

# OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

November 2005

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## OUR ENVIRONMENT TAKES A BACK SEAT!

Hurricanes, Tsunami's, threat of an election, local elections, failure to solve the softwood dispute with our neighbour, United States takes first place in our news. However, there is much more which concerns an environmental organization!

Our woods continue to be clear cut. We have a beetle problem. Mills are being closed - no longer do the logging companies have to process logs in the area where they are cut. Loggers report waste as trees are cut so that companies can sell them as raw logs - often some of the tree is left on the ground because it does not meet the requirements - when it could have been processed by small mills.

Too many other priorities mean that a National Park in the South Okanagan is not getting the promotion it needs; in fact, there is little we hear from those working on the process.

Meanwhile much work in our Provincial Parks has been privatized and even if we hear rumours about second thoughts, re-fees, upkeep etc... we wonder if the contracts are of sufficient length that change cannot take place?

The Kettle Valley Trestles in Myra Canyon continue to be replaced and that is good news!

## PEOPLE NEED WATER FOR SURVIVAL

When are we going to realize that we can't keep draining our lakes? How many people can we accommodate in our Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys? The rapid rate of development in various parts of B.C., Okanagan, Columbia, Lower Mainland and South-East Vancouver Island has put a huge strain on all the infrastructure needed to keep the environment as clean as possible.

Full sewer treatment (Vancouver and Victoria lag badly), transportation and water requirements should be planned for the future; INSTEAD WE SEEM TO PLAY UNSUCCESSFUL CATCHUP AND POLLUTION INCREASES.

The lack of ATV (All Terrain Vehicles) legislation is making news again as watershed operators feel their water supply is being threatened because of intrusion by ATV's. The Legislation has long been prepared in Victoria - and has long remained undeclared. A good topic for you, our readers, to use in a letter and a question to ask our politicians.

Once again we hope the information in this newsletter will be of value, that you will renew your membership, perhaps add a donation and write to our government to express your concerns. Our 2006 Annual Meeting will highlight recovery in Okanagan Mountain Park.

*R.D. White, Editor*



**SEEING RED** - Minister of Transportation Kevin Falcon, far right, announces the restoration of the Red Bridge just outside Keremeos. Also, from right are: Don and Anna Bartlett of the Red Bridge Heritage Community and Roger Mayer of the Okanagan-Similkameen regional district.

The renovated Red Bridge was officially opened by Kevin Falcon (Minister of Transportation) on July 29, 2005. CHBC news staff were present for the opening. The new bridge is now a bright red. Metal sheets on the inside walls should prevent vandalism to the bridge, a problem experienced for several years. Sections of the original boards are attached at the entrance to the bridge. A plaque describing the history of the bridge will be placed at the east entrance.

*Bridge is being used by all traffic daily.*

*Michael Meheriuk, OSPS Director*

Donations are appreciated anytime - tax receipt will be issued. OSPS appreciates your continued support in our attempts to save OUR parks. 2005 memberships at \$10.00 individual, \$15.00 family, \$20.00 organization have been rolling in. THANKS!

## **LAND CONSERVANCY BUS TOUR SUCCESSFUL**

With 27 participants plus office staff and Anthea Bryant a very successful day long bus tour took place reports Anne Armstrong, Development and Communications Officer.

The October tour stopped at the Three Gates Farm on the Marron River and the Ven'Amour Organic Farm. On site was a unique habitat and animals. Three Gates Farm has entered into a legally binding covenant with the Conservancy while Ven'Amour Organic Farm owners Steven Venables and Kim Brind'Amour have agreed to protect 40 acres of cottonwood forest that includes intact brush.

The bus stopped at Yellow Lake for a picnic lunch in good weather.

## **CONSERVATION COVENANTS - PLANNED GIVING**

At the Land Conservancy meeting November 8th at Leir House, executive director Bill Turner, lawyer Charlie Abbott and accountant Ian Kennedy outlined how the organization was using the British Trust System to protect land, ecology and our heritage while at the same time providing tax benefits for donors.

The Land Conservancy (TLC) is a non-profit, charitable Land Trust working throughout British Columbia. TLC protects important habitat for plants, animals and natural communities as well as properties with historical, cultural, scientific, scenic or comparable recreational value. It does so by gaining control of the property through acquisition of title, conservation covenant or long-term lease arrangements.

In the Okanagan Region (Okanagan Similkameen, Kootenay Boundary, Central and North Okanagan), properties under TLC are Lehman Springs Conservation Area near Osoyoos, Max Lake located on the West Bench adjacent to Penticton, Mountain View Doukhobor Museum, Grand Forks; Okanagan River Cottonwoods, Penticton Channel; Similkameen River Pines near Keremeos.

