

OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Summer
2008

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

Phone: 250-494-8996 • Email: anglerem@telus.net

Dear Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society Members - re: Invitation to the Treasures of the Tulameen-Past and Present on July 26, 2008.

The Princeton & District BC150 Committee would like to invite you to a great day in the beautiful Tulameen Valley. Participate in the grand opening of the network of historical trails that were once the only land transportation routes in British Columbia. Jacobson Lake Recreation Site is the main staging area for the trails and is located southwest of the community of Tulameen.

Enjoy an afternoon of stories from the Upper Similkameen Indian Band, families of the original pioneers, local historians and the Backcountry Horsemen of BC. Enjoy traditional trail snacks and beverages, and take the guided hike west to Palmer Pond with the Vermilion Field Naturalists. End the day at the Tulameen Community Club for a light supper and tour of the Tulameen Museum.

Transportation from Princeton is provided from the Princeton Arena via Lynch Bus Lines. This day will begin at the departing time of 9am with a tour guide and traditional music of the area on the bus to make your journey into Jacobson Lake enjoyable. After a spectacular day with us you will return to Princeton by 8:30 pm.

Limited seating is available on the bus so please confirm your attendance with Nadine by July 1st by calling 250-295-6067 or email: nadinemcewen@hotmail.com.

If you are wishing to drive yourself to the Jacobson Lake Recreation Site please note that your best route is along the Lawless Creek Forestry Road.

The Tulameen Community Club is organizing a light supper at a cost of \$5.00 at the door for 6:30 pm. Event T-shirts will be available for \$25.00 each-please pre-order by calling or emailing Nadine.

Please be prepared for a day in the wilderness with proper hiking attire, day pack with water, lunch and clothing, binoculars and camera. The hike to Palmer Pond is rated moderate, with an elevation gain of 350 metres and is an 8.5 kilometre return trip from Jacobson Lake.

Included with your invitation is the agenda for the day and the Ministry of Tourism, Sport & the Arts Visitors Map and Guide of the Treasures of the Tulameen.

Thank you to the Spirit of BC-BC150, Ministry of Tourism, Sport and Arts, Regional District of the Okanagan & Similkameen, Town of Princeton, Tulameen Community Club and various individuals and groups who have worked together to make this day a memorable one.

For additional information please contact Nadine at 250-295-6067 or Kelley at 250-295-7295.

Sincerely,
Nadine McEwen
Princeton Community Recreation/
Cultural Coordinator

Red Bridge Centennial

The Red Bridge at Keremeos will be 100 years old this year and a celebration of this event will take place on July 26th, 2008.

The day starts with a pancake breakfast at the downtown park. A walk down the railbed to the bridge will take place after breakfast. Dignitaries will recognize the centennial for the bridge and a host of activities is planned for the day.

There will be music, story telling, children's games, gold panning in the river, butter churning and a skit by a Cawston group. First Nations will have dancing and traditional food.

Those wanting postage cancellations can do so at the post office. Artisans will be present to show and sell their items. Railway hats, T-shirts mugs and pins will be available for purchase.

Let's make this a memorable celebration for a very unique bridge. Remember the day, July 26th at Keremeos.



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

Cycle route plan making the rounds

BY TRACY CLARK

Penticton Western News - May 2, 2008

A coalition of bicycle enthusiasts is looking to pave the way for a circular bike route in the Okanagan. The B.C. Cycling Coalition is proposing the creation of a provincewide network of cycling routes, including a circular Okanagan route that would stretch from Vernon to Osoyoos and back.

The proposal, which has already received support from the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen as well as Kelowna city council, would build on the existing Kettle Valley Rail trail but would upgrade and improve the trail to make it easier for touring cyclists.

Jack Becker, president of the BCCC, said the idea for a provincial cycling network, which is being dubbed the Soaring Eagle Cycling routes, is inspired by a successful route in Quebec called La Route Verte.

As a travelling cyclist, who has taken cycling tours as long as 11 months all over the world, Becker said it was during a trip to New Zealand six years ago that he first thought about the lack of adequate cycling trails in B.C. He spoke to other cycling tourists from Europe about other places they had cycled, most indicated Asian countries, but none had cycled in B.C.

