

# OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

February 2007

P.O. Box 787, Summerland, B.C. V0H 1Z0

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## THE OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY 42<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Proudly presents

**DR. KEN HALL - Professor**

Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability  
University of British Columbia



### CANOEING IN THE ARCTIC: THE COPPERMINE RIVER



Ken Hall is an environmental chemist with 35 years experience in conducting research on water quality, environmental contaminants, waste water treatment and environmental impact studies.

He is also an avid outdoors lover. His presentation will be of the land, the wildlife and the plants along the Coppermine as well as the river itself.



**WHEN: FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2007**

**WHERE: SUMMERLAND CENTRE STAGE THEATRE**

**TIME: 7:15 PM**

**ALL WELCOME • DONATIONS ACCEPTED**

Donations are appreciated anytime - tax receipt will be issued. OSPS appreciates your continued support in our attempts to save OUR parks. 2006 memberships at \$10.00 individual, \$15.00 family, \$20.00 organization have been rolling in. THANKS! **Form - Page 5**

Ken Hall is an environmental chemist with 35 years experience in conducting research on water quality, environmental contaminants, wastewater treatment and environmental impact investigations. He coordinated a three year program to investigate the impacts of log handling and storage activities on a lake ecosystem in central B.C.; conducted limnological studies on eutrophic, meromictic and coastal oligotrophic lakes and presently is involved in lake restoration studies using aeration and fertilization techniques.

He is now serving on two committees as part of the Greater Vancouver Regional Districts (GVRD) liquid waste management program. He is also on the environmental task group which coordinates and evaluates the monitoring program for all of the GVRD waste discharges and their impacts on the receiving environment.

#### **LETTER TO THE EDITOR:**

With regard to: "Thorpe ticks off CORD Director" in January 26, Capital News.

We are two individuals among many that are very appreciative of the Regional District's stand with regard to the Crystal Mountain proposed development.

We know only too well what the provincial government and the developers are brewing up for us and while it may be profitable for them in the short run, it is us, the residents and citizens that will pay the long term cost.

Too many unanswered questions and questionable outcomes still remain, making Mr. Thorpe's cavalier attitude seem more like an insult to his constituents, rather than the actions of a responsible representative.

The availability of water is at the top of the list, sewage treatment, loss of wildlife habitat and infrastructure upgrades for a development this size, are but a few of the serious concerns.

Many area residents have come together over the past few years to raise our concern over the proposed Crystal Mountain "subdivision" and to ask for a full scale environment assessment of this project. We know that once the damage is done, there's NO going back!

Thus far only the Regional District has shown due interest for our concerns. Other levels of government have turned a blind eye.

*Sincerely,  
Jessica & Joe Klein  
(250) 767-9231*

#### **Critically Viewing the Human Condition**

The human being is a highly intelligent, often venomous and potentially lethal member of the animal kingdom. It is the only creature on earth capable of large scale environmental destruction and has thus far shown itself to be extremely adept at altering and damaging diverse ecological systems throughout the planet.

While being responsible for the extinction and endangerment of numerous animalspecies, humanbeings have also done tremendous damage to many forest and plant communities. Both water and air have born the brunt of this species toxic effluent, with dire consequences for other life forms dependant upon these essential elements.

Humans have not limited their aggression to other species. While possessing the most highly developed brains in the animal world, they have wrought continuous destruction upon each other since their appearance on this planet. This aggression often takes physical form in the most brutal and malevolent manner arising from human's uniquely developed intellect, capable of rationalizing, visualizing and then projecting and manifesting.

These advanced humanoids also possess many characteristics that are benevolent and caring, and are capable of great compassion and love. Unfortunately, they are relatively easily misled and confused and have been relentlessly duped and controlled by members of their own species. Where tactics and intimidations have not been effective in controlling populations, humans have often resorted to wide scale exterminations. Killing each other appears, also, to be quite common as a means of venting negative emotions. A serious flaw of the human's superior intellect derives from its ability to rationalize and distort the effects of its self-serving motivations thus circumventing its conscience, its only effective moral compass. This ability has been the primary mechanism that has led the species to endanger the entire ecosphere and jeopardize its own chances for survival.

Whether or not the forces of evolution can overcome this flaw, is the leading question for the future of this species and the planet. It is a question and a problem that only we as individuals can address and correct.

*Hopefully,  
Joe Klein  
Vice President OSPS*

#### **Trail Project**

RDOS chairman Dan Ashton said Monday the regional district's Rails to Trails committee will determine how the funds will be utilized this year.

