

OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Summer
2009

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

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

Parks Society Recalls Juergen Hansen's Contributions

Centre Stage Theatre in Summerland was the venue for the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society 44th Annual General Meeting on March 6th.

During the meeting, a tribute to Juergen Hansen, who passed away earlier in March, was read.

Hansen had been associated with society projects during its entire 44 years.

He was an enthusiastic supporter in all the projects, from parks like Okanagan Mountain and Cathedral Lakes, habitat in the winter range for the bighorn sheep at Vaseaux Lake or environmental with the ecological reserve the society helped to create at Haynes Point in Osoyoos.

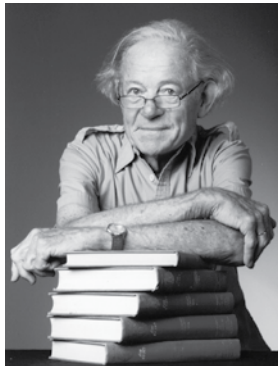
For 10 years, Hansen and directors Joe Klein, Clive Johnson and Harold King attended the meetings of the Land Resource Management Planning. Together they were the voice for the environment.

Hansen was also often the society's representative to the B.C. Outdoor Council and to the B.C. Environmental Network. To both he brought energy and foresight.

The 70-kilometre stretch of the Trans Canada Trail for which his wife Marilyn

is the coordinator also greatly interested Hansen.

Much money had to be raised to build bridges, surface the trail and build fencing. The trail is slated for non-motorized traffic only. It is open to all users but not all uses.



Hansen was a man of great scientific knowledge, of energy and a desire to have peaceful solutions using consensus, all with the aim of protection and conservation of the environment. He and his contribution to all those organizations will be missed.

The brief business meeting was conducted by past president Vic Jensen in the absence of chair Harold King.

Bert White spoke to the financial statement which is good thanks to many donors, but especially the late Doreen Tait's legacy.

The elections saw Anne Davidson, Bill Johnston, King, Mike Meheriuk and White elected for two years. Continuing directors are John Bremmer, Don Guild, Johnson and Sheila White.

Bill Johnston, who has enjoyed years of hiking on trails through the Cascade Mountains, introduced the speaker.

Continued on next page...

EDITORIAL

The OSPS Annual General Meeting was held in Summerland March 6th, 2009. The news of the death of one of our most active and able Directors A Juergen Hausen was a cause of sadness and loss (see tribute article). Juergen will be greatly missed. We hope others will join our board – two or three volunteers would be most helpful.

In this time of fiscal restraint, it is most gratifying to have the OSPS assist other groups. It must be said that the OSPS Directors have always been most frugal and also fortunate in their spending. The popular and educational Meadow Lark Festival in Penticton received \$1000.00. The Skaha Rotary Club received \$290.00 to assist with the Penticton Creek cleanup. The Summerland Cultural and Development Group were given \$500.00 towards the cost of an interpretive panel to be erected by the protected marsh on the Okanagan Lake Lower Town foreshore and we were pleased to contribute \$2,500.00 to the Valhalla Foundation to assist in the purchase of 155 acres of forest and Slocan Lake foreshore which abuts the present Valhalla Wilderness. It was a wonderful opportunity to help expand that place of incredible beauty and diversity.

The election is over and we know the governing party but wait the naming of Ministers with whom we may have dealings.

The OSPS has concerns regarding funding for BC's world renowned Parks which have been and should continue to be great

Continued on next page...

Please use the enclosed membership form on page 4 to help us carry out our mission.

Juergen Hansen Remembered

...continued from front page.

Kelly Cook of Princeton gave a delightful presentation as she narrated the history of the historic trails and her work in restoration of two trails out of Tulameen.

She has called them “treasures of the Tulameen and has become well versed in the story of their construction for trade and the people who used them.

Some of the descendants live in the Princeton area and their stories and pictures were mingled with those of the trails and the array of summer wild flowers.

The pictures, all taken by co-worker Sharon Anderson, also showed the festivities on July 26 when the official opening was held.

The crowd was joined by 60 back country horse riders who had taken several days in their ride from Fort Langley to add an authentic touch to the colourful ceremonies.

Sue MacGregor, herself related to Cascade pioneer family, the Allisons, thanked the speaker for her presentation which was appreciated by everyone.

EDITORIAL ...continued from front page.

tourist attractions. Layoffs – this spring as well – have had a devastating effect on the number of experienced and qualified Park Rangers. Funding has also been cut considerably (see articles).