## **MOUNTAIN VIEW DOUKHOBOR MUSEUM - RESTORATION UNDERWAY**

TLC and our local partners have been busy at the Mountain View Doukhobor Museum in Grand Forks. A community Liaison Committee has been formed to help guide the management and vision for the site. Merlin Rosser, our project manager is working on a Strategic Plan that will incorporate

the community's vision for the site. Volunteers are actively working to clean up the site and prepare for restoration work. Thanks to funding from the Softwood Industry Community Economic Adjustment Initiative, a state of the art dry chemical fire suppression system is being installed to protect the 1912 communal house.

Funds are still required to ensure that TLC can continue to protect this important cultural site. If you can help, please contact Shawn Black in our Okanagan Office (250) 492-0173.

*TLC Newsletter, Summer 2005*

## **WILDLIFE REFUGE PROPOSED FOR CENTRAL OKANAGAN**

A wildlife recovery centre for injured or ill songbirds and animals could be established east of Kelowna.

Supporters hope to raise \$3-million during the next two years to develop the refuge, which would include a small hospital and an interpretive centre near Eight Mile ranch.

"There's nothing like this in the Okanagan," Charlie Hodge of the Canadian Earthcare Society said Friday.

"Our main goal is to provide a place where animals that have been hurt could be rehabilitated and then released back into the wild," he said. "Right now, most of these animals simply die."

The likeliest animals to be treated at the centre would be birds, with injuries such as broken wings, and small mammals that may have been struck by motor vehicles.

*Ron Seymour ~ The Okanagan - August 27, 2005*

## **NATURALIST'S LATEST BOOK ON B.C. READY FOR LAUNCH**



His latest book in hand, biologist and naturalist Dick Cannings of Naramata checks out his Russian Olive Tree - an introduced species mentioned in The Rockies - A Natural History, a 288 page hard-covered volume was launched at Okanagan Books.

*Joyce Langerak  
Penticton Herald*

## **BIGHORN RECOVERY**

The local wild sheep population suffered a catastrophic setback in the late 1990's that reduced the number from 450 to about 150 as a result of the spread of disease from domestic sheep and goats through interaction between the two groups.

Since that time, the project - a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Environment, private organizations and the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec - has restored the wild numbers to about 280.

"Our target is to get back to about 400 by the year 2010, and right now, I would say we're on pace to make that number," said wildlife biologist Brian Harris of the Environment Ministry, who was involved in Wednesday's tour.

According to FNAWS director of development Neil Thagard, everyone has a stake in the survival of wild sheep.

"They've got a value to a lot of people - both in a consumptive and non-consumptive manner," he said. "People come here to view wildlife, and that brings money into places like Penticton."

For farmers who still want to continue to raise domestic sheep, the project members have come up with a variety of ways to lessen the impact.

"We're offering ways, such as double fencing, to reduce potential for nose-to-nose contact between the domestic and wild sheep, which is the biggest way the disease is spread," said Stepaniuk. "We're not trying to take away people's livelihoods. We want to give them other options, we want to keep individuals in agriculture."

Ideally, the biggest way to safeguard the wild sheep is to end the raising of domestic species in high-risk areas, something the project manager said many farmers are willing to consider once being made aware of the risk to wildlife.

"We want to create a feeling of ownership - stewardship - of the wild sheep, to let them decide what they want to do," he said. "We have a really sensitive ecosystem and we have to think

outside the box in creating novel ideas.

"We're creating a win-win situation for agriculture and wildlife co-existence.

*Mark Brett - Penticton Herald - Sept 8, 2005*

## **SUSTAINABILITY IS JUST AS IMPORTANT ON A SOCIETAL LEVEL**

The term "sustainability" has been used by many people and groups in the Okanagan lately because of the many developments taking place and particularly due to that rapid population growth in many of our communities.

Dr. William Rees of the University of B.C., who heads their School of Community and Regional Planning, published an article on the Internet in which he discusses this topic.

He defines sustainability as "a state of being, which is characterized by relative permanence." That is, if something - our society, our land or our water system - is sustainable, it will be around a long time.

Dr. Rees says that if we wish to be sustainable we cannot engage in activities that damage the basis of our existence. We cannot, therefore, undermine the long-term productivity of our ecosystems. An ecosystem is sustainable only if we protect it and the life support service it provides.

When Dr. Rees talks about a sustainable society, he means one that is characterized by functional democracy, social justice and reasonable equality. It is one whose citizens are committed to living within the means of nature. Dr. Rees claims that we are not doing this right now. In fact, he says, global society is presently completely unsustainable. Why? Because a significant proportion of our production and consumption is derived from the depletion of our natural resources...

