

OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Spring
2008

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

Office Phone: (250) 494-8996 • Fax (250) 494-3131

Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society

43rd Annual General Meeting The rebuilding of the Myra Canyon Trestles



Guest speaker: Ken Campbell

Friday, March 14, 2008 at 7 PM

Center Stage Theatre

Summerland Secondary School
9518 Main St. (on Rosedale Ave)

Everybody welcome, donations accepted

Editorial Comment

We hope you, with friends, will attend the 43rd AGM of the OSPS March 14. The program will be interesting and entertaining. We also hope we may gain new members as well as some who would serve as directors.

The OSPS was formed because a number of concerned local people perceived the need for protection of wildlife, preservation of special areas, and later the recognition of historic trails such as the Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail.

Those aims have been well fulfilled in every way with the creation of Class A Parks (eg. Okanagan Mountain and Cathedral Lakes); assisting in the creation of the Osoyoos (Haymer Point) Ecological Area and winter range for the Vaseaux California Big Horn Sheep; and further with the exploration and declaration of heritage status and protection for historic trails such as the Brigade Trail.

Today we are concerned and supportive of the proposed National Park in the grassland area west of Oliver and Osoyoos (more in this newsletter).

Much of this newsletter, however, is focussed on a region outside our usual interests. The policy and principles being brought forward by new provincial legislation deserve our close attention.

continued on next page...

Please use the enclosed membership form on page 6 to help us carry out our mission.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

...continued from front cover

Parks throughout BC could be affected by decisions to alter park boundaries to serve private interests, be they for ATV guiding, hunting, run-of-the-river power production and the like. Note: Bill 30 allows independent power producers freedom from municipal bylaws which could result in activity against community wishes.

It is essential that the environment and the security of parks get first and careful consideration. A precedent of putting aside present natural factors could upset the whole philosophy or park sanctity.

It is useful to speak of the wonders of B.C.

Parks for tourism — they make beautiful TV. and pamphlet ads, but playing with present park boundaries or intrusive behavior within those boundaries will have a negative effect.

“Do no harm” must be Minister Penner’s credo as, in his position, one of his sworn duties is “to protect and enhance” parks.

Speaking further of ATV activities, we know there are thousands of kilometers of logging roads throughout the province. There are also other trails and routes which could be suitable for ATV traffic.

But there is an immediate need for rules, supervision and enforcement to protect some areas from ATV operation.

Disturbances in arid area allow invasive weeds to flourish; untoward crossing of creeks can cause siltation affecting fish; mud-bogging through upland marshes can affect community water quality. All of the above have been witnessed. Erosion is also a major problem in many areas.

There is much to consider regarding our beautiful provincial rural lands if we are to fulfill our stewardship role for the benefit of all in the future.

“This land is not ours, we but hold it in trust for our children.”

Please write or contact various MLA’s and Ministers as indicated to support the treasures that are our parks.

Provincial Park Boundary Adjustment Policy, Process & Guidelines

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Since the early 1990’s, parks have been created through comprehensive land use planning processes such as Land and Resource Management Plans and Regional Land Use Plans. Prior to the 1990’s, park candidates were identified through BC Parks systems planning process on an area by area basis. In all circumstances, areas were selected for park designation to:

1. contribute to the long-term growth of BC’s tourism industry and the diversification of our economy;
2. improve our quality of life by producing places where all British Columbians can enjoy a variety of recreational activities;
3. aid the preservation and understanding of our cultural heritage;

4. provide natural benchmarks for scientific research; and
5. protect representative and unique ecosystems, and species at risk.

Editor’s note: we hope the order is not in importance. Our preference would go #5 to #1!

In recognition of the public interest in the designation and management of parks, and the integral role parks play in supporting local economies and community based recreation, government has afforded parks a high level of legislative protection. Because of this, boundary adjustments require legislation and are normally approved only where there are significant benefits to the Province.

Public input can be directed by email to PineconeBurke@gov.bc.ca

It is important to be aware of the following with respect to this type of application:

1. The final decision on whether to amend a Park boundary has to rest with the Legislature because Parks have the highest level of protection under the BC Park Act.

2. The Minister of Environment - as the Minister responsible for BC Parks - is likely to play a key role in whether an amendment is recommended to Cabinet, hence to the Legislature.

3. The Minister of Environment will be guided by the advice of the BC Parks staff after they have received the proponent’s and the public’s input.

4. This process is not managed by BC Parks. It is managed by the proponent company. BC Parks staff will be available to be consulted during the open houses and they should receive copies of all comments made to the proponent by the public. The proponent desires a speedy process i.e. to have a boundary choice come before the legislature this spring or fall.