“Considering the spectacular scenery of this province, much more majestic than that of Quebec and most other places in North America, why should this province not have a world-class cycling touring network ... which would attract people from all over the globe to come and visit this province, its cities, towns, villages ... ?” he said.

The idea was discussed with the BCCC and taken to the minister of transportation, who Becker said was “very interested.”

The idea was then taken to the cycling community for route suggestions and other ideas.

The routes the BCCC is proposing include southern Vancouver Island, Georgia Strait through Metro Vancouver and into Hope and the circular route in the Okanagan wine

country. Becker said this area is “a natural” for such a route because of its location — within a day’s driving of several large centres — the diversity of the terrain, the scenery, amenities and the close distance between the towns.

While the KVR trail is already an attraction for cyclists, Becker said it’s a different market of tourists that the BCCC is targeting. “Today, the people who do use the KVR have different expectations than the greater touring cyclists market,” he said. Currently, he explained people who use the KVR do so in shorter distances, with lighter loads, using mountain bikes and slow riding.

“They are expecting to ride on surface which may be loose sand, stony, may rip tires open or cause punctures, at least,” said Becker. “They are going to use much more personal strength and they better be in shape or else they will not go far.”

The cyclo-tourist market, on the other hand, tends to use touring bikes with narrower tires, and can range from leisure cyclists to distance cyclists, said Becker. They look for hard, paved surfaces and would want to cover enough distance each day to be able to make it to accommodations of the night.

“The leisure segments of this market may not be the most physically fit. This segment will not necessarily want to struggle up mountain passes. They will not be the boldest cyclists nor the greatest risk takers,” he said. “You could consider these to be people who would usually tour by car and which we wish to attract to exploring the province by cycling instead.”

Some of the potential upgrades the KVR would need to make it suitable for cyclo-tourists could include replacing the surface with a firm limestone, or at best it would need to be paved. The pathway would then need better connectivity on the east side of Okanagan Lake, and between Summerland and Kelowna. The signage and other amenities would also need to be upgraded and the trail would need to be maintained at a high level, explained Becker.

Editorial Comment

Good news! Two celebrations of historic interest are coming - both July 26th.

The Red Bridge at Keremeos has been restored for its 100th Birthday and sections of the Hudsons Bay Brigade Trail and the Rice Trail in the Tulameen Valley have been researched and restored. The OSPS has had a direct interest in both topics.

Mike Meheriuk, and OSPS director, has been an active member of the Red Bridge Restoration Society. The brochure developed to tell its history was funded mainly by the OSPS with assistance from the Okanagan Historical Society.

“Old Pack Trails”, a booklet published in 1982 by the OSPS, was written and based on work by OSPS members Harley Hatfield and Bob Harris, and told of their original efforts to locate the trail built in the 1850s. It proved to be a great assistance to Kelley Cook, contractor for the new trail restoration work. The booklet is still available from the OSPS for \$3.50 (including postage).

OSPS NEEDS MORE PAID UP MEMBERS!

A plea for lapsed members to rejoin and for new members to come aboard. We would also welcome 2 or 3 new directors, just volunteer! We meet the first monday of each month.

The 2008 AGM named 3 new Life Members in recognition of their long service to the OSPS: Harold King, Bert White and Sheila White were thanked for their contributions over many years.

This newsletter contains material relating to new OSPS territory. The topics of the gateway proposal at the coast and the new interest in coal/methane gas productions in the Flathead River area, both have important environmental implications. We hope you find all the information interesting and helpful.

TRANS CANADA TRAIL

Myra Canyon sparkles in new book

BRUCE OBEЕ CYCLED THROUGH THE OKANAGAN 3 TIMES BEFORE PRODUCING OFFICIAL GUIDE TO B.C. SECTION OF 18,000 KM TRAIL

BY J.P. SQUIRE

*The Okanagan Sunday,
April 27, 2008*

Kelowna — The beautiful Okanagan Valley, and specifically the spectacular Myra Canyon, receive high praise in a new official guide to the Trans Canada trail through this province.

The 398-page book, *Trans Canada Trail: British Columbia*, is from Vancouver Island writer and photographer Bruce Obee, who doesn't hide his enthusiasm for the Okanagan part of the trail.

"I cycled the Trans Canada Trail in the Okanagan Valley three times before I did the book, so I was fairly familiar with that territory. I think Myra Canyon is probably the highlight of the Trans Canada Trail in all of Canada," he said last week in an interview from his home.

A provincial rail-trail strategy has now anticipated that rail-trail travel will involve 25 per cent of the \$1 billion nature-based tourism in B.C. or about \$250 million a year in the future.

Obee listened when a government official talked to a group of nine doctors and lawyers on the trail. The official was asked how

much he thought groups were spending, and he estimated \$30 a day each.

One member of the group said they had just spent \$1,000 collectively on the first day of a five-day trip on their hotel rooms in Rock Creek, and one restaurant meal



BRUCE OBEЕ/Special to the Okanagan Sunday

Mike Leblanc, a trail identification officer, and James Clark, national trail coordinator, both with the Trans Canada Trail Foundation, cycle through Myra Canyon southeast of Kelowna

and supplies.

"The image of a granola-eating cyclist out for a cheap vacation can't be further from the truth," said Obee.

"The majority of the people that we met had really high-end equipment and they were well-equipped. It's like they want an all-day aerobic workout that's not like climbing mountains, not overly strenuous but it is physical. And they don't hate to spend on comforts.

Amanda LeNeve of Whitecap Books notes the Trans Canada Trail will total 18,000 kilometers when completed, 2,800 kilometers of that in British Columbia on two separate routes.

In the south, it weaves across seven mountain ranges from Vancouver Island to the Rockies. In the north, it takes the Alaska Highway from Watson Lake, Yukon, to Dawson Creek, B.C., then follows backroads into Alberta.

"This is a title we're quite excited about, as it's one of the most intensive guidebooks the Trans Canada Trail has done. It also guides readers through some of our country's most amazing scenery," said LeNeve.

Access to trail blocked

REGULAR USE OF SECTION OF TRANS CANADA TRAIL NEAR BEAVERDELL FRUSTRATED BY OBSTACLES.

BY J.P. SQUIRE

The Okanagan Sunday, April 27, 2008

With summer activities starting soon, Jean-Marie Vigneux is worried people won't be able to use a popular section of the Trans Canada Trail south of Beaverdell.

Vigneux moved to Beaverdell two years ago, primarily because he had easy access to the so-called McCulloch section to the north and the Rhone section to the south.

He is partially disabled by a degenerative nerve disease that struck in 1992. He has to exercise daily to maintain his leg muscles or risk losing the use of them permanently. He is also a Type 2 diabetic, so he needs that exercise to maintain his health.

Last summer, he hiked 15 kilometers a day on the gentle grade of the former Kettle Valley rail line. However, during the winter, he was forced to turn back on the Rhone section due to gates, rocks and large sewer pipes in his way.

The first one-meter-wide gate, a few hundred meters from the start of the Rhone section, was frozen in packed snow, he said.

"Even I could see that although the trail was marked as accessible for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, hiking and horseback riding, that was untrue," he said.

On April 16, he tried the Rhone trail again since the snow and ice holding the first gate in place had melted. However, after hiking for 1.5 kilometers, he discovered a second fence.

"This gate, unlike the previous gate, which

I could work with my limited strength, was a barbed wire fence which required me to work and easy mechanism to open, but I could not close it.

Vigneux can't understand why West Kettle Valley Ranch, which apparently owns cattle grazing land on either side of the rail line, would fence the trail since there are already fences on both sides of the right-of-way. Ranch officials could not be reached for comment.

Vigneux complained to Trails B.C., explaining the problem and suggesting the non-profit organization change its trail markers to indicate the trail can't be used anymore.

Vigneux also noticed someone has dynamited a trail section with steep sides north of the first gate, bringing down big, jagged rocks. In another location, four one-metre-wide, two-meter-high concrete cylinders like sewer pipes have been filled with rocks and used to block bicycle, horseback and vehicle access.

Judy Oystriick, also from Beaverdell, used the Rhone section for a decade, "But I quit because it was too much of a hassle."

The alternative is to backtrack to Beaverdell and use Highway 33 or backroads to get south of the eight-kilometer closed section.

She has complained to Penticton-Okanagan Valley MLA Bill Barisoff and provincial officials in Victoria.

