Six Good Reasons to Save the Wilderness

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This lecture has been delivered to many groups, dating back to the mid-1980s. It has been updated a little for each. It may be excerpted or reprinted as desired.

Books to lectern: *The Population Explosion, Beyond the Limits, Biodiversity, For the Common Good.*

This talk used to be called *Grizzly Bears Need Friends, Too,* but it kind of grew into something else. We're still going to get to the grizzly bears, but we're going to get there by way of the Virgin Islands, AIDS and the end of the world. Along the way we're going to see why it's really important to be kind to the wilderness, grizzly bears and all.

Here we go.

First point: there is money to made in wilderness. Notice that it's not "money to be made in *the* wilderness," but "money to be made in *wilderness,"* as a commodity.

Money, money, money. Let's get right into the nitty-gritty, here.

There is money to made in real wilderness—wilderness without mines or oil wells or ranches or roads. This comes as a surprise to many people, who assume that in order to make a dollar on a given piece of land, you have to buy it, sell it, rent it, build something on it, grow something on it or cart something away from it—trees, coal, minerals, oil and gas, whatever. But we in Jasper know that you can make money without doing any of these things. We make most of our money on *tourists.* And there is lots of money to be made, both here in the park and even before the tourists arrive.

Park visitors buy everything from backpacks and bedrolls to bear-bells and binoculars. These people buy gas for their cars, so they can reach their favorite patch of wildland at the end of the road. Or they buy airline tickets to Edmonton or Calgary, then they pay the car-rental company or Greyhound or Brewster bus lines to carry them on to Jasper National Park. They eat as they travel, stopping at restaurants along the way. They check into a hotel in Jasper, at two hundred bucks a night. If they are "eco-tourists"—meaning hikers and birdwatchers and such—they go walking the next day, on foot in the 98 percent of the park that is truly wild. They follow the trails for hours, burning up a couple of thousand calories that

will have to be replenished at one of the local eateries. Then it's back to the hotel for another night. And on they go, sprinkling money all the way.

Until a few years ago no one had sat down and added up what the public pays to visit the wilderness. It's a remarkable figure: of the 5.6 billion dollars spent on tourism annually in Alberta,[1] at least half of that went into activities taking place in wildlands.

Even more amazing is the fact that, when you examine the economic kick a wilderness area provides to the surrounding region, and to the country as a whole, it more than makes up for the dollars that could come from hacking up that area industrially or agriculturally.

For example: you could get a lot of money for the trees in Jasper National Park, but it's worth far more with the forest intact. A study of how much money the mountain national parks produce for the Alberta economy was done by Parks Canada back in 1989, and even then they found that Jasper park alone was worth 143 million a year—within Alberta.[2] I'll bet it's more like 200 million these days. Add to that the money spent by out-of-province visitors to get here, the cost of outdoor equipment and supplies bought before making the trip, and you're looking at well over 300 million bucks spent annually in hope of getting within camera-range of a bear. In just one national park.

Three hundred million dollars is a lot of two-by-fours and plywood. No doubt the loggers could get their 300 million out of Jasper park, and then some. They are, in fact, doing some logging in the park right now, which is the subject for a diatribe, not for a civilized, rather learned speech such as this one.

If the loggers were allowed to *clear-cut* the forest around Jasper, then the rest of us would go somewhere else, taking our holiday dollars to prettier places. Logging leaves the land a mess, and many years go by before the land heals. But by simply leaving the trees on the slopes, the natural landscape continues to produce recreational income for generations, 300 million every year, long after industry would have moved on. Wilderness can only become more valuable over time. The supply is finite and the demand grows with the human population.

Studies such as the one by Parks Canada show conclusively that land now set aside as wilderness should not be touched—that it should be retained as wilderness *purely for economic reasons.* All of us bunny-huggers just knew there

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[1] Source: www.albertacanada.com/documents/SP-EH_AlbertaEconomicQuickFacts.pdf

[2] Source: *Impact on the Provincial Economy of the National Parks of Alberta,* by the Socio Economic Branch, Canadian Parks Service, 1989, page 13.

had to be some bottom-line, dollars-and-cents rationale we could offer to the corporate world to leave our bunnies alone.

