

OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Summer
2010

P.O. Box 787, Summerland, B.C. V0H 1Z0
Phone: 250-494-8996 • Email: anglerem@telus.net

An Introduction to OSPS

Welcome once again to the Newsletter of the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society. As usual there is plenty of important information regarding the parks and their environments and resources in our area for this month. In this issue we are attempting to provide you with a taste of some of the topics and issues that are percolating out there.

At the recent Annual General Meeting, held in Summerland on March 12, two new directors were elected to the board. We welcome Mary Trainer and Ian Graham to positions on the board.

The O.S.P.S. has been involved in a number of issues ranging from observing and writing correspondence regarding caribou range and the hunting of wolves from helicopters to the surveillance of environmentally sensitive areas and the sponsoring of an author reading and the Meadowlark Festival. In this issue we highlight a few of these topics.

Check out our spread on a variety of stories about the water of the Okanagan and Similkameen. These articles speak about the Kettle and Similkameen rivers and the conflict over private vs. public stewardship of this precious resource. Add to this the information on the Okanagan Water Study and you have a very interesting bit of reading. Let us know what you think.

The O.S.P.S. has also been active in spon-

soring the maintenance and improvement of trails in our region. Read about the Keremeos trail upgrades, note the pictures from the refurbished Faulder section of the Trans-Canada trail and relate to them as you peruse the articles about other groups working on trails throughout our region. These trails are important to our parks, no matter how long or wide they are. Trails are legacies for our children, grandchildren and our environment.

The mainstream press has also reported on changes to the B.C. Campground system from reservations issues to rate hikes. We have reproduced them here for your consideration. What are the restrictions? What are the benefits and who are they for? Are campgrounds eliminating picnicking?

The Meadowlark Festival is rolling around once again (May 20th – May 24th www.meadowlarkfestival.bc.ca). This event, recently voted “Best Annual Community Event in the South Okanagan, has been sponsored in part by the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society. We are proud to be a part of this festival with its more than 80 environmental and educational events.

Please enjoy this summer issue of O.P.S.P. Newsletter. Get in touch with us at anglerem@telus.net or Box 787, Summerland, BC V0H 1Z0. Remember Parks are a legacy. The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society is working to fulfill it. Come on out to give a hand.

BC Plans an Escalation to its War on Wolves by adding Helicopters to its Arsenal

Valhalla Wilderness Society – February 16, 2010 – Craig Pettitt, Director

The BC government, under the cover of the current Olympic fun and games, has quietly presented an agenda for shooting wolves from helicopters. For several years now, BC has been killing wolves by trapping them throughout the Interior Wet belt, to aid mountain caribou recovery.

“The proposed escalation by employing helicopters is an admission that the current wolf kill programs have been a failure,” says Craig Pettitt, a director of the Valhalla Wilderness Society. “Many scientific studies have shown that when wolves are killed, the packs disperse, the wolves spread over a larger area, resulting in more packs, more breeding pairs and higher birth rates. This seems to be exactly what is happening. Since the province started its wolf eradication plan in the Revelstoke area, wolf sightings and evidence of packs have increased dramatically in areas to the south of Revelstoke such as the Slocan and Lardeau Valleys. Researchers in Revelstoke have found that there was significant dispersal of the pack due to the hunting pressure.”

More and more wolves to kill means that the government is stooping to more and

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

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more inhumane methods of slaughter. "The wolves are subjected to terror, exhaustion from running, and finally they are shot. Shooting from a helicopter cannot be very accurate, so there will be suffering from all kinds of wounds," says Pettitt.

The BC government has long refused to require any substantial modification of human activities to save the mountain caribou. Logging is the chief reason why the caribou are disappearing, yet in the new caribou recovery plan, the government protected only 0.66% of the Timber Harvesting Land Base, and even that can be logged under certain conditions.

Displacement by snowmobiles and helicopters used for heli-skiing plays a secondary role, driving the caribou from critical winter feeding grounds. "The recently announced snowmobile closure zones are too few and too small," says Pettitt. "Wolves have no access to mountain caribou in winter unless snowmobiles pack down the snow. The government could create substantial protection from wolves overnight by closing key areas that are heavily used by snowmobiles. Instead it prefers to slaughter the wolves."

Letter to Hon Barry Penner, Minister of Environment

APRIL 15, 2010

RE: MOUNTAIN CARIBOU SURVIVAL

Our Society with many others is concerned about the plight of BC's Mountain Caribou.