The OSPS which itself was responsible for several parks in the South Okanagan Similkameen area is understandably alarmed that the Park lands here and throughout BC will not be properly cared for. The BC Park system is of such varied climate and terrain that it encompasses many important and unique biotic conditions. We must guard and respect these beautiful and unique areas.

The “Sharing of Trails” is a must topic. The OSPS favors multiple use of some trails, but others to be open for all users but not all uses. This means non-motorized traffic on trails meant for hiking and perhaps cycling. This is a much discussed concept. The OSPS also continues to support the need for licencing and insurance for all ATV users. They do use some roads they do use publicly funded trails and they do need to be able to be recognized.

Water is a major topic for many reasons. We know it is essential to all life, but do

we really appreciate the care that must be taken regarding not only its use but also its source. Whether from mountain snow or underground aquifers the extraction, distribution, and use and disposal of this resource are all-important. Two reports expand on this topic.

Power is another much discussed subject, whether solar, wind, fossil fuel or hydro (or hummer!) power is required for many reasons. Presently run-of-rail (ROR) is being touted as clean, green and good. This depends, we feel, on the location, size, scope and need, which conditions vary greatly. Serious concerns are raised regarding the export of electrical ROR powered as NAFTA must be considered – as it lays down inflexible rules which could have a far reaching effect on IC people. (see articles on this) Due diligence is called for.

We hope this newsletter is found to be both interesting and pertinent. Whatever else, care of all natural lands must be kept as of prime importance. Economies will have their booms and beats, but the land must not be held hostage to those events.

Please renew your membership now – we need you!

Change Hidden in Budget

BY SHEILA WHITE

Penticton Western News – March 27, 2009

A funny thing happened on the way to the federal budget. Included in its many pages is a little but important piece of non-budgetary legislation that proposed changes to the navigable Waters Protections Act. Sneaky, eh?

The proposed changes to the Act would be good for business on navigable waterways, eg. run of river power plants as it lessens

the need for environmental assessment and depends on the sole discretion of the minister.

Budget Bill C10 has passed third reading in the House of Commons and is now being considered by a Senate committee before going to the full senate.

This is not good news for hundreds of thousands of people who have had historic rights to use navigable waterways. Now might it be good for the health of the river inhabitants as environmental safeguards are lowered.

What can be done? Write or email the Senate committee and entire Senate. Write or email your local MP with your own concerns. Ask that the NWPA be extracted from the budget and be considered on its own, as would be proper. Ask that environmental assessment be adequate and that public involvement be assured.

It could be truly deceitful if the NWPA changes were shoveled through in this treacherous manner disguised in a government depending on the passing of the budget, but being a non-budget hidden item.

Run-of-the-River Hydro and IPPs

FACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Run-of-the-River Hydro projects (RoRs) produce renewable energy, but when emissions during construction and in the manufacture of equipment, and the environmental and resource impacts are taken into account their overall greenness is reduced, in some cases substantially.

Many of the projects proposed by Independent Power Producers' (IPP's) would produce much of their energy from snow and glacier melt in the summer months. This does not fit well with BC's power needs, which are greatest in winter. The RoR generation would fit better with the demand pattern of Southwest US States. Nevertheless, there are a few, mostly small RoR sites on rivers fed by fall and winter rains that could match the province's regional and local demands more closely.

All hydro development has a negative impact on the environment, which to a large extent is unavoidable, and it impacts also public recreation and the tourism and forest industries. At least one of the proposed large RoR projects has the potential to create a storage reservoir by flooding a large, important Conservancy area. This would increase the value of the project many fold and would become irresistible in years to come.

The energy produced by most proposed RoRs would be more expensive than that produced by existing or proposed storage-based projects, as many RoR generating units would be idle or running at part load many months of the year.

The cost of IPP developed projects will be substantially higher than if they were developed by BC Hydro because; as a Crown corporation BC Hydro can borrow the massive funds required at significantly lower interests rates, and

IPPs must add higher contingency allowances to their project cost determinations, this because their chances of being selected in BC Hydro's call for energy proposals are relatively low and they cannot afford to undertake as thorough site investigations as BC Hydro would in their rigorous selection process for the next site to be developed.