5. The Boundary Adjustment is considered before the proponent files and application for an environmental assessment for his project, as would be required in this case which concerns a hydro project on the Upper Pitt. We feel environment should be the primary consideration.

The Upper Pitt River Valley

UNDER THREAT FROM PRIVATE HYDRO PROJECTS

History of the Upper Pitt

Only a few kilometers northeast of Greater Vancouver lies a spectacular valley with magnificent waterfalls, hot springs, splendid scenery and wild salmon in abundance. Accessible only by boat, the Upper Pitt River Valley at the north end of Pitt Lake has escaped many of the typical development pressures. Even today, this valley hosts only a handful of full-time residents. While logging has occurred in the lower valley for over a century, the upper elevations of the Upper Pitt River Valley are protected within three provincial parks – Pinecone-Burke, Garibaldi and Golden Ears on the west, north and east, respectively. The establishment of Pinecone-Burke Provincial Park in 1995 was supported by thousands of residents in the lower mainland.

In the late 1990s, the threat of a gravel mine led to the designation of the Upper Pitt as BC's most endangered river in 2000. Thankfully, the government of the day responded to concerns and stopped the mine. Now, the Upper Pitt faces a far graver threat from a large cluster of hydro projects in which an unprecedented eight tributaries of the Upper Pitt River would be diverted to produce electricity and a transmission line carved through pristine wilderness in Pinecone Burke Provincial Park.

Situated in the heart of Katzie First Nation territory, the Upper Pitt valley is remarkably rich in its wild salmon and wilderness-dependent species. It supports the largest remaining wild coho population in the lower Fraser and has a unique race of sockeye that take up to 6 years to mature. It provides valuable habitat for all species of Pacific salmon plus steelhead, cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden and the largest population of bull trout remaining in the lower mainland. The Upper Pitt River Valley attracts grizzly bears, wolves, marbled murrelets, wolverine and mountain goats.

Because of its remoteness and habitat values, government biologists selected the Upper Pitt Valley for the re-introduction of elk in 2004. Today, the elk are thriving.

The Proposed Private Power Project

The Upper Pitt hydro proposal from Northwest Cascade Power, Inc. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Run of River, Inc.) is a very large 180 MW (megawatt) cluster of 7 powerhouses. To be approved, this project will require an Environmental Assessment and deletion of land from Pinecone Burke for a 42 km transmission line to Squamish. Key decisions from the provincial government are anticipated as early as spring, 2008. Because Pinecone Burke Park was established by legislation, a boundary change will require a vote in the provincial Legislature. Public information sessions have been scheduled (see bottom of next page and www.bmn.bc.ca). The Environmental Assessment process is expected to open for public comment on the draft Terms of Reference early in 2008 (see www.eao.gov.bc.ca, current projects, Upper Pitt). Because complete information regarding this project has not yet been released, some of the information below may be subject to change.

Shockingly, the proposed Upper Pitt "run-of-river" project would divert all major tributaries of the Upper Pitt River that lie outside of park boundaries. It is an unprecedented high-density cluster of river diversions that would have a heavy impact on this small valley. Within only a short 12 km stretch of the river, eight creeks would be diverted in part, and seven powerhouses constructed. These creeks include Boise, Homer, Pinecone, Steve and Bucklin Creeks on the west side of the Upper Pitt River plus Corbold, a tributary of Corbold and Shale on the east. The portions of their headwaters that are outside of park boundaries will be dammed and reservoirs constructed. In total, over 30 km

of creeks will lose a substantial portion of their flows. These power projects typically result in diversion of 80-95% of the mean annual discharge of a creek. The Upper Pitt River is internationally renowned for its abundant wild salmon. It's hard to imagine a more inappropriate place for eight river diversion projects.

Astonishingly, creek diversions and powerhouse construction are proposed within aquatic habitat used by ocean-migrating salmon in four of the eight creeks despite the fact that important coho and chino spawning areas are found in lower reaches. Boise Creek, reported to be highly sensitive to low water winter flows, supports a unique highbred of Dolly Varden/bull trout which are present throughout the entire reach of the creek proposed for diversion. In particular, any disturbance to this creek is totally unacceptable.

In addition to impacts on fish habitat, considerable construction will be required on public land. New roads, powerhouses, intake structures, transmission lines, gravel pits and penstocks are anticipated to cover more than a hundred hectares of land in the valley. Transmission lines and roads will require forest clearing and creek crossings. Such construction in the Upper Pitt River Valley, with its steep mountainous terrain and heavy rainfall and snowstorm events, could lead to blocked culverts, road failures, landslides and damage to salmon habitat.