"There's the upkeep on the trails and additional acquisitions for trails," he said. "The ultimate objective is to tie the Okanagan (trail network) in with the Similkameen."

The trail would extend across the U.S. border at Osoyoos and south to Oroville before following the old Burlington Northern Railway route back into B.C. at Nighthawk and continuing up the Similkameen Valley to Princeton.

*Penticton Herald, February 25, 2006*

## **The Story of the Passion and Fight for Wilderness**

Without the efforts of this bunch of very ordinary Canadians who didn't shy from decades of commitment, there would be a lot less big trees and a whole lot more big stumps.

Big Trees, Not Big Stumps by Paul George, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, paperback, 500pp, with DVD, 2006. ISBN number: 1-895123-03-8. \$39.95 from the Wilderness Committee, <http://www.wildernesscommittee.org/> or phone (604) 683-2567.



## **Save precious farm land**

Industry in Naramata?

Thanks for John Moorhouse's piece in the Penticton Herald on Jan. 25.

It provided us with the results of a Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen board meeting which passed a motion to grant the Naramata Plexis door factory a second two-year extension to remain unconforming on land zoned agricultural.

Sadly, the press release mentioned nothing about conditions. We would hope that under the circumstances there are some conditions.

I do concur with objections put forward by two other property owners, who are adjacent to the Plexis property, but who wouldn't be, if they had a factory of this size in their front yard.

But what is really worrying me is that important decisions are being made and the citizens of Naramata have never had a chance to be made aware if the issues and pass judgment on

these issues which have far reaching connotations as far as the future of Naramata is concerned.

Granted, we do have committees such as the Advisory Planning Committee who work hard with our Regional RDOS director.

Also, we have the Official Community Plan Planning Committee who have worked hard on bringing the plan up to date. We appreciate all their efforts, but major decisions are being made, like the granting of a second two-year extension, and the citizens of Naramata have not had the opportunity to express their views on major questions such as: Are we in favour of having industry in our town or not. Or, whether or not zoning infractions set a bad precedent.

Granted, there was a meeting called several months back, but it was poorly represented because only a few were notified and concerned speakers were only allowed one minute.

It is vital that a general meeting is important enough to merit notifications

to all households and that everyone is made aware of the issued ahead of time, and have an opportunity to express themselves.

Be aware that Naramata's charm did not just happen. Naramata was threatened back in the '70s when farmers were starting to subdivide their farms into residential lots, because there was no zoning. Worried citizens expressed their concerns at a public meeting and the RDOS executive, in their wisdom, said, "We hear you loud and clear, you need a community plan with zoning bylaws." These were implemented and the town was saved.

Let's hope we can learn from the lessons of the past by hearing what the wishes of the majority are.

What's your opinion? Send your letters to 101-186 Nanaimo Ave. W., Penticton, BC V2A 1N4

*Fred Ritchie, Naramata  
The Okanagan Saturday  
February 3, 2007*

## **A National Threat**

In communities throughout Canada, the clean water you rely on is under a significant and growing threat.

In British Columbia, Victoria and Vancouver have abysmal records when it comes to raw sewage dumping and the lack of sewage treatment, and Sierra Legal is dedicated to changing this, e.g. Vancouver - Up to 22 billion litres of combined overflows each year. Upgrades to 100% secondary treatment won't be completed until 2030. Victoria - Preliminary screening, no treatment. More than 34 billion litres of raw sewage still discharged each year.

Last year, we demanded that the BC government declare the sewage outfall areas in Victoria as contaminated sites. Recognizing our work, the Province recently announced that Victoria will need to submit a plan for sewage treatment to the Province by June 2007. Sierra Legal has also launched a private prosecution against Vancouver to force the clean-up of two facilities, the Lions Gate and Iona sewage plants, that are still polluting our waters with inadequately treated sewage.

*Sierra Legal, November 2006*

Can you believe that feeding areas for endangered grizzly bears (like the bear you see in the photo) are sprayed with pesticides by our Provincial Government?

Shocking as it may be, things like this happen regularly, and the BC provincial government allows it.

You may not realize it, but the threat of industrial development in BC (even in our protected parks) is *intense*. And it is constant. Every day, some new venture threatens to wipe out another wetland teeming with wildlife; another stand of forest that can never be replaced.

