

LIFE AT ELIGUK

by Jennifer Toland

PROJECT FISHBONE

The endless rewards of backwoods life continue to amaze, as yet another below-zero day draws to a close over the snow-capped Rainbow mountain range in British Columbia. Lingering for a few extra minutes, I gaze through my single pane, frost-etched window, mesmerized by the day's fading glow. The blue drape of night casts darkness while the light of the oil lamps grows ever brighter, illuminating the log walls inside the cabin. A shiver creeps down my back and I snap out of my gaze - instinctively signaling that I need to stoke the fire.

The stove pipe creaks as it cools, and inside the wood stove, I poke at the red coals, scattering them about, so I can load more of the dry split resinous Spruce I hauled in from the woodshed earlier. The warmth of the fire envelops me once more, and I am filled with a sense of comfort and contentment, grateful for the opportunity to experience the wonders of nature in all its glory. As I watch the mesmerizing dance of the flames, I am reminded of the countless adventures I have had in the wilderness. A moment of reflection only interrupted by

the audible hissing, cracking, and popping sounds emanating from the wood stove.

Mid-winter, all is frozen; a blanket of white silence, hibernating, waiting, as do I. Aron, my Mountain Man husband left on his snow machine yesterday. It was -13F when he headed out that morning to the nearest city on a supply run, a major risk-laden arduous challenge against weather, nature, and mechanical malfunctions across miles of fro-

zen lakes and rivers, blown down tree-blocked, deep snow trails, and a hundred miles of the rarely plowed forest service road. Eight hours out, and eight back in, if all goes well...which rarely happens. Life out here, survival out here, is a constant challenge.

I'm alone in the wilderness whether it's for days or weeks, depending on conditions; it's a lifestyle dictated by the weather. It determines your schedule. A place so desolate, that only a



Built in 1986, when we first approached Eliguk it looked like an abandoned town.