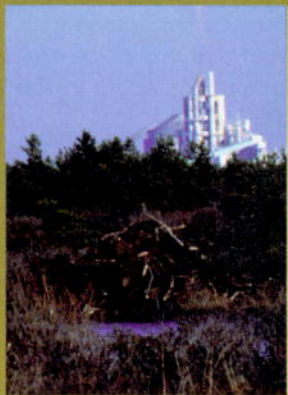


Burns Bog

a road runs through it



"Burns Bog is one of a vanishing kind... a special bit of nature as it has been for millennia. It should be left completely alone."
— David Suzuki

Located on the southern fringes of Vancouver, Burns Bog is one of the world's most precious ecosystems. Home to nearly 200 species of mammals and birds, it is also a vital stop for migrating waterfowl.

For 5,000 years the bog has sheltered a diverse range of plant and animal life. Embedded in its deep layers of peat lies a record of all

major local events, both natural and human. No one has fully explored the secrets it holds.

But Burns Bog is faced with imminent destruction, as the needs of the area's mushrooming human population eat away at its edges. This video explores an urgent question: How do we define the worth of land and water, peat and plants, when there is a profit to be made?

Recommended for Grades 7 and up, in the areas of biology, ecology, Native studies, political science and social studies.

Director: D. DeMille
Producer: George Johnson

24 minutes, 15 seconds
Order number: C9199 041



Closed captioned.
A decoder is required.

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Burns Bog
a road runs through it