"We've been fighting this for a long time — eight or nine years — to get somebody to pay attention," she said.

"We're powerless to do anything about it," commented Sue Burnham, secretary of Trails B.C. "We don't have any regulatory authority at all."

The property for the rail line was expropriated from the longtime owners of the ranch. When the rail line was closed down, "he made the decision it was his land again," Burnham said.

Concerns surface over Faulder water

Penticton Western News

April 18, 2008

Recent efforts to revitalize the water levels in a well in Faulder do not appear to be working.

The 79 residences in the rural community west of Summerland were placed under water restrictions this week that will reduce their consumption rate, as a way to protect against further drops in the water level and the potential for the well's pump to fail.

These actions were taken by the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen after efforts to rehabilitate the well did not improve its operation as expected.

While there are cycles that cause the water levels in a well to drop and recharge throughout the year, last year that did not happen. Rather than increasing, the water level just continued to drop. In a report prepared by RDOS engineering services manager Andrew Reeder and presented two weeks ago, it was identified that water levels became dangerously low and the well lost 65 per cent of its capacity to recharge.

In an attempt to remedy the situation, the RDOS contracted Golder and Associates to conduct an emergency well rehabilitation in Faulder. Using a new airburst technology, high-pressure inert gas was pumped into the well to break up sediment and mineral deposits that had become trapped on the well's screens. During the flushing, residents in the community were put on a boil water advisory and water was trucked in from Summerland.

Reeder said the flushing was considered successful, as the operation of the well improved almost immediately increasing by

continued on next page...

Okanagan River remains on most endangered list

WOLF DEPNER

Penticton Western, March 26, 2008

The Okanagan River ranks for the eighth straight year among the most endangered rivers in British Columbia.

So says an annual report by the Outdoor Recreation Council tracking provincial rivers.

The river ranked 10th this year, down from eight place in 2007 and 2006. The river's worst ranking came in 2003 when the council considered it the most endangered in the province. It ranked as the second-most endangered river in 2002, the third-most in 2001 and 2004 and the seventh-most in 2005.

But if the endangered rating of the report has dropped in recent years the report itself leaves room for plenty of improvement.

"For decades, the Okanagan River has been damaged by channelization, water extraction, urban encroachment, riparian habitat loss and the building of dams and weirs," it states. "In many sections, it now resembles more of a ditch than a river."

The report also blames users for mismanaging the river's watershed, citing several

examples.

"Among these were the inadequate management of groundwater, the over-allocation of water licenses and the unauthorized removal of surface water," it said.

but the report — as it has done in years past — holds up the possibility of improvement.

"On the bright side, however, a strong effort is underway to try and restore this great waterway and, while you can't immediately turn things around for a river that has been abused for so long, some progress has definitely been made," it said.

The river continues to be an "ideal candidate" for a major habitat restoration initiative that would include a significant "de-engineering" component, it said.

"Some of this work has already been done and, if such work continues, this could dramatically improve the state of the river," it added.

The annual return of significant numbers of sockeye (one of only two significant remaining populations in the Columbia drainage) to the Okanagan River system also reinforces the potential of such a program and the recent reintroduction

of sockeye to Skaha Lake is an "exciting" recent development, the report said.

"Over time, such a restoration initiative could improve flow regimes, enhance off channel habitat and improve fish passage," it said.

"Riparian habitat could also be restored in many areas, which would enhance fish values as well as improve wildlife habitat for red-listed species such as the tiger salamander and western screech owl."

The report pointed specifically to a fisheries habitat restoration project in Douglas County south of the border that could be emulated on the northern side. But the report appears to be quiet on what effect plans for a dam along the Similkameen River might have on the regional watershed.

Okanagan County officials in Washington state are studying the feasibility of a dam on the American side of the Similkameen River about eight kilometers northwest of Oroville, Washington.

The proposed 80-meter tall dam would create a reservoir whose surface area would exceed 72 square kilometers, with about half of the reservoir located in Canada, according to a report detailing the project.

...continued from previous page

20 per cent. But he said that there were still concerns about the drop in water levels. Then this week the RDOS issued a press release stating that those concerns were being realized.

The regional district said the problem may be as a result of 2003 draught, where Summerland and the surrounding areas

experienced a dramatic water shortage due to a low snow pack. Hydrologists, staff consultants and professionals have been hired to determine the problem and look at ways to provide the community with a good supply of water. This includes determining the age of the water in the 15-year-old well and looking for a short-term strategy for the summer if the well does not adequately recharge as expected in the next two months.

The RDOS said they should see that recharge starting to take place early next month.

Once that is known, the residents of the small community's 79 homes will be informed of the extent of the problem through a public meeting, according to the RDOS.

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

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Forum focuses on natural approach to protection of water quality

WOLF DEPNER

Penticton Western, March 26, 2008

Protecting the natural environment is one of the major keys to preserving water quality, said a biologist who will speak at a major regional forum dealing with water issues.

Anna Warwick-Sears, executive director of the Okanagan Water Basin Board, said this connection will be among the themes discussed during a public forum hosted by her organization Thursday in Kelowna.

“Riparian protection is one of the most important things we can do to protect water quality,” she said in an interview.

Riparian areas — vegetated strips of land bordering creeks, rivers or other bodies of water — may make up only a small share of local watersheds, but fulfill several key roles.

Warwick-Sears said riparian areas are like natural water filters that trap pollutants and sediments that may carry harmful bacteria.

While protecting water at its source receives a lot of attention, protecting riparian areas from the effects of urban development is just as crucial, she said.

One prominent but not exclusive development case with implications for local riparian areas is the development of Sickle Point — one of the last remaining pieces of undeveloped wetlands on Skaha Lake — by developer Mel Reeves, who has promised to protect the area under provincial riparian legislation passed in 2006.

The new legislation requires property owners to hire a consultant if they wish to develop land less than 30 meters away from a body of water, but also grants them additional flexibility and reduces municipal liabilities.

Local politicians have denounced the new rules as limiting, while environmental groups have questioned their effectiveness.

Warwick-Sears said she has heard mixed

reviews from planners dealing with the legislation.

“It may be that we need to strengthen the legislation,” she said. But it may also be a case of working out some of the kinks, she added.

Municipalities are still getting used to it, she said. But general efforts to protect and restore riparian areas — especially in urban areas — are starting to pick up, with mapping now underway, she said.

Warwick-Sears said other water quality topics include the effect of the mountain pine beetle epidemic on soil stability, dealing with storm-water run-off in urban areas and the entry of pharmaceuticals into the water stream, she said.

The potential effect of climate change on water quality will also come up, she said.

Higher water temperatures could reduce the dissolved oxygen content of water and encourage algae growth, she said.

Working towards a consensus Penticton Western News, May 2, 2008

I feel that I must reply to the letter from Ernie Marven, dated April 10. After all, he referred to me, relating to my signing of the Land Resources Management Plan, which I will refer to as the LRMP from here on.

Mr. Marven wrote of “the feeling in that room.” I know all too well about that since I attended all except for one meeting during the those five plus years the LRMP met, but I do not remember seeing him there.

Let’s be clear about this, no one who was a part of the LRMP table had any part in putting forth a national park proposal. I know this because the group of original, national park proponents came to see my wife and I at our home. At that time I asked them if they had discussed this proposal with anyone who sat at the LRMP table. They said they had not. Since a national park would directly affect ranchers I asked them to contact Mark Quaedvlieg, who sat at the table representing cattlemen. They agreed to this request and I am sorry to say they did not make contact for whatever reason I am not sure — sometimes time has a way of running out, it does for me I know.

So, people at the LRMP table did not go

out and propose a national park reserve, thus it can not be “hurtful” nor can they be “mistrusted.”

I brought the information about the national park to the attention of the table — and Ron Taylor, who for five years had represented fish and game clubs, wished to be heard on the subject as did others. After this, the table created a new sub-committee to meet with Parks Canada and get reports as to how Parks Canada was progressing. This LRMP sub-committee continues to meet and I consider that Parks Canada has made a concerted effort to give out answers. Some people may not like the answers but this was the process that we went through at the LRMP table for all those years.

One other statement is “The plan is not being managed as it should.” We, the table, have nothing to do with “management” that is being undertaken by the appropriate ministries of government, as they have staff to do that work. It is being done. Slowness of this process is due, in my opinion, to efforts by some to stop the feasibility study.

The problem is always to find a solution that people can live with — a consensus will never

be accomplished if any position is based on “I want.” There must be a position of give and take. This does not mean one position is doing all the “giving” and the other is doing all the “taking.”

Senator Fitzpatrick was familiar with the national park proposal for the South Okanagan-Similkameen and spoke enthusiastically to the table about it. Personally, I see nothing improper with him putting forward his thoughts — everyone else can and should, just know your facts.

As far as a particular business wishing to have “certainty,” there is no such thing in this world. If an environmental study were to show that certain actions of that business were at some times or in some locations, very disturbing to the fauna would they still wish to go there? As citizens, would we want that? This is not a federal land grab. It is a proposal to give some certainty to some of the most endangered habitat, not only in Canada, but in the wider world. Let’s talk about it.

Harold King, Oliver
Chair, OSPS

Parks will provide stability

Penticton Western News, March 5, 2008

This is in response to a letter critical of Ross Fitzpatrick from Quadvlieg, Rustat, Norton and McKay, opponents of a proposal that will benefit nature, benefit the land, and benefit the people. That proposal is a South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park.

Opponents to the park argue if the momentum to create a national park can be blocked then use and enjoyment of the land will remain unchanged forever.

Independent public poles have determined that the majority of residents support conservation of our endangered environment. A national park would provide what a large majority of residents want. Park supporters

also seek continued use and enjoyment of the land. However, the rapid pace of land development is putting those values at risk. This is one of the fastest developing areas in Canada. Circumstances will not remain unchanged if the national park proposal is blocked. As the land continues to become ever-more fragmented access will inevitably be prohibited. Instead, a national park is the very land securement mechanism that will ensure, in perpetuity, many aspects of nature all of us cherish.

Real world experience shows it will be good for business owners and for employees in the South Okanagan-Similkameen. It will be a big boost to our economy. Whether a person is in business, a recreationalist or a nature-lover wanting to conserve cherished natural values for themselves and their kids to enjoy, there are many substantive benefits to establishing a national park here.

A national park here will become a treasured neighbor in our ecological, economic and

cultural landscape. We are at ‘a crossroads’ this park proposal is a ‘one-time only’ opportunity to achieve this lasting legacy for our children and the future.

Far sighted people support the national park proposal. Ross Fitzpatrick is among those people. I join the many people that applaud Ross Fitzpatrick for his commitment to helping conserve the quality-of-life of residents in the South Okanagan-Similkameen.

There are a number of misrepresentations in the letter from park opponents. For example, Parks Canada has committed to allow CHC to continue mountain flying training. Further, Canadian Helicopter Company has recently been sold to foreign business interests. This is a clear example that circumstances can change in a moment. A national park will provide security and stability in long-term conservation of a the landscape.

Bob Lincoln
Kaleden

Ottawa taking look at pro-national park petition

NEARLY 20,000 PEOPLE HAVE SIGNED IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSAL FOR SOUTH OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

By Okanagan Saturday Staff
March 3, 2008

Two years and nearly 20,000 signatures in the making, a pro-national park petition is starting to make the rounds of government.

On Friday, members of the South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Network presented a letter of intent to present the petition to South Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District board. On Tuesday, B.C. Southern Interior NDP MP Alex Atamanenko is expected to table the petition in the House of Commons.

Of the approximately 19,000, an estimated 6,000 signatories are from the South Okanagan-Similkameen area, said parks network member Chris Purton.

“we’ve been collecting the signatures at parks information booths at various community events,” said Purton.

Originally, explained Purton, the petition was incidental to the information booth, which the network established as a way of disseminating “the best and most accurate information” to the public.

“As a result, the petition is based on a careful consideration of the park and its effects by those who signed it.”

A press release issued later in the day stated the network collected signatures at 53 community events in an area stretching from Summerland to Osoyoos.

Parks network member Bob Lincoln added presenting the petition to the regional dis-

trict let the “local government know a large percentage of the area population support the park”

Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District directors were unavailable to receive the letter of intent on Friday. Copies of the petition will be available for the directors, but the originals have already been submitted to Ottawa.

Petition signatures were also collected by Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Canadian parks and Wilderness Society and Nature Canada.

More information about the proposed park is available though Parks Canada at its project office at 102 Industrial Place in Penticton.