Ah, but let’s dig deeper here. This kind of reasoning could get us into trouble in the end, because it appeals to *selfish human values.* Those values can change, and in a hundred years the numbers could be flung back at us. What happens when the bunnies become more valuable in the pot than out in the woods? What if the tourist industry gets out of hand and packs so many people into the wilderness that it’s not very wild any more? This has happened in places such as Yosemite Valley, California. Closer to home, a study of the Bow River Valley has shown that the heart of Banff National Park has been severely damaged by tourist development.

No, your committed, purist bunny-hugger (like me) has to justify wilderness in other ways than invoking the sweaty marketplace. And, indeed, we *can* come up with other ways. Would you like to hear some of them?

I knew you would.

Preserving wilderness is one of these paradoxical actions that the human species is famous for. I can’t think of any other animal that purposely leaves parts of its territory permanently untouched, just for the sake of having it that way.

Not that animals don’t leave parts of their territories untouched. They do. But they are inclined to leave them untouched only for a while—for later, when the unused places are actually needed. The elk of Jasper National Park do that. They leave choice grazing patches untouched—until winter, when the forage is needed.

One of those patches surrounds my house in Jasper. Once each winter, a dozen or so great big elk come into the yard. They scuff the snow aside and trim the grass down to about *so* long in a little over an hour. Saves me a heap of work, including having to apply fertilizer.

In the national parks one can come up with some great excuses for not mowing the lawn.

Now, humans are the heaviest grazers around. We do our grazing with *machines.* We gather our wheat and our rice and our oats mechanically, and we store them for later. We turn them into such things as bread and Rice Krispies and granola bars. We don’t just seek out our grazing meadows; we create them. We cut down the natural forest, we plow up the prairie, and then we plant whatever *we* want to grow there.

We go beyond that. Way beyond that. We have turned the Great Plains into wheat fields and the Great Lakes into shipping canals. What’s next? Turning the continental shelf into one big fish farm? Why not? We humans have the power to do anything.

I'll tell you why not. It's because we also have the power to make monumental mistakes. We are the ones who introduced rabbits to Australia. We built the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. We invented PCBs, plutonium, dioxin, freon—even our *hamburger boxes* have been deadly, linked to depletion of the ozone layer.

Some years ago I visited the Virgin Islands, a place that ought to be in every ecology textbook as a cautionary tale.

In the beginning, there were no rats on the Virgin Islands. They probably arrived on one of Columbus's ships, and they overran the place. So, to kill the rats, someone had the bright idea of introducing the mongoose, which is a cat-size Asian predator that resembles a marten. But this well-intentioned person forgot that rats are active at night, while the mongoose hunts by day. So the mongooses (I always want to say "mon*geese")* hunted mainly the island's native mammals, birds and lizards, wiping most of them out. The *rats* are doing just fine.

I know this talk is supposed to be about saving the wilderness, but bear with me about the Virgin Islands for just a bit longer. There is a point to be made here.

Like most of the West Indies, the Virgin Islands were developed as plantations. Slaves were brought over from Africa and put to work cutting down as much of the original forest as possible, then the islands were planted with sugar cane. Over several hundred years, the plantation owners managed to grow and market enough sugar to rot the teeth of nearly everyone in Europe. By the time it was over in the 1860s, the aboriginal islanders were all dead and the ecology of the West Indies was completely haywire.

Well, thank heavens you can't grow sugar cane in the Canadian Rockies.

Today, in spite of what happened, the West Indies still have warm, clear water, coral reefs and white-sand beaches set about with palm trees, just like the travel posters advertise. So millions of people travel there. These people go snorkeling on the reefs. They eat Caribbean lobsters in the restaurants. They stay in resort hotels. The sewage from the hotels runs out into the sea, damaging the coral reefs and sickening the lobsters—any lobsters that haven't been eaten, of course.

Jasper and Banff and Lake Louise appear on travel posters. Millions of people travel there. They stay in resort hotels. Sewage runs out ...

Am I making my point? We humans leave a trail of destruction behind us, and there are now so many humans that the trail is worldwide. There is precious little of the Earth left in its natural state; that is, its ecologically *sensible* state. By chance, large tracts of the Canadian Rocky Mountains are still more-or-less natural, more-or-less ecologically sensible. That is, they are still *wilderness.*

And, as promised a few minutes ago, here comes another important reason for preserving that wilderness: like the elk, we may need some un-grazed patches of the world for future use—whatever that use may turn out to be.