Considering that the logical market for the high cost, mostly summer season RoR energy is in the Southwest US states, where the energy rates are already high, and that environmental costs of developing this power would be borne mostly by BC rather than by the US states and could still be considered quite green in their perspective, it is understandable that IPP proponents consider the RoR opportunity to be worth exploiting. That more than 600 potential sites have been staked by IPP hopefuls is proof of this.

In drawing conclusions it is appropriate to consider the economic benefits, the environmental costs and the economic cost to BC consumers of exploiting the export potential of IPP produced energy. The environmental costs can be measured in terms of rivers, fish, wildlife, and biodiversity destroyed or damaged. They would be cumulative and they would be large.

Economic benefits from developing RoR sites for export would be derived through increased employment and could be fairly significant. These would be realized mostly during the construction labour from other



areas. Some development profits and revenues may be reinvested in the province.

The economic cost would be long lasting and far reaching. As IPPs expand the consolidation of firms would be inevitable and as their contribution to BC's energy supply becomes more and more essential their bargaining power would rise. The consolidated IPPs will be aware that there is a more profitable market in the US and could use their power to extract from BC Hydro rates approaching those available in the US and/or the opportunity to sell directly to US utilities. With the increasing addition of high cost IPP and RoR energy and the gradual integration of BC and US markets the rise in our rates to the much higher US levels would become inevitable.

Whether the result described above would be considered good or bad depends on whether you believe BC's electric energy resources should be developed in the interest of BC consumers or you believe that it is best to let the market decide who the beneficiaries should be.

RAY PILLMAN, P.ENG (RET)
email raypillman@telus.net

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

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Postal Code: _____

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

Donation: _____ (Income Tax Deductible) I wish to receive the OSPS newsletter by email



BC Parks Funding History

BC Parks funding / annual operating budget is a bit more complicated since the Front country contracting-out five years ago, whereby the funds that used to pay Rangers now go to pay the companies like [Mt Seymour Resorts] who manage BC Parks as PFO's (Park Facility Operators). And in some cases, like Golden Ears, the successful bidder did such a lousy job that they lost the contract. [In the mean time – at Golden Ears the very active volunteer group – GETPARC – had become disgusted and actually disbanded].

At one time there were only ten “full-time” BC Parks Rangers, but I think it has dwindled since then. In working to resolve the conflict at Cypress, we tried for some years to get the figures, which were tangled up with the PFO and things like snow clearing contracts. In fact it's not easy to get clear figures for BC Parks.

At the CPAWS Parks conference organized by Sabine Jessen about twelve (?) years ago this was a hot topic and the BC Parks management attending it assured us that BC Parks was getting \$32 million annually, not less, and at one time BC Parks funding peaked a \$42 million (under the NDP). However the NDP roughly doubled the number of Provincial Parks from 300 to 600, without doubling the budget (as suggested by the public under the Provincial-

wide “Parks Legacy” survey) and there now are 650 Provincial Parks.

The Liberals cut all ministry budgets by 30% when they came to power, including MOF and BC Parks, and a large number of BC Parks staff voluntarily took retirement, or got the pink slip. Then the contracting-out of Front country duties followed... which process actually took 6 months of the remaining staff's time (to do the tendering, bids, etc.) which they never made up.

Currently the BC Parks budget had come back to about \$30 million (as confirmed by BC Parks Director Scott Benton at the Parks Funding Open House that Jeremy McCall organized a year ago) but \$30 million for 650 Provincial Parks has to be compared to GVRD Parks (Metro Vancouver) at \$21 million for 21 parks and conservation areas; and Washington State Parks (biennial USD) budget which works out to roughly \$100 million annually for 110 State Parks in comparable terrain.

National Parks in BC do not make for an exact comparison, but again it works out to roughly \$1 million per Park. BC Parks has roughly \$43,000 per park and this does not include conservation areas, recreation areas, etc.

This explains why you actually see staff when you go to these other parks, but almost never see a ranger in a Provincial Park. Beyond that, it gets worse, as in the Lower Mainland, where there were two full-time rangers ten years ago, there now are three part-time Rangers

who are hired on for four month contracts in Winter and Summer: meaning that as of March 31st, 2009, there are no Rangers in the 17 Lower Mainland Parks, including Cypress and Seymour – where all the winter trail marking poles were removed in late March (the 24th) while it was still SNOWING!