First and foremost, without habitat the caribou cannot survive. Clear cut logging is not only a great disturbance but also cuts off a crucial part of caribou food supply. Therefore it must not be permitted in critical areas.

The simplistic reaction that killing wolves will somehow save the caribou is unrealistic. Wolves are predators and under normal circumstances would help to keep the herds healthy. Some wolf kill may be needed to relieve pressure on the present caribou population, but predators are an important part of the ecology... sees reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone Park.

We in no way support shooting from helicopters. Such behaviour is hard on all wildlife and is indiscriminate in its targets.

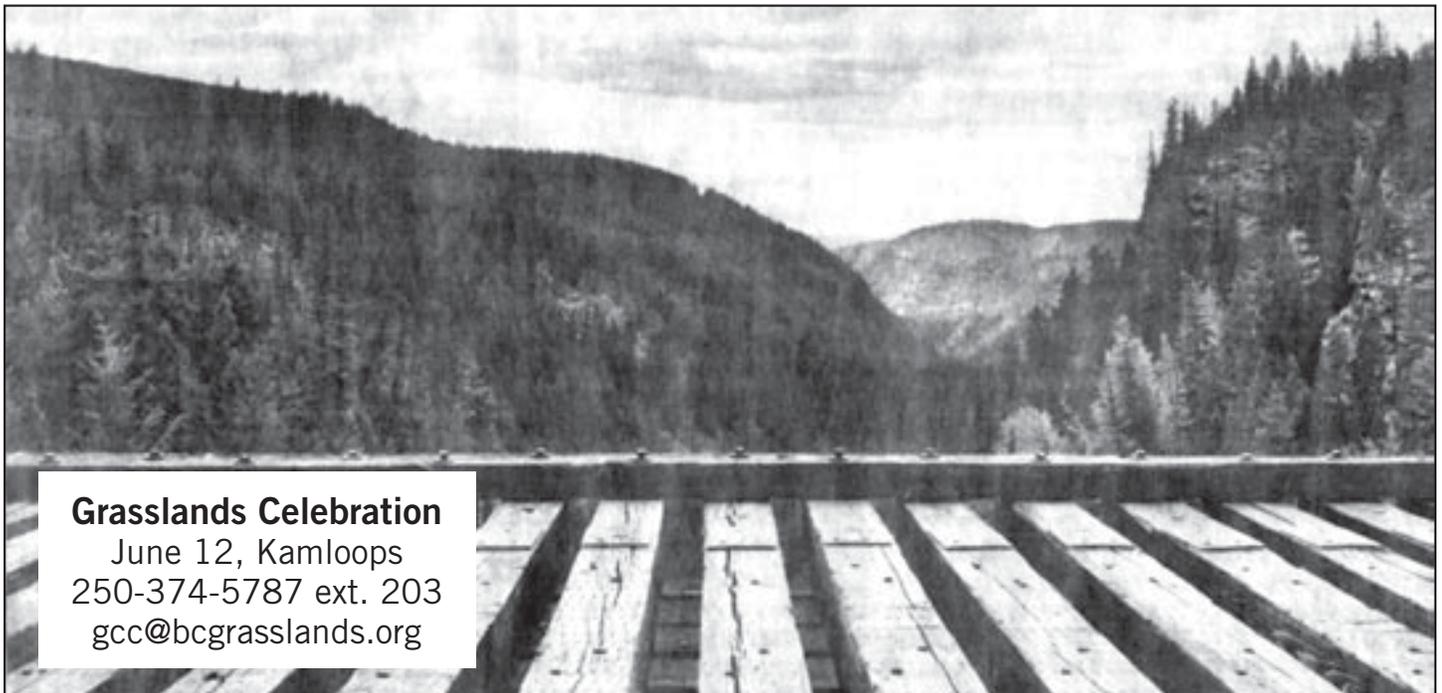
Mining, snowmobile and heli-skiing activities have access to a considerable area in all. Again, these disturbances lead to more stress on an already threatened species.

Hunting Bag limits in BC seem to be more based on "business" than on due care regarding each species. Bag limits should always reflect specific care and need for control.

The caribou scientist team has done a good deal of investigative work. More attention and weight to their findings would be helpful.

In closing, may I repeat that unless there is a safe and sufficient habitat, there is little hope for a valuable BC species.

We encourage everyone to let the Minister of the Environment know how you feel about this issue.