Maybe, when AIDS is about to wipe us all out, someone will discover that the cure lies 30 metres up a jungle tree in the one square hectare of the Amazon rainforest that somehow escaped the loggers. Or in the back-country of Jasper National Park. Of course, if curing AIDS means scraping Jasper National Park into buckets and extracting the active ingredient, then the environmentalist faction will argue that we should leave the park alone and let humanity die.

The foregoing sounds silly, but it brings up a profound question. Who comes first, humanity or the rest of the world? Such a question is rooted in philosophy and religion, but it has practical implications for all of us these days.

Let's phrase it more rhetorically, the way David Suzuki would if he were the speaker tonight instead of me. *What gives us the right to ride roughshod over all the other things that live on this planet?* Or even over the non-living things? The un-mined mountains, the un-dammed rivers? The Judeo-Christian reply is that God gave man dominion over the beasts and fowl, which is a powerful argument, hard to refute. Edward Abbey, the famous environmental advocate for the desert country of the American southwest, eventually quit trying to refute it. He simply stated that this whole point of view is, quote, "quite insane."

(By the way, I have it on good authority that when God gave us all this stuff He also told us that we had better take good care of it. Problem is, He didn't give very clear directions as to *how.)*

Well, Edward Abbey has a point. David Suzuki has a point. Truly, as a naturalist I know that riding roughshod over the world has gone on much too long. Riding roughshod has given us acid rain, deforestation, unsafe drinking water, polluted air, ruined farmland, wrecked fisheries and global warming—each of which is troublesome and all of which, taken together, are going to complicate human affairs considerably over the next fifty years.

In Mexico City, thousands of citizens die each year from air pollution. In Russia and Rumania and Poland they are dying from tilling soils laced with industrial waste. In Bangladesh they've cut the trees down all over the watersheds, and the resulting floods are killing thousands. Hurricanes and typhoons are growing stronger, also because of global warming, killing yet more thousands. Any day I expect some geologist to show that the 1989 San Francisco earthquake was caused by the weight of humanity coagulated on the coast of California.

What to do? Technological fixes are not going to work. Technology is part of the problem. Too often it is used to harm the planet, not help it. Getting *off* the

planet is a possibility, but an unlikely one, given the hostility of the solar system. And it kind of begs the question for those of us left behind. We could simply let nature take her course—that is, keep on the way we're going—and lose ninety percent of the world's population to famine, fighting, disease and assorted disasters. This is the usual way in which nature deals with population explosions, regardless of the offending species. And our species has invented weapons that may ensure no repeat offense.

But, of course, this won't do. We are *humans,* and humans are smart, so we ought to be able to figure our way out of this. In point of fact, we have. The solution is obvious, and any ecologist worth her or his Ph.D. will verify the truth in it. I refer you to the work of ecologists Anne and Paul Ehrlich, who wrote a book entitled *The Population Explosion,* and to a terrific book by Donella Meadows, Dennis Meadows and Jørgan Randers called *Beyond the Limits,* which uses computer modelling to show what might happen to our species, depending on the actions we take, or fail to take, to solve our environmental, social and political problems. Both these books present horrifying scenarios, then go on to suggest surprisingly simple solutions. Reading them gives me hope that we can pull ourselves out of this mess. What do we have to do? Three things.

- Number one: we have to level off the human population, and then *reduce* it from the current count, which is 6.9 billion and heading for nine billion by 2040. Even the best possible conservation and pollution-control programs will be overwhelmed by our sheer numbers if we don't reduce the population. Over the long haul we have to reduce it *a lot;* the Ehrlichs figure that we'll have to cut it to only *twenty-five percent* to achieve long-term sustainability. But they, and the authors of *Beyond the Limits,* think that if we can manage the levelling off we can manage the rest.
- Number two: our technology—meaning our cars and houses and television sets and all the other material clutter we adore so much—must all be produced in non-polluting ways, and all of it must be recyclable to conserve raw materials and energy. Again, this is entirely possible.
- Number three: we have to stop breaking new ground and learn to live with what we've got. We have to keep the farmers and the engineers and the suburb-builders out of the wilderness. Most of the Earth's landmass is already under human domination, and that's too much. For long-term sustainability, we have to give a goodly chunk of the world back to Mother Nature.

This last is the most powerful reason for preserving wilderness.

Henry David Thoreau said that "in wildness is the preservation of the world." He was absolutely right, in a way we are just beginning to understand.

