuit for activists who reveled in victories won and girded loins for battles to come.

In the 1980s, however, the British Columbia forest industry (and with it the economy and the political administration of the province) faced a number of serious challenges. Old mills were less efficient than new-built counterparts elsewhere, especially as computer-controlled and highly mechanized milling operations became the norm. The Stockholm Conference of 1972 had heightened civil society concerns about environmental devastation and spawned and invigorated a number of environmental non-governmental organizations that raised public concern about logging practices in British Columbia. Opposition to imports of Canadian wood from the US lumber industry challenged the stumpage system governing access to the BC forest, led to the imposition of countervailing duties, and undercut established markets. Declining global markets and increasing competition from producers elsewhere also challenged the profitability of the BC industry. At the same time, increasingly forceful, and compelling, claims to rights in and title over their traditional territories by First Nations groups in the province disrupted established assumptions about the very bedrock of the industry, its access to timber.⁴

Then, the protests at Clayoquot Sound sent strong shockwaves through the already crumbling foundations of the postwar consensus.⁵ Facing a looming economic crisis in the forest industry as well as seemingly worldwide disdain for allowing logging to proceed as it had, and acutely conscious of the potentially devastating effect that international market boycotts of the sort pioneered in the Clayoquot campaign could have upon the sale of BC wood products, the provincial government acted quickly. In 1994 an “Interim Measures Agreement” was signed with several First Nations of Clayoquot Sound, recognizing the responsibility of hereditary chiefs to conserve and protect their traditional lands and waters for generations to come. Meanwhile a newly minted Commission on Resources and Environment sought (with limited success) to bring stakeholders to negotiated agreements on regional and local resource-use goals in four areas of the province where these issues were particularly contentious. In 1994, CORE released its recommendations for a provincial land-use strategy, and the next year the government introduced a highly prescriptive Forest Practices Code to increase environmental protection and establish a consistent set of rules for forest licensees.⁶

These highly visible actions were strategies intended to secure the future. So too – although far less noticed at the time – was a parallel initiative aimed at securing the forest industry’s wood supply. Between the inception of protests against logging in Clayoquot Sound and the government’s acceptance of the sweeping recommendations of a scientific panel on the area in 1995 (limiting clearcuts to four hectares, reducing the annual allowable cut, and establishing a moratorium on logging until the completion of a detailed inventory of pristine areas), the industry had increased its interest and operations in the mainland’s Mid-Coast Timber Supply Area. Conscious of the particular conjuncture of circumstances that had escalated the Clayoquot protests to global visibility and forced government and industry to react, the newly re-elected administration in Victoria sought to get out in front of developments and establish a collaborative process to steer development on the mid-coast. In 1996 they initiated a Central Coast Land and Resource Management Planning (CCLRMP) process. By inviting representatives of local communities, leaders of companies that were interested in exploiting the resources of the coast, union representatives, members of interested First Nations and ENGOs, and other stakeholders to the table, they aimed to forge consensus around a plan to protect some 2 to 3 percent of the area from exploitation.

This prospect pleased neither First Nations nor ENGOs. First Nations agreed to join the deliberations, but only as observers, insisting that the

CCLRMP process had no authority to make decisions about territories to which indigenous people had claim, and adamant that they were not just one among several stakeholders with an interest in the region. Scornful of the tiny fraction of the area to be protected and afraid of being co-opted by participation in a government-led process, ENGOs turned their backs. In the summer of 1995, a coalition of environmental groups – the Raincoast Conservation Society, the Sierra Club of BC, BC Wild, and the Valhalla Wilderness Society – had initiated efforts to set aside Princess Royal Island and adjacent parts of the mainland coast as a sanctuary (somewhat akin to that established in 1994 at Khutzeymateen for grizzly bear protection) for the Kermode bear (a cream- or white-coated variant of the black bear). According to environmental activist Tzeporah Berman, Greenpeace members had also begun to strategize about the mid-coast a year before the CCLRMP process began, after a meeting with Peter McAllister, founder of the Raincoast Conservation Society, and his son Ian. By Berman’s account, the McAllisters pointed out that only 69 of some 360 rainforest valleys along this stretch of the mainland remained undisturbed, and stressed the futility of campaigning to save one or another of the pristine areas (Johnson Valley? King Island?), while other parts of the coast were devastated.⁷ Instead they argued for a concerted campaign to protect the entire area.

New knowledge of this relatively inaccessible territory had become available in the previous five years. In 1991 the Earthlife Canada Foundation and Ecotrust/Conservation International published an inventory of watersheds in coastal British Columbia by forester and geographer Keith Moore and Spencer Beebe, the founder of Portland-based Ecotrust.⁸ Using air-photos, satellite imagery, and BC Ministry of Forests logging data, Moore offered an important synoptic view of the region, indicating that two-thirds of coastal valleys had been significantly affected by industrial development, that another sixth had been modified to some degree, and that barely a fifth remained pristine. Four years later, the first publication of newly established Ecotrust Canada – an offshoot of the Portland organization – was a “bioregional portrait” that presented information on forest cover and indigenous languages as proxies for the larger issues of forest integrity and cultural diversity in coastal temperate rain forest areas between California and Alaska.⁹ The maps in this “Atlas of People and Place” spoke volumes, and their message was summarized in the accompanying text. “The south-to-north advance of development and indigenous cultural loss in the North American coastal temperate rain forest” was “abundantly clear.” South of the 49th parallel “biological and indigenous

cultural integrity” had been greatly diminished, “at a price reckoned not in dollars but in human communities, living species, natural processes, and knowledge of the ecosystem.” Better stewardship was needed, urgently. Protecting “natural areas and cultural traditions” was essential to recovering what Oregon writer Kim Stafford “called ‘the nourishing ways’: the local knowledge that quietly affirms ‘this is how to live in this place. In this way, it becomes our home.’”¹⁰

Eight million hectares of coastal temperate rainforest – the “last remnant” of its kind – running back from a spectacular island-and-inlet studded coast to clothe mountain slopes with one of “the most complex and diverse ecosystems on Earth”; a rare sub-species, revered by First Nations as the spirit bear, with broader “charismatic megafauna” potential; a strong First Nations presence in the area and the corollary expectation that they were anxious to protect their territory; the call to affirm the value of intimate familiarity with nature; a strong sense that the CCLRMP process was but another manifestation of the “talk and log” strategy attributed to corporate and government interests through the preceding years; and a fear that the Forest Practices Code would disperse logging activity and lead companies “to invade remaining coastal watersheds at an accelerated pace” – all of these things were siren calls to environmentalists.¹¹