You also probably know that just 25 million rich Americans (and many of the developers in our area are among this number), who comprise just .4 percent of the world's people, have a combined income greater than that of the poorest two billion of the world's people, who are 43 percent of the total population.

Scientists argue that to restore our

ecosystem's integrity and stability will require an 80 percent reduction in our material and energy consumption by the year 2050.

Dr. Rees' own studies of our ecological footprint produce similar results. The average Canadian requires the goods and services of between 8 and 10 hectares of productive ecosystems to support our present lifestyle. This is four to five times our global ecological share. No lifestyle is sustainable if it cannot be extended to all members of the human race. We fail the test of sustainability because it is estimated that we need four Earth-like planets to support or present standard of consumption.

Dr. Rees says that a sustainable environment is one that not only meets today's needs, but will also meet the needs of future generations. When cities and towns help developers take properties out of the ALR and virtually give it away to them for housing, we can't possibly be sustainable. When we have land that could be used for agricultural purposes it becomes non-productive when it is divided and subdivided for the purpose of providing residences for a few people.

It is a particularly unsustainable process when large acreages are removed from the ALR to provide a place for the rich and famous to practice their golf strokes. No individual or country can be sustainable on its own. You need the total cooperation and mutual respect of all members of society.

*Frank Martens, Summerland*

## **FRASER RIVER TOPS BC'S ENDANGERED RIVERS OKANAGAN RIVER NOW 7TH**

7. Okanagan River (channelization, water extraction, urban encroachment, habitat loss, dams and weirs altering river flows)

8. Kettle River (independent power project threatening species at risk)

*The Outdoor Report • Vol. 17 - No. 3*

**OSPS along with many area Valley Organizations want to ensure that our lakes REMAIN UNPOLLUTED. THE ACCELERATED POPULATION GROWTH IN THE SOUTHERN INTERIOR IS WORRISOME!**

# WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR WATER?

## PRIVATIZATION

Privatization. Public-Private Partnerships (P3s). Alternative financing. Contracting out. All of these corporate schemes mean less accountability to the public and ultimately less democratic control over our drinking water.

Our municipal water systems are in desperate need of upgrades, and corporations see this as an opportunity to enter what they view as a lucrative market. These corporations seek 10 - 50 year contracts to design, build and operate our drinking water and sewage systems. Experience after experience shows that when corporations get involved, increased charges, poor service, loss of public disclosure, environmental damage and corruption follow.

When these problems arise, communities find that they don't have the legal or financial resources, or even the democratic mechanisms, to seek compensation and correct the difficulties. Moreover, corporations can utilize disciplines of international trade agreements, such as the World Trade Organization's General Agreement in Trade and Services (GATS), to force Privatization, despite their dismal records.

Canadians are standing up for public water systems. In fact, some cities have already rejected corporate lobbying efforts and kept their water under democratic control.

## BULK WATER EXPORTS

Corporations see Canada's fresh water as "blue gold" and are proposing to divert and export bulk quantities of water abroad for profit. We must remember that these corporate schemes are not intended to bring water to the poor around the world who lack access

to clean drinking water. Rather, water shipped abroad would be bought by the few who could pay for it, and could be used for wasteful purposes such as watering lawns or golf courses.

Corporations have argued that the water that flows out to the ocean is "wasted water." But nature does not waste water, and these dubious corporate buzzwords cannot deny the fact that bulk water exports would be devastating to the environment and the public interest.

In the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), water is listed as both a "good" and a "service." If one province were to begin to sell water abroad, all provinces could be obligated to do the same, due to the terms and conditions of NAFTA.

Across this country, Canadians have recognized the threat of water diversions and bulk water exports and have undertaken countless initiatives to stop them.

## BOTTLED WATER

Bottled water is draining water supplies around the world and clogging landfills with plastic. People, many of whom are concerned about water quality, are paying hundreds of times more for bottled water than they would for clean water from their own taps. A few corporations are making enormous profits from this scam.

Bottled water is regulated as a product, and is not considered a daily necessity in the way tap water is. As such, tap water is tested assuming regular daily consumption over a person's lifetime, whereas bottled water receives only general product testing.

Some corporations do little more than re-filter and remineralize tap water, sometimes paying less for this tap water

than local residents. Others pay nothing more than a small administration fee for a permit to pump spring water from our watersheds. Canada now exports more bottled water than we import.

Citizens across Canada are working to stop the damage that water-bottling operations have inflicted on their communities.