Since his election in 2001, Gordon



Campbell has systematically changed, weakened, and, in some cases, *downright dismantled* the laws that were in place to protect BC's environment. Here are a couple report highlights for you:

- The new "Significant Projects Streamlining Act" enables the BC Liberals to waive virtually all legal requirements standing in the way of development projects deemed to be "provincially significant".
- Profound changes made to the Forest Act by this government have shifted control of BC's forest resources from government to private logging companies!

### **Public must pressure politicians on climate change – Suzuki**

"I don't think anyone could have predicted six months ago that the environment would rocket up to the No. 1 concern of Canadians across the country," Suzuki told a packed auditorium at Dalhousie University.

"This is the moment where decisions made and not made are actually going to determine the future not only of our species, but of countless other species that share the planet with us."

After his Halifax speech, Suzuki didn't seem convinced that Harper's commitment to the environment is sincere.

"Stephen Harper is a political animal, so he's paying attention to what the public is saying," he said.

"It's important that Mr. Harper indicate that he's committed to Kyoto — because we're signed onto it — and that he's going to do everything he can to meet it. We can't just pull out of it."

Suzuki said a report released in Paris on Friday that concluded global warming is "unequivocal" and man-made should be all the evidence the Harper government needs.

"I think it finally puts the nail in the coffin of the naysayers," he said. "There's been a handful of people who have said, 'No, the evidence isn't in and humans are not a part of it.' It's a tiny group, many of them funded by the fossil fuel industry."

Suzuki added that journalists should ignore scientists that cast doubt on global warming, since they don't represent a consensus within the scientific community.

*The Okanagan Saturday, February 3, 2007*

### **Flathead Valley**

Since 1911, when Waterton Park Superintendent Kutenai Brown first recommended protection of B.C.'s Flathead valley, conservationists have been working to protect this special valley — home to the highest density of interior grizzlies in North America, the highest diversity of vascular plants in the Rockies, and the most diverse population of carnivores in North America. British Columbia residents are now waiting to hear how the Province intends to protect these values, after repeated denials of a request to pursue a National Park feasibility study for the area, despite support from local first nations, the Regional District of East Kootenay, the Fernie City council. A proposal by Cline Mining corporation

to extract 2 million tonnes of coal a year from an open-pit operation in the headwaters of the Flathead has conservation interests boiling on both sides of the border. The Flathead Wild Coalition, including Wildsight, CPAWS, Y2Y, and the U.S. National Parks Conservation Association and Montana Wilderness Association, are working to keep industrial mining out of the Flathead watershed, for protection of a core nature sanctuary inside the identified proposed national park boundary, and a land use plan for the entire region that protects its globally significant wildlife and wilderness values.

*For more information visit:  
[www.Flatheadwild.ca](http://www.Flatheadwild.ca)*

*Dave Quinn,  
Wildsight  
January, 2007*

Jim Bryan – SOK Naturalists would like to have a memorial to Vi Gibbard.

Perhaps a bench on the KVR above Arawana Rd., Naturalists voted \$500. and need more, could OSPS help?

## **Restoring bighorn sheep great idea**

As a wildlife biologist with a special affection for mountain sheep, I applaud the possibility of restoring California bighorn sheep in Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park. For many years sheep, mostly males, have been sighted in and about that park, however, the numbers of those sheep are far below the habitat potential of that area.

Wild sheep live in mountains because in that steep terrain they are able to out-manuever their natural predators. Their key to survival is exquisite familiarity with their range. At any given moment a predator may appear. Sheep must instantly know every possible escape route throughout all the areas they use each day. Thus, sheep are slow to abandon the security of familiar habitats, even when high quality habitat opportunities are nearby, such as in Okanagan Mountain Park. Females, more than males, are reluctant to explore new habitats because most of each year they carry the burden of unborn babies, or have the responsibility of lambs at heel. Even though sheep would naturally re-occupy Okanagan Mountain Park the process would be slow. Knowing there is habitat potential for them, it is desirable in my view to accelerate the process. Their prospects for recovery in the park are boosted by the habitat benefits resulting from the wildfire there in 2003.

I am encouraged consideration is being given to using local sheep for the proposed transplant. It is a principal of biology that locally adapted individuals have better prospects than those from afar. I hope the capture, and the release, are as gentle as possible. I also hope the transplant takes place after the most severe portions of the winter season, but, as early as possible to maximize the time for the females to find, and become secure in, the very special grounds they require. As each ewe approached the birth of their lamb they must find the particular kind of rocky ledges needed to give birth, and yet, close to succulent early greening forage to produce milk for that baby. Some ewes have given birth as early as mid-April. So, time will be of the essence.