Some environmental groups were quick to adopt familiar forms of direct action. In September 1995 the Forest Action Network (FAN), a grassroots organization with an office in Bella Coola, joined the Nuxalk First Nation in a blockade of logging on King Island. Shortly after a dozen or so environmental groups came together as the Coastal Rainforest Network in June 1996, Greenpeace called for a ban on logging in British Columbia’s old growth forests. In 1997 there were more blockades on King and Roderick Islands. But the central coast was not Clayoquot Sound. Because it was accessible only by sea and air it was difficult to muster large groups of protesters; a few activists might chain themselves to machinery, but it was a sizeable challenge to get news coverage of such actions. Moreover, relations between First Nations and environmentalists were far from easy. Many members of the small indigenous communities on the coast had come to rely on income generated by the forest industries. As much as they deplored the devastation of their traditional territories, they needed work and were acutely aware of the alignment of interests between the provincial government and logging companies. So a majority of Nuxalk voted to ban FAN members from their reserve and, despite an earlier understanding between them, the Kitasoo First Nation denounced Tzeporah Berman and Greenpeace as eco-imperialists.¹² Protests mounted

in a spirit of common cause were denounced for dividing indigenous communities. Solidarity was usurped by acrimony and distrust, and provincial government representatives publicly chastised Greenpeace for following “the route of conflict and confrontation.” Forests Minister Dave Zirnelt made his government’s position clear – the Roderick Island protesters, he said, “are breaking the law and their activities are not welcome – not by Western Forest products, not by the KITASOO First Nation and not by British Columbians” – but Premier Glen Clark was more direct in concluding that “environmentalists who . . . work with American interests against our industry and jobs are enemies of British Columbia.”¹³

Thwarted in their attempts to develop traction by bringing people to the forest, environmentalists redoubled their efforts to “bring the forest to the people” by developing slide shows and other materials to support a market campaign against the products of BC’s three largest logging companies, all of whom had operations on the mainland coast that contributed, Greenpeace said, to the felling of “an acre of rainforest every sixty seconds” in the province.¹⁴ Re-envisioning the coast as the Great Bear Rainforest (a coinage invented by Peter McAllister in 1993 or thereabouts) was central to the success of this strategy. The iconic, somewhat tantalizing, name that respected the presence of First Nations people by avoiding the designation “wilderness,” and gave space for concern about the habitat of both Kermode and grizzly bears, quickly became a powerful symbol of place, and invited people to think again about human-nature interactions. Faced with rising consumer resistance to the sale of products made of “old growth” forests, major home-improvement retailers, including Home Depot, Lowes, and Menards, refused to buy wood from “environmentally sensitive areas.” A parallel campaign in Europe led the German Publishing Association and the Belgium Paper Association to cancel contracts with companies logging Canadian rainforest. By most accounts, these developments cost the BC forest industry tens, even hundreds of millions of dollars in lost contracts.¹⁵

Logging companies soon responded. One divested its cutting rights on the mid-coast, one adopted variable retention logging in place of clear-cutting, and another offered a moratorium on logging in certain areas while the CCLRMP process unfolded. The locus of power had shifted, and it had done so remarkably quickly.¹⁶ As Merran Smith of ForestEthics and Art Sterritt of Coastal First Nations reflected in their joint telling of the Great Bear Rainforest story, in 1996 “power was firmly in the hands of the BC government, which owned the land; and the forest companies, which held the rights to log and manage much of the region’s forests.”¹⁷ However,

by the end of the century, market campaigns had so emphatically increased the heft of the environmental lobby that it could no longer be marginalized as a temporary irritant. During the same period, First Nations groups that had largely acted independently of each other came together with impetus from the David Suzuki Foundation (and in light of Ecotrust Canada's insistence that this "spectacularly wild" territory was properly considered the Great *People* Rainforest) to form Coastal First Nations, a coast-wide alliance to implement ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable forms of resource management on the central and north coasts and Haida Gwaii.¹⁸

Recognizing that the game had changed, several forest company executives and their advisors from Canadian Forest Products, Catalyst Paper, International Forest Products, and Western Forest Products met in 1999 to find ways of reducing conflict over coastal logging. It was soon apparent that the industry needed to change its relationship with environmental groups; that the interests of First Nations, local communities, and other stakeholders had to be heeded; and that new forms of forest management attentive to a wide range of forest values were necessary. In this new order of things, environmental stewardship was recognized as a core social value and negotiation was seen to offer the best route forward.

As the CCLRMP process bogged down, representatives of half a dozen major forest companies and four leading environmental groups sat down together in January 2000 as the Coast Forest Conservation Initiative. Intent on finding a long-term solution to the mid-coast/Great Bear Rainforest conundrum, their first step was to declare a moratorium – an eighteen-month period during which logging would cease across a considerable part of the coast and the market campaign against wood from the rainforest would be curtailed. Promising as this seemed, the CFCI soon began to splinter. Some companies lost access to much larger areas of forest than did others. The provincial government was not happy at the subversion of its own process. Neither First Nations nor union representatives were part of the initiative, and other groups were suspicious of the CFCI's agenda; indeed the Truck Loggers Association characterized it as nothing more than "an ill-advised effort to placate some large environmental groups."¹⁹

Forced to take a step back, members of the CFCI were encouraged to develop – with First Nations and other interests and in liaison with the CCLRMP – an "ecosystem-based model for conservation and management of coastal forests" that fully integrated social, ecological, and economic needs. Only a few months later, in April 2001, the CFCI claimed

an instrumental role in bringing the provincial government, First Nations, environmental groups, forestry companies, and local communities to endorse a framework for the future of the Great Bear Rainforest. Formalized in the government's announcement of an Interim Economic Measures arrangement with local First Nations, and its release of an Interim Land Use Plan for the Central Coast, this agreement, described by the provincial premier as a "hard-won consensus aimed at saving areas of global significance" was met with widespread (if not universal) goodwill. In principle the agreement envisaged the establishment of protected areas, the implementation of ecosystem-based management, the development of a new regional economy, and a commitment to government-to-government relationships between BC and eight First Nations. Yet this was a framework, not a final document; parts of the deal were vague and much was left open to later negotiation.²⁰ Two and four years on, despite some reduction in the annual wood harvest and the protection of twenty large valleys, environmental leaders were dissatisfied at the continuation of business-as-usual logging practices and the slow implementation of ecologically sensitive forest management.

Meanwhile, after a great deal of biophysical and socio-economic research, gathering of traditional knowledge, the establishment of a Conservation Investments and Incentives Initiative to attract financing (that would both allow conservation and promote economic development), and thousands of hours of committee work, the way was paved for a final Great Bear Rainforest Agreement in February 2006.²¹ This agreement had three important facets. First, some 21,120 square kilometres (one-third of the land area of the central and northern coasts), encompassing a wide range of habitat types and almost 40 percent of the mature forest, were protected under new conservancy legislation drafted to meet the needs of First Nations and environmental groups. Second, all parties agreed to the full implementation, beyond these areas and within three years, of Ecosystem-Based Management practices intended to meet the needs of conservation and community stability at a regional scale.²² And third, a Coastal Opportunities Fund of \$120 million was established, with half the total provided by philanthropic sources dedicated to conservation management, science, and stewardship jobs in First Nations communities, and the remainder, contributed equally by federal and provincial governments, designated for investment in sustainable business ventures in First Nations' territories and communities.