Grasslands Celebration
June 12, Kamloops
250-374-5787 ext. 203
gcc@bcgrasslands.org

Annual General Meeting Minutes – March 12, 2010

HELD AT 7:00PM IN THE CENTRE STAGE THEATRE, ROSEDALE AVENUE, SUMMERLAND, BC

Harold King, Society Chairperson opened the meeting by introducing the Directors who were present. He then introduced the wives of those Directors saying they also played an important part in the Society.

MINUTES: M/S Dave McMullen/Helen Poncelet that the minutes of the 44th AGM be adopted as circulated. **CARRIED**

TREASURER'S REPORT: Treasurer Bert White spoke to the reports that had been handed out and asked for any questions regarding the two financial statements which were to be adopted. M/S Bill Johnston/Mariln Hansen that the financial reports be accepted as distributed. **CARRIED**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Secretary Sheila White reported 129 members. She asked those attending the meeting to encourage new members. OSPS newsletters reach a larger audience than membership going to the Libraries, a number of politicians here and in Victoria, and to a number of the other

environmental groups. As well we are on the web.

ELECTIONS: Conducted by Bert White. The elections were for two years. Continuing Directors are Anne Davidson, Harold King, Bill Johnston, Mike Meheriuk and Bert White.

Standing for election: John Bremmer, Don Guild, Ian Graham, Clive Johnson, Mary Trainer, and Sheila White.

After calling for other nominations three time, those standing for election were declared elected unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS: Director Clive Johnson spoke of the need to protect special small areas. He had maps to show people and explain the situation for two such areas that could be seen and discussed after the AGM and the special presentation.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Motion to adjourn. Moved by Irene Meheriuk at 7:45pm.

FEATURE PRESENTATION: "New Life in Okanagan Park". Introduction: presenter Harold Baumbrough by Sheila White. Harold Baumbrough, "naturalist extraordinaire" has been keeping watch and photographing a square kilometer of Okanagan Park since the devastating fire there in 2003. Harold was for many years a biology teacher at the Penticton High School. He has continued his love and interest in nature and has become extremely knowledgeable about the infinite variety of plants and flowers – some very surprising which appear after such a catastrophe. His slides were beautiful and often amazing. His knowledge of the many, many species to be seen seemed limitless. Both his pictures and his explanatory talk were greatly appreciated by those present.

AFTER THE PRESENTATION: Discussion and Refreshments took place in the Foyer for some time after the meeting, Memberships were available as well as the various brochures, newsletters, etc.

Resource Remake for B.C.

By Tom Fletcher – Legislative Reporter – Summerland Review – March 11, 2010

Finance Minister Colin Hansen's PowerPoint presentation for last week's provincial budget included a slide showing "refocused" spending on resource ministry services.

These "dirt ministries," as they are known around the B.C. legislature, are taking a \$320 million cut in operating spending over the next three years, while spending continues to climb almost as fast as usual in "people ministries," notably Health Services and Education.

The Forests and Range ministry takes about half of that, with smaller cuts at Agriculture, Community and Rural Development; Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources and Transportation and Infrastructure.

The Ministry of Environment isn't mentioned in the slide show, presumably because it's about keeping the people above the dirt. But one of Hansen's many budget charts shows spending that is set to decline by three per cent after this year and stay at that level until at least 2013. The

reduction at environment is proportionally bigger than the other ministries, except forests, where the cut is twice as deep at six per cent.

With forest harvesting down by half from historical levels, it is natural there will be reduced ministry inspections and permits. But the question was soon asked, when do the cuts start to impair the government's ability to protect the 90 per cent of B.C. that is Crown land?

Kettle Earns Dubious Honour

OUTDOOR RECREATION COUNCIL SAYS DEVELOPMENT THREATENS RIVER

By Don Plant – Special to the Herald – Friday
March 26, 2010

The Kettle River will continue to recede and heat up unless the provincial government takes action, says an environmental watchdog.

The river, which flows through the South Okanagan and boundary regions, topped the list of the most endangered rivers in BC in 2010 – a list compiled every year by the Outdoor Recreation Council.

“the Kettle has experienced record-low flows in recent years. Locals couldn’t even inner-tube down the river,” said Mark Angelo, the council’s rivers chair. “If issues around extraction and low flows are not dealt with... the circumstances will only worsen.”

The prospects are dire for local wildlife. As water levels decline, the water temperature rises, which generates more algae and deteriorates habitat for fish, plant life and invertebrates, Angelo said.

Residents in Westridge, Rock Creek and Midway have seen steady declines in the Kettle for the last dozen years, said Al Grant, who lives in Rock Creek. Lower snow-packs are one reason. Higher temperatures have caused more evaporation.