Having California bighorn sheep restored in Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park is insurance against epizootic contagions, such as the killer pneumonia that swept through other Okanagan Valley wild sheep in 1999.

*Bob Lincoln, Kaleden  
Penticton Herald, February 21, 2006*



California bighorn sheep ram with a ewe at Vaseux Lake.

### **Conkle Mountain Park**

Summerland — Council has given the green light for the creation of Conkle Mountain Park.

The park is being created from two parcels of land located above the Trans Canada Trail and Kettle Valley Railway on Conkle Mountain.

The Corporation of the District of Summerland owns both pieces of property, which total approximately 250 acres in size.

**Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society  
Box 787, Summerland, B.C. V0H 1Z0  
MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual (\$10.00) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$15.00) \_\_\_\_\_ Organization (\$20.00) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation: \_\_\_\_\_ (Income Tax Deductible)

***Please help support our continuing programs***

## **OSPS says “TRY IT: Biking, hiking in grand style”**

Oliver — When engineers changed the course of the Okanagan River in the 1950s, the last thing they had on their minds was recreation.

Straightened to facilitate lake level and flood control, the aggressive reconfiguration of the river resulted in a barren right-of-way devoid of wildlife or natural vegetation.

Now, more than four decades later and thanks to the dedication and determination of a group known as the International Bicycling and Hiking society (IBHS), a section of this river sports a multi-use path that is enjoyed by locals and tourists.

“Joggers, in-line skaters, families with their little kids chugging along. Oliver, of course, has a number of old-age pensioners and they get out there and walk,” said John Bremmer, President of the IBHS.

The IBHS was founded in 1986 when Stan Upton moved to Oliver and spearheaded efforts to push a trail from Brewster, Wash., to Vernon.

Though that dream has not yet been achieved, the IBHS has managed to implement 18.4 kilometers of groomed trail.

“It goes from the head of Osoyoos Lake and it’s compact gravel from there until Road 9, and then paved from Road 9 right up to McAlpine Bridge, which is the intersection at Highway 96,” said Bremmer.

He added he’s spoken to a number of tourists who have travelled to the area to ride the trail.

“We’ve been told more than a few times that the reason they come to Oliver is just to enjoy the path,” he said.



IBHS President John Bremmer, left, and Director Keray Levant discuss future developments while overlooking the Oliver portion of the Hike and Bike Trail.

The flat, even terrain and hard-packed surface make this an ideal path to see the local scenery and wildlife.

“When you get down to the south end of it, where you have the head of Osoyoos Lake and the oxbows there, it’s certainly wonderful for bird watching,” said Bremmer. It’s also possible to see otters, fish and beavers, and the natural vegetation has regrown into a lush green backdrop.

“The advantage of the path going right down the center of the valley is you can have little loops off,” said Bremmer.

For example, you can take off at Road 9 and head up through the vineyards in the Black Sage Road area, or you head up the other way to visit Gehringer and Tinhorn wineries.

Director Fred Lindsay became involved with the IBHS with hopes of connecting the Oliver portion of the Trail to other lineal parks in the area. Lindsay is working with another director, Keray Levant, to hook Oliver up to a trail in Okanagan Falls, and eventually through to Penticton.

“It’s our belief that by a year from this fall that we will be able to go at least from Kaleden to the head of Osoyoos Lake,” said Lindsay. Many tourists already use the trail as part of a bicycle circle tour from Midway, around the Kettle Valley Railway

Line into Penticton and down into Osoyoos — though riders have to use public roads for portions.

The planned expansion will spark a boost in tourist use, bringing many visitors to the area, said Lindsay. “We believe it will become a world-class facility and the world-class destination.”

*John Bremmer, OSPS Director  
Penticton Herald, May 13, 2003*

## **Subalpine splendour also reveals changes to Manning Park**

At the end of July, I took advantage of the Wildflower Weekend offered by Hope Mountain School, our good friend from the Manning Park Bird Blitz, Kelly Pearce, being the leader.

We were fortunate in the weather as there was a faint overcast and breeze so that it wasn’t too hot - the previous day having been in the mid 30’s - a real scorcher. I remembered, from past years, that there used to be some milkweeds (that plant so necessary to the monarch butterfly) growing along the sides of the road up to the Lookout. Not too many, but a few here and there. Well, now there is no missing them, these large, showy, stout plants 3 to 4 feet tall growing in profusion along the roadside. They first appeared in Manning Park in the late 1960’s and can now also be found in other dry

areas of BC such as Oliver and Ashcroft. (Showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*) is native to BC, but is listed as a nuisance weed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. — Ed.)