These were momentous achievements in the span of a single decade, and they reflected a new order of things. In place of activism aimed simply

and directly at the protection of nature – by physically preventing machinery from cutting down trees in specific valleys – in the Great Bear Rainforest activists intervened in the complex commodity chains linking forests to producers, retailers, and consumers around the globe. In place of attempts to create wilderness parks that excluded productive activities, in the Great Bear Rainforest environmentalists worked to create new economies within the heart of a protected area. Where environmental groups once denounced loggers as enemies of nature, in the Great Bear Rainforest they worked with forestry companies to improve the way that they cut down trees. Where environmental campaigns once represented indigenous people as the continent's first ecologists or earth stewards, in the Great Bear Rainforest environmentalists recognized First Nations as governments with legitimate interests in the use and ownership of the earth and its resources.

As an outcome of these sea changes in environmental and social attitudes, the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement has drawn widespread attention. More may have been written about the Clayoquot protests than about the establishment of the Great Bear Rainforest, but the latter has drawn a far wider range of interest, as activists, resource managers, business consultants, the leaders of indigenous groups and ENGOS, and scholars trained in several disciplines have sought inspiration, guidance, wisdom, meaning – and perhaps even career advancement – in their examination of the mid-coast/Great Bear Rainforest debate. Some of this outpouring is opaque and a fair part of it, published in academic journals but perhaps best described as a form of “higher journalism” written amid the fray, is likely to be superseded. Still, the best and most thoughtful work on the “ongoing revolution” that is the Great Bear Rainforest – and this volume is part of that – has much to tell us. So, to take but one example, scholars interested in furthering social innovation, such as Ola Tjornbo, Frances Westley, and Darcy Riddell of the University of Waterloo, have seen unfolding events on the mid-coast/Great Bear Rainforest as breaking new ground in efforts to tackle “the highly complex and critical problems societies are increasingly coming to face around the globe.”²³ This is no small thing. Moreover, they argue, an understanding of how those involved in transforming approaches to resource management on the mid-coast were able to bring this change about is vital to developing the “knowledge, and ultimately tools that may help many more such complex negotiations to occur in the future.”

This is precisely where Justin Page makes his contribution in *Tracking the Great Bear*. Conjuring an innovative opening to his book, he plunges

readers into the “dense tangle of ecological, economic, social, and political relations” out of which the Great Bear Rainforest was and is constituted in its many incarnations. Recognizing that much was in flux on the BC coast at the turn of the millennium, he is mindful of the observation, by French science and technology studies scholar Bruno Latour, that “in situations where innovations proliferate, where group boundaries are uncertain, [and] when the range of entities to be taken into account fluctuates,” then conventional forms of explanation are inadequate to the task of understanding events. In response, his pioneering contribution avoids the assumptions and analytic techniques built up in the analysis of earlier conflicts. Rather than run through another social constructionist analysis of the meanings assigned to places, prepare another political economic account of the capture of policy by industry, or offer another description of the mobilization of resources within policy windows by environmentalists, in the manner of much social movements analysis, Page chooses simply to “follow the actors themselves” to learn “how environmentalists gained the power to influence land-use decisions in British Columbia” (pp. 7, 13, and 12 herein), thereby fashioning a new amalgam of nature and society on BC’s coast.

Simply following the actors is no recipe for a simple history, however. Page proceeds deliberately, analytically, and from a particular standpoint. Trained in sociology, Page is well-schooled in current efforts within the environmental social sciences to move beyond the long-standing intellectual separation of society and nature to emphasize, instead, the hybridity of the human and non-human spheres (sometimes marked as socio-nature). He also draws intellectual inspiration from the work of Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law that regards “everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located.” Following this lead, Page systematically deploys the conceptual approach known as actor-network theory (ANT) to argue that the environmentalists’ success in the Great Bear Rainforest rested on their ability to assemble a network of disparate elements that “act[ed] as a single unit of force” (pp. 11, 10 herein).

Much has been written about actor-network theory and many before Justin Page have adopted its insights in efforts to better understand particular circumstances. Yet both the status and the value of ANT are matters of continuing debate. One of its main proponents has described it as a “semiotic machine for waging war on essential differences” and another has said that ANT is “simply another way ... of being faithful to the insights of ethnomethodology.”²⁴ It is perhaps better regarded as a “sensibility”

than a “theory,” as “an orientation to the world that brings certain characteristics into view.”²⁵ Among these are an acceptance of the “constitutive role of non-humans in the fabric of social life” and the conviction that “agency is distributed,” which is to say that actors and their networks are mutually constitutive and that things get done through assemblages of social and material entities rather than because subjects or objects act in isolation. Critics of this approach charge that it pays too little heed to questions of race, class, and gender, and that it underestimates the role of power in society. Some suggest that it is ultimately purely descriptive and that its main point seems to be that everything is connected. Others are skeptical because some deployments of ANT trace such complex patterns of causality that they seem to obfuscate rather than clarify the problem at hand.²⁶

Webs or networks – “groups of actors connected by social ties or relationships” – are everywhere, of course, and it is important to emphasize that ANT conceives of networks as “more than social” entities.²⁷ From this perspective, networks include a markedly wide range of participants. Human and non-human elements are afforded equal consideration and potential to act within markedly “heterogeneous” networks. Reflecting this, the term “actant” is sometimes used instead of “actor” to describe network participants that might include men and microbes, ideas and tools, women and shellfish, chisels and sewage systems. ANT networks also encompass a great diversity of dynamic, reciprocal, and open-ended relationships. Rather than mapping the ties that bind individuals – charting the structure of pre-existing relationships – ANT practitioners seek to discover the ways in which actors “define and distribute roles, and mobilize or invent others to play these roles.”²⁸

Because actor-networks have many links and nodes, and because they are contingent, flexible, heterogeneous, and to some degree informal, they commonly overlap and take different forms depending upon the scale at or criteria by which they are defined.²⁹ Page is well aware of this and acknowledges that his account of the establishment of the Great Bear Rainforest focuses on the network-building efforts of environmentalists. This (environmentalists’) network intersected with many others. But it was not conjoint with any of them. So Page’s story of the Great Bear Rainforest is one among several. Had his point of entry into this maze of overlapping networks been other than the one he chose, his account of developments focused on the mid-coast would have been different from the one now before you.