Billions for roads, a pittance for transit

Dear Editor,

The provincial government has announced a \$14 billion transit plan – transit as in roads and bridges, not in public transportation.

Minister of Highways Kevin Falcon evidently believes the huge expenditure for “Gateway” will solve the trucking problems in and out of Vancouver, as well as all other Lower Mainland traffic.

Unfortunately, there is nowhere in North America which has been successful in combating congestion by building more roads. In fact, studies in Cincinnati show worsened traffic problems, 43 percent, by expanding their road system.

There are ways to ease congestion in

the Lower Mainland:

Use express buses with queue-jumper express lanes over the Port Mann Bridge.

Increase the number of Skytrains traveling south of the Fraser River.

Use “low floor” diesel railcars on low-use railway lines – these are successful in Europe.

The government’s “green plan” would be far better served by substantial investment in public transit. Compare \$631 Million more for highways but only \$21 million for transit.

There is no city anywhere that can live with uncontrolled traffic. A comprehensive and responsive public transit system is a necessity. Vancouver needs that system, desperately.

*Sheila White, Summerland
Penticton Herald, May 15, 2008*

Gateway to Global Warming?

Today more and more people are trying to do what they can to reduce their contribution to climate change but it’s difficult without adequate public transit alternatives. If we make the wrong choices our tax money will be used to increase carbon emissions and speed up climate change. Our government has to lead the way.

The Society Promoting Environmental Conservation (SPEC) examined the Ministry of Transportation’s reports and has found that the Gateway Project will lead to a 31% increase in the greenhouse gas emissions which cause climate change. Meanwhile, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) has published a report showing the possibility of reducing emissions by 45% by 2020. It is up to us to make the right choice.

Why building highways first won't get us out of the jam

BY STEPHEN REES

Transportation Economist, Richmond

The public can only make transportation choices from what we have been offered. As residents of municipalities south of the Fraser, our options are still far too limited. The Province has just announced a \$14 billion transit plan, but they still insist that the multi-billion dollar Gateway highway expansion mega-project is needed and will come first. This approach only digs us deeper into debt, without solving our traffic problem. In fact, the end result will be more cars and more congestion.

Any plan aimed at containing urban sprawl and rewarding green developments will not work unless it incorporates transit right from the start – not as a possible add-on later, which is the provincial government plan announced in the 2008 budget. There are many cost-effective solutions to peak hour congestion on the Port Mann Bridge that can be implemented right away, which have not been evaluated adequately. These include:

- express buses across the Port Mann Bridge between Surrey and Coquitlam, using “queue-jumper” express lanes.
- more SkyTrain cars traveling south of the Fraser
- “low-floor” diesel railcars (as used in Europe), run on existing low-use freight railway lines.

We cannot afford to wait until after new roads have been built, bridges twined and freeways widened to tackle our region's traffic problems.

Developers are already buying up our land so that they can build more car-oriented sprawl in areas which have little or no transit provision. Without the provincial government making improved public transit their top priority the cycle can only worsen



and we will spend ever more hours stuck in traffic. We must provide reliable public transit to the fastest growing areas of the province NOW.

Did you know?

“Widening and building new highways actually causes, not relieves, traffic congestion in Cincinnati and other major US metropolitan areas. This study estimates that up to 43% of traffic in Greater Cincinnati is caused just by expanding the area's road network.”

Did you know?

Public transit is at least 30 times safer than automobile travel, as measured in deaths per mile traveled.

Reckless spending or Sensible solutions

*Western Canada Wilderness Committee
April 24, 2008*

The latest educational newspaper by Western Canada Wilderness Committee is entitled *Stuck in Traffic? We have a Choice – Reckless Spending or Sensible Solutions*. Have a read. You will be interested to hear the perspectives of Metro Vancouver area residents who want immediate transit investment, and land use planning based around livability and sustainability. As you may know,

all this will be threatened if the provincial Gateway Project is allowed to proceed.

The BC “Gateway Program” provides the infrastructure for the Canadian government's “Pacific Gateway Strategy,” which is an (estimated) \$7 billion federal government plan to increase trade with the Asia-Pacific region. The massive proposal includes new and expanded highways, bridges, rail yards, container terminals and port infrastructure to facilitate importing more goods made abroad and exporting more of BC's non renewable resources.