I realized I had not been to the Manning subalpine since 1990 when we first started bringing llamas along on our wilderness camp trips. No more backpacking for us, let the llamas carry our gear!

In Manning, llamas are only allowed on the horse trails, so we usually go to Castle Creek or Monument 83, but no longer are able to visit Three Brothers Mountain or Kicking Horse Camp. We do, however, go llama-camping in the South Chilcotin subalpine, where I have identified as many as 90 species of wildflowers.

*Duanne Vandenberg - BC Nature, Winter 2006*

## Coal power more costly

The proposed coal/wood waste power plant near Princeton has become an important and controversial community issue. Is the Princeton Power Project the beginning of a new energy policy that will end B.C.'s history of being the greenest electricity producer in Canada? Concerns voiced by residents of the Similkameen and Okanagan are being echoed across the province.

Compliance Energy Corporations (CEC's) proposal raises issues that can become cloudy and lost in technical debate, but this much is clear: our world depends on electricity, we generate most of it by burning fossil fuels, and every fossil fuel watt generated contributes to global warming — a serious problem which is no longer disputed by scientists and can no longer be ignored.

After decades of using hydroelectric dams, why meet future energy needs by burning coal in a facility that will add to the problems our children stand to inherit? Why place power generation in the hands of private companies instead of an accountable, public body? While B.C. Hydro has provided clean, reliable, and low-cost electricity to the public for many years, current government energy policy reserves new electricity generation for the private sector.

New power needs in the province will have to be met by integrated energy companies who may own the rights to fuel sources such as coal. CEC has chosen to burn coal and waste wood.

The company owns a thermal coal mine (the Basin Mine) about 20 kilometers from Princeton, has no long-term contracts to sell the coal, and cannot operate the mine year-round. It has stated publicly the mine may not be viable over the long-term.

The area in which CEC plans to source waste wood stretches from Hope to Kelowna and Oliver to Merritt. Considering these distances, and that heating values for wood range between 15 per cent to 40 per cent at 50 per cent moisture content to that of coal from the Basin Mine, it becomes clear the company may be compelled by its bottom line to burn more coal than they anticipate. However, if they burn the ratio of wood and coal that they have publicized (50-50), not only will their power plant contribute to global warming, but so will the convoy of diesel-burning trucks

used to supply the wood.

Who stands to benefit the most from this project? The general public, which will gain a few jobs? A government bent on privatizing the energy sector? Or a cash-strapped coal mining company with a share price at its lowest point since 2004?

Neither the government nor CEC has adequately addressed the fact CO<sub>2</sub> from the company's activities will contribute to global warming. Any CO<sub>2</sub> released into our atmosphere is a contribution, not a reduction. A strong message sent to our elected representatives can implement change in government policy, requiring the development of truly sustainable options. When provided with information, opportunities, and incentives, people are willing to put their own energy and money toward a cleaner future. On one website ([www.onelesston.ca](http://www.onelesston.ca)), which takes the visitor through commitments to reduce energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 987 registrants have pledged small changes which will prevent a total of 3,424.39 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from being emitted in one year. Their combined estimated energy savings are \$797,114 for that year.

In contrast, the Princeton Power Project could add as much as 276,920 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere every year from coal alone. Its 56 megawatts will be three times as expensive to produce as power currently produced by B.C. Hydro.

Small changes like not letting a vehicle idle and turning off incandescent bulbs when they are not needed make a positive impact and empower us by setting a good example. But the energy policy of our government must reflect our broader necessity: to generate electricity without contributing to the problem of global warming and to eliminate, not increase, the emission of harmful pollutants to our environment.

*Robert McDonald, Cowston  
Penticton Herald, February 7, 2007*

MP Atamanenko will continue trying to build support in stopping a proposal to open a coal-fired plant in Princeton, and he's looking forward to more discussions regarding a proposed national park in the Oliver area.

Input regarding both write to: MP Alex Atamanenko, House of Commons, 525 Confederation Bldg., Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6 [atamaa@parl.gc.ca](mailto:atamaa@parl.gc.ca)

## Big business taking ever-growing share of Canadian forests

Edmonton — Canada's public forests are increasingly falling under the control of large corporations, says a new report being released today.

In a national survey of forest tenure, global Forest Watch Canada found the amount of public forest controlled by the largest 13 forestry companies increased by nine per cent between

2000 and 2003.