Under the Bruce Strachan Recreation Stewardship report, he calculated that with the increased fees from angling licences, campsites, meter parking in parks, etc. the revenue would make BC Parks self-funding. However there is no indication that this was ever feasible and cost about \$2 million in total to import, plus they constantly break down and cause the PFO's much grief, and then the PFO's take a slice of the revenue-so it's unlikely that the parking revenues amount to more than a drop in the bucket-even if the meters have been paid for-which I doubt.

Some Parks with a lot of camping (like Monck, near Merritt, made quite a bit of money from camping fees, as they are jammed mostly by locals in their campers) and the revenue is ploughed back – Into That Park.

HOWIE HARSHAW
Email harbony@mac.com

Ed. Note... *There have been questions raised concerning the disposition of Park fees – but whatever the case there certainly would not be enough collected to look after all the Parkland itself and operate as well all the labour costs involved.*

Beetle Making Its Presence Felt

BY JOYCE LANGERAK

Penticton Western News, April 1, 2009

It's time to get used to the idea that the mountain pine beetle is in the Okanagan, and there's no way to control it.

"It's expected to peak by 2011," said Chandra Wong, co-coordinator of the three-year South Okanagan Similkameen Pine Beetle Outreach Pilot Project, which wrapped up March 31st. "Right now, there's time to plan and budget. Staff needs to have direction, but this window of opportunity is small."

Wong explained there's no way to get rid of the beetle. It's a natural part of the ecosystem, and something that British Columbians just have to adapt to.

She requested that the RDOS solicit more information on pine beetle impact on watershed, clear-cutting of dead trees, dealing with waste wood and they adopt leadership in maintaining open dialogue with other stakeholders including forest

B.C. Provincial Park Rangers Get Layoff Notices

B.C.'s Ministry of the Environment is laying off up to half of its park rangers this summer, CBC News has learned and that means many provincial parks will have to share rangers.

Valhalla Provincial Park Ranger Bob Fuhrer told CBC News he fully expected to be back on the job this summer, but last week, he got a layoff notice.

Fuhrer has worked at the Kootenay Park for 15 years – and that three out of the five summer rangers who work in parks in the West Kootenay Region have been laid

licensees in watersheds.

Mountain pine beetle invasions raise the chance of a catastrophic fire should one start.

"The forest is a dynamic and changing place. Things are going to change with mountain pine beetle, but it's not the end of the world. It's actually helping the forest ecosystem become more resilient to any change that takes place."

There are also water quality and water quantity implications. When trees are dead and they have no foliage, more snow lands on the ground and is melted more quickly without shade. Earlier spring melt means the water will come sooner and its volume will be higher, creating a chance for flooding."

"Then water storage will be used much sooner. So there's the risk of having a shortage later in the summer."

Another concern is ecosystem and wildlife sustainability. Salvage logging of the dead trees means more forest road construction which impacts the environment as well.

off, along with a similar number in East Kootenay Parks.

A ministry official has since confirmed similar layoffs are happening at provincial parks across B.C.

Fuhrer said he's grown to love patrolling the mountains and lakeshore of Valhalla Provincial Park, but for the first time since it was created, it will not have a dedicated ranger this summer.

HOWARD HARSHAW, PH.D.,
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE
Forest Resource Management

Faculty of Forestry – University of British Columbia
Email aw@interchange.ubc.ca

BIG WHITE'S NOT SNOW WHITE

Dear Editor: My letter is regarding the recent article "Water Diversion Big White/Kettle River" (Herald March 30).

Big White's colours - they aren't snow white! Big White plans to have its way with the upper Kettle river drainage. Their recently approved expansion gives them a capacity of 11,400 bed-units!

They have huge expansion plans that will increase this capacity to nearly 47,000 bed units. The entire ROB (Rest of the Boundary) has a total population of 10,000 people. To enable this expansion big White has stated unequivocally that they want more water from the upper Kettle River and will do whatever it takes to get it.

In spite of many protests from local ROB residents the MOE has indicated that they will give Big White the requested water on the basis that it will be an insignificant amount.

The biggest and ugliest scars in the "tourism area" were made by Big White with more "huge growth" and accompanying scars in the making.

These scars are located at one of the most sensitive and fragile environments in the entire Boundary – the top of Big White Mountain.

All developments made at the top of a 7,500-plus foot mountain are, by their very nature, ecologically devastating.

Huge investments are necessary to develop, maintain and service the site, involve lost environmental values, increase energy consumption with attendant increases in pollution and permanent loss of forest and their associated environmental services.