At some level, of course, this is self-evident. Different accounts of the Great Bear stage afford more or less influential roles to those who played upon it.³⁰ Civil servants who toiled far from the media spotlight give some prominence to the CCLRMP process, the role of government in orchestrating it, and the readiness of the forest industry to adjust; First Nations note the importance of their willingness to participate in discussions; corporate leaders stress the importance of their vision and leadership; and some say little would have been accomplished without the work of expert facilitators and the staff of the Hollyhock Leadership Institute who counselled environmental group representatives about the value of mindfulness, meditation, and the need to move beyond confrontation. In the end, of course, this is a large part of Page's point – that what we take as reality is shaped by the networks that help to constitute it – and (he would insist as a corollary) that “a network approach digs deeply into the dynamics of power” (p. 124 herein).

Following Page as he tracks the multiple strands of the environmentalist network through the Great Bear Rainforest debates, one is reminded of Latour's assertion that “the idea of network is the Ariadne's thread of . . . interwoven stories” tying them together in a way that is “more supple than the notion of system, more historical than the notion of structure, [and] more empirical than the notion of complexity.”³¹ Developed to provide insight into the development of science and technology, early work using the ANT approach focused on the complex interwoven stories that linked governments, boardrooms, laboratories, ideas, money, people, and technologies. Here Page deals with the interwoven stories of First Nations, forestry workers, corporate leaders, environmental activists, trees, bears, maps, government officials, local residents, distant consumers of BC forest products, landscapes, land-use and resource policies, and local deployments of ideas about risk, scale, and time, conservation, development, and justice. By examining these through an ANT lens, Justin Page provides a strong empirical account of an important episode in environmental conflict in BC, and provides a fresh, forward-looking perspective that deepens our understanding of contemporary environmentalism. There is much of value here, not only about the re-conceptualization of an extensive timber supply area as a giant wilderness park and then as a space where environmental preservation, forestry reform, and the recognition of indigenous rights could be implemented side by side, but also about how people act in the world and the relations between society and nature.

Tracking the Great Bear is a splendid title for this pithy book, because the idea of the Great Bear Rainforest was, and remains, absolutely central to what happened on this coast. As Tzeporah Berman (who was centrally involved in the early Great Bear Rainforest campaign) and a few others recognized near the beginning of the Clayoquot protests, building interest in the environmentalist cause required its leaders “to think like storytellers.”³² Above all else, they “needed to create a narrative to frame . . . [their] work, to engage people, to capture interest and focus attention.”³³ Stories can be powerful coagulants and compelling motivators. They articulate the ties that embed people in networks. They allow people to understand their place in the larger scheme of things and to appreciate how particular actions, however small they may seem, help to move the plot forward. But the plot is rarely constant. Events are contingent, and the stories signalled by the “Great Bear Rainforest” label have changed markedly in the two decades or so that it has been in circulation.

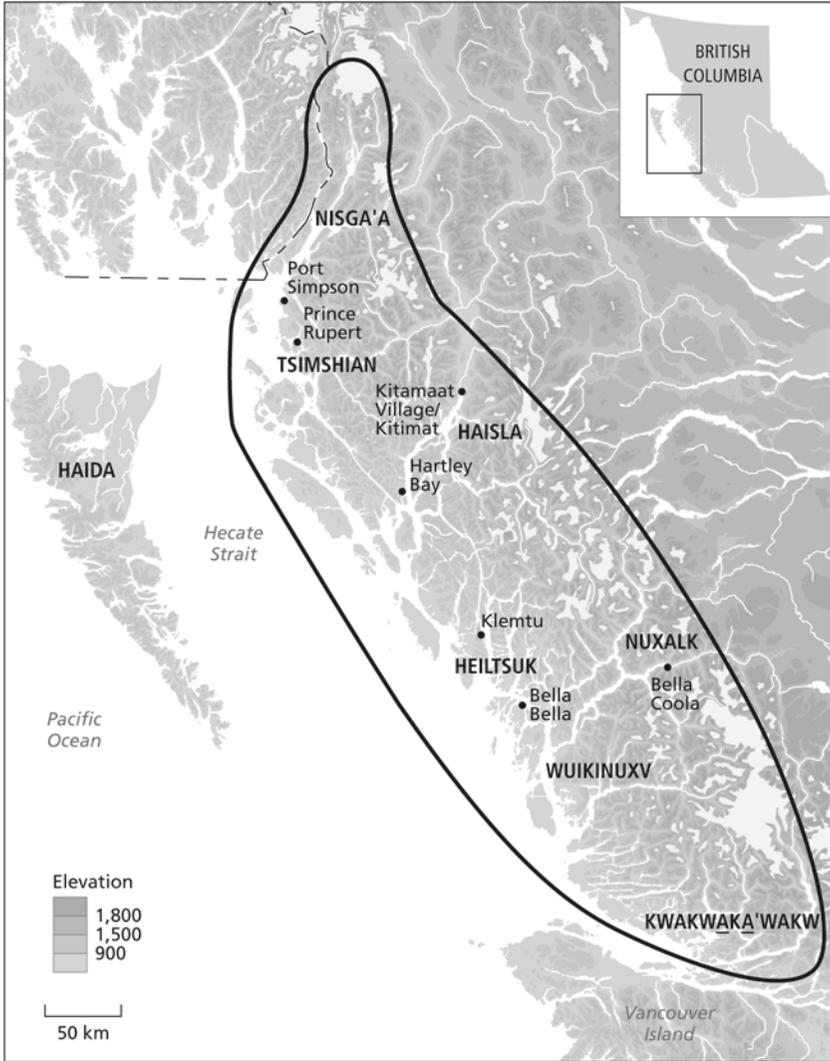
Against this backdrop, it is worth reflecting on the role that stories play in shaping environmental action. According to Raul Lejano, Mrill Ingram, and Helen Ingram, recent advocates for doing just this through an approach that they call narrative-network analysis, the stories that protesters tell about their involvement with environmental movements can reveal much about how networks are created and sustained. By studying stories and groupings of actors (or networks) simultaneously, they claim to better understand the “the quality of arrangements, complex motivations and relational knowledge that sustain attachment to environmental causes.”³⁴ In this view, “narratives are part of the glue that binds networks” and attending to them enhances our understanding of how and why those involved in events created “new stories about their motivations, as well as the science, ethics and values informing their environmental practices.”³⁵

Page does not use the term narrative-network analysis and would eschew the social constructionist implications often associated with that phrase. Yet *Tracking the Great Bear* surely lays the groundwork for thinking productively along some of the lines sketched by Lejano, Ingram, and Ingram in their discussion of this approach. By documenting the transition from fiercely confrontational, oppositional activism to a more inclusive, collaborative, collective form of environmental politics in the development of the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement, this book shows how all of those involved in discussions, negotiations, and actions pertaining to the mid- and north coasts of BC worked out new ways of relating to (or framed new stories about) the rainforest environment and each other. By moving beyond familiar binary conceptualizations – such as those between nature

and society, science and politics, ecology and economy, and local and global – this book also challenges widely accepted ways of thinking about (storying) the environment.