A significant factor in the river’s degeneration is people drawing more water. Farmers use it to irrigate hay fields and ranches. Residents

supply their homes with water from private wells. Yet there’s no way to estimate how much because no one keeps records.

“There’s no metering,” said Grant, who speaks for the Boundary Environmental Alliance. “The provincial government is talking about possibly licensing groundwater and metering. I’ve been listening to that noise for 25 years now.”

Many in the area oppose more extraction until authorities take a hard look at the amount of water people are taking from the river. They’re against a proposal by Big White Ski Resort to draw 400 million more gallons a year for a future reservoir.

The extra water, taken from three streams that supply the Kettle, would irrigate two golf courses and supply new condominiums surrounding them. The plan is still 25 years off, said the resort’s vice-president Michael Ballingall. But he knows how much water it would need if the development is approved.

Ballingall estimates 400 million gallons (1.6 billion litres) comprise less than one per cent of the total freshet that runs off Big White Mountains each spring. That’s equivalent to the snow that covers three of the resort’s 118 ski runs, or the amount of water that flows under the Rock Creek Bridge for 576 minutes during full runoff, he said.

“Unless you capture it, it won’t be missed by any Canadian,” Ballingall said. “the snow-melt is long gone by May. If you need water

in June, July and August, save the April-May water. That’s none of our business. That’s the government’s business.”

The summertime river levels depend on being replenished by ground water, said Grant. If you cut off the three streams that Big White wants to tap into, you wouldn’t notice a difference in Midway during freshet. But a full run-off plays a key role in re-charging the downstream aquifers that top up surface flows and supply well water later in the summer.

“If aquifers are not fully charged, it could worsen the low-flow situation in summer,” said Angelo. “The freshet and aquifers are linked.”

Big White’s proposal is so far in the future that Ballingall hopes the government will have a water-development plan by the time it’s implemented. Environmental groups agree – Victoria must develop a watershed management plan for the Kettle that examines seasonal flows, freshet flows and all existing water demands.

“It’s essential in view of the development pressures we’re now seeing,” said Angelo. “We should develop the plan first, before we approve any new major water withdrawals.”

The province is now reviewing its Water Act, which was legislated in 1909. The government aims to update provisions to protect stream health, improve water-governance, make water allocation more efficient and regulate groundwater use in high-demand areas.

Okanagan Water Study to be Launched Friday

Boundary-Similkameen MLA John Slater will help launch the Okanagan Basin Water Board’s water supply and demand project at a ceremony in Kelowna on Friday.

The three-year study will take a comprehensive look at water availability throughout the Valley and includes an analysis of how the

Okanagan water supply could be affected by climate change.

“We believe that this project will be a learning resource for all watersheds in our province,” Slater said.

Slater, a former chairman of the water board, spoke in the legislature on Monday to raise

OKANAGAN IN BRIEF – MARCH 2010

awareness of water issues and acknowledge World Water Day. He said an estimated 1.1 billion people in the world rely on unsafe drinking water sources.

The provincial government is looking for input into ways to update the Water Act, established in 1909, the province’s primary water legislation.

Protect Our Rivers Now

EDITORIAL

– Managing Editor Jon Manchester – The Okanagan Saturday – March 27, 2010

When British Columbians think of threatened rivers, they might naturally think of the Fraser in the highly developed Lower Mainland or hydroelectric dams on the Columbia.

But many of our province's most endangered waterways are right here in our own backyard, or very close to it.

The Outdoor Recreation Council released its annual top 10 list of BC's threatened rivers this week, and the Okanagan-Boundary country's Kettle River was No. 1.

As with much of the Okanagan environment, the river is feeling the pressure of increased development. Along with that development comes increased water extrac-

tion for irrigation and drinking.

The result is reduced water flows, which lead to rising river temperatures, increased algae growth and a river that is less hospitable to fish and other wildlife.

As more development is proposed, summer water flows could dwindle to a trickle. Already, residents are unable to float the river in summertime because it is too shallow.

But the Kettle isn't alone.

Four more Southern Interior waterways have the dubious distinction of being named in the top 10.

They are the Coldwater River near Merritt, the Similkameen River to the southwest, Glacier/Howser Creeks and Elk River in the Kootenays.

Even though it's lower down the list, one of the biggest threats is the cross-border dam proposal on the Similkameen that would create a lake backing up across the U.S. border into BC.