## YOU CAN ACT FOR CANADA'S WATER BY:

1. Demanding a National Water Act that declares water a human right and protects our water from the increasing threats.
2. Fighting the privatization of water services in your community, and working to stop trade deals that privatize our water.
3. Boycotting bottled water, and conserving water in your household and workplace.
4. Contacting the Council of Canadians to get involved with our campaign and with local chapters.
5. Passing this flyer around your home, workplace and community.

## JUMBO UPDATE

The controversial Jumbo Glacial Resort project -- in B.C.'s remote back country. This resort community would take up 6,000 hectares and introduce a population of 6,500 people -- right in the middle of prime grizzly bear habitat.

Despite massive local opposition, the provincial government recently granted a certificate allowing the development to proceed. (The Minister responsible even ignored the objections of his own grizzly biologist.) WCEL continues to support efforts to challenge the governments' environmental assessment.

*Pat Moss - Board President, WCEL - Fall 2005*

## **DUCKS UNLIMITED WILL USE BOB GIBSON'S \$25,000 TO TEACH AREA GRADE 4 STUDENTS ABOUT WETLANDS**

"The opportunity came to introduce Grade 4 to concepts of land and environment," Gibson said Monday at the Vaseux Lake boardwalk.

"When people give us that amount for our education program, we like to acknowledge it," said Kathleen Fry, education coordinator with Ducks Unlimited in B.C.



Vaseux Lake is a natural when it comes to planning a field trip to learn more about wetlands, said Fry.

"The South Okanagan board of directors last March endorsed the Okanagan conservation plan," said Ian Barnett, director of regional operations for Ducks Unlimited's Pacific region.

"Conservation wouldn't be anything without education. This is a great opportunity to provide the youth of this area with the understanding of wetlands – and field trips."

About 85 percent of the wetlands in the South Okanagan have been destroyed by flood control measures and development.

### **OTTAWA QUIET**

**MINING** | Environmentalists slam decision but B.C. mining officials herald 'strong signal'

A northern British Columbia Mine project that is a long-time source of international controversy was quietly approved Thursday by the Federal

Government. Vancouver-based Redcorp Ventures announced that it has been cleared by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Transport Canada to proceed with its Tulsequah Chief project in the Taku River watershed in northwest B.C.

Canadian and U.S. environmental groups were quick to condemn the decision, which was praised by mining

### **Quick Facts**

The following information was provided by Ducks Unlimited Canada:

■ Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) focuses on wetland conservation in B.C. - identifying habitats and waterfowl species in the greatest need of help, then charting a course for restoration and management.

■ Supported by leading-edge science, its conservation programs concentrate on areas providing maximum benefits for North America's waterfowl, wildlife and people.

■ DUC has secured more than 167,890 hectares in B.C.

■ It has completed 520 habitat projects.

■ 630 landowners have conserved habitat in partnership with DUC.

■ DUC has some 1,300 volunteers.

■ Public education accounts for six percent of DUC's budget.

■ Fundraising and administration uses 12 percent.

■ The remaining 82 percent goes to habitat and research.

industry proponents as a strong vote of confidence for the B.C. economy.

Redcorp president Terry Chandler said the company is "not out of the woods yet" because it must raise new investment capital to fully delineate the size of its presumed multi-metal resource.

*Scott Simpson ~ Vancouver Sun*

## **FOREST WATCHDOG CALLS FOR HALT TO ISLAND LOGGING**

B.C.'s forest watchdog says the government should halt logging in the coastal Douglas fir forest on southeast Vancouver Island until it gets a plan in place to protect endangered and threatened plants.

**“If we can’t do it in the most threatened ecosystem-type in the province, one wonders where you can do it.”**

*Bruce Fraser  
Forest Practices Board*

The Forest Practices Board says the provincial government doesn't have the tools to protect plants on Crown land and no jurisdiction to protect them on private property.

Board chairman Bruce Fraser said that before logging blocks are allocated in Douglas fir forests, the areas should be “directly inspected for the existence of threatened

plants.”

The board's report stems from a complaint by the Carmanah Forestry Society, which opposed a 2004 decision to allow logging on southeast Vancouver Island.

The board says officials shouldn't have allowed logging without first doing a comprehensive inspection for endangered plants.

Carmanah Forestry Society president, Syd Haskell, praised the report.

“The Forest Practices Board has come out more strongly that I've seen them come out on any issue before,” he said. “The ecologists are all saying, ‘Save these areas.’” And the Forest Practices Board has recognized that.

