

Cathedral Grove

"You don't know what you've got . . . till it's gone"

Wilderness warrior Betty Krawczyk

Why British Columbia's feisti-
est great-grandmother is willing to go to jail for nature.

by **BRIAN PAYTON**
portrait photography **RON WATTS**

BETTY KRAWCZYK believes that citizens are obliged to speak up when faced with injustice. The 78-year-old great-grandmother has scolded government, industry, and even fellow conservationists in defence of British Columbia's wilderness. Her outspoken manner inspires some, goads others—and has cost her almost two years in cumulative prison terms.

Krawczyk's remarkable journey has taken her from an impoverished childhood in southern Louisiana to the front lines of B.C.'s environmental movement. While raising her eight children, she found time to pen more than 200 fiction stories in the true-confessions genre ("I was his love slave") for popular women's magazines—before taking up the cause of the Women's Movement in



● Great-grandmother and activist Betty Krawczyk, 78, walks softly and carries a big stick in her crusade to protect British Columbia's wild places.

the late 1960s. During the Vietnam War, she emigrated to Canada after her first son joined the airforce and her second was about to be drafted.

Forty years, four marriages and divorces, eight grandchildren, and one great-grandchild later, the Vancouver resident is probably best known for her role in the Clayoquot Sound protests of 1993.

On a sunny June afternoon, Krawczyk sat down beside an arbutus tree to reflect on her life in B.C.'s environmental movement. Her perch afforded a view of West Vancouver's Eagleridge Bluffs high above Horseshoe Bay, where she and other protesters spent six weeks on a blockade last summer to protest a highway expansion that has since proceeded through the area.