They now control 57 per cent of Canada's operating commercial forest, and the largest five companies hold rights to 100 million hectares of public forest — an area larger than the province of Ontario.

"What it means is that the decisions on how our public forests are used are in fewer and fewer hands," said Peter Lee, Forest Watch's national coordinator.

The five largest companies are Tembec, Abitibi-Consolidated, Slocan/Canfor, Louisiana-Pacific and Tolko.

Lee also said, however, that concentration isn't necessarily a bad thing.

"Companies who have larger holdings scattered throughout the country have a lot more flexibility in what they can do."

As well, it's cheaper and easier for

*Continued page 8...*

...continued from page 7

groups such as Forest Watch to deal with fewer, larger corporations, said Lee, who did acknowledge that not everyone agrees.

“Any kind of corporate concentration means more power in fewer hands,” he said.

The report also found the area of forest being logged in Canada has increased by 50 per cent since 1975, mostly in the boreal forest, one of the world’s largest remaining intact ecosystems.

Alberta led the way in increasing forest exploitation, with a 214 per cent annual increase in the area logged.

### **Extinction ahead for BC woodland caribou herd?**

Imagine a company proposed to redevelop a huge mine in a vast wilderness area in northern Canada. Fifty years after the mine has been closed, the company wants to start large-scale mining operations, so it asks the authorities to approve its project. After carefully examining the proposal, expert government scientists alert the authorities that the project would decimate local wildlife. In fact it could wipe out an entire herd of caribou that has already been identified as needing protection to ensure its survival.

What should happen next?

Common sense would dictate that the authorities should reject the project, or perhaps ask the company to revise its proposal to dramatically minimize its impact. Or should they disregard the cautionary pleas and give the project a green light — then spend years fighting in the courts to ensure the project goes forward? In the case of the controversial Telsequah Chief Mine, unfortunately the latter is true.

The Tulsequah Chief Mine is located near the Alaska-BC border in the 18,000 square kilometer Taku River watershed, one of the most exceptional remaining pristine wilderness areas in Canada. The proposal to re-develop the

Much of that increase came because of new technologies allowing the use of aspen, said Lee.

As well, the Alberta government under then-environment minister Ralph Klein pushed for an expanded forestry sector.

“It was basically an open-arms policy,” said Lee.

Other provinces that have seen large expansions in the amount of land logged are Prince Edward Island (206 %), Newfoundland and Labrador (176%) and Quebec (123%).

Job growth, however, hasn’t matched the growth in logging.

mine includes a 160-kilometer access road to the mine site that would run through prime habitat for a variety of wildlife, including woodland caribou, grizzly and black bears, wolves and moose.

Sierra Legal filed a lawsuit in August challenging the project. Representing the Transboundary Watershed Alliance, Sierra Legal’s lawsuit aims to force the federal government to hold the federal Species at Risk Act and protect the East Atlin caribou herd, listed under the act as a species of special concern. The suit also seeks to ensure compliance with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

Lawyer Randy Christensen says he’s “astonished by the blatant disregard the two federal departments have shown for ensuring protection of the caribou herd and the pristine wilderness area.” The Yukon Government, Canadian Wildlife Service and independent scientists acknowledge that the project would have a devastating impact on the caribou.

Sierra Legal will continue to work hard to monitor government applications and approvals of mines, so projects that are potentially harmful to the environment don’t escape proper assessment. We will fight to ensure that such government decisions won’t be at the expense of our wildlife.

*Sierra Legal, December 2006*

Between 1990 and 2001, the annual area logged in Canada rose by 12 per cent while forestry employment rose only four per cent. In 1990, 2.7 hectares were cut for every forest-sector job, a figure that increased to 2.9 hectares per job by 2001.

Global Forest Watch Canada is a non-profit organization conducting research into development activities in Canada’s forests and their environmental impacts.

The study, the group’s first since 2000, was funded by private foundations and the home furnishings company IKEA.

*Penticton Herald, March 31, 2004*

### **Mountain Caribou**

Mountain caribou recovery planning is ongoing in BC right now and you have until the end of February to provide your input to government. Government has committed to recovering mountain caribou, but it is not clear what tools they will use to achieve it nor what “recovery” of this animal means to Victoria. Locally, the Mountain Caribou Project has been promoting habitat-based recovery and the broad economic and ecologic benefits such an approach would provide to the region. The Mountain Caribou Project website is at [www.mountaincaribou.ca](http://www.mountaincaribou.ca) and contains links to websites with government information as well as published research. A “caribou fun” section will be up soon highlighting a variety of other actions - such as the Slokan school kids Caribou Christmas carol that was aired locally on Mountain FM as well as provincially on CBC and the Kimberley school kids aerial caribou art.