## **COURT LOSSES ON ABORIGINAL ISSUES MAY FORCE FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN PROVINCE'S APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

Between 2001 and 2004, virtually every natural resource and environmental law in BC was amended or repealed. Past West Coast Environmental Law reports and articles documented that

unprecedented deregulation has come at the expense of BC's communities and environment, while providing increased rights and control to resource companies and developers. First Nations around the province have been vocal in their concerns about impacts of new provincial forestry laws and policies on Aboriginal Title and Rights, and the lands and resources that sustain their cultures and communities.

Buffeted by a series of court losses in cases brought by First Nations (many related to environmental and natural resource issues such as timber rights, fish farming, environmental assessment and forestry interim measures), the provincial government has been under intense pressure to shift its approach to natural resource issues. With hotspots brewing around the province, tensions about the impacts of unsustainable development on Aboriginal Title and Rights create uncertainty for resource companies, and ever growing unity amongst First Nations and their political organizations. Premier Campbell was under pressure to change.

This spring, an agreed-to Statement of Vision and Principles developed by the Premier's office and First Nations Leadership Council (Union of BC Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit, Assembly of First Nations - BC Region) stated:

*“We are all here to stay. We agree to a new government-to-government relationship based on respect, recognition and accommodation of aboriginal title and rights. Our shared vision includes respect for our respective laws and responsibilities. Through this relationship, we commit to reconciliation of Aboriginal and Crown titles and jurisdiction.”*

The “New Relationship” document is available on the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation website at: [www.gov.bc.ca/arr/down/new\\_relationship.pdf](http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/down/new_relationship.pdf)

OSPS office received a concerned call re: **red-topped trees** (lodge-pole pine) in the Carmi Ellis area. This is a 20 year old plantation and the trees are dying - caller did not think it was a beetle problem.

## WOODWORTH'S A MAN WHO IS SPENDING A LIFETIME DOING WHAT'S RIGHT

John Woodworth's life was shaped by a man he never met.

His grandfather, his namesake, believed that as the editor and publisher of a country newspaper, he had a responsibility to the community to do what was right.

The "younger" John Woodworth has embodied that philosophy.

Woodworth's house has an osprey-eye view of Okanagan Lake, clinging to the Poplar Point cliff with the tenacity of its designer.

In the age of the specialist, Woodworth is a Renaissance man. He's an architect, has lectured at university, has written a best selling book, was a magazine editor and writer, created some of the best man-made monuments in Kelowna and helped preserve nature-made ones.

The man-made ones include Kelowna's City Hall, Kelowna Community Theatre and KLO campus of Okanagan College. The natural ones include Okanagan Mountain Park, Cathedral Parks, Kalamalka Lake Park and Kelowna Rotary Marshes.

He came to Kelowna from Vancouver when he was four and lived on Manhattan Point for four idyllic years. When his mother died and his dad lost his job the same day, the family moved to Oliver.

"It was February. It was a cold winter, and we had two tents set up in the snow. It was tough."

"We didn't get along as a family, but my dad said 'at least you're getting your independence.'"

Did he ever. Woodworth lived in a cabin he built when he was 12 and roamed the rivers, lakes and back country with his dog and his .22 rifle.

"I never hit anything, but I found all sorts of things."

His cabin was so close to the Okanagan River that he was flooded out in the spring and awakened by spawning carp in fall. "When you live down on the bottom land of the river, you're part of nature," he said.

At 12, he was hired as a printers devil with the Oliver News, one of the highlights of his childhood. "That was a wonderful education."

When he turned 18, he got on a train to Edmonton for pilot training in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

"The war was on, and a lot of the local air force guys had been killed. My dad figured I wouldn't be alive within a year."

At 19, he was flying 16-hour patrols in a four-engine Liberator bomber, 250 feet above the mid Atlantic looking for submarines.

"If the radar operator spotted something, you dropped down to 50 feet with your bomb doors open in a split second, you had to make a decision: was it a U-boat? But you come back with other kinds of memories, too. I remember being off Iceland and the Northern Lights were out, a great band covering the whole sky."

When he returned, he married Nancy, and went to UBC with the intention of going to Carleton University to take

journalism. Instead, he fell into architecture, but still kept writing. When he graduated, he went into private practice, but was offered an architectural editor's job in Toronto. He and Nancy packed up their Austin A 40 and drove to Toronto.

"We slept in the car with my feet sticking out the door and our first born on a platform over my head, which seemed to drain in my direction."

They decided to return to Vancouver, and soon moved to Kelowna. After driving to Williams Lake during a winter storm, he questioned the wisdom of running an architectural practice across the Southern Interior. The next trip to Williams Lake was in the air. "That was an epiphany: there was another way of going about a general practice."

He had another epiphany when he was invited to join the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society. "It wasn't very long before I was president. I didn't want it, but here was freedom. You'd leave the office loaded with problems and come around the Poplar Point corner and knew I could be my other self, and no one was going to tell me what to do."