All this points to the need for improved water protection measures in BC, and it's about time the province is finally reviewing its Water Act, which was legislated way back in 1909.

We need to protect our waterways now before it's too late.

Battle to Keep Water Public is Too Important to Lose

BY MURRAY DOBBIN – VANCOUVER SUN – MARCH 23, 2010

In Canada, as in most parts of the developed world, our civic governments have for decades run drinking water and waste water treatment systems as a public service. This is because generations have realized that water is something distinct and precious that must be managed as a public, not private, good.

However, in the last 25 years, two trends have been combining to promote the steady shift of water from a public good to private commodity.

The first of these trends is that senior governments have adopted a free-market agenda based on the belief that government should "get out of the way" of business. As a key component of this agenda, they have implemented policies to promote the privatization of many government services. In the case of public water services, they have deliberately avoided needed investments

for many years. This has brought us to the present situation, in which crumbling public infrastructure has created a pressing need for massive infrastructure investments.

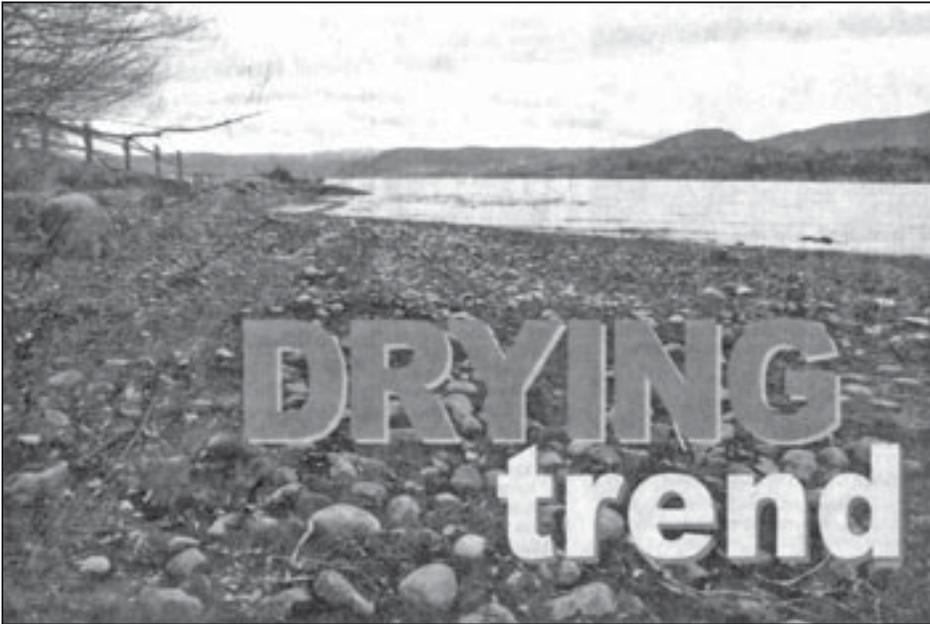
As a solution to this manufactured and convenient crisis, governments have promoted public-private partnerships, or P3s. A P3 is an arrangement whereby a private corporation provides some combination of financing, designing, building, and operating an infrastructure project, such as water treatment plant, and the government pays a yearly fee through a contract often lasting 30 or more years.

Although governments promote P3s as a way to save public money, critics have shown repeatedly that they cost more, since corporations have higher borrowing costs and also must generate a profit. Moreover, because of commercial confidentiality requirements, P3s are much less

transparent and accountable.

The second trend fuelling the commodification of water is bottled water. The bottled-water companies have been promoting their product with slick marketing campaigns designed to convince people that bottled water is better than tap water. Companies such as Coke, Pepsi and Nestle take public water, re-filter it, bottle it and sell to consumers at massive profits. Bottled water sales help establish the notion that water is a commodity like any other, and the production and transport of the bottled water creates huge amounts of greenhouse gas and plastic garbage.

New and emerging threats are trade deals under negotiation with the United States and Europe. These deals may well facilitate further privatization of Canada's water resources and water infrastructure by American and European corporations.



BY RON SEYMOUR – THE OKANAGAN SATURDAY – MARCH 2010

Okanagan water study envisions more dry years ahead, but report’s authors aren’t ringing any alarm bells yet.

Summer water shortages likely to occur decades from now underscore the need for present-day conservation programs and infrastructure improvements, say the authors of a new study.

Flows in Mission Creek during the summer are forecast to be down 20 per cent by 2040, and down nearly 50 percent by 2070, the

Okanagan Basin Water Board says.