To put this another way: earlier environmentalist conceptions – of the forest industry as the serpent in BC’s rainforest garden, and common “Paradise Lost narratives” that indicted humanity’s destructive impacts on (pristine) environments – depended upon a particular, purified way of seeing that pitted the interests of ecology and economy against each other and drew a rigid distinction between exploitative humankind and vulnerable “nature” in need of protection.

The Great Bear Rainforest Agreement is undergirded by a very different set of assumptions. Because all involved in reaching the agreement made concessions, it has sometimes been described as a compromise. But this has unnecessarily negative connotations. Letting go of particular commitments opens the way to embrace others, and in Page’s telling, the story of the Great Bear Rainforest invites us to do exactly that. At one level it is empowering because it suggests that the development of compelling, inclusive narratives and strategic interventions in networks may have greater potential to transform existing ways of thinking and acting than the once-common strategy of identifying foes and demonizing them. This way leads to important gains in what some have called ecological democracy. At a second level, Page’s detailed demonstration of the importance of collaboration and co-existence for advancing the conservation economy enshrined in the 2006 agreement drives home the importance of rethinking the human-nature relationship to transcend the long-standing divide between “ephemeral human political interests” on the one hand and the “cold, hard non-human scientific facts” on the other (p. 90 herein). This way leads to a more just and environmentally sustainable future, a future foreshadowed by some of the developments discussed in this book and realizable, in its author’s estimation, by the remaking of the very idea of conservation that they portend. May the tracks to the “one good common world” indeed lead through the Great Bear Rainforest of British Columbia, as Justin Page hopes and has explored so intriguingly.



The Great Bear Rainforest

Introduction

It is February 7, 2006. You sit down in front of the television, or spread out a newspaper, or maybe listen to the radio in your car. You might be in Vancouver, Montreal, or New York. Or you might be in England or Austria, perhaps Japan. You learn that an agreement has been reached to protect the world's "largest remaining temperate coastal rainforest." There's a good chance that you haven't heard of this place. You're told that environmentalists call it the Great Bear Rainforest and that it is in Canada, where it stretches along British Columbia's central and north coasts. To help you understand the vastness of this new protected area, the Great Bear Rainforest's size is compared to more familiar land masses, depending on where you live. It may be described as almost the size of New Jersey, twice the size of Yellowstone, or three times the size of Prince Edward Island. The entire area is twice the size of Belgium, they say. The agreement protects the habitat of species such as grizzly bears, wolves, salmon, and the "elusive spirit bear," says one reporter. It is "British Columbia's gift to the planet," says an environmentalist. "Spirit bear," you think, "that sounds pretty interesting."



Ending a decade-long environmental battle once dubbed the "War of the Woods," British Columbia is set to announce Tuesday the creation of a park twice the size of Yellowstone along a vast coastal swath where grizzly bears and wolves now prowl under thousand-year-old cedar trees.

— DOUGLAS STRUCK, *WASHINGTON POST* (2006)
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An improbable assemblage of officials from the provincial government, coastal Native Canadian nations, logging companies and environmental groups will announce an agreement to preserve the home of the Spirit bear, which is also the largest remaining temperate coastal rain forest.

– CLIFFORD KRAUSS, *NEW YORK TIMES* (2006A)



Reading on, you learn that this “unprecedented collaboration between First Nations, industry, environmentalists, local governments, and many other stakeholders” (British Columbia 2006) produced an agreement to protect 1.8 million hectares of coastal rainforest while putting in place strict, lighter-touch forestry practices for 4.6 million hectares, bringing the total area encompassed by the agreement to 6.4 million hectares. The reporter notes that the hundred protected valleys specified in the agreement represent about one-third of the area, while about two-thirds remain open to logging. “I thought this story was about an agreement to protect wilderness,” you might think, “but now they’re talking about how most of the place will be logged!”

You need to visualize the place referred to, so you do a web search for a map. You come up with two different versions of the same place. The first map, on the Sierra Club’s website, corresponds to your initial reaction to the story. Environmental groups have drawn a big circle around a swath of remote, rugged land. The map shows no signs of human use or habitation. The second map, released by the BC government along with its announcement of the land-use agreement, is more differentiated. It shows protected areas but also empty spaces outside these protected areas. These “operating areas,” as they are referred to on the map, vastly outnumber the protected areas. You go back to the news story. They are talking about how the operating areas will be subject to a novel management regime called ecosystem-based management (EBM). EBM, they say, is a way of managing land that minimizes impact on the environment, thereby ensuring that resource use remains sustainable. Someone says that EBM guides forestry planning on the basis of what you should leave, not what you should take. That is, it shifts the focus from logging-centred parameters such as fibre volume to ecosystem characteristics such as bear dens, tree snags, and buffers around streams.



The new parks, in addition to 600,000 hectares already in parkland, will create a network of protected areas encompassing 1.8 million hectares – an area three times the size of Prince Edward Island – in 100 pristine river valleys.

– GORDON HAMILTON, *VANCOUVER SUN* (2006)

Logging will be allowed in many areas in the Great Bear Rainforest, but it will take place under “ecosystem-based management.” The new logging approach is supposed to protect the environment while permitting up to 50 per cent of the timber to be removed from some areas.

– MARK HUME, *GLOBE AND MAIL* (2006)

[Ecosystem-based management] integrates ecological, economic and social purposes and is designed to work as a management and planning regime that first looks at what is needed to be left in place to allow for a healthy ecosystem and then looks at what can be taken out.

– RAINFOREST SOLUTIONS PROJECT (N.D.)



You might be getting the sense that this story is about forestry practices as much as it is about nature conservation, and you might find this interesting because logging and the protection of nature are opposed in your mind. But EBM seems to say that both things can be true: nature can be preserved, and foresters can make money. Along these lines, you hear something about the development of a new *conservation economy*. Environmentalists raised \$60 million, matched by the provincial and (probably) federal governments to total \$120 million, to support the development of a regional economy that creates employment while protecting wilderness.

Now you might be getting the sense that this story is about people as much as it is about wilderness. Indeed, you hear that EBM has a “social” aspect. This reminds you of a third map that you saw on the David Suzuki Foundation website, entitled “Turning Point: First Nations Signatories to the Protocol with British Columbia, April 4, 2001.” You go back to take a better look at it. This map, like the other ones, uses circles to claim areas

of land. But the circles do not encompass nature (as in the Great Bear Rainforest map) or human uses of nature (as in the land-use zoning map). Rather, they assert ownership, territory, home. Displaying the traditional territories of Haisla First Nation, Heiltsuk First Nation, and Tsimshian First Nation, the third map is the first to indicate human occupation.

First Nations assert strong claims on the land encompassed by the agreement. Like environmentalists, they are concerned with protecting the land from status quo industrial logging. But they are equally interested in developing new economic opportunities for their impoverished communities. The media report that First Nations endorse EBM and are keen on the idea of a conservation economy. Art Sterritt, the leader of a group called Coastal First Nations, talks about a diversified economy, First Nations' access to forestry, and the development of new economic opportunities such as ecotourism, fishing lodges, and shellfish. He says that, "for First Nations, [the agreement] is a new beginning. It means that we're going to be able to develop an economy that's sustainable, and that's really what's important about this" (as cited in Forsythe 2006).