Threats to Pinecone Burke and our Provincial Park System

The electricity generated is proposed to be taken from the valley to Squamish on a transmission line that would cross a remote 4.6km portion of pristine wilderness in a Class A Park is unprecedented; in fact, it is prohibited under the BC Parks Act.

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Fears are high that deletion of land from Pinecone Burke will set a new precedent for industrial intrusions into other provincial parks and protected areas. Why is the provincial government even allowing the consideration of such an illegal industrial activity in a Class A Park?

Do We Need Low-Value High –Cost Electricity from Private Projects?

Despite its high environmental and financial costs, the electricity produced by run-of-river projects is considered low-value because it can be supplied only on an intermittent basis. Little electricity will be produced in winter when high elevation intakes are frozen- yet this is our period of highest electricity consumption in BC. A report recently released by BC Hydro indicates conservation initiatives alone could result in electricity consumption in 2027 being no greater than what it is at present. Clearly, conservation – not environmental destruction- is the best way to meet our future energy needs.

There are many reasons why such a large cluster of hydro projects is unacceptable in a special place like the Upper Pitt River Valley. While the Upper Pitt is a particularly egregious example, hundreds of rivers are now threatened with similar diversion projects. The provincial government currently has no management strategy to identify

which sites could be suitable for energy projects and which, (e.g., the Upper Pitt River Valley), are totally inappropriate. With no overall planning, BC's remote wilderness areas are likely to become covered in a web of overlapping and redundant private transmission lines... all of which will only increase our electricity costs.

Your Help is Urgently Needed to Protect Pinecone Burke Park!

Comments from the public are being solicited until April 2 (midnight) on the proposed park boundary change. Please, stand up for our parks and say no to the proposed change in this park boundary. Stopping the transmission line could present a serious impediment to the entire project. Please submit your comments to PineconeBurke@gov.bc.ca or mail them to Boundary Change Pinecone Burke, c/o BC Parks, PO Box 9398, Stn. Prov. Govt., Victoria, BC V8W 9M9 or fax to 1-250-387-5757. For more details on the park boundary proposal or to send comments to the proponent, see www.runofriverpower.com under Pitt River Projects.

Write to:
Minister Responsible for Parks, Penner
BC Parks
Minister of Energy
Minister of Small Business
MLA
Premier

Let Hydro develop energy plan

Independent power producers may soon run dams and turbines in B.C. rivers and local governments may have no ability to regulate or restrict construction of these facilities under the B.C. government's Bill 30.

Apparently, there are about 500 current water licenses or applications by private, independent power producers across the province, promoted as clean and green run-of-river power sources.

They need oversight as, apparently, some include diverting rivers, building power lines through parks and excluding First Nations and communities in decisions.

Will they pay royalties for diverting rivers? What happens to the environment? Who "owns" these rivers now and who sets electricity rates when their contracts expire? Does B.C. have an electricity crisis, or is it that B.C. Hydro is not allowed to generate new power for us?

Might the Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement between Canada and the U.S. enhanced inter-jurisdictional trade in energy case a need for more energy production (see www.citizens-forpublicpower.ca).

B.C. Hydro should be our utility source, ensuring public ownership of our rivers. A two-year moratorium on water licenses to private developers would provide time for full examination of any possible private power projects.

*S.H. Fitzpatrick, Kelowna
Feb. 2, 2008*

Questions remain regarding government releasing forestry companies of tree farm license restrictions on their lands

There are still many questions surrounding Coleman's decision, says Eric Swanson, a campaigner with the Dogwood Initiative. "The big question is what was the reasoning," he says. "He's got the interests of corporations and not the public in mind. Until he comes out and proves otherwise, that's what everyone's got to assume."

Says Swanson, "There's no benefit to workers in B.C. or jobs in B.C. or the

long-term viability of operations on Vancouver Island."

Swanson points out WFP is 70 per cent owned by Brookfield, a company that owns large amounts of property in New York City and elsewhere. "They're primarily a real estate company," he says. "[Coleman] must have known. It's publicly available information."

Several months after the release, WFP

announced a deal to sell some of the land released from the TFLs to a real estate developer. The deal will close in March if conditions can be cleared. The sale includes prime lands on the west coast of Vancouver Island between Sooke and Port Renfrew, including recreation areas used by campers and surfers.

However, still no compensation provided for the public for the minister's action re: TFL releases.

Limit Growth To Our Water Carrying Limits

In his May 19 editorial, Think ahead, protect options, Editor Tom Wilson, acknowledged that the Okanagan Partnership organization has research from UBC professors that indicate there won't be enough clean water to sustain Kelowna's population by 2050.