Big White is proud of their developments and future mega-growth plans, and oblivious to the concerns of the ROB residents.

Yet their actions are largely responsible for the Kettle River moving from No. 8 on British Columbia's endangered rivers list to No. 2 – a most undesirable ranking! Big White's colours are definitely not green and clean.

Fred Marshall – Boundary Country
Penticton Herald – Wed. April 1, 2009

Editorial Was Oversimplified

Dear Editor:

The Herald's April 9 editorial "River Runs Through it" provides an oversimplified assessment of independent power projects (IPP's) and dismisses a number of important public policy issues advanced by Rafe Mair and Gwen Barlee.

The premise that B.C. will continue to require more electricity and existing hydro-electric dams have had adverse environmental impacts are true. What is less certain is whether a numerous IPP's will present lower net environmental impacts than a few large dams. A systematic assessment of alternatives is required.

Blanket endorsement of "small, local run of river projects" is misleading. IT presents IPP's as benign "mom and pop" operations built on small creeks in community watersheds. True, small pelton wheel hydro-electric installations successfully serve many locales but these don't resemble most of the proposed IPP's.

As Mair and Barlee indicated, many IPP's can be very large scale such as the 1,000-megawatt (MW) proposal in Bute Inlet by Plutonic Power, which will entail diversion of 17 streams and building 16 power plants. Its capacity will exceed BC Hydro's Site C dam.

Even smaller scale projects can entail significant water diversions and have adverse environmental impacts. Those smaller than 59 MW are not subject to environmental assessment and approval processes. Approval projects can however, end up exceeding the 50MW threshold. And the process for assessing projects of 59MW or more is far from open and transparent.

Regrettably the editorial ignored other key public questions raised by Mair. Among these was the high purchase prices committed to IPP's by BC Hydro for a fixed term.

If the power is used in B.C., consumers will pay inflated prices and amortize projects which, with their extended service lives, will likely end up producing power for export markets rather than domestic needs, Mair indicated under NAFTA terms, any power, once exported, cannot be directed for use in B.C.

He added that the risk that water licensed to an export-oriented IPP will be subject to NAFTA and thus to diminished or no control for use in B.C.

Mair also raised the topic of economic benefits. Will IPP's generate returns to the Crown comparable to what BC Hydro historically has done? What are the water license fees? Why isn't there a process for competitive bidding for development rights on prime IPP opportunities?

Mair's concerns are echoed by Coastal First Nations executive director Art Sterrit who questioned (Vancouver Sun, April 9) the current approach of calling out for IPP proposals without criteria, without consideration for a long term strategy related to a green economy and without an export plan" (and one might add a domestic supply plan).

The challenge is to ensure that every small scale renewable energy production project demonstrably minimizes environmental impacts, provides a fair return to the Crown for use of land and water, provides power at realistic process and ensures that the power will contribute to long term electricity supply in B.C.

It is hoped that the Herald and other papers can help illuminate the search for answers to these concerns.

DENIS O'GORMAN – PENTICTON
Opinion – Penticton Herald,
Friday May 1, 2009

Open Letter from Rafe Mair Re: Election on Tuesday, May 12, 2009

The energy policy, in which no one but industry had a hand in formulating, will ruin an ever increasing number of rivers, not to look after BC's energy needs, but mostly, American requirements, I have nothing against Americans and in fact have often sacrificed our environment rivers so they can preserve theirs. This policy is governed by the North America Free Trade Agreement and our experts tell us three things-

Once an American company has access to our water for any reason, it can be used for anything including selling bulk water exports.

Once an American company has tenure on a Canadian water and is using it, that tenure cannot be terminated either by contract or legislation.

Once we are exporting energy, we cannot reduce that supply to the US without reducing our own usage by a similar amount (this is the "Proportionality Clause").

Moreover, the profits which BC Hydro now pays into our treasury will go as dividends to shareholders of Companies like General Electric, Ledcor and Axos. BC Hydro, forced by this government to pay huge amounts for energy that they can't even break even with when they sell it, will bankrupt BC Hydro for which we paid a high environmental price 45 years ago but which has since then given us regular power at 1/10th the cost they pay in California. Dr. Marvin Shaffer at SFU calls this new business technique "buy high, sell low"!

Please take time to look at www.saveour-rivers.ca and get the bigger picture.

River Dropped from Endangered List

BY KATHY MICHAELS

Penticton Western News – March 27, 2009

After a long run, Okanagan River is no longer one of B.C.'s most endangered waterways.

The Outdoor Recreation council of British Columbia released its annual ranking of at-risk rivers and after eight years in a row of earning the distinction for dubious practices – such as channelization, water extraction and riparian habitat destruction – a concerted effort to improve conditions has yielded some positive results.

Jeremy McCall, the executive director of the council, said in a recent visit to the region he was pleased to see efforts by First Nation groups and the community at large to repair some of the natural features of the waterway.

Specifically pointing to a segment of the river that runs between Okanagan Falls and Oliver, he said what was once narrow has been made a bit looser and windy – closer to what's natural and more conducive to the creation of riparian habitat.

Other efforts he lauds include reinstating pathways for fish to travel.

“On the Okanagan River there's that silly little McIntyre Dam and it's doing so much harm to the fish,” he said. “It was thoughtless to put it in place with a fish ladder, and the fact that it was relatively simple to fix has given people the incentive to do something.”

While there have been improvements to the river, it has yet to gain a clean bill of health and areas like the channel, which is heavily polluted, are still a concern.

Mark Angelo, author of the study which the Most Endangered list is based on, pointed out there's still a lot of work to do.

“Several years ago it was ranked at the top, and (the change) is a reflection of the fact we have seen some improvements,” he said. “But it's also a reflection of the fact other new river issues have emerged.”

The Kettle River, which starts in the Big White area and loops its way through areas like Midway and Grand Forks, has gained a good portion of attention, and was ranked second most endangered for its problems.

“It gained a huge amount of feedback from that region,” Angelo said. “Concerns around excessive water extraction, development and, to a degree, issues around water extraction create an array of worrisome events unfolding on the Kettle.”

Trust Fund to Help Clean Up Trails

The Okanagan Sunday, March 29, 2009

Skilled forestry workers will remove dangerous trees, brush along park trails.

Four unemployed forestry workers will improve 180 kilometres of recreational trails in the Okanagan, thanks to \$110,000 from the Community Development Trust's Job Opportunities program.

The project will include the identification and removal of dangerous trees and brush, and maintenance work along 100 kilometres of trails in Graystokes Park, a 50-kilometre trail connecting Big White and Linden Lake, and 30 kilometres of trails around Idabel Lake.

The work will increase the level of safety

and enhance trail grooming operations by the Kelowna Snowmobile club.

The forestry workers will also install trail-head signs and improve three public-use cabins: White House at Two John Lake, Uncle Tom's Cabin, which is close to the 201 Road, and Canyon Lakes Cabin.

Provincial officials earlier announced that nine forestry workers will clean up 144 recreation sites in the Okanagan at a cost of \$470,000.

Dead or dying trees and easily combustible material will be removed from the forest floor at campgrounds, hiking, fishing and day-use areas.

The project area ranges from north of Shuswap Lake to Osoyoos and will be par-

ticularly effective in areas heavily impacted by the mountain pine beetle.

The goal of the \$26-million Job Opportunities program is to reduce the impact of current lay-offs on workers employed in the forest industry, retain skilled forest workers for the anticipated future upturn, and preserve the characteristics of the labour force in forest-dependent communities.

Forest-dependent communities or organizations, licensees and contractors working in co-operation with a forest-dependent community are eligible to submit a project proposal to the program.

To date, the program has approved more than \$13 million for 79 projects, which will employ more than 620 forest workers.

Activist Points Finger at 'Dirty Dozen'

WATER MANAGEMENT

BY JOHN MOORHOUSE

Penticton Herald, Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Maude Barlow tells conference water systems are 'going to be destroyed if we're not careful'

Maude Barlow calls them the 'Dirty Dozen,' representing the tragic direction our world is heading with its water resources. The renowned author/activist and national chairperson of the Council of Canadians was the opening keynote speaker at this week's BC Water and Waste Association conference at the Penticton Lakeside Resort.

While the Earth's human population has tripled to six billion since 1950, water consumption over that same period has increased seven times.

Barlow, who also serves as the United Nations' senior advisor on water, said her Dirty Dozen list starts with "groundwater

mining," where groundwater sources are being used up far faster than they're being replenished. The same holds true for "river over-extraction," where surface waters are diverted for irrigation and drinking water purposes.

"We have extracted our rivers literally to death," she said, pointing to the Colorado River, the Yellow River in China and the Murray-Darling river system in Australia.