Mountain caribou at Kootenay Pass. The South Selkirks (Kootenay Pass) herd has increased to 41 animals.



## **No workable alternative to national park**

Last Thursday's Philosophers' Cafe, 'Philosophy of land: How to preserve our wilderness in the new millennium', held at the En'owkin Centre was very informative on many of the issues surrounding the South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Feasibility Study. As one who is in favour of the proposed national park, I have some comments on the evening.

While Jeanette Armstrong's comments on the biosphere reserve model of conservation were certainly interesting as another possible route to pursue, it seems at this time the choice is between supporting the national park model, or not supporting it.

I do not know enough about the biosphere reserve model to have an opinion on its merits. However, it does not appear there is any group actively pursuing the development of a biosphere reserve in the South Okanagan Similkameen area.

Meanwhile, the national park feasibility study has been in process for a number of years and is close to having to make a decision. Therefore, my fear is that if a national park model is abandoned, the status quo, or worse, will continue for many years, thus accelerating habitat and species loss through land use incompatible with conservation.

While Greg Norton spoke passionately in opposition to a national park, the substance of his arguments left me questioning his motives.

While he tried to align himself with Ms. Armstrong by referring to his and his supporters' traditions on the land, which included such activities as quad riding and logging, he

ignored her comments on always considering and evaluating the needs of all aspects of the land.

Continuing on activity, whether considered traditional or not, cannot be justified or excused when it imperils the greater good.

Mr. Norton seemed to wish to pursue conservation to the extent it would permit and enhance his and his supporters' ability to continue to carry out their usual (traditional?) activities on the land. I did not hear him express concern for the preservation of habitat and species for their own sake.

Dick Cannings spoke of the urgent need to preserve habitat and species some of which are endangered in this area. He also made an argument for the national park economically and pointed out that such a park comes with funding that supports enforcement of its principles.

While there may be other models of conservation which may or not be suitable for the South Okanagan Similkameen, the national park model is the one we now have an opportunity to grasp.

The opposition appears to be divided with no cohesive, workable, alternative plan. After Thursday night's thorough presentations, I continue to believe that, more urgently than ever, we need to support the national park concept for the South Okanagan Similkameen before other land use pressures cause irreparable harm to the area.

*Joanne Montgomery, Penticton  
Penticton Herald, January 31, 2007*

## **In BC's Forests This Year**

The bullies in the forest are running amok, logging rules are virtually non-existent and the subsidies have been generous.

A Ministry of Forests and Range compliance and enforcement technician confided to me about the sad state of current forest management. "They have legislated us out of the bush," he complained. "Companies are controlling prices and are bullies in the forests." He had heard that his union was going to do a survey to determine the level of job satisfaction under the province's Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA), but the survey was mysteriously canned. He does not know anyone that is satisfied, "except the managers."

Essentially, he said, some companies are "running amok." His views coincide with a consulting forester who was once a major licensee woods manager, but now does not like to look anymore when he is out in the field. No wonder, as he now sees a management style similar to the 1970s, with openings that are too large, cut block boundaries that are too close in proximity to other blocks, improper riparian management, too much waste, and a lack of attention to visual quality.

Although profits are finally falling for the industry because of the current low price of lumber, most companies have done very well this decade. Thanks to the provincial Liberals, logging rules are virtually non-existent and the subsidies have been generous. The provincial government has spent hundreds of millions of dollars buying back timber to establish its new market-based tenure system, timber that the companies never paid for in the first place. Another \$125-million has been allocated for worker and community adjustment programs. This is public money being used to prop up an industry that always claims it pays for our schools and hospitals!

## **BC TIMBER PROFITS FLOWING SOUTH**

Despite the billions of dollars that were spent on softwood duties, most BC forest companies were able to make sizable profits thanks to low stumpage rates and mechanization in the mills and in the bush. Now these profits are getting invested in the US as BC forest companies purchase sawmills there. What a sweet deal: companies can get paid for the 20 per cent of the timber that the government takes back and then they use this money to invest outside of the country, providing jobs to US workers. Then they are able to purchase at auctions the timber removed from their tenures to use in their mills.

