

The Lost Coast

by Jen-Ann Kirchmeier

Since the beginning of time, the forest has held a special place in folklore and mythology. Our roots, as humans, are deeply entwined with our allies, the trees. Trees have served as sacred groves, home and shelter for countless creatures, including mankind, windbreaks for safety, they are oxygen machines, and they have also provided us with the materials with which we make homes, paper, bridges and much more. They are full of magic and mystery and offer endless benefits to mankind.

This show is dedicated to the "Lost Coast", and the magnificent old-growth forests of Cape Yakataga which are soon to be gone.

Once, endless spires of green cascaded down the foothills of the Yakataga River Valley. Once, there were undulating shapes of forest interspersed with meadows and streams and rivers filled with creatures busy with their lives.

Once there were endless stretches of trees and beauty with no roads. Not long ago, this place was truly as God had designed it... beautiful, lovely and free.



Now the foothills have been clear-cut and they lie brown and disturbed with piles of unwanted trees rotting. Only the very best of the trees are taken after all has been cut down. This is called "high grading". Now an infrastructure of roads are in place and frustrated loggers and adventure seekers shoot bears and other living four leggeds because the shelter is rapidly leaving and all is in turmoil. Gone is the peace and



the freedom of place. Gone is the quiet. Now the machines roar and tear at the trees. Rapidly now the rest of the selected trees are reachable and soon this place will be broken and desolate and open for yet more exploitation for oil and gas and coal and more resources to sell to places far far away for great profit for a few.

The business of the clear-cutting at Icy Bay and White River, and on up to the Yakataga River Valley is very revealing as to the profits and gains for a few crafty individuals and institutions, with losses for the tax-paying public.

The business of rebuilding the Cape Yakataga Bridge this summer is also very interesting to contemplate, as many oil and gas leases lie beneath the surface of the first phase of destruction of clear-cutting.

I wish to thank the individuals who have so graciously contributed of their time and energy to put forth their passion on behalf of this incredible land. Thank you to Gary Leo of Fairfax, Cal. for the satellite photos of the entire clear-cut area. Thank you Gabriel Scott for providing the facts and figures to clearly outline the dirty business of clear-cutting these forests. Thank you Kristen Smith for sharing with us the importance of trees to the watershed and fish.

Many thanks to Carol Hoover for putting all of this information into a form that is readable and coherent and lovely to look at.

It was my great and good fortune to have been able to spend over a decade of my life in these forests and to have the experience of actually living in an intact and holy place.

It is my dream to reclaim this land and to go back in after the damage and thin the little new forests coming up, to clean up this mess and to bless the forest of the future. For truly, we shall also feel the effects of the loss of our forests when our breath is only filled with the smell of gasoline and diesel fumes.

Where will we turn when there is no more air and no more beauty.

May we stop this madness now by revealing the plan that is in place to take it all away.

May we step forward and join with our fellow creatures who inhabit this planet and take our rightful place as caretakers, not takers. As guardians and companions to this place.

May our children and great grandchildren see forests forever.