With the Earth's ecosystem getting out of kilter in a big way, we have to protect the part that still functions normally—that is, naturally—in hope that it will get us through the next couple of hundred years, providing us with breathable air, drinkable water and a climate more livable than that of Venus. In the meantime we have to stabilize our population. We have to get our act together politically and implement sustainable economics. Or we're not going to make it.

Unfortunately, the world's governments are mishandling the whole situation, as demonstrated so depressingly at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and subsequent gatherings. A growing number of environmentalists figure that the political inertia is too great, and that we've had it.

Okay; let's suppose the gloomers-and-doomers are right. Let's assume that there's no hope at all. What do we do?

We choke back the sobs and head for the wilderness. It's instinctive: escape to the outdoors. We do that anyway; never mind the end of the world—we do it for fun. Why is that? Because for most of our 200,000 years of existence as a species we have made our living by walking about in the wilderness in small numbers, hunting animals and gathering plants. We are evolutionarily programmed to do that, to be *free to roam.*

Staying put on farms and in towns and cities is the opposite of being free to roam, and we find that hard to take. During the last 10,000 years, population growth has forced us to invent agriculture and settle down, simply because there isn't enough wilderness left to be roam *in.* Ten thousand years sounds like a long time, but it's not enough to wash the wanderlust from our genes, spelled *g-e-n-e-s.* We are still happier in natural surroundings. Thus do we load up the mini-van and hit the road at holiday time, heading for one wildland or another. Thus do climbers like me hang from our fingertips off cliffs in the mountains, enjoying the landscape in a way that hardly anyone else does.

In the *Bloom County* comic strip—remember *Bloom County?—*Opus the Penguin, Milo and the rest of the gang used to head down to the "dandelion patch" when the hassles of modern life got to be too much. Cartoonist Berke Breathed was just updating Thoreau, who pointed out 150 years ago how much those rapidly industrializing New England Yankees needed to spend some time at Walden Pond every now and again.

We have some first-rate dandelion patches in the national parks of the Canadian Rockies. A weekend in the Jasper back-country scrubs a lot of urban grime from the soul. Getting back to the job on Monday is easier. We sit down more comfortably behind our desks. We step more lightly toward our places on the assembly lines.

For some people, every Monday morning they go back to the job of trying to save the world. Some years ago I spent a day with Peter Hamel, an Anglican priest who has dedicated his life to resisting social and environmental evils. You may have heard of this fellow; he makes the national news once in a while. Peter Hamel has faced down the loggers on Lyell Island, and he has been busted by the Mounties for standing with the Lubicon Cree at their road block in northern Alberta.

Here is a man who regularly puts his neck on the line for what he believes in, who endures terrible frustration, and you know what he does whenever he can sneak away from the barricades for a few hours? He goes *birding.* In 1988 the Reverend Peter Hamel set a new Canadian record for the number of bird species seen in a single year: 436.

In December of that year Peter and I walked over the tundra of the Cardinal River Divide east of Jasper, trying to find a white-tailed ptarmigan, which is a species Peter missed somehow in his do-gooding peregrinations across the country. We didn't find a ptarmigan, but, of course, the main thing was to get out there in that windswept dandelion patch and, as Opus the Penguin used to say, "mellow out." Peter Hamel came away acting markedly mellower. We also chanced upon another species he needed for his list.

Reason number five for preserving wilderness—I'm keeping count here—is a favorite with *scientists.* Bringing the whole planet to heel is eradicating a lot of interesting species of animals and plants, something like 140,000 species per year, if you believe experts on it such as E.O. Wilson—I have his book here—so we should be setting aside patches of wilderness in which to maintain these species rather than letting them go extinct. At least not until they are properly *studied.* We have to keep our scientists busy, off the streets and out of trouble.

Being a bit of a scientist myself, I can see their point of view. After all, the last passenger pigeon is dead, the last great auk is gone, and there's a wistful sadness to that. If we keep little islands of wilderness around, little atolls of grizzly bears in that sea of farms and factories, then maybe we can hang onto living representatives of all of North America's remaining wildlife.

Or most of it. Or, as seems more and more evident, at least some of it. For we are learning that our islands of wilderness must be larger than we thought necessary. Even substantial blocks of wilderness, such as the four interlocking national parks of the Canadian Rockies, may not be big enough.