"When you run a practice, you have to take what you can get, but I suddenly realized there was another world out there and I didn't have to spend 24 hours a day with my nose in my work."

He was appointed to the Nature Conservatory of Canada and "pretty soon was chairman" and became a founding director of the Nature Trust of B.C. One of the first projects was to start creating Okanagan Mountain Park. "It took a long time and an awful lot of patience."

While negotiating with the provincial government, a planner noticed that the B.C. Forest Service had carved out one quarter of the park for logging.

Woodworth hopped in his float plane, flew to Victoria, tied up in front of the legislature and marched up to see the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water, who had been unaware of the change. When premier W.A.C. Bennett announced the creation of Okanagan Mountain Park, it stretched from Kelowna to Naramata.

In a life filled with accomplishment, Woodworth's proudest is his role in the creation of the 8,600-kilometre Alexander Mackenzie Voyageur Route, for which he thinks he got his Order of Canada.

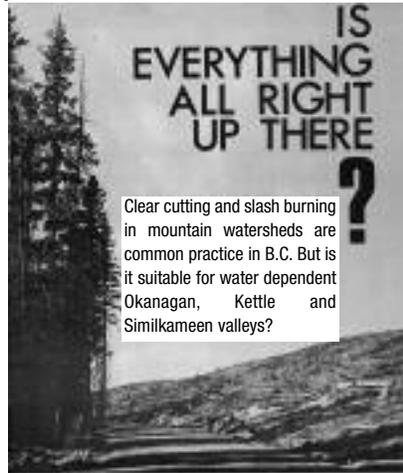
"I get calls from all over North America, England, Switzerland and God knows where, who want to buy the map and trail guide" - both of which Woodworth designed and wrote.

At 82, he's still working to make the valley better. "We have a responsibility to look after the uniqueness in this valley," he says.

*Ross Freaque, City Editor - Kelowna Daily Courier*

John Woodworth, a former director and president of OSPS, was awarded a life membership in the society. OSPS published his booklet "Is everything All Right Up There" in 1972. It created great interest across Canada.

*Editor's Note*



## WEST COAST ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

“Cutting up the safety net” rocked the provincial government recently. Our report revealed that, since his election 2001, Gordon Campbell has systematically changed, weakened, and, in some cases, *downright dismantled* the laws that were in place to protect B.C.’s environment. Here are a few report highlights for you:

- Government ministries responsible for environmental protection have seen unprecedented staff cuts, making it difficult for ministries to monitor and enforce environmental laws.

- The new “Significant Projects Streamlining Act” enables the BC Liberals to *wave virtually all legal arguments* standing in the way of development projects deemed to be “provincially significant.”

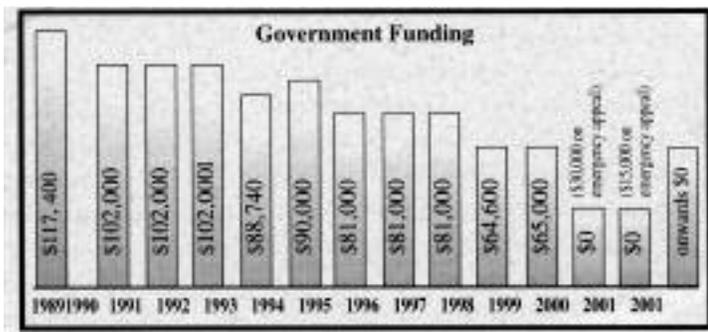
- Profound changes made to the Forestry Act by this government have shifted control of B.C.’s forest resources from government to private logging companies!

*Pat Moss - Board President, WCEL - Fall 2005*

## GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF OUTDOOR RECREATION LACKING

A major decline in government commitment and services to outdoor recreation has occurred. The BC Ministry of Forests’ recreation programme has been decimated. BC Parks has lost staff, and there has been a 25% drop in park visits. Parks are being increasingly commercialized. What can, or should, ORC do? We have protested these service cuts to service in many letters and attended many meetings. Is the inevitably approaching federal election a chance to query candidates about their positions on outdoor recreation? Although, we are not a lobby group we think that asking questions of political candidates whenever feasible could be useful.

*The Outdoor Report • Vol. 17 - No. 3*



## John Boot

Was kind enough to give me some information about the recent activities of the Rotary Club. They have been working hard on improvements to the Adams Bird Sanctuary recently to add to the enjoyment of all. Among other things there has been an expansion of the walkway and the installation of a new bridge to improve access.