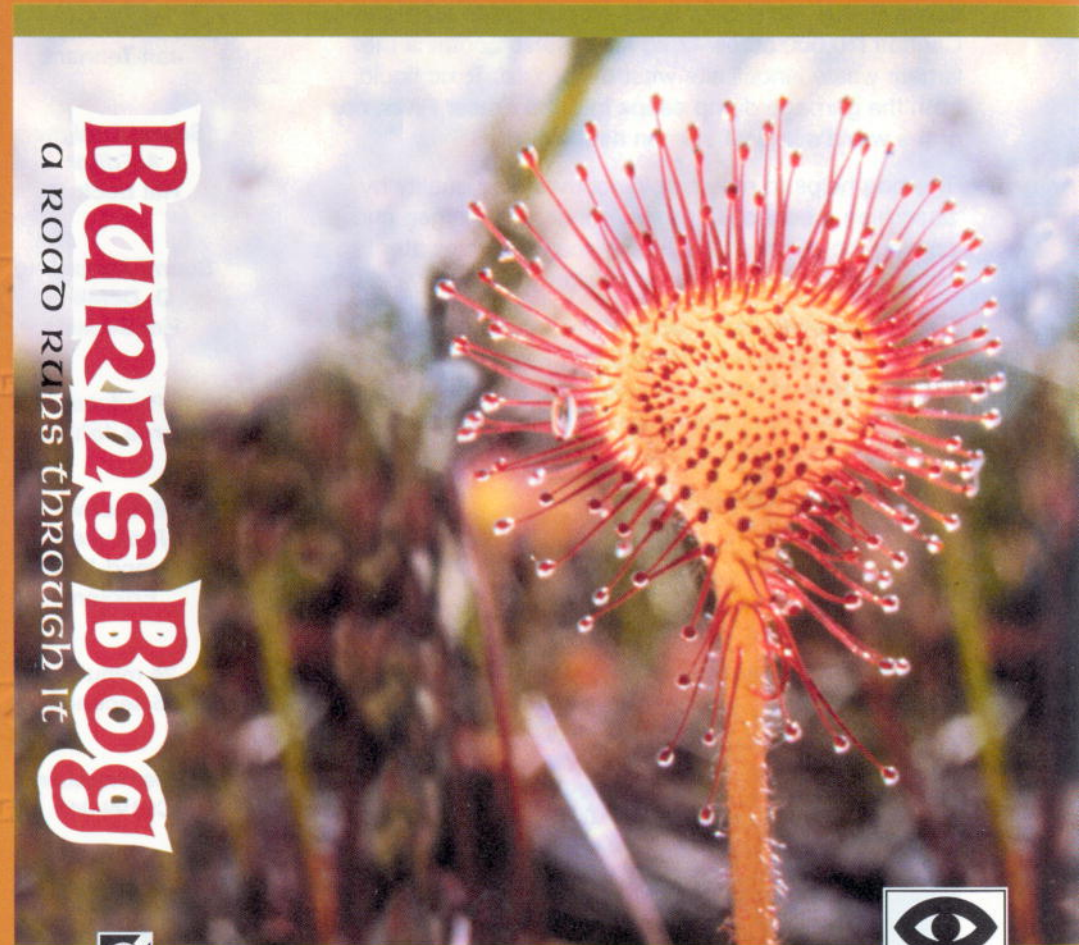


VHS

C9199 041

Burns Bog

a road runs through it



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FACTS

- A bog is a special kind of wetland where plants reach extremes of adaptation. The high acidity and moisture within bogs, combined with low nutrients, create an environment too harsh for most species. Burns Bog boasts an unusually high level of bio-diversity, because it is surrounded by forests, swamps and marshes, which are a vital part of this peatland.
- Burns Bog is the largest undeveloped urban land area in Canada (10,000 acres/42 sq km). It also contains the largest waste landfill site west of Toronto. Toxic liquid from the garbage dump seeps into the Fraser River, one of the world's largest salmon habitats.
- The bog helps to maintain Vancouver's air quality by absorbing greenhouse gases, generating oxygen and cooling the atmosphere. It also soaks up rainwater like a giant sponge, releasing moisture slowly during dry periods.
- Experts estimate that 1 acre of this bog is destroyed every day. Threats include golf courses, cranberry farming, the creep of urban development, peat harvesting and a highway that would run right through the bog, opening it for development.
- Most of the land is privately owned.



Director
D. DeMille

Writer
Andrew Gardner

Composer
Wesley Lowe

Narrator
Jan Tennant

*Sound Designer
& Editor*
Hal Beckett

Sound Recording
**D. DeMille
Hal Beckett**

Producer
George Johnson

*Executive
Producer*
**Svend-Erik
Eriksen**

**24 minutes
15 seconds**

**Order number:
C9199 041**



PRE-SCREENING QUESTIONS

- Have you ever visited a bog, swamp or other wetland? What did you think of it? Would you consider it worthless? Explain.
- Do you remember a nature hang-out that has since disappeared? What were your favourite things about it? Do you miss it? What has replaced it?
- If you owned a big tract of wetland and a developer offered to buy it from you, what would you do? What factors would influence your decision?

POST-SCREENING QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Have students research the unusual characteristics of Burns Bog or other wetland (eg, type of habitat, plant, animal and insect species, its effect on the surrounding area). What can it teach us about natural systems?
- Divide students into groups to research different aspects of a major wetland (eg, Florida Everglades). Topics can include its history of development, effects of human encroachment, endangered species, effect on water and weather systems, current initiatives to preserve and restore it.
- Discuss the concept of a web of life, using Burns Bog as an example. How are the plants and animals there dependent on each other and on the bog? How does the bog interact with nearby rivers, streams and the ocean? Create a web of life diagram for the bog using visuals drawn or collected by the class.
- Divide students into groups to research and debate the following issues:
 - Do human needs override those of plants and animals? What might some of those needs be?
 - Conservation vs. development: which has greater value?

- Should public access to protected lands be restricted? Why save huge areas if few people are allowed to enjoy them?
- Does anyone miss the dodo or the passenger pigeon? Are all endangered species worth saving?
- Have students research the history of the area where they live. What was there before it was developed? What are ways to minimize the effects of urban development on the land? What lifestyle choices can individuals make that might help?
- Have students investigate where their garbage goes. What can they do to reduce the amount of waste their family produces? Visit a recycling plant to find out how materials are made re-useable. Are there negative side effects of recycling?
- Visit a local protected or undeveloped area (provincial park, conservation area, nature centre, vacant lot, etc.). Find out if the land will remain wild, what habitats it contains, any special features, etc. Supply students with field guides to plants, animals, birds and insects, and have them record what species they find within a small area.
- Create a unit of study on bogs and have small groups research topics such as how bogs are formed, the human uses and properties of peat and sphagnum moss, how bogs fit into natural cycles (carbon, water) and archaeological discoveries.
- Research other places in Canada where development and industry caused a conflict over natural spaces (eg, Clayquot Sound, Oka). Trace the history of the protest, including the reasons behind it and the positions of both sides in the conflict. Was the protest effective? How?

OTHER RESOURCES

Web sites

Please note that Web addresses may have changed since the publication of this guide.

Burns Bog Conservation Society:
www.burnsbog.paconline.net

Irish Peatland Conservation Council:
indigo.ie/~ipcc/index.html

Friends of the Earth UK:
www.foe.co.uk/wildplaces/peatbrf.html

Books and teachers' guides

Discover Burns Bog, by Bill Burns, Hurricane Press, Vancouver. Tel: (604) 688-1763

The Burns Bog Conservation Society offers three teachers' guides. Tel: (604) 572-0373

Related Videos from the NFB

For other resources on ecology and the environment, visit the NFB Web site at **www.nfb.ca** or **www.nfb.ca/burnsbog**