Despite this, Wilson states the typical pro-growth position that we shouldn't politically limit growth and we won't because we have the ability to vastly improve sustainability without pulling up drawbridges.

If the city can't sustain water to 2050, how is it going to ensure water is sustained beyond 2050 for future generations?

Unfortunately, in accommodating growth, Kelowna City Hall's strategies of reducing household and yard water use, and it's so-called smart growth high rise densification are futile short-term band-aids.

Indeed, whatever water saved is consumed by increasing population, leaving a net water deficit. The reality is, clean water supplies are finite, where-as growth increases exponentially. This means, the faster the growth, the greater depletion, pollution and drought.

Logically, the way to sustain water to 2050 and beyond for future generations, is to limit growth to the carrying capacity of tipping point of water.

We face two main choices. Carry on with chasing endless growth and blindly speeding along using conservation Band-Aids believing all is well, until we collide with nature's barrier of carrying capacity. When carrying capacity is exceeded, supreme nature, restores its equilibrium of balance by lifting its deadly drawbridges of depletion and drought to terminate the growth plague and to paralyse Kelowna.

Or, we can voluntarily slow growth, by lifting our drawbridges just enough to limit growth to ensure it doesn't exceed the barrier of nature's carrying capacity, in perpetuity.

One method is to simply have moratoriums or quotas on building permits tied to vital water supplies.

In conclusion, endless uncontrolled growth is one of the main causes of water shortages, pollution and drought. Therefore, survival depends on controlling and limiting growth. So, the obvious question is, why is Kelowna City Hall and Okanagan Partnership malingering in properly putting the brakes on growth today to prevent disastrous drought being here before 2050 or after?

Robert Cichocki, Kelowna – OSPS Member Okanagan – June 23, 2007

Keep Thirsty U.S. Away From Our Water: Expert

Natural resource a 'fundamental human right', under threat, trade lawyer tells conference

Canada urgently needs a clear policy to protect that nation's water resources from privatization, pollution and the creeping demands of the United States, a leading activist told an Ottawa conference yesterday.

"Water needs to be regarded as a fundamental human right and not as a commodity", said international trade lawyer Steven Shrybman. "That is critically important. We need to strengthen sovereignty and negotiate an agreement with the United States that makes it very clear that we will determine when and where Canadian water resources will be used. And that agreement needs to trump any right of any claimant in a trade agreement to assert a claim on Canadian water".

Mr. Shrybman was speaking at Integrate this, a packed weekend conference organized by the Council of Canadians, a left-leading advocacy group, to challenge terms of the Security and Prosperity Partnership between Canada, Mexico and the United States. Opponents of the partnership say its proposed increased economic integration of the three countries is a threat to Canada and Canadians in numerous areas.

"Even if Canadian water was a legally designated human right and not a commodity that would not necessarily mean it couldn't

be shared," added Mr. Shrybman.

But Canadian water resources should not, he said be used to support unsustainable management of water in the United States.

"In other words", he said, "If they are not managing water properly in the U.S. and they run out, it is no answer to simply divert Canadian water".

Critics of the U.S. thirst for water point to water-importing desert cities in Arizona and Nevada – especially Las Vegas – as examples of unsustainable use of water.

The majority of water resources in Canada are currently public owned, but there is a growing fear among those who agree the Canadian government develops a firm policy, for-profit private corporations will eat into public ownership with no guarantee that water could be delivered safely to the public at an affordable price.

"Water services should be delivered on a not-for-profit basis regardless of people's ability to pay," said Mr. Shrybman, "and there should be universal access to water".

Most Canadians wrongly think that there is already universal access to water in this country, said Mr. Shrybman.

"It depends", he said. "Many communities live with boiled water advisories and water in many first nations' communities is an international scandal".

Source – The Ottawa Citizen – Sunday, April 1, 2007

FSC to Review logo for Rainforest Logging

It is hoped that in reviewing the FSC Standards, a real end to FSC approval of old growth forest products will be applied, not just in South America or Indonesia, but here in our own back yard, including Clayoquot Sound.

There are always people ready to look like winners in this game, but if it isn't an end to destructive processes, then it just isn't a winning game for anyone, merely a slower, perhaps nicer way of doing the same things. We cannot continue to kill the

planet in a "nicer" way; we have to turn this game around: say "no" to industrial commercial extraction of resources where people and the planet and other creatures are harmed.

How cutting an old growth coastal tree thousands of years old can get certified as "sustainable" logging is beyond me. Everyone knows that when these trees are gone, they will never be again, not in anyone's lifetime, so what is sustainable about that?