Science tells us that every species has a "threshold population density," below which that species cannot reproduce enough of its own kind to survive

routine calamities such as hard winters, parasite infestations and getting squashed by Winnebagoes on the Icefields Parkway.

When that threshold is crossed, a species is doomed. In Jasper park we are dangerously close to losing the caribou. In Banff park the wolf is on the verge of becoming history, and the grizzly bear is in trouble.

Now there may be people in this room who wouldn't mind seeing every grizzly bear in the Rockies decline as far and as fast as possible, but take it from me, who has had many close encounters with bears, that these animals are not bloodthirsty killers. I very nearly *walked* on a bear once; it got up, highly insulted, and looked at me incredulously until I delivered a proper apology.

Grizzly bears kill people only when we do something really gauche, like threatening their babies or trying to steal their elk kills. Okay; most of us wouldn't knowingly threaten grizzly-bear babies, and we're not really interested in rotting elk carcasses, but the bears just automatically assume the worst of us—which, when you stop to think of it, is quite justified. After all, we *shoot* bears. We hit them with our cars and trucks and trains. We trap them in nasty ways to get their furry skins. We lock them up in zoos, etc., etc.

Considering how humans treat grizzly bears I'm surprised that the bears don't get even with us at every opportunity. It was Edward Abbey who said, spoonerizing the U.S. constitution, "I believe in the right to arm bears."

Bears hardly ever attack people. Why not? It's simple biology. If bears went after humans more often, we would have done them all in long ago. Maybe the bears *know* this.

For whatever reason, bears are not much of a threat, and they belong in the mountains just as much as we do, perhaps more. They were there first, like the bighorn sheep and the golden eagles and the mountain goats—all of them world-famous symbols of the Canadian Rockies.

Figuring out how much wilderness to set aside for protecting these critters would take years, but I'm already quite sure of the conclusion that will be drawn: if you want to save the plants and animals of the Canadian Rockies, then you have to save the Canadian Rockies. The whole works.

This includes the 87 percent of the Rockies that has already been earmarked for human takeover. I refer here to all the land lying outside the national parks. These non-federal areas are controlled by the governments of Alberta and British Columbia, both of which look more favorably on logging, mining, oil exploration and dam-building than they do on protecting wilderness. If you doubt that statement, contact the Alberta Wilderness Association or B.C.'s Wilderness Committee. They have been following the loss of wildland in Alberta and B.C. for

decades. Watching industry and government connive away the wilderness is absolutely infuriating.

What can we do? We don't dare make our case at a public hearing without having lawyers to state it, because the other side—meaning the developers and the government, who might as well be sitting together—always have their own lawyers to do the same. Sometimes we take the government to court, trying to force provincial and federal environmental regulators to follow their own regulations. A few times we have won, but mostly we lose. And that's ridiculous. Completely unfair. I once saw a person in the Calgary AWA office wearing a teeshirt that carried the following message: "I used to be angry, but now I'm just amused."

Well, if mankind is on the road to ruin, and taking the world along, maybe this is the right attitude. If it really is too late to avert worldwide ecological collapse, which it may well be, then all we can really do is watch it happen on the evening news. Might as well relax with a tall, cool drink, out there in the dandelion patch.

The ultimate cynicism is reserved for those of us who actually live in national parks. Smugly, we know that when civilization flickers out, we will be the last ones to go. We will survive fifteen minutes longer.

Of course, I'm not as cynical as that, or I wouldn't be speaking with you here today. I *do* hold out some hope for *Homo sapiens.* After all, the Berlin Wall did come down. Barack Obama was elected president of the United States. As I speak, eagles are still soaring southward along the ridges above Canmore.

Anyone can help get the ball rolling on saving the planet. You know the slogans. "Think globally; act locally." "Reduce, re-use, recycle." We can all take our newspapers and our bottles and cans to the depots. We can have fewer children—and we can teach them, both in the schools and by example, to walk more and drive less, turn the thermostat down, quit smoking, quit pouring weed-killers on the lawn, quit buying things from companies that behave badly. We can examine our *own* companies, our own jobs, our own investments, and modify the way we make our money so as to do it less harmfully. We can encourage our elected officials to get going on real environmental reform, with legislation and funding on the big, government-size issues, such as weaning our society off hydrocarbons, cleaning up industrial practices, and, of course, protecting wilderness.