Our provincial government claims that

Gateway will also address the problem of traffic congestion. This assertion is false. Commuter travel would actually get much more difficult as a result of Gateway. Highway expansion will only result in more traffic jams and car accidents, and an increase in our irresponsible contribution to climate change. Imagine traveling on roads groaning under the weight of 5,000 additional heavy truck trips each and every day. Then, imagine breathing the air when each new container ship that pulls into an expanded Delta Port spews more pollution than 2,000 diesel trucks. That is the contribution Gateway would ultimately make to our environment and quality of life.

Flathead River tops 2008 Endangered Rivers List

MARK ANGELO, CM, OBC · *Rivers Chair, Outdoor Recreation Council*

As one of North America's most beautiful rivers flowing through both south-eastern BC and the state of Montana, the Flathead continues to face an array of threats and, for the second consecutive year, finds itself in the number one position. Foremost among the threats confronting this waterway is the proposed Cline open-pit coal mine which would be located in the headwaters of the Flathead River about 50 km south of Fernie. If approved, the mine would produce about 2 millions tons of bituminous coal per year.

The Flathead River runs through the largest, unsettled, low elevation valley in southern Canada and is one of North America's wildest and most beautiful waterway. No other region along the Canadian - Us border sustains such a diversity of wildlife and ecosystems.

The river and its surrounding terrain, which forms the western boundary of the Waterton - Glacier International Peace

Park, supports many important wildlife populations ranging from grizzly bears to tailed frogs, both of which are blue-listed species. The river also has some of the best water quality of any river in Canada (if not North America) and supports important trans-boundary fish populations that include the blue-listed bull trout as well as westslope cutthroat trout - and the river's floodplain is a critical travel corridor for wolves, grizzlies and elk. It's also important to note that the Flathead supports perhaps the highest density of inland grizzly bears in North America.

Yet, the BC portion of the Flathead River and its surrounding environs remain vulnerable and unprotected.

Given that the Flathead is an international waterway, any adverse impacts associated with the proposed mine will also extend downstream close to Montana's Glacier National Park and then to Flathead Lake. The river's U.S. stretch has also been designated under the "Wild and Scenic River"

system and it's estimated that, if a pollution event were to occur, contaminated water could reach Montana's Flathead Lake within 48 hours of discharge from the mine.

At present, the terms of reference for the mine is currently being reviewed by the BC Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) which will ultimately gauge whether or not the risks associated with the mine can be mitigated. To date, public sentiment and feedback towards the mine has been overwhelmingly negative. In addition, many believe that approval of the mine would be very difficult to justify from a scientific perspective in that there is not enough information to accurately determine the impacts of the project on the entire Flathead Basin.

Consequently, in light of this uncertainty, the ORC believes the EAO and the BC government should take a risk-adverse approach and, for the good of the river and its valley, block the mine.

Toxic Emissions affect our Health

If the South Fraser Perimeter Road is built as proposed and Highway 1 is doubled to eight lanes, we, the residents of communities south of the Fraser, will be encircled by major highways and every resident will be increasingly exposed to thousands of extra emissions-spewing trucks and cars every day.

Environment Canada considers vehicle emissions to be toxic. Health Canada tells us that fine particulate matter is known to aggravate symptoms in individuals who already suffer from respiratory or cardiovascular disease. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada has recently reinforced the same statement with their January 2008 report

card. In addition they declare there are approximately 6000 additional deaths in Canada because of short term exposure to air pollution. Do we really want to increase the number of cars, vans and trucks going through our back yard?

Conservation program gains new partners

OLIVER - The South Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Program has four new partners, as it hosts its annual spring steering committee meeting in Oliver today.

Program coordinator Bryn White says

the towns of Oliver and Osoyoos and the District of Summerland are joining the SOSCP as local government partners, following the Regional District of the Okanagan-Similkameen, which signed on last fall. The Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory is also joining, to become the 45th partner of this environmental conservation program.

The South Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Program was founded in 2000 by various groups concerned with the special environment and habitat of the South Okanagan-Similkameen. Its vision is to maintain a healthy environment that sustains the diversity of indigenous plants and animals while enriching people's lives.

Penticton Herald Staff, May 15, 2008