## ENVIRONMENTALISTS SILENT

There is quite a contrast between this decade and the last, when every move by the government faced harsh criticism from the environmental community and the forest industry fought hard to pursue its goals with its Forest Alliance public relations campaign and Share movement. Now the industry has achieved its entire wish list from the government it helped to elect with generous election funding. The Forest Alliance and Share movement is gone and with it the industry's and government's commitment to communities. And sadly, the environmental community is nearly silent with its censure, even though government policies are abysmal. Perhaps there is a lack of critical analysis because there are few groups working on forestry policy anymore and the media avoids reporting on any criticism of forestry.

## SOFTWOOD TREATY

The softwood lumber agreement is a dog's breakfast that quickly puts the public to sleep. Clearly, the Harper government has agreed to terms that continue to benefit the US, despite many court victories in Canada's favour including two recent ones. Perhaps they agreed to the terms because they know, but will never admit, that Canadian lumber is indeed subsidized and that the final court decision may support the US, which does need controls on Canadian exports to protect its industry. While Canadian companies are eager to see most of their duty payments returned, many remained opposed to the deal. The Harper government has basically bullied the companies to accept the agreement and we will likely never know how many companies actually support it. Under the treaty, the Canadian public could benefit more from lumber exports as the proposed treaty calls for a sliding scale of export charges that will flow into provincial treasuries combined with quotas when the price of lumber falls below \$355 per thousand board feet. However, under B.C.'s "market-based system", stumpage rates will likely fail to account for the export duties, resulting in no change in resource rents. Currently, the price is well below \$300/thousand.

## Trail Talk

Three members of the Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society met with the leadership of Princeton's Vermillion Trails Society on February 8th. Summerland has 61.5 km. of Trans Canada Trail, and Princeton has 114 km. Both of our groups share similar problems: lack of ongoing maintenance funding; and access to ORVs (off-road recreational vehicles) ruining the trail surface. Our long term goal is to improve the trail's surface for comfortable cycling. But if we can't keep ORVs off through provincial legislation, we cannot be successful. The Trans Canada Trail project is now under the Ministry of Tourism. I urge you to please write Minister Stan Hagen (Minister of Tourism/ Sports/ and the Arts) urging him that we need legislation to keep ATVs and dirt bikes off the trail. These ORVs have 100,000 km. of logging roads for their "sports". They don't need to take over the hiking, cycling or horseback riding trails, too. Here's Minister Hagen's address:

Hon. Stan Hagen, Minister of Tourism/ Sports/ Arts,

Box 9071 Stn. Prov. Govt, Victoria, BC, V8W 9E2. Here's his e-mail: stan.hagen.mla@leg.bc.ca

Last November, Bill Johnston and Henri Frioud made a detailed trail inventory of what trail work needs to be done, from 1.5 km. east of Osprey Lake to Faulder. In that section, there's one unfinished bridge, and we had three significant landslides requiring clearing. The trail's surface is deeply rutted from ATV traffic. This report has been passed to the Regional District office. We are in the midst of arranging a meeting with the Regional District in the third week of February with the hope that some of our concerns will be addressed.

Donations for the Summerland portion of the Trans Canada Trail can be sent to Ron Awai, 5909 Gartrell, Summerland, BC, V0H 1Z7. A charity receipt will be sent for amounts over \$10. For \$40, you can have your name engraved on our donors' board. For \$200, you can have even a larger plaque with more names. We are grateful for your help!

## Poacher's Paradise

Cutbacks to the Fisheries Department's enforcement staff have created a "poachers' paradise" on the North Coast and throughout BC, according to the B.C. Wildlife Federation.

Local spokesman Ken Franzen said at least three cases of abalone poaching were uncovered by enforcement officers in and around Prince Rupert last spring.

"These offences represent only the tip of the iceberg and are particularly objectionable as northern abalone are listed under the Species at Risk Act," Franzen said.

"The problem doesn't end with abalone," he said. Increasing numbers of fish caught for food, social and ceremonial reasons is being dumped into the legal commercial fishery, he said.

And increasing non-compliance in the selective fishery component of the commercial fishery in the chinook sport fishery means there's a need for increased enforcement year-round on the North Coast, Franzen Said.

He fears poaching for abalone and many other species might have become rampant later in the summer when North Coast enforcement officers were redeployed to the Fraser River in order

to boost enforcement there

Franzen noted there was only one enforcement officer available last summer at the peak of the North Coast fishing season.

"Enforcement problems and poaching may be as bad, if not worse, on the Skeena as they are on the Fraser," he said. There are reports that enforcement problems are not isolated to the North Coast, because of reassignments exacerbated by vacancies that have remained unfilled for years.

*Penticton Herald,  
January 4, 2007*