So—there are things we can do. Maybe, just maybe, that will be enough to get us through the next fifty years. And if we don't make it, well, Armageddon is going to be an interesting experience.

In that case I'm concerned more about the grizzly bears than the humans. It wouldn't be the bears' fault, but they would be among the casualties. A naturalist like me finds that appalling.

Still, I'm also a geologist, and I can console myself with the geological perspective on our plight. Geologists deal in long-haul terms—what's a million years, give or take?—and it's comforting to keep in mind that the planet has recovered from numerous world-wide environmental catastrophes. After each of these "mass-extinction events," as geologists call them, life, in one form or another, has gone on. There have been five major mass extinctions. We know that most of them have been caused by rapid changes in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which has brought on sudden global warming or cooling. Um, much like what we see happening right now. At least one extinction event—the most famous of these accidents—occurred when a small asteroid hit the Earth 65 million years ago. That episode was tough on the dinosaurs, but it allowed a lot of wee furry mammals to take over the world.

Amazingly, we upstart apes are now causing an extinction event of our own. The rate of species loss caused by human destruction of natural habitat is now about equal to the rate caused by extraterrestrial impact. Ah, progress!

I'll close this discussion of doomsday by making one last point. In the mud on the sea bottom there live humble organisms called *lingulid brachiopods.* These are little clam-like things that first appeared in the fossil record half a billion years ago. Amazingly, lingulid brachiopods survived the great Permian extinction event that did in about 96 percent of all marine species on Earth 251 million years ago. Brachiopods seem incapable of laughing—although you never know; everything is smarter than we think it is—but if lingulid brachiopods can laugh, they will have had the last laugh many times as other species came and went. Lingulid brachiopods are successful because they are simple, unspecialized and adaptable—the formula for longevity on this planet.

Further, lingulid brachiopods seem not inclined to undergo population explosions. Most humans think that massive growth of anything signals success, but ecologists know that this notion is wrong. Edward Abbey said it best: "Perpetual growth is the creed of the cancer cell."

I doubt that many economists have heard of Edward Abbey, but some are fully in agreement with him. Here's another book for your reading list: *For the Common Good,* by Herman Daly and John Cobb, Jr. This book is an amazing treatise on post-industrial, steady-state economics. It's profound, right up there with *The Wealth of Nations* and *Das Kapital,* because it puts to rest old notions about innate human selfishness, the inherent goodness of constant economic

expansion, the endless chase after material goods and yet more convenient ways to wreck the globe.

According to Daly and Cobb, the main antidote to all this is *smallness.* Smallness in human affairs. From the size of our families to the size of our companies and our communities, small is beautiful, folks.

Among the big peaks of the Canadian Rockies we have some exquisite smallnesses, such as the sight of a ptarmigan and her chicks picking up bugs two steps away in an alpine meadow, or the sound of clean, cold water gurgling out of a mountain spring. Can't you just hear it? The thought alone gives pleasure.

And therein lies one last reason for preserving wilderness. This is my favorite reason, valid come what may, and it's this: wilderness is an abstract idea as well as a concrete reality. We need wilderness, just as we need Mt. Everest, simply because it is *there.* It needn't be *here,* where we are right now, but it must exist *somewhere.* We need wilderness when we are *not* in it, because it represents *hope and freedom.*

I ask you: is it not comforting to remember, as we sit here surrounded by plastic and paint under artificial lighting, that in less than an hour we could be in the Rocky Mountains, which are exactly the opposite of this room? We know instinctively, in our guts, that places like the Rockies are worth saving, regardless of whether or not we will ever tramp the wilderness there. As much as we wish to know what lies beyond the next mountain range, a part of us hopes fervently to find more wilderness, wilderness stretching on and on, filling the scene from horizon for horizon, with nothing man-made for the eye to trip over.

In the vastness of the Canadian Rockies there are still scenes like that. Long may they live!

I've hit the end of my lecture, but I thought you might appreciate a quick listing of the six good reasons for keeping wilderness that I've mentioned:

1. Wilderness is worth more economically in its undisturbed state.
2. We may need that land for later, for purposes we haven't thought of yet.
3. Wilderness is essential to the ecological health of the planet.
4. Going to the wilderness feels good. We enjoy it because our species grew up in it.
5. Wilderness protects threatened species and is essential for scientific study.
6. And wilderness represents hope and freedom.