

My name is Alexa Pritchard, my family pioneered here in Danford at Wilson Lake 130 years ago. My great grandfather, James Wilson, moved from the Low area where his father pioneered in 1842. I own 100 acres adjacent to the Picanoc River where my grandfather logged and ran a sawmill by the 5 Mile. They left the area pristine for the next generation. It would be irresponsible if we did not continue to protect it as well.

I've seen the famous Ganges River in India—cattle wading in, drinking and defecating. Down stream families bathing in the same 'holy waters'—and even farther along women filling their pails with water to take home for cooking and drinking. (The water pails have handy built-in strainers to keep the larger chunks out.)

Why do Europeans flock to Canadian wilderness? The major rivers in Europe are appalling, polluted by run-off from the streets, industrial waste, darkened with leachate, destroyed and misused.

In Canada, the Don Valley in Toronto is a prime example of abuse and exploitation. Rivers all over the USA have been similarly ruined.

Then there is our river, the Picanoc. Pristine. Crystal clear. Quite. A natural sanctuary.

It is truly an awesome sight and one of the best-kept secrets in Quebec and I'd like to share it with you today.

The Picanoc has been discovered by canoeists and kayakers who annually rush to the wild spring flow to challenge the rapids en route, such as "no-choice", "Archie's", and the ultimate experience of the "bus eater" or "the chute".

Members of the Five-Mile Club have known this for years. It is a very special place.

'WT' has been smart enough to tap into the growing wilderness market at a time when the baby-boomers are retiring.

For years Banff, Alberta, has drawn people from all over the world to experience the well-protected parks to the extent that the tiny town of Banff has reached its maximum and no further building is permitted. (If you haven't been there, it isn't much bigger than Wakefield.)

Danford is a goldmine yet to be fully tapped.

The Council of Alleyn and Cawood 'vision statement' clearly kept that in mind but lost sight of it in the past few years.

In 1995, the Council passed a motion to name Range VI lots 7 & 8 as "Recro-Touristic" and to "maintain some control on the natural environment within its domain for future inhabitants;" and went on to state "in keeping with our Planning Program in developing our 'FORESTRY TREASURES'." (bylaw 99/06/100)

Mount O'Brien is a start.

Tourists are coming and they want guides.

Imagine getting paid well to go for a walk!

You don't even need to leave the village to see flocks of beautiful yellow birds!

Right in the village! 'Kaz' doesn't have that!

I can't think of another place that does.

There are folks that travel for 100s of miles to bird-watch and they need guides, a place to stay, something to eat and drink, and gas for their vehicle.

Will ornithologists flock to a dumpsite? No, but seagulls will.

Danford people have forgotten more about the woods that most city folks will ever know.

I ask that they have an opportunity to share their experience and wealth of knowledge; to train their teens to learn what they have from working in the bush.

Let the city folks experience what the locals have taken for granted. It **IS** a very special area.

Ask any tourist why they keep coming back.

It is a love affair with a beautiful place.

You have the power. Please don't destroy this very special place!

Preserve it as our ancestor's did. Be a part of the G-8 quietly in our exclusive corner of the world.

Read the G-8 petition signed by 265,000 people who demand a stop to global warming.

Do what is right.

Stop all landfills, in God's name I pray, stop the dump.

Over the next few minutes I will share with you this Shangri-la.

Enjoy.

Oh, and if you see anything out of place, please let me know.

Thank you for this opportunity.

(DVD slide show to follow)