*Summerland Review - June 23, 2005*

## SUMMERLAND IS PRESERVING PARK LAND

The Parks and Recreation commission’s move to designate Little Giant’s Head Mountain as a heritage site should not surprise anyone.

The commission’s mandate is to protect and preserve park land within the community. To that end, one would expect to see the board make recommendations to keep existing park land from development.

Once land is removed from park land designation and developed, the changes cannot be reversed.

Land use is removed from park land on developed land may change over the years, but a parcel of developed land will almost never revert to undeveloped park land. For this reason alone, there is a lot at stake as a result of the Little Giant’s Head Mountain proposal.

Public perception must also be considered.

The 13 members of the public who spoke at Thursday’s meeting all opposed a proposed land swap in the area. Their



concerns and opposition must be considered.

The proposed land swap and development have attracted a lot of attention from the community.

While the developer says the plan would provide a trail and a park area, others in the community are concerned that the proposed swap and development would take away an area they have enjoyed for many years.

In the end, municipal council will have the final say on what happens to Little Giant’s Head Mountain.

Land swap turned down by council.

*Summerland Review, August 25, 2005*

## TWO YEARS AFTER FIRE PARK IN BLOOM AGAIN

From a landscape of dark and grey, the charred forest south and east of Kelowna has blossomed into the colours of each of the two growing seasons since the Okanagan Mountain Park fire altered the landscape.

Against a backdrop of blackened spires, the bright green new growth, the yellow of arnica, blue of lupine, purple of fireweed and white of daisies is in sharp contrast.

It has been two years last week since flames followed smoke over the hill into Kelowna, and plant, animal and human communities have been busy in that time rebuilding.

The natural regeneration of a forest is an exciting thing to watch, as biology teacher, Harold Baumbrough clearly illustrated with a slide presentation this week. (At March 10/06 OSPS annual meeting, Harold Baumbrough will present "Recovery pictures of the park").

However, his description of what he recorded faithfully every week occurring on one plot of land includes very little about trees returning to the landscape.

With a fire as severe as this one, many of the cones that would be opened by natural fires in this ecosystem were so completely destroyed by the heat of this fire that the seeds themselves were even fried.

Baumbrough describes finding rocks which have fractured and splintered from the heat.

That's a danger that climbers returning to favourite spots in the fire-affected area will also face.

Because of our fire suppression efforts in recent history, when the layer of dead and dry material on the forest floor caught fire, it didn't just race through, lightly burning off dead grasses and moving on.

Instead, it burned hot and created intense heat, taking venerable old firs and pines as well as just their dead lower limbs.

Even the thick-barked ponderosa pines and Douglas firs went up like torches in the heat of this fire, as did their cones, complete with the seeds which should have been released to start a new forest.

In Cedar Mountain Regional Park, there are areas where the fire burned at its most severe, it doesn't appear that there's much natural regeneration of evergreens.

I would suspect the same is true in much of Okanagan Mountain Park, but the province has said it doesn't intend to do any replanting in provincial parks, so it could be a long time before trees return to those rocky slopes.

*Judie Steeves  
Western, August 21, 2005*

## FIVE MORE TRESTLES TO BE REBUILT BY DECEMBER

Five more Myra Canyon Trestles lost in the Okanagan Mountain firestorm of 2003 are rising from the ashes.

"Contracts have been awarded to rebuild trestles No. 2, 3, 13, 14 and 15," said Myra Canyon Restoration Committee chairman Ken Campbell.

"Construction is going on right now for December completion."

After fire swept through the southernmost reaches of Kelowna in August 2003, destroying 239 homes and forcing the evacuation of one-third of the city, the blaze destroyed 12 of the 16 wooden trestles along the Kettle Valley railbed in Myra Canyon.

The trestles were more than a structural marvel and a piece of Okanagan history. They were part of the Trans Canada Trail and a tourist attraction that drew 50,000 people a year to hike and cycle the 12 kilometres of wilderness.

"That trail is unique," said Campbell. "Since trains no longer used it, it was a flat trail usable by all, yet it offered spectacular scenery and the thrill of crossing trestles over deep canyons. One international cycling magazine called Myra one of the best 50 bike rides in the world."

The first trestle to be rebuilt was No. 18, the first one accessible on the trail off Myra Forest Service Road. Sure Span Construction of West Vancouver did the work in the summer and fall of 2004.

Sure Span, which has built bridges throughout B.C. as well as the United States and Indonesia, won the \$1.2-million provincial contract to rebuild Nos. 2 and 3 this summer.

"We've built a lot of bridges, so we know what we're doing in Myra," said Sure Span estimator Brian Moore.

"The only challenge is the narrow access through a canyon and No. 1, which didn't burn in the fire."

Nos. 2 and 3 are closer to the trail access off the Little White Forest Service Road.

Experienced bridge builder, Seismic 2000 Construction of Langley has the \$1.8-million contract to build Nos. 13, 14 and 15, which are closer to the Myra Forest Service Road access.

All the trestles are being rebuilt from timber to look as much as possible like the ones that were burned.

The goal is to have all the trestles rebuilt and the trail totally reopened sometime in 2007.

*Herald, July 13, 2005*

**OSPS 2006 Annual Meeting  
Friday, March 10 at Centre  
Stage Theatre will feature  
Harold Baumbrough's study of  
the Okanagan Mountain Park  
Fire and its natural restoration.**

## AN ACHIEVEMENT TO TAKE PRIDE IN

*Dear Editor,*

In 1960 an event took place which would be hailed as an achievement of some note - the opening of Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory not far from Penticton, in the South Okanagan.

Its site was chosen with great care, and has proven to be perfect for such an endeavour. The observatory sits in a valley surrounded by large protective hills - some more accurately named mountains - high enough to provide the isolation needed. But it has already made its mark in the scientific world, and has been widely praised, not only in Canada, but much further afield.

Canadian astronomers have been lauded as some of the best in the world, and have produced an impressive number of scientific papers. The Institute for Scientific Information has found that Canadian astronomy research was more frequently cited than any other in the world.

This is no small, insignificant scientific playground we have in our valley! Created under the umbrella of the National Research Council, its work is widely recognized and respected by scientists the world over. It is a treasure of great price, well worth its weight in proverbial gold. The observatory is putting Penticton on the international stage.

Therefore, its value needs to be recognized and guarded with the greatest of care. Not all of the area's residents understand, unfortunately, how easily human activity can affect its delicate operations. Signals received from space are carefully monitored.

These signals are often faint, and can easily be damaged by interference. So the population density in the observatory's environs, the White Lake area, must be kept low. The apparently unused space around the observatory was preserved to keep human interference with these weak and often intermittent signals low. It must not be casually tampered with.

Recently, however, attempts have been made to acquire land which is in the radius of the observatory's signals, for housing. Those making this effort may be well-meaning. They simply do not understand what is at stake.

Apart from its scientific value, says Dr.

Tom Landecker, observatory operations director, the project had brought benefits of differing aspects, to the local economy. It provides jobs, and its employees, like those of any other business, pay taxes and spend locally.

The observatory also attracts prestigious scientific visitors from far-flung



The White Lake Observatory must be protected from development, says Ben Amos of the Okanagan Partnership group.

places. It provides one more destination of interest for tourists. School children, whose minds are keen to hear what those big recorders do, are brought by their teachers on field trips and are provided with tour guides - often scientists themselves. The observatory is a key player in building a high technology economy in the valley, creating jobs for those children when they grow up.

Some years ago the Official Community Plan was adopted. It stated no application to create a subdivision could be considered if it could not prove the human interference it would engender would not negatively affect the signals received by the Observatory. Nothing must endanger the observatory's research.

A public hearing was recently held at which the applicant appeared to think he could ignore the Community Plan and replace it with one more favourable to the

applicant's plans. However, Robert Horwood, a federal government lawyer with the National Research Council, explained the applicant was acting on insufficient knowledge.

Because he did not understand the value of the research done by the Observatory, he failed to realize the seriousness of the threat the proposed bylaw would create.

The board must therefore rescind the first and second hearings of the proposed bylaw and then discard it, Horwood said. A second public hearing, starting from scratch, would proceed with more care, taking all the facts and the background of the observatory's work into consideration. This would ensure all misunderstandings would be eliminated.

Horwood also pointed to some jurisdictional errors which occurred at the first public hearing. A second hearing would avoid such errors. In particular, Landecker must be allowed to speak without hindrance, and explain fully the observatory's aims and importance, not only to this country, but the world.

AS AN UNPLANNED ASSET, the necessity for little interference with signals provides a stage for nature lovers. Birders especially love to visit the area - more pennies for the tourism pot. Both Western and Mountain Bluebirds put on a fine show, and there is no lovelier spot in the valley to watch for, and listen to meadowlarks.

This protected space also rewards the visitor with a slice of the old Okanagan - unspoiled, peaceful, mesmerizing. How proud we should be to live in an area where nature has provided perfect conditions for a scientific achievement such as that taking place here, in the Okanagan's unique, incomparable Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory.

*Dodi Morrison*

*Penticton Herald - June 27, 2005*

OSPS was instrumental in protecting the site. (Director Doreen Adams was sent to see Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.)

OSPS also wrote this year to voice opposition to any subdivision.