Susanne Hare, Tofino BC Watershed Sentinel - Jan/Feb 2008

MEMBERSHIP FORM Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society • Box 787, Summerland, B.C. VOH 1Z0

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Individual (\$10.00) _____ Family (\$15) _____ Organization (\$20) _____

Donation: _____ (Income Tax Deductible)

Please help support our continuing programs



If it's salmon or money, the salmon lose every time

Here on the Salmon Coast, soul-stirring runs return with the rains. We always know both are coming, we don't know how much. And, just like the weather, while everybody talks about the fate of wild salmon, nobody does anything about it. The iconic salmon is entangled in our sense of identity. It symbolizes our home and reminds us of our own transient place in nature. First Nations elders say their culture survival is linked to salmon.

Yet our misty-eyed reverence evaporates the moment the needs of salmon conflict with somebody making money. For example, every year since 1993 the Fraser has been prominent on the annual list of endangered rivers. Threats include gravel extraction, logging, farming and suburban sprawl. So it's no surprise that, even as we get more grim news about the prospects for wild salmon survival, another huge gravel mining operation prepares to scalp salmon spawning habitat.

After studying 30 years of data, the David Suzuki Foundation found shocking salmon declines. Since 1990, stocks plummeted by 70 to 93 per cent among 10 representative B.C. populations. The report doesn't say it, so I will. Among our leading culprits is the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, notwithstanding its many fine individual scientists, dedicated public servants and their notable achievements.

But the DFO pontificates about wild salmon policy while behaving like a hostage

to industry. Although specifically mandated to protect wild salmon, it approves projects which biologists say will harm them. It salves its conscience with promises incapable of fulfilling. What else to conclude from Watching salmon runs under its stewardship dwindle from astonishing abundance to pathetic tatters?

You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to notice that the period in which the steepest decline began coincides with the Mulroney government's remaking of the department. Sure, the DFO nabs the occasional poacher, illegal clam digger or house-holder messing with the riparian zones, but when it comes to the big-tickets stuff, it just doesn't seem present or accounted for.

Want to "mine" the province's most important and endangered salmon river — be our guests! Decide that of all possible locations on this huge coast, you simply must locate your fish farm on a main migration route — no problem! Leave a salmon river so choked with debris torrents it looks like a landing strip for jumbo jets — let bygones be bygones! Our provincial government is also a player in this two-faced farce. Pave the parks, treat them like a land bank for resort development, liquidate the old growth in watersheds, let timber giants convert forest reserves to real estate without paying the compensation due as the original deal for access to public lands, kiss off the last spotted owl habitat, industrialize pristine foreshores, turn a blind eye to repeated pollution permit violations. Similar hypocrisy

permeates the commercial fishing sector. The same folks lamenting DFO incompetence will lobby furiously for fisheries openings that biologists warn may tip already weak stocks like the Sakinaw of Cultus sockeye over the brink and into the abyss of extinction.

Sports anglers think it's all about them. Salmon returns are declining? Let's kill all the deals so there are more fish for us. No Chinooks in the Cowichan River? Let's launch a bizarre ocean ranching scheme in which the release of hatchery fish at convenient fishing spots will create angling opportunities that mask the real declines in abundance. First Nations aren't immune either, not if there's a major buck to be made logging or mining a watershed or digging the gravel out of spawning beds. All of us, all the while, go on chanting the sanctimonious mantra of the sacred salmon.

Well, as I've said before, in a democracy, citizens get exactly what they deserve. The onus for changes lies not with the bullied bureaucrats but with the voters who have the power to hold accountable those whom they delegate authority. Time to start asking yourself whether your grandchildren deserve a coast of barren rivers and denuded landscapes, in which the salmon that once came to us by the hundreds of millions have largely been lost to concrete blocks, video games and toilet paper.

STEPHEN HUME

Vancouver Sun - January 30, 2008

South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Network

A group of volunteers and organizations actively promoting the Proposed National Park.

BASIC PROGRESS ON THE PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK

The feasibility study being conducted by Park Canada continues. The boundaries outlined in the Draft Concept presented at the Open Houses in spring of 2006 are still the model they are working with. Those outline an area, very roughly, from Oliver and Keremeos south to the US border, and from the Okanagan valley across to the Ashnola — not including the communities, of course, nor the farmland around Cawston and in the Okanagan, nor the Indian Reserves. Total land area in that concept of the Park is 650 sq. km, of which 350 sq. km is currently Provincial Protected Areas, 200 sq. km is Crown Land, and 100 sq. km is privately owned. There are grazing licenses on much of the Crown Land which will continue to be used.

To establish the Park, the Province would first hand over the Protected Areas to form the core, and the rest of the Park would slowly “grow out” from there. It would take a long time to complete. Parks Canada talks in terms of 30 years. The privately owned land, which is mostly ranch land, could be purchased by Parks Canada on a willing-

seller willing-buyer basis, and the timing for any individual purchase would be up to the present owner; as soon as the Park is established, or some time down the road when, for example, the rancher wishes to retire, or never if, for example, the rancher wishes it to remain in the family or sell it to someone else. The possible deals that could be made are many and various. A similar philosophy is applied to the grazing leases.

Parks Canada has been negotiating with the relevant Indian Bands throughout this process, with some kind of Parks Canada - First Nations co-management of the Park in mind, as is done elsewhere. Those negotiations have recently become quite difficult, and it is not clear where they are going, or what the effect on the Park might be.

LOCAL EFFORTS

The local SOSNPN (South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Network) continues to actively promote the Park. The booths and tables that have been set up at various events over the past couple of years, to provide information and to gather names on petitions and letters and cards (and where we got your name), are still going. There is a core of hard-working

local volunteers looking after that.

Main focus of the Network at present is to get signature on a petition that will be presented federally (in Ottawa; the format of the petition has been checked and declared satisfactory by the Clerk of the House of Commons), provincially (in Victoria), and locally (to the Regional Government). Three other organizations are helping with this, the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and Nature Canada. The National Park Network is an active part of this enormous effort, and gets names locally in a variety of ways:

- petitions at the tables and booths mentioned above
- petitions on attractive posters that have been set up in various shops and offices
- petitions in information packages distributed network-style

If you can use a package like this, contact Chris Purton via email cpurton@vip.net or phone 250-490-8682 (Penticton number).

Naturalists giving up plenty for park

Dear Editor,

Several people have asked what the naturalists are giving up to make a national park reserve in the South Okanagan. My answer to those people is I feel I would be giving up the following:

1. The problem of explaining to visitors why there are a lot of invasive weeds near roads.
2. Explaining why there are ATV tracks in riparian areas, where there are ATV tracks going straight up hills in what was pristine area, and why the trails are getting deeper every year.

3. Answering why there are no burrowing owls, jack rabbits and many other critters which used to inhabit this area.

4. Explaining why the reeds and other riparian plants all trampled into the mud around lakes, preventing many species from using the riparian areas.

5. Answer why the grass in some areas is grazed right down to the bare soil so that invasive weeds can take over.

We may be giving up some free access that we currently have, just the same as those opposed. The restrictions that Parks Canada puts on the area are the same for all — whoever said naturalists are not hunters and vice versa. And while I know naturalists who hunt, most of us buy our meat at the grocery store, and are therefore supporting our ranchers.

Unfortunately, I may have to give up supplementing my Old Age Pension income because I won't have the chance to pick up empty beer cans left by hunters and bush parties.

We will all have to give up something to ensure the protection of this area, but the benefits of these losses will be a huge gain for us and future generations by picking up the latest update of the National Park Reserve Feasibility Study in our local tourist bureaus and/or by contacting National parks at 1-877-490-2238 or by email at sols@pc.gc.ca.

*Harry Nielsen,
Osoyoos
Penticton Herald
Feb. 22, 2008*

Trail Talk from the Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society

This year, we're hoping to improve some of the trail's surface for easier hiking and cycling. We also want to erect an attractive flora sign with the most important flowers that can be seen along the trail plus their native uses, and we want to put up a sign depicting noxious weeds. We're working towards having a protective kiosk for these signs and also for some historical information.

We have one bridge west of Summerland to finish and must remedy a particularly rough stretch of trail torn up by ATVs westward from Faulder.

There's a provincial team working on a trail

strategy for all of BC. Unfortunately, the motorized group will have a strong input. If you want to preserve some non-motorized trails, please speak up. You can e-mail Bill Marshall of Tourism BC: Bill.Marshall@gov.bc.ca and John Hawkings, who is in charge of BC's trails: John.Hawkings@gov.bc.ca Both of these men care a great deal about having some non-motorized trails in BC. We hope that the KVR trail (part of the Trans Canada Trail) will be non-motorized.

But Bill and John need support because the motorized contingent, backed by the ATV and dirt bike producers and owners, are very strong. Please write! Please

also donate towards making your TCT as fine as possible! Donations will be happily received by: Trans Canada Trail Society, c/o Marilyn Hansen, 7611 Oak Avenue, Summerland, BC, V0H 1Z9. Please call about having your name on the donors' board: (250) 494-9265).

You're in for a treat seeing what has been done to fix the Myra Canyon trestles. Be sure not to miss the Park Society's meeting on March 14 at Centre Stage in Summerland.

You can also look forward to the following:
Trans Canada Trail Challenge 2008

Trans Canada Trail Challenge 2008 – Sunday, July 6

MYRA STATION TO THE PENTICTON TRANS CANADA TRAIL PAVILION

Trails BC, the Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society, the Naramata Woodwackers, and the Summerland TCT Society along with regional communities/jurisdictions are pleased to offer the 8th Trans Canada Trail Challenge. This year it will be held in conjunction with the re-opening of the Myra Canyon and the Penticton Centennial. Participants will be able to discover and explore up to 80 km of the Trans Canada Trail on the Kettle Valley Rail Trail.

You can choose to cycle, walk, run, or ride your horse in this non-competitive and

personally challenging event. Cyclists can choose to ride the full 80 km while walkers along with cyclists and runners can choose to do shorter sections that include the spectacular Myra Canyon with all its re-constructed trestles. In the Myra Canyon alone there are 18 trestles and two tunnels. Equestrians will be able to combine a ride with a walk or cycle in the Myra Canyon.

If you haven't already done so, go to our website: www.trailsbc.ca for more details and to register either online or by regular mail. For information about the Myra canyon and its location go to:

<http://www.myratrestles.com>

We sense that this will be a very popular event and registrations are limited. Register early to avoid disappointment.

If you are interested in volunteering do get in touch with us by e-mail.

Questions or comments can be directed to our administrative contact:

Contact Name: Leon Lebrun
E-mail Address: southwest@trailsbc.ca
Phone Number: 604-942-6768

MoE Small Parks?

The November media announcement by the BC Ministry of Environment to protect small bits of land in the Kootenays appears timed to obscure planned extirpation of the Purcell Grizzly, Wolverine, and Mountain Caribou. A proposal to protect Monica Meadows (Glacier Creek) while the ministry allows large hydro diversions on Glacier/Howser

Creek and a 92 km-transmission line over a pristine wilderness pass is nothing less than a sad testament to a provincial government/bureaucracy bent on deceiving the public.

Bill 30, which allows Independent Power Producers freedom from municipal zoning by-laws, will eventually cause the extinction of all endangered species in BC. A couple

of three small parcels of protected land may feel good to the environmental stewardship division of BC's MoE, but will be little conciliation to the nearly extinct Bull Trout of Glacier Creek as they struggle for breath in a creek diverted down a 16-foot tunnel.

Tom Prior, Nelson BC

Watershed Sentinel - Jan/Feb 2008

Timing Vexes Goat Fans

Environmentalists say blasting to widen Highway 97 should be delayed till after mountain goats' birthing season

Rock blasting to widen Highway 97 north of Summerland this spring could spell trouble for a local herd of mountain goats, says environmentalists.

Up to 19 mountain goats frequent the "Goat Bluff" are just north of Summerland. Concern over the impact of blasting during birthing season has a group of residents questioning the highway project's schedule.

The \$54-million upgrade calls for considerable blasting of rock faces along a seven-kilometre stretch of the highway from Bentley Road in Summerland to Okanagan Lake Provincial Park and is designed to improve safety and increase

capacity along the winding section of highway.

Penticton area naturalist Eva Durance said Monday a mountain goat herd has used the area for a number of years. It now totals about 19 animals.

"It's very useful terrain for mountain goats to be down that low," she said. "It's rocky, but they're usually up higher in the mountains, but they seem to be doing just fine."

Durance noted the female goats will soon be having their kids and will be at their most vulnerable. Mountain goats are sensitive to human disturbance, especially during kidding season.

"Highways has gone ahead and given permission for the company to blast and start work when the mountain goats are giving birth," she said. "This is absolutely the worst time of year for them to be doing this."

Durance suggests all blasting work be postponed until late spring or summer to avoid disturbing the goats as the nannies give birth.

"Once the kids are on their feet and the weather warms up, they go up higher into the mountains, so they're not nearly as apt to be (at risk)," she said.

JOHN MOORHOUSE
Penticton Herald

Ministry protecting goats while widening highway

Protection of a local mountain goat herd must be balanced with safety and traffic concerns as work progresses on the Highway 97 widening project north of Summerland, say Ministry of Transportation officials.

The project, which is underway, will involve considerable blasting along a seven-kilometre section of the highway from Bentley Road in Summerland to Okanagan Lake Provincial Park. An estimated 1.5 million cubic metres of rock and earth will be removed by the time the project is substantially completed in the summer of 2009.

One of the key areas where blasting will occur is at Goat Bluff, just north of Summerland. When blasting is complete, a rock face 70 metres high will be crested

on the west side of the highway.