"How in the world," you might be wondering, "did environmentalists (who usually focus on ecological preservation), logging companies (who generally concentrate on economic development), and First Nations (who often contest rights, title, and governance) ever agree on a common land-use plan?" There might be good reasons why the newspapers use descriptors such as "historic," "unprecedented," and "landmark" to describe the agreement. The war in the woods is over, say the newspapers, TVs, and radios. "This agreement brings an end to the long-standing resource-use conflicts over this land," says Dallas Smith, a First Nations leader (cited in British Columbia 2006). "This is a revolution in the way that we approach forestry in British Columbia," says Merran Smith (2006), an environmental representative. "It is a revolution where communities are leaders in their own destinies. Where logging practices have a lighter touch on the land and conservation comes first."

REMAKING BRITISH COLUMBIA'S COASTAL FORESTS

This book is about the (re)making of the Great Bear Rainforest (GBR). To open this exploration, I have deliberately thrown you into the *medias res* – the middle of things – with no guidance, framework, or sense of direction. There is no other way: this is always where we find ourselves, in one imbroglio or another. Within just a few introductory pages, something as

simple as a new protected area has become a complete mystery, with multiple actors, themes, tensions, and questions. Seemingly about a “saved” wilderness – complete with towering trees, wolves, and bears – it is also about land rights, land-use practices, and the development of local economies. When one enters the Great Bear Rainforest, one encounters not a pristine wilderness but a dense tangle of ecological, economic, social, and political relations. *Tracking the Great Bear* traces the constitution and re-constitution of those relations to provide insight into the establishment of one of Canada’s newest and most important protected areas.

When you are in the middle of things, you don’t stay in one place for long. Things are always evolving, moving, and transforming. Just as you think you have a grip on the actors, interests, and themes, they shift their alliances and change their definitions. Accordingly, the only way to get a sense of the story is to jump in and follow the flow. If you already have ideas about who environmentalists are and what they want, what “wilderness” is, how Aboriginal rights are best achieved, or the goals of the forestry industry, please park these ideas here, or at least be prepared to have them challenged. As you become more deeply connected to this unique episode in Canadian environmental history, you might find that your own ways of understanding society and the environment have begun to shift and change.



It took a while for people to hash it out from “okay, we want no logging”
– which everybody might want in their hearts –
but there was enough people to say “well, we’re not going to
achieve that, and is that really what we want?”

– INTERVIEW WITH AN ENVIRONMENTALIST

It took me a long time to realize that our conceptions of wilderness,
you know the basic conception of wilderness,
that it’s a place untouched by humans, is really wrong.

– TZEPORAH BERMAN (INTERVIEWED ON *THE NATIONAL*,
CBC, JUNE 16, 1999)

The reality is we’ve been out and visited those First Nations
communities, and they’re ... in trouble, like, it’s not good out there.
These people – something has to shift.

– INTERVIEW WITH AN ENVIRONMENTALIST

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It felt like what we're coming up with was a big vision.
 You know, we're going to protect the majority of all the intact valleys,
 and we're going to transform the logging practices, and we're going
 to create a new kind of economy.

— INTERVIEW WITH AN ENVIRONMENTALIST



I have referred to the GBR as a “story.” I do not mean to suggest that the place called the GBR is fictional or that its primary actors are mere characters. I use the term to highlight the multiple forms that the GBR takes through its mobilization in media clips, maps, and the words of its key actors. The GBR is a real place, one that also flows as words, images, data, wood, and people (all of which are also real and traceable) among a global network of actors. Each instantiation of the multiple GBR is a variation with its own specific reality, and each can be traced back to its material-semiotic source(s) in and around British Columbia’s central and north coasts. This book too is a variation of the GBR – a story written in the genre of environmental sociology.

Environmental sociologists study the social causes and consequences of environmental issues and problems as well as social responses to those problems (e.g., Redclift and Woodgate 2010). In the area of natural resource management, environmental sociologists tend to focus on how natural resources are defined and represented, the structural causes of resource depletion, the unequal impacts of resource management decisions on marginalized groups, and the strategies, tactics, and networks of the environmental movement. In these terms, the GBR is a ripe case for sociological study. As an example of collaborative natural resource management, the GBR yields insights into the devolution of decision-making power from experts to stakeholders, contests over representations of natural systems, the distribution of costs and benefits of conservation, and the role of markets and coalitions in the environmental movement. Much value is derived from this form of study (e.g., Clapp 2004; Cullen et al. 2010; Davis 2009; Frame, Gunton, and Day 2004; Hayter 2003; Howlett, Rayner, and Tollefson 2009; Jackson and Curry 2004; Low and Shaw 2011; McGee, Cullen, and Gunton 2010; Rayner and Zittoun 2008; Rossiter 2004; Shaw 2004).

However, environmental sociology's self-definition as the critical study of "societal-environmental interactions" (Catton and Dunlap 1978) subtly impedes appreciation of the GBR's most interesting feature: its dissolution of a presumed boundary "between" nature and society. Despite the rich and diverse range of epistemological views espoused in the field (from realist to social constructivist to critical realist), environmental sociology continues to rest on an underlying assumption that society and environment are separate if "interacting" domains. Not surprisingly, this focus confines researchers to the social and political dimensions of environmental issues and problems – sociologists' area of expertise – while leaving non-human processes to natural scientists. This methodological restriction manifests itself in sociological debates over the compatibility of conservation and development. Regardless of whether sociologists argue for a basic incompatibility of conservation and development under conditions of advanced capitalism, or for the possibility of reconciliation under processes of ecological modernization, analyses tend to focus on the operation of social institutions without considering the role of non-humans therein.

Recent years have seen increasing attempts within the environmental social sciences to avoid dichotomies between society and nature, conservation and development, and science and politics to account instead for the emergence of new *social natures* or novel, hybrid configurations of humans and non-humans (Braun and Castree 1998; Castree and Braun 2001; White and Wilbert 2009). *Tracking the Great Bear* seeks to bring these scholarly developments more fully within environmental sociology by unpacking the GBR as a powerful hybrid assemblage of humans and non-humans. This project builds on existing scholarship on British Columbia's entrenched top-down, timber-biased policy "compact" between government and industry and the struggles by social actors such as environmentalists and First Nations to create policy changes (Cashore 2001; Hayter 2003; Marchak 1983; Markey et al. 2005; Wilson 1998). However, this book provides a novel analysis of British Columbia's war in the woods. Like other sociologically informed accounts, it focuses on power struggles among social groups as they vie to influence land-use policies. However, rather than analyzing such struggles in traditionally sociological terms (using concepts such as social movement mobilization, political opportunity windows, discursive practices, or economic and ideological power), I focus on environmentalists' strategies to reassemble the scientific, cultural,

political, and economic networks constituting British Columbia's coastal forests.

ASSEMBLING ACTOR-NETWORKS TO SAVE THE WILDERNESS

Think of Roscoe Inlet [an inlet in the Great Bear Rainforest] as the hub of a wheel, with spokes that reach all the way to the premier's office, the corporate headquarters of logging multinationals, the foreign offices of some of B.C. wood exporters' largest customers, the influential command centres of the most affluent philanthropic foundations in the U.S., environmental groups and First Nation chiefs and their councils. It has brought long-standing combatants to the table to discuss, on more or less equal terms, the future of what is now widely recognized as one of the last great terrestrial conservation opportunities on the globe.

– Andrew Findlay, BC Business Online (2007)

The principal aim of this book is to explain how environmentalists established the Great Bear Rainforest in an area that is materially and politically aligned with the interests of the forestry industry. The book's central proposition is that environmentalists achieved success by assembling a powerful actor-network, an assemblage of disparate elements that act as a single unit of force (Callon 1986). Scholarship that makes use of this concept, loosely grouped under the label of actor-network theory (ANT), was originally established to explain the development of scientific knowledge and technology. Working within the small field of science and technology studies, Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law (Callon 1980, 1986; Callon and Latour 1981; Callon and Law 1982; Latour 1987, 1988; Law 1986) disputed the "discovery" account of science and technology, the view that great scientists and engineers combine institutionalized methods and individual genius to uncover the truths of nature and to develop superior technologies. They also went a step further than the alternative view that science and technology are ultimately reducible to social and political factors. Taking a more expansive view, they suggested that scientists and engineers routinely crisscross multiple scientific, economic, political, and cultural domains. If we want to understand how scientific knowledge or

technologies are produced, they argued, then we need to examine protagonists' network-building activities everywhere that they occur.

More than a novel epistemological view of how experts come to know nature and the workings of machines, ANT espouses the ontological position that reality itself is the outcome of networks. Inspired by Julien Greimas's theory of semiotics, Michel Serres's philosophy of translation, and the process philosophies of Alfred North Whitehead and Gilles Deleuze, the actor-network concept rests on a relational ontology that "treat[s] everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located" (Law 2008, 142). The "object" of scientific knowledge is not "out there," complete in itself and waiting to be discovered; rather, it is enrolled as a network-building participant. Only after the socio-natural network has been assembled can one point to a definite reality with particular features and attributes. This is not to say that nothing pre-exists human-orchestrated network-building activities (indeed, there needs to be something to enrol in the network). Rather, it means that the usual distinctions between reality and representation, nature and society, science and politics, the material and the symbolic, and even epistemology and ontology do not apply. In their place is the process of heterogeneous network construction.

While not without its critics (e.g., Amsterdamska 1990; Bloor 1999a, 1999b; Fuller 2007; Winner 1993), ANT's conceptual tools are increasingly being recognized for their applicability to the analysis of environmental issues (e.g., Besel 2011; Bled 2010; Blok 2010a, 2010b; Dempsey 2011; Eden 2009; Holifield 2009; Jepson, Buckingham, and Barua 2011; Jolivet and Heiskanen 2010; Landström et al. 2011; Lien and Law 2011; Lockie 2007; Rodger, Moore, and Newsome 2009; Rodríguez-Giralt 2011; Sodero 2011; Thoms 2011; Whatmore 2009). Most environmental issues, including forest protection, involve highly complex mixtures of scientific knowledge, political struggles, economic interests, social concerns, and non-human constituents. Often environmental battles are fought as if the issues can be separated into one true biophysical reality, on one side, and social groups with competing interests, values, and knowledge, on the other. However, it takes little probing of most environmental controversies to discover that our understanding of biophysical reality turns out to be just as contested as its value and use. Adding more science to the mix usually does little to resolve the issue and often makes it even more contested. Indeed, the separation of complex issues into nature versus society is a general tactic and resource used by participants in environmental struggles – and not a feature of the terrain itself. ANT allows researchers to dive into the complexity of environmental

issues while treating concepts such as nature and society as topics in need of explanation rather than as explanatory resources themselves.

Tracking the Great Bear deploys conceptual tools offered by ANT to achieve three objectives. First, by refusing to limit the analysis to social and political dimensions while treating biophysical categories such as the rainforest as given, the book provides a unique, comprehensive, and detailed account of how environmentalists gained the power to influence land-use decisions in British Columbia. Second, by strictly following the methodological practice of tracing network-building activities wherever they occur, rather than using the speedier but potentially inaccurate approach of relying on pre-existing concepts and frameworks of explanation, the book demonstrates the fresh and novel ways in which relationships between humans and non-humans were worked out in this particular case. Third, by providing a full-scale ANT analysis of a sociologically important environmental issue, the book demonstrates the value of ANT to environmental sociology.

REASSEMBLING METHODS



Imagine that I am a traveller and that I just arrived here after travelling around the world. I've heard about this place called the "Great Bear Rainforest," and I'm intrigued, but I don't really know anything about it. I was told that I should talk to you because you do know a lot about it. So, here I am! Can you describe the "Great Bear Rainforest" to me?

- What's special or significant about the place?
- What would you say are its most distinctive features?
- What's your own connection with the place?

— SELECTION FROM AUTHOR'S INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



Before proceeding to the analysis, I ought to re-emphasize that this book reassembles a particular version of the GBR. This account, like all social science research, is subject to the usual standards of objectivity, validity, and generalizability; these methodological principles, however, are slightly recast in ANT terms. My account is objective in the sense that it is full of

objects or materials traceable back to the people, places, and things associated with the GBR (I have already introduced some of these elements in the quotations interspersed in this introduction). The material that I draw on includes agreements (land and resource management plans, government-First Nations, ENGOs-industry, etc.), terms of reference, work plans, legal orders, presentations, reports (technical, organizational, workshop), scientific articles, ecological data, newsletters, press releases, news stories, public and customer information materials, campaign materials, histories and timelines, minutes and agendas of meetings, maps, videos, films, and radio interviews. I also conducted thirty-four in-depth semi-structured interviews with key actors between September and December, 2007, whom I purposefully selected from environmental organizations, forestry companies, First Nations organizations, and local and provincial government departments.¹

The evidence on which I base my claims also provides a basis for actors to object to what is said about them (and for me to defend my claims). The validity of my analysis is ultimately dependent on how it stands up in the hands of those most intimately associated with the case. On that score, interviewees provided with earlier versions of this book have not objected to anything said about them or the case. However, it is important to note that the analysis is not objective in the sense of providing an impartial, synoptic, god's-eye view of the one true GBR. Nor was that my goal. My goal was to "follow the actors themselves" (Latour 2005b) to learn how the GBR was established. The analysis is *symmetrical* in the sense that I consider both the "social" and the "natural," and the "political" and the "scientific," with the same analytical repertoire (Callon 1986). However, in another sense, the analysis is *asymmetrical*.