"The problem is, the government had a see-no-evil, hear-no-evil, speak-no-evil concept, and they weren't going to deal with it."

Canada is not without its own horror stories, as Barlow pointed to the Northern Alberta tar sands that destroy three million barrels of water a day to produce one million barrels of oil.

Other Dirty Dozen problems include creating waste water as garbage, rather than reintroducing the water to the aquifer.

Pollution of waterways, destruction of watershed habitat, infrastructure decay, poor agricultural production standards, the world's "addiction" to bottled water, privatization of water resources, our blind faith in new technology, lack of political accountability and a belief in unlimited growth.

Barlow said governments can either address water problems now, or wait until they become unmanageable.

"Our water systems around the world are dying, because we see them as an economic engine for growth instead of the living ecosystems that they are," she said.

"They're going to be destroyed if we're not careful."

She called on the government to increase its mapping of Canada's groundwater reserves, while limiting groundwater extraction to the volume of recharge.

International Bicycling & Hiking Society

Letter - Path Upgrade

It is the intention of the IBH Society to upgrade two sections of the Okanagan River dyke. One section would be from Road #9 to Road #18 and the other from Road #22 to the head of Osoyoos Lake. This would allow much better riding and walking and be the base for circle routes while visiting and touring the area.

The upgrade would include grading, crush and compacting with water along with an additional 50mm of crush/silica mix. The

upgrade is identical to that placed for the fish habitat upgrade north of Oliver. This will leave a very durable surface that will last for many years to come.

The Society requests written support from the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society in order to ensure the government agencies who oversee the affected lands know that the International Bicycling and Hiking Society path is a very important part of our community and having the path upgrade will provide years of continued use and enjoyment.

Thank you for your support in this endeavor.

JOHN BREMMER

The OSPS is pleased to support the great work that has been done by the IBHS and also for the plans for further work.

There has been a long association between the IBHS and the OSPS as their aims of recreation and quiet enjoyment of the environment are compatible.

The IBHS has done excellent work so far and the popularity of the present trail is a clear indication of its worth both for local people and for tourists.

We congratulate the IBHS for their next undertaking and wish them well for its successful completion.

Managing Water a Challenge

KELOWNA – OKANAGAN SUNDAY
March 29, 2009

NEW WAY OF THINKING NEEDED, SAYS LEADING AUTHORITY ON GLOBAL WATER ISSUES.

Despite the world's increasing water problems, it's not too late to turn things around, according to Sandra Postel.

The leading authority on international water issues and director of the global Water Policy Project told a Kelowna audience on Friday night that the first step is to change what we think water is.

Water supply problems will get worse as global population growth and climate change compound the effects of inefficient agricultural and industrial practices and wide-spread damage to freshwater ecosys-

tems through dams, diversion and over-consumption of water, she predicted.

"The challenge we're facing is a very big one," she said. "It's figuring out how we're going to meet the global water demands of nine billion people by 2050, while at the same time sustaining the aquatic ecosystems that support not only our economies but so much life on this planet with us."

Protecting ecological infrastructure such as wetlands, improving water productivity and developing ways to share water more equitably must all be part of new local, national and international policies for water management.

New York City, for example is investing \$1.5 billion in its watershed to avoid having to build a new \$6 billion water filtration system.

Society needs to adopt a new mindset that draws boundaries around water use, valuing water not only for what it can do when it has been pumped out of the ground or rivers, but for the work it does when left alone.

"The old mindset was one that denied water's finiteness, one that said as we experience rising population and rising economies, we go out and find more water. Go out and build another dam, divert another river, drill more groundwater. It was a fairly simple prescription."

The new mindset "needs to deal directly with water's finiteness, and the importance of these ecosystem functions and services." She said. "At some point, we want to say we can't allow more modification of rivers, we can't extract more from ground, lakes or river systems, because the cost of doing so – in the form of lost ecosystem services exceeds the benefits we're going to get."

Author Cultivates Book for Region

BY JOYCE LANGERAK
Penticton Western News – March 20, 2009

A book for naturalists and gardeners living in the South Okanagan will be launched in Penticton informing readers how to establish native plants in gardens and landscapes.

Author Eva Durance has written *Cultivating the Wild: gardening with native plants of British Columbia's Southern Interior and Eastern Washington*.

It's the first comprehensive guide to gardening with indigenous plants of the areas, she said.

"The native plants because they evolved

with all the local birds and insects, are most valuable for those and most are very beneficial to gardens," said Durance, a lifelong naturalist and former English professor.

For example Monarch butterflies must find milkweed, a native plant, on which to lay their eggs.

"I actually put a big thing on milkweed. It's a wonderful plant. It's extremely important and it's gorgeous.

Durance produced the colour photographs appearing in the book, which is lavishly



Author Eva Durance checks out a rabbitbrush, which is native to the area.

illustrated with pictures of each species and four basic garden designs including native and non-native plants.

"I put a close-up of a flower. It's exquisite, and the scent is just glorious."

As a landscape designer, she specializes in public and private xeriscapes incorporating native plants.

She was involved in the design of the xeriscape demonstration garden east of the Penticton Art Gallery on Marina Way.

Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society ~ Trails Report

The last of four bridges, this one near Osprey Lake, which had to be built to complete the 70 km stretch of the Trans Canada Trail in the Summerland area, has funding in place. Geoff Solly will be overseeing the project this summer.

The nearby trail surface will be crushed gravel from the road construction which should make an excellent surface. It is finer gravel than that used near Faulder.

Both the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen and the provincial government have given funding toward the costs of trail building and improvement. The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society has also budgeted money to assist this project overall.

A couple of landslides have required maintenance work.

Vandalism has occurred – such as the removal of the heavy bollards in the trail, put in to prevent motorized traffic. It took

energy and equipment to pry out these bollards which were then thrown down into the creek.

Consideration has been given to sanitary requirements, but there is still no legislation for licensing, insurance or area control for ATV / OMVs. Quebec has legislation with reference to ski and hiking trails concerning ATV control – B.C. needs it too.

Please – everyone write to MLA Rick Thorpe, Tourism Minister Bill Bennett and Parks / Environment Minister Barry Penner, and Premier Gordon Campbell. Ask for licensing and insurance of all ATVs and also that hiking trails be free of motorized traffic. Trails can be open to all users – but not for all users, i.e. no motorized use on some trails.

The Summerland Trans Canada Trail committee hopes to put up some signage along the trail. They must be well-made to withstand vandalism. There is a need for younger people to help with the work of the committee; volunteers are always welcome. The

OSPS would like new Directors also!!

When a bicycle ride from Myra Canyon to Penticton was organized last year, over 500 people signed up and paid to participate! The Myra Canyon area is now a Linear Heritage Park. The entire Kettle Valley railroad should also be designated as a Linear Heritage Park; as should the Brigade Trail between Hope and Princeton.

There is a new and excellent book concerning the B.C. route of the Trans Canada Trail. This is such a wonderful experience for everyone which will become a major tourist attraction.

So – please write the government of B.C. at Victoria concerning ATVs.

And donations are very welcome. They can be sent to Geoff Solly, 6803 Nixon Road, Summerland, BC V0H 1Z9

Ed. Note... The names in Victoria may have changed, but the need for support letters continues.

Federal Trails Funding – Shared Trails

The term “Shared Use Trails” has suddenly become a significant definition in the context of the Federal trails funding program because a commitment to “demonstrate shared use” of any trail for which funding is sought will be one of the key criteria for eligibility, according to the COHVDC document I circulated earlier this week.

As previously noted we have not been officially advised of this requirement but during our various discussions with representatives of the Canadian Trails Federation we were provided with the draft study entitled “Shared Use Trails in Canada”. This document was compiled by Terry Norman and Donald Shiner of Novus Consulting in Halifax, NS. Terry Norman

recently resigned as the President of the Canadian Trails Federation (and the Nova Scotia Trails Federation) when he was hired by the National Trails Coalition to become the designated administrator/coordinator of the Federal trails funding program.

Please note that this is a draft, with all that this implies. We were promised a final version of the document by Mr. Norman several weeks ago but he is undoubtedly being kept busy with his new responsibilities so we have not yet received it.

I am distributing it now to enable everyone to come to their own conclusions about the definition for a shared use trail. Having the document could also assist in the debate of how BC recreation trail organizations

might be able to prepare themselves for applying for this funding. At the moment it appears that non-motorized groups in BC, and a few motorized groups, are being excluded from this funding on the basis of not being members of the CTF/NTC as previously explained. Even if the membership test is met, the question of shared use will obviously present another hurdle to some prospective applicants.

It looks like being an interesting summer!

JEREMY MCCALL
Executive Director
Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia • outdoorrec@orcbc.ca
April 23, 2009