“The water, when we need it the most, won’t be there,” OBWB executive director Anna Warwick Sears said Friday at a press conference to publicize a water supply and demand study that’s been three years in the making.

New Interpretive Trail to Target Schoolchildren

By J.P. Squire – *The Okanagan Sunday* – March 14, 2010

The focus of that project will be to have an easily accessed trail so that younger school-aged children from the area don’t have to climb mountains to get there – FOSS president Herb Blamire

FOSS president reviews projects from past year, looks toward plans for this year

Friend of the South Slopes will start work on a project for schoolchildren this year – an interpretive trail in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park.

The brainchild of director Isabel Pritchard, the trail would start at the Stewart Road East trailhead in Kelowna, with existing trails at that location used to teach children and others about local flora, fauna and forest ecology.

FOSS president Herb Blamire believes it will take two or three years to complete, with the planning phase scheduled for this year.

Group Fights to Save BC Lake on World Water Day

BY TIFFANY CRAWFORD – VANCOUVER SUN – MARCH 23, 2010

Fish Lake would be Destroyed by Mining

As countries observed World Water Day on Monday, a Canadian group focused on saving British Columbia fish-bearing lake and nearby creek from destruction.

At a public hearing in Williams Lake, the Ottawa-based Council of Canadians urged a federal review panel to reject a proposed mining project about 200 kilometres southwest of Williams Lake. The hearing was packed by about 300 people.

The proposal is by Vancouver-based Taseko Mines, which says it must destroy a lake and a creek in order to mine a copper-gold deposit.

Taseko has offered to compensate for the loss of the lake by building an artificial one elsewhere.

But the CAC argues that destroying Fish Lake through the dumping of toxic waste will kill about 85,000 trout, causing a food shortage for first nations.

The group fears the tainted water will also affect salmon because the toxins will contaminate the Taseko River, which connects through a tributary to the Fraser River.

Province Hiking Campground Fees

BY WESTERN NEWS STAFF

Starting April 1, campers will be able to reserve specific sites for the first time due to a new reservation system.

The announcement also comes with news of increased user fees for camping. Environment Minister Barry Penner said with growing operating costs for BC Parks and reduced tax revenues to government, user fees for camping will increase between \$1 and \$6 for basic camping sites. The new fee structure will allow BC Parks to maintain high-quality service and is the first increase in two years.

Camping fees for basic sites will increase from \$15 to \$16 per night moderate sites will increase from \$19 a night to \$21 per night. In some developed campgrounds, fees will increase by an additional \$2 per night (from \$26 to \$28) and some by an additional \$4 per night (from \$26 to \$30) for the highest-demand sites with the highest levels of service.

Premium backcountry fees for adults will increase by \$5 per night (from \$5 to \$10) at Garibaldi, Cathedral, Berg Lake (Mt. Robson), Wells Grey, Juan de Fuca, Strathcona, Cape Scott, Mt Assiniboine, Kokanee Glacier and Bugaboo. (Youth ages 13-18 will remain at \$5 per night) Backcountry fees in 33 parks, including E.C. Manning, Wells Gray and Tweedsmuir, will remain at \$5 per night. Mooring buoy fees will increase by \$2 per night (from \$10 to \$12). Sani-station fees will increase by \$3 per use (from \$2 to \$5 per discharge).

In order to reduce mailing costs, the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society would like to send the newsletter by e-mail. If you have an e-mail address, please contact Michael Meheriuk at this address; anglerem@telus.net

'Tis the Season for Camping in British Columbia

SPECIAL TO THE OKANAGAN SUNDAY – APRIL 4, 2010

Pitching your tent by a sandy lake beach, roasting marshmallows around a roaring campfire, sleeping under the stars, stepping from your RV to a wilderness hot spring, or bivouacking on an alpine meadow after a long day on the trail – there are as many great reasons to camp as there are campsites in British Columbia.

Camping, whether by tent or RV (recreational vehicles), car, kayak or backpack, is one of the most popular ways to holiday in BC. And it isn't just about roughing it or saving money (though there is that). Sleeping under canvas is, for many people, the best way to access this province's spectacular landscapes and to enjoy a whole range of outdoor activities, from hiking and kayaking to mountain biking and white-water rafting.

Camping is also a big part of the culture here. You'll see people of all ages and all walks of life at campsites, from young families and city professionals on weekend breaks to seniors who live and travel in their RVs for months at a time.

BC Parks recorded 2,325,000 campsites visits in 2006 – that's a lot of camping for a province of only four million people.