Science and technology studies scholars have criticized ANT for failing to recognize that researchers inevitably privilege some actors and elements over others, arguing that (1) it is impossible to account simultaneously for all network elements (particularly those of which we remain unaware) and (2) researchers connect materially and symbolically to the networks that they study in necessarily partial ways (Lee and Brown 1994; Star 1991). My account is asymmetrical because I have self-consciously chosen to explore the establishment of the GBR from the perspectives of environmentalists. This does not mean that I restrict my analysis to their interpretations of the case but that I examine their network-building activities (whether they are explicitly aware of network building or not). This involves going well beyond environmentalists' interpretations to take account of the wide range of

human and non-human elements brought together by their interventions. Nevertheless, had the analysis proceeded from the perspectives of other network elements – whether First Nations, forestry workers, or grizzly bears – a somewhat different network would emerge and a different story be told.

I chose to follow environmentalists' interventions for practical reasons (I had to choose *some* point of entry into the network), for social scientific reasons (environmentalists influenced BC environmental policy in important ways that need to be *explained*), and for political reasons (I largely *agree* with environmentalists' goals to protect the ecological integrity of coastal British Columbia and other places around the world). With respect to the last point, this book represents a material and symbolic intervention in environmentalists' GBR network. Materially, it functions as a device with which to extend the GBR network to other people and places, where it might be translated and utilized in struggles over conservation. Symbolically, the book frames and characterizes the GBR network according to my academic interests, particularly my desire to influence the environmental community to reorient their thinking away from a "nature" versus "society" framework and toward a framework focused on the careful re-fashioning of collectives of humans and non-humans. The generalizability of my analysis will depend on the extent to which it is taken up and circulated to other places and contexts as well as the degree of its immutability in the hands of its recipients.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

I have arranged the material in a rough chronological order beginning in the early 1990s, when environmentalists first became interested in British Columbia's central and north coasts, and ending with the agreement of 2006. Chapter 1 examines environmentalists' scientific and political re-definition of the coastal forests in terms amenable to their policy ambition, which, at the time, was the designation of British Columbia's central and north coasts as a giant park. I detail environmentalists' work to displace the official definition of the coastal forests by placing the forests in a wider ecological and cultural context. The official definition – the "Mid-Coast Timber Supply Area" – derives from a long-standing policy compact between industry and government and highlights an instrumental view of the forests. I show how environmentalists contested this view by creating a chain of associations that (1) designated a new, globally rare forest type

termed the “coastal temperate rainforest,” (2) used this designation to identify key threatened watersheds at the local resource management scale, (3) populated these watersheds with culturally resonant stories and images, and (4) rebranded the coastal forests as the Great Bear Rainforest, a name materially and symbolically loaded with scientific and political content.

Chapter 2 traces environmentalists’ efforts to assemble a network in support of the redefined forests and the concomitant power shift between environmentalists and the BC forestry industry. I focus on a series of interventions aimed at translating the interests and identities of multiple actors. First, I describe how members of the BC environmental movement were enticed to refocus their efforts from isolated valleys in the southern portion of the province to the large area to the north. Second, I examine how grizzly bears were made to speak on behalf of the rainforests (instead of government and industry) through environmentalists’ biology-based conservation plan. Third, I detail environmentalists’ campaign against companies such as Home Depot, Staples, and IKEA (retail customers of BC forestry products), examining how these businesses were induced to demand reform in BC forestry practices as a condition of doing business with BC forestry companies.

Chapter 3 examines the shifting centre of gravity from government to environmentalists for land-use policy making. My central focus is on the uptake of, and resistance to, environmentalists’ vision for the coastal forests and the consequent translation of that vision by a number of policy actors. First, I show how forestry companies worked to recapture their policy influence by recasting themselves as a conservation-oriented coalition. Second, I examine the translation of environmentalists’ identities and interests as they negotiated with industry in a hybrid industry-environmentalist policy-making coalition. Third, I detail local communities’ and First Nations’ resistance to this unofficial policy process. Through an examination of multiple negotiations involved, I document the translation of environmentalists’ original goal of creating a giant park into a plan to achieve conservation, *plus* forestry reform, *plus* Aboriginal rights and title (including the Aboriginal right to economic development).

Chapter 4 presents the principles and procedures invented by the actors to reconcile conservation, development, and justice in the evolving plan. Examining a pilot First Nations EBM project, I highlight three sets of mediating mechanisms designed to avoid trade-offs among these domains. The first set of mechanisms is conceptual: I trace environmentalists’ deployment of the concepts of risk, scale, and time within an EBM framework

to reconcile ecological protection with resource extraction. The second set is economic: I trace environmentalists' efforts to raise \$120 million in funds to support a new "conservation economy" that translates conservation into economic development and economic development into conservation. The third set is political: I examine the development of protocols and agreements that institutionalize a new "government-to-government" relationship between First Nations and the government of British Columbia, thereby articulating justice with conservation and development.

The conclusion considers the implications of *Tracking the Great Bear* for natural resource management and environmental sociology. First, I discuss how environmentalists developed the power to devise an alternative procedure to official land-use planning via their problematization of the coastal forests, enrolment of actors, and innovations to articulate the interests of various actors. In this discussion, I highlight (1) power generation through network formation, (2) blending of science and politics and the material and symbolic, (3) non-human agency, and (4) the relationship "between" nature and society. Second, I argue that ANT provides a useful methodological reorientation for environmental sociology, providing it with a strong alternative to approaches resulting in realism/social constructivism debates. Rather than confining analysis to social structures, forces, and processes – which are subsequently related to nature (real or socially constructed) – I suggest that ANT discloses the structures and forces produced by the actors themselves to order human and non-human elements. Moreover, I suggest, ANT researchers participate in the networks that they study by rendering networks explicit and interpreting their ordering. Rather than theorizing the relationship between nature and society, ANT scholars follow the ways in which this issue is settled by the actors whom they study, while advocating for the democratic inclusion of all relevant actors.

By the end of the book, readers will have learned much about how the GBR project was originally conceived and how it evolved. Having jumped into the *medias res*, readers will have travelled great distances: with environmentalists as they pulled together concepts and data from British Columbia's coasts and elsewhere, (re)defining the GBR as a new type of forest; with bears as they protested outside forestry companies' offices and travelled around North America and Europe; with activists as they traced and intervened in the commodity chain linking forests, forestry companies, and retail customers; with forestry companies as they joined environmentalists in a joint project; with First Nations as they translated the

emerging network into their own terms; and with stakeholders and experts as they worked to redefine ecology and economy. By the end of the account, readers will have witnessed the emergence of a new socio-material network and will have had the opportunity to examine in detail the work that it performed to generate power, intertwine science and politics, and redefine the relationship between society and nature.