Goat Bluff is also a key habitat area for a herd of up to 19 mountain goats. Some environmentalists fear the goats will be negatively affected by blasting, especially during their critical spring birthing period.

Brent Persello, regional manager of environmental services with the Ministry of Transportation, said environmental monitoring of the area has been ongoing since 2005, and a close watch is being kept on the goats while construction proceeds.

Persello said a bluffer zone will be created above the blasting area to ensure no animals are too close.

"We're going to be using foot patrols or temporary fencing – measures like that to keep them above the buffer line," he said. "There's not going to be a situation where a piece of fly-rock is going to hit a goat, because they're going to be hundreds of metres away."

However, Persello wouldn't speculate on what type of measures may be taken if the goats are still deemed to be at risk.

Dulay noted previous public input called for the ministry to "hit the project Hard" and complete it over two years instead of three to minimize the impact on motorists. Drilling, blasting hauling work is scheduled to continue until May 2009.

JOHN MOORHOUSE
Penticton Herald - Feb. 27, 2008

Recent Letter Sent to Ministries:

The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society (OSPS) has been informed by the Outdoor Recreation Council (ORC) that a Kelowna company, Okanagan ATV Tours, has applied for a commercial ATV touring license in the area adjacent to Darke Lake Provincial Park, between Peachland and Summerland.

The OSPS objects greatly to this application because the proposed activities in the area in question would interfere with the traditional uses of this area for hiking, family recreation and horseback riding.

It also seems to interfere and overlap with at least one Summerland-based commercial horseback tourism license and with historical protection designation.

Many of our OSPS members have also used this area for non-motorized recreation as an ideal territory for hiking and biking in a way that is compatible with environmental and ecological values.

Our outdoor-orientated members hope that the new B.C. trails strategy will provide opportunities for designation of separate motorized and non-motorized use of at least some of our trails, especially those near communities like Summerland, where many retired residents have an avid interest in quiet recreation.

Write to:

Ministry of Tourism, Sports and the Arts
– Stan Hagen

Please use the enclosed membership form on page 6 to help us carry out our mission.

German Citizens Protest Logging of Mountain Caribou Habitat at Canadian Embassy in Berlin

The BC government's failure to stop logging in mountain caribou habitat sparked protest at the Canadian Embassy in Berlin. German citizens gathered in front of the embassy carrying a banner with the slogan "Save the Inland Rainforest of Canada" and two life-sized effigies of the mountain caribou.

Last year several German environmental groups including Naturschutz, Regenwald Kanada, and Urgewald wrote letters of concern to the BC government. At the end of the year the government announced its new plan to save the mountain caribou. However, the plan did nothing to reduce logging in mountain caribou habitat. As a result, the organization Robin Wood took its campaign to the German people. Canada is Germany's fourth largest pulp supplier.

"For the last 47 years the nations of the world have had the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species to ensure that trade did not make species go extinct," says Anne Sherrod, a director of Valhalla Wilderness Watch based in New Denver, BC. But suppose what's being traded is wood products, and it's the logging of the wood that's causing species to go extinct? This is happening in the inland rainforest. Many kinds of old-growth dependent lichens, plants and animals are endangered.

"The recent actions from people in Germany show that the world is watching what BC is doing to protect its endangered species from going extinct," says Elisabeth von Ah, coordinator of Kids for Caribou, which runs an "Adopt-a-Tree" campaign in the inland rainforest. So far, 321 people from all

over the world, among them many children, have adopted one of the big trees.

"The last intact old-growth inland temperate rainforests are being destroyed for profiteering at any cost," says Eric Schindler of Pro Terra, based in Argenta, BC. "Yet the huge crown volume of one of those majestic trees produces more oxygen, filters more dust from the air, transpires more moisture, gives more protective shade to the ground, regulates the climate better than a thousand young plantation trees. These are astounding ecosystems and world-unique assets which only fools would allow to be harmed and destroyed."

The following are a few of the BC and US environmental groups that also support the scientists' mountain caribou petition. "We cannot support a plan for recovering mountain caribou that does not stop the logging of forest critical to their survival. Thousands of Canadians have written letters to the BC government begging for an end to logging the old-growth caribou forests, especially inland rainforests. But the new plan ignores their plea just as it ignores the main cause of the mountain caribou's decline: logging. This is an ecosystem of global significance, and now the international community is starting to speak out. **We hope our governments will listen.**"

Initial Signatures:

Save the Cedar League
Northern Ecology Watch
Kids for Caribou
Ecological Internet
Valhalla Wilderness Watch
Perry Ridge Water Users