Campsites fill up, but rarely feel crowded, as numbers are limited and sites are well spaced. In backcountry, forest service and marine park campsites, chances are you won't see a soul.

There are 340 vehicle-accessible campgrounds, and a total of 11,125 individual vehicle-accessible sites, in BC provincial parks and protected areas. Of these, approximately 3,600 campsites in 68 of the more popular parks can be reserved through BC parks campground reservation service, Discover Camping (www.discovercamping.ca or 1-800-689-9025).

Most reservable sites are vehicle-access

sites, welcoming cars and RVs. A typical pitch is roomy and shady, separated by a stand of trees from its neighbours. Most have a fire pit (though campfires are not always permitted) and a picnic table. Washrooms (with either flush or pit toilets), potable water and firewood (for a fee) are all within walking distance. With a few exceptions, there are no electrical plugs or water hookup of RVs in provincial park campgrounds. Pets are not always permitted, especially in backcountry areas.

Many provincial parks also have walk-in campsites (a relatively short walk from parking) as well as rustic backcountry sites for hikers. Marine parks have sites accessible only by boat or kayak.

There are also seven national parks in BC Campsites in two of them – the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve on Vancouver Island and Kootenay National Park in the Kootenay Rockies – can be reserved through the National Parks Camping Reservations Service at www.pccamping.ca or 1-800-737-3788 (877-reserve).

Private campsites are found throughout BC, near popular beaches, lakes and hot springs, or near major highways or towns; some are part of resorts with other types of accommodations. These typically have RV hookups and may also have such amenities as laundromats, beaches, cafes, playgrounds or pools. As with other accommodations in BC, these can be reserved through www.HelloBC.com or 1-800-435-5622.

BC is also home to more than 1,200 Forest Service Recreation campsites (formerly operated by Ministry of Forests) now operated by the Recreation Sites and Trails Branch of the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts. Accessed by unpaved forest service roads and typically near lakes and rivers, these campgrounds are small and rustic, but do offer outhouses, fire rings and picnic tables.

BY ANNE MURRAY – SPRING 2010 –
BC NATURE

Parks and Protected Areas

Eva Durance and three other Okanagan naturalists were interviewed by staff of the Auditor General's office for a performance audit on conservation in BC's Parks and protected areas.

This was an excellent opportunity to pass on BC Nature members' concerns regarding the operation and role of BC Parks, which have suffered enormous cuts over the last decade or so. In fact, the annual budget of BC Parks is now only slightly greater than that of the Capital Regional District Regional Parks and is substantially less than that of Metro Vancouver Regional Parks.

The National Park Network Committee is nominating the Similkameen River for the annual Endangered Rivers list compiled by Mark Angelo and the Outdoor Recreation Council. The Similkameen River, in the southern Interior is threatened by dams on both sides of the border.

Have You Heard

Compiled by Delores Broten and Susan MacVittie – Watershed Sentinel – March-April 2010

SEE YOU IN COURT

In March, Eco justice filed a lawsuit for Sierra Club Canada that claims the Canadian government acted unlawfully in gutting the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) through regulations last year.

The lawsuit challenges the 2009 Exclusion List Regulations that exempt thousands of projects such as highways, bridges, roads, and sewer systems from facing the scrutiny of legally required federal assessments. The lawsuit also challenges the Adaptation Regulations that give powers to the Minister of the Environment to exempt any other project from federal EA that is funded under various infrastructure funding schemes.

If the lawsuit is successful thousands of projects that were approved without an assessment could be revisited.

--Sierra Club Canada, March 2, 2010

GRIZZLY HUNT IN BC PARKS

The David Suzuki Foundation (DSF) has found that grizzly bears are being hunted for sport in 60 BC provincial parks. Many of the hunters are from the United States

and Europe, where it is either illegal to hunt bears or populations have disappeared.

BC is one of the last safe havens for grizzlies in North America, although the bears are increasingly threatened by human activity such as resource extraction and hunting. DSF says the government needs to treat provincial parks as refuges for bears and other wildlife.

-David Suzuki Foundation, February 25, 2010

BROWNS CREEK BLOCKADE

In February the Okanagan Indian Band commenced a protective blockade in response to logging in the Browns Creek watershed that supplies the majority of the 1,800 band residents with their drinking water.

Tolko Industries, who want to harvest 15,000 cubic metres in the area, have received an order from a Vancouver judge to remove the blockade. Chief Alexis notes that the federal government has abandoned its obligation to protect water supplies and allowed the BC government to sell off water rights. A number of fish bearing creeks that run through the reserve have been reduced to dry gullies. Chief Alexis also asked the BC government to stop issuing cutting permits in areas where their title to the land is being resolved by the courts.

-Okanagan Nation, February 23, 2010

KVR Trail Dispute Heats Up

RESIDENTS PRESENT THEIR CONCERNS OVER POSSIBLE RIGHT-OF-WAY TRANSFER TO BAND

By Scott Trudeau – Penticton Herald – March 19, 2010

About 20 residents showed up at Thursday morning's Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen meeting in protest of possible change in the right-of-way of the Kettle Valley Railway.

Enns outlined the roughly five-kilometre stretch, which bisects the two areas from

the southern portion of the West Bench to the northern portion of Sage Mesa.

About 75 properties run adjacent to the KVR.

Enns brought two petitions signed by residents opposed to the proposed transfer

because it is viewed as an integral and useful part of both communities. The petition states residents had not been adequately informed about the proposal and the possible negative affect on their land value as well as access to a community park in the area.

Society OKs Funds for Upgrade to Keremeos Walkway

BY PENTICTON HERALD STAFF – MARCH 22, 2010

At a recent meeting of the Similkameen Trails Society, members decided to allocate funding for improvements to the Keremeos Promenade.

Work on the promenade will be completed by Brian Dunn with help from volunteer labourers. The promenade begins at the Red Bridge and continues to a dead-end

at the undeveloped right-of-way road near The Rocking Chair Ranch.

In addition, a Cawston committee submitted a proposal through the trails society to the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen to have a walking trail circle the area from Kobau Park, around the Keremeos Creek-Wainwright Nature preserve, to Daly Drive and the Burlington

Northern Railway bed and returning to Kobau Park via Coulthard Road.

RDOS official Diane Vaykovich is working with the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure Finance regarding the abandoned Burlington Northern Railway bed that extends south through Cawston.



On the KVR Trail west of Faulder, March 2010

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



Conservationists Gather in Naramata

LIFE – BY KRISTI PATTON – PENTICTON WESTERN NEWS – MARCH 19, 2010

Conservationists and naturalists from across British Columbia will be meeting in Naramata to discuss how to sustain land in the sensitive Okanagan habitat and across the province.

The three days of workshops, field tours and seminars started on Thursday and is hosted by the Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia, a provincial association of local, regional and provincial land trust and a partner in the south Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program.

“We chose Naramata because we really like its natural area, opposed to having it in a big city, because that is what this is all about,” said executive director Sheila Harrington. “We also have our South Similkameen partners there, the Naramata conservation initiatives, and considering the Okanagan is one of the most endangered areas in Canada we thought it would be a good place to hold the conference.”

The gathering at Naramata Centre features 15 seminars on conservation tools and land stewardship education. On-site tours include the recently protected lands around the Skaha Bluff’s, Okanagan River Oxbow

restoration site and the Osoyoos Indian reserve with the First Nation’s Land Trust, who will host a short hike to desert lands ripe for protection, in an almost pristine state.

“We will be looking at the restoration in terms of a topic,” explained Harrington of the site tours. “How restoration took place and why. When we visit the first Nation land, which is very special, we will look at what are the key features, the ecological and culture interests and challenges on how to protect the land.”

Local speakers include Harold Baumbrough, who held a slide show presentation on Thursday called, After the Fire. This presentation depicted the re-growth and restoration of lands burned in the 2008 Okanagan Mountain fire. On Friday evening local snake expert Mike Sarrell will give an interpretive presentation on snakes of the South Okanagan Similkameen and their habitat.

Other keynote speakers on Friday include a morning plenary on conservations offsets, and emerging method of mitigating climate change. This will be followed with a discussion on Saturday on how offsets

can be put to the long-term conservation of carbon-storing forests, grasslands and wetlands. Saturday will also feature a session on developing conservation funds in local communities. This will highlight successful initiatives throughout British Columbia and the United States to raise dedicated funds for green space and conservation lands.

“Dedicated conservation funds have been a successful approach to conserving water, land and the natural quality of life in other areas, so we are looking forward to exploring what might be a good fit to accomplish this for our region,” said Bryn White, south Okanagan Similkameen Conservation program manager. “Even in tough economic times, experience has shown that these initiatives are successful when thought through carefully.”

Other seminars include attracting and retaining volunteers and board members and working with local governments to increase natural area protection.

For a full listing of the seminars, information on the site tour and registration fees visit www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca