

# OSPS NEWSLETTER

## OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Winter  
2007/2008

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## Taxpayers Lose in Forest Giveaway

**T**he Liberal government's willingness to hand benefits worth hundreds of millions of dollars to forest company owners is staggering. It simply doesn't make sense. The government has written contracts with forest companies covering their private land that has been included in provincial tree farm licenses.

The public compensated the companies handsomely to get them to sign the contracts, which ensure the land is managed and protected as timber-producing forests. But now all the companies do is ask and the government lets them out of the agreements.

The companies make huge, quick profits. The public loses access, green space, environmental protection, forest jobs — and gets nothing.

This started in 2004. Weyerhaeuser asked the government to take 90,000 hectares out of its tree farm license. Ministry staff told Mike de Jong, then the forest minister, it was a bad idea.

The company had already been compensated for including the land; the tougher environmental and replanting standards were worth continuing; and the agreement ensured the land stayed as forest. Communities saw this as an important social contract, staff reported. And if the government let the company take the land out of the tree farm license, it would have to negotiate compensation, staff said, and that would be tricky.

But de Jong over-ruled the ministry's non-political staff and said OK to the company's request. He got nothing in compensation

for taxpayers.

Within months Weyerhaeuser began negotiating its sale to Brascan, which agreed to pay \$1.4 billion. Much of that value was due to de Jong's decision, which meant a \$500-million windfall for the company.

Brascan executives said that getting the lands out of the tree farm license meant an extra \$18-\$24 million a year in profits for the company, now called TimberWest. And for the first time, the company could sell

*continued on following page...*

**OSPS 2008 Annual Meeting** has been set for Friday, March 14th with slides and talk on the rebuilding of the Myra Canyon Trestles for use as part of the Trans Canada Trail east of Penticton. Place centre stage Theatre Summerland – 7pm.

## Coalition Careless with Facts

*Dear Editor,*

Can it be the spokesman for the Grassland Park Review Coalition is becoming bored and therefore careless with the facts?

Since the project was first announced, Greg Norton has been the "Johnny One-note" of opposition to a proposed national park in the South Okanagan-Similkameen.

He claims to speak for "rancher, hunters, quad riders, snowmobile riders, fishermen, backcountry adventurers, loggers," yet we only ever hear the one voice. And it doesn't always ring true.

In the Penticton Herald article of Nov. 15, Norton appears to confuse the National

Park Network, a group working in support of the establishment of a national park, with Parks Canada.

He accuses Parks Canada of "solely concentrat[ing] on analyzing and quantifying the benefits and ignoring the socio-economic costs."

Not so. In Parks Canada's Spring-Summer 2006 publication "A Draft Park Concept", they list some benefits on page 13 and an equal number of challenges (no-one has problems anymore) on page 14. It doesn't get more "balanced" than that. Parks Canada has been conducting its feasibility study with consistent neutrality.

In the face of the Grassland Coalition's shrill opposition, the National Park Network (a citizens group) was formed to provide a

voice for those of us supporting the park concept. Any "promoting the park" has come from them.

Norton's assertion that what the Grasslands Coalition has "always tried to do is get that kind of balanced approach" also stretches the truth.

As early as January 2005, he protested in print that "a national park will turn every aspect of my life upside down." That hardly sounds like searching for a balanced approach.

Instead of a single note of opposition, we should hear a range of voices and perspectives. Add yours to the composition.

*Kathryn McCourt, Summerland  
– Penticton Herald – Nov. 21, 2007*

Please used the enclosed membership form on page 5 to help us carry out our mission.



## On Saving Caribou

In October the BC government, with the blessing of the ten environmental organizations, announced its plans to protect the Mountain Caribou, a Species at Risk under Canadian federal law. The plan trumpeted a 2.2 million hectare habitat set-aside, but in the absence of maps, stewardship agreements with recreational users, clarity on lower level habitat desirable for timber extraction, and in the pres-

ence of divisions between those ENGOs who signed confidentiality agreements and those who were not invited by government, evaluation of the plan's impact for caribou remains unclear.

*Watershed Sentinel – November 2007*

*...continued from previous page*

the land for development instead of being obligated to keep it as timber to ensure the future of the Island forest industry.

That meant a huge increase in the land's value. The company now says it has identified 38,000 hectares it wants to take out of forest use. They're worth \$300 million to \$450 million as is, "with significantly higher valuation potentially achievable through value-added development activities."

De Jong could have said no; nothing bad would have happened and the company had no case for demanding the gift. He could have asked for compensation for the public or job guarantees, or at least demanded a donation of land for parks. Instead, he handed benefits worth \$500 million over and got nothing in return.

Forest Minister Rich Coleman did it again this year. Western Forest Products asked him to let it out of its tree farm license, reducing its environmental and replanting obligations and allowing more raw log exports. And, more importantly, freeing up 70,000 acres for sale and development, including waterfront west of Victoria used

by surfers, campers and tourists and adjacent to provincial parks.

It's a gold mine for the company. And the government got nothing for the public — not money, investment commitments or a single acres protected as park. Coleman didn't consult anyone — politicians or public — from any of the communities. It was astonishingly arrogant. A developer has already bought the Jordan River property. He won't commit to public access to the surfing beach and camping area.

WFP is also selling another big chunk of land near Sooke Potholes Provincial Park. Just two years ago, the public helped raise money to buy land for the park. Part of the appeal was the park would be surrounded by land protected as forest. It might be logged, but it would be replanted. Coleman ended that. The company now has 561 acres for sale around potholes.

So why did he do it? Coleman says the company asked for help and he delivered.

There's no evidence he saved one job or that Western Forest Products needed a handout. Coleman hasn't released a single scrap of paper showing a review or rationale

or business case for his decision.

Now the government is planning the next giveaway, in the Kootenays. Pope & Talbot has been advertising 16,000 acres currently covered by tree-farm licenses for sale for development. Coleman maintains he hasn't decided whether to let the company out of the contract. But in fact, the same developer who bought the Jordan River property has purchased a large lakefront tract from Pope & Talbot. Both the developer and the company seem confident the deal is done, despite Coleman's claims.

Again, why would the government give a bankrupt forest company a gift worth millions? Especially when the land includes property that's important for running the business. A company asks for a favour with hundreds of millions of dollars. The government doesn't negotiate, or protect the public. it says sure.

And you lose.

PAUL WILCOCKS

*Penticton Herald November 3, 2007*

**For the latest (at press time) government reaction to this criticism, see page 9.**

## PROPOSAL TO SELL CROWN LANDS

# RDOS Board Wants to Know Why

**Directors vote to invite minister Pat Bell to a meeting to explain reasons for move**

**A**lmost two years after its launch, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen directors are still steamed over a provincial government proposal to sell Crown lands currently being leased to cabin owners and other recreational users at reservoir lakes in the Okanagan.

The RDOS board voted unanimously Thursday to invite Agriculture and Lands Minister Pat Bell to a future meeting to explain the government's reasons for the move.

Integrated Land Management Bureau officials said about 163 recreational lots are potentially for sale, next to 20 upland reservoirs. This includes some 40 lots at headwaters Lake northwest of Summerland.

Discussions have focused on water quality, the level of lake reservoirs, the impact of septic disposal and other issues, in consultation with local governments and first nations.

But regional district directors wondered

why those environmental improvements can't be directed by the province, as the landowner. They claimed this appears to be another move by Victoria to download responsibility and ongoing monitoring costs onto local government.

Penticton Coun. Joanne Grimaldi said there should be no lifetime guarantees for leaseholders.

"This is public land. These are drinking-water reservoirs," Grimaldi said. "Wouldn't no development be best for a community water source?"

Osoyoos Mayor John Slater, chairman of the Okanagan Basic Water Board, described the government's attempt to sell the lots as a "quick fix" to environmental problems first pointed out by the water board in September 2001.

Slater also wondered how the regional district could provide compensation to property owners affected by a decision to increase the water levels of a reservoir.

BY JOHN MOORHOUSE  
*Penticton Herald*  
Friday, November 30, 2007

## Lesson in Reality Needed

This is a quote from the Friends of the Earth organization: "The United Nations Environment Program warned recently that humans are using natural resources and polluting the planet at such an alarming rate that we have put civilization as we know it at risk and may soon pass an environmental point of no return." In its most comprehensive report ever on the environment, released Oct 26, the UN warned that problems including global warming, species extinction and food scarcity threaten humanity and that dramatic changes are needed now to avoid an environmental collapse. The report was compiled by a group of nearly 400 experts and is a sobering read for anyone who cares about our world's future."

I am constantly amazed at the number of people who seem to think that they are brighter than the best scientists on earth. These people believe climate change to be a hoax; that we will never have any problems with our water supply, even in a valley that gets only 10 inches of precipitation a year; that we should continue to promote runaway growth; that big box homes surrounded by golf courses are a better thing than leaving a natural habitat for our wildlife; and that blowing off ALR land for non-productive uses is a much better use for them than growing food products.

For those people I suggest that you start looking at reality.

*Frank Martens, Summerland  
- Penticton Western News,  
November 25, 2007*

## Breaking the Barriers of Water Reuse

**REUSE IS A REALITY AND A NECESSITY.**

**W**ater reuse is not an abstract concept; it is both a reality and a necessity. For the reason cited below, the requirements and opportunities for water reuse will continue to grow at an increasingly rapid rate.

- **Economic Factors.** In addition to the treatment technology costs, it is necessary to factor in that raw water costs are steadily increasing, and will continue to

do so, reflecting the requirement for better quality water, and costs associated with meeting new regulations. Also, there are the intangible benefits of creating the image of responsible stewardship.

- **Lack of commitment.** The commitment to reuse is more dependent upon consumer perception: "Drinking recycled sewage," "Toilet to tap," etc. In reality, the majority of the world's population now drinks from rivers and streams that are receiving wastewa-

ter discharges. For example, the Colorado River receives 280 wastewater discharges before it becomes the source of drinking water for Los Angeles, and the Thames River receives 360 wastewater discharges before becoming the source of drinking water for London's 7.3 million people.

PETER CARTWRIGHT  
*Canadian Water Quality Association  
Technical Consultant*

## Dam Quietly Proposed for Upper Similkameen

**RDOS director says dam could help control flooding and provide 'clean' electricity**

**W**hile controversy swirls over a proposed dam on the lower Similkameen River in Washington state, discussions are quietly proceeding over the possibility of a dam on the upper Similkameen near Princeton.

The Washington government recently awarded \$300,000 to the Public Utility District of Okanogan County for a feasibility study into the construction of a dam at Shanker's Bend, eight kilometers northwest of Oroville. The U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is deciding whether the utility can move ahead and look into the potential impacts of building a dam.

One proposal calls for a 79-metre-high dam, which would create a reservoir stretching more than 7,200 hectares – about half of which would reach into B.C., flooding lands south of Cawston including portions of the Lower Similkameen-Indian reserve.

A hydroelectric dam at the Shanker's Bend site was first proposed in 1948, and has been looked at periodically since then.

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen has yet to take a stand on the latest dam proposal.

RDOS chairman Dan Ashton said Thursday he doubts any decision on the Shanker's Bend site will be made soon, noting a 79-metre dam would also cause extensive flooding in the U.S., including Nighthawk, Washington, and the Palmer Lake area where several cottages are located.

George Hanson, RDOS director for Area B (Cawston), said he would likely be opposed to Canadian land being flooded.

However, he noted one of the proposals being studied calls for a smaller dam that would only flood land in Washington.

Hanson said a joint Canada-U.S. committee looking into Similkameen Valley issues, meets Monday in Omak, Washington, to discuss another dam proposal on the Similkameen- upstream from Princeton.

Hanson said details on the size of the dam and its reservoir have yet to be determined. He emphasized the committee is only looking at the upper Similkameen dam project, rather than the Shanker's Bend proposal, which is totally separate.

"All we're looking at is whether it's feasible to put in a dam above Princeton, so there are a lot of studies that need to be correlated

and brought together in order to determine whether or not it's feasible," he said.

"They're doing feasibility studies on economics and doing some environmental assessment impacts."

Joe Nitsch, RDOS director for Area G (Keremeos rural Hedley), said he hopes negative publicity over the Shanker's Bend project won't have a negative impact on the Princeton dam proposal.

He noted it could help control flooding along the Similkameen and provide "clean" electricity.

The Similkameen Valley Planning Society and FortisBC are looking into the feasibility of the dam.

"Nobody is really proposing it. It's just something that's being looked at as a possibility," Nitsch added.

"We're a long ways away from anywhere regarding it (going ahead)."

A hydroelectric dam was first proposed in the early 1990s by Princeton Light and Power Co. at the former Similco Mines site, but did not proceed past the preliminary planning stage.

BY JOHN MOORHOUSE  
*November 16, 2007 – Penticton Herald*

## RDOS Asked to Consider Grasslands During Development

**T**he regional District of Okanagan Similkameen needs to consider protection of its valuable grasslands as it plans for development, says a conservation organization official.

Bruno Delesalle of the Grasslands Conservation Council told the RDOS board grasslands throughout the South Okanagan-Similkameen are coming

under increased pressure from growth and development.

"Historically, we have lost over 36,000 hectares in the South Okanagan alone and this rate is increasing," he said.

Delesalle said this area has ecologically significant area of grassland, sage and antelope brush, in addition to the pocket desert near Osoyoos.

The Kamloops-based conservation council is calling on local governments to include an analysis of the impact of

development on grasslands in future planning efforts.

"We understand we can't stop growth," said Delesalle. "But we need to bring this to the table".

The RDOS directors referred the matter to regional district staff for a recommendation at next month's board meeting. The Grasslands Conservation council will be holding a workshop in Penticton on Nov. 28.

*October 22, 2007 – Penticton Herald*

Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society  
Box 787, Summerland, B.C. V0H 1Z0

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## Okanagan Breaks Ground for New Rails with Trails

Groundbreaking ceremonies took place Friday morning in Kelowna to begin construction of the Rails with Trails bike-path project. The \$2.1-million provincially backed project had city officials on hand to celebrate the Okanagan's

first commuter-based bike path.

"Kelowna has the most extensive bike-lane network within Canada", said Mayor Sharon Shepherd. "This is a sustainable initiative that brings us one step closer to our ultimate long-term vision of a multi-use pathway bridging communities from downtown Kelowna to Vernon."

Encompassed in the project are the city's goals of promoting active living, alternative modes of transportation, reduced harmful emissions and providing sustainable transportation networks.

"If someone offered you a way to save money, lose weight, save time and increase your quality of life, you might think it sounded too good to be true", said Shepherd. "But these are all benefits of using two wheels instead of four".

The route connects neighbourhoods to recreational facilities, parks, institutions and the downtown cultural district. It also provides access

to the Okanagan waterfront with plans to extend the pathway to UBC Okanagan, said Shepherd.

The asphalt pathway will be up to 4.5 metres wide, landscaped and illuminated, with a fence separating the path from the railway.

"We're always looking for ways that the city can reduce its environmental footprint", said Shepherd.

Don Knox, chairman of the Kelowna Cycling coalition, is confident the path will provide safe access for people wanting to cycle the Okanagan.

"The biggest inhibitors of people riding bikes is the fear of riding on the side of the road", he said.

"By dedicating a separate riding path, we believe this will greatly increase the amount of people that will get on their bikes and ride."

The anticipated completion of the project is spring 2008.

LIZ FIELD

*The Okanagan Sunday – October 28, 2007*



*Don Knox, chairman of the Kelowna Cycling Coalition, Kelowna Mayor Sharon Shepherd and Al Horning, MLA, break ground for the first commuter bike trail in the Okanagan.*

# BC Forest Land Controversy Erupts

British Columbia's forest management has been scandal-plagued for the last half century, and the problem has erupted again. This time, it is not access to the lucrative and biologically rich old growth forests that are at issue, but the land upon which they once stood. The BC Liberal government has been allowing logging companies to withdraw their private land holdings from the Tree Farm Licenses (TFL) with no compensation to the public.

The pattern began in 2004 with 223,000 acres on Vancouver Island and continued in the Kootenays. Now it's another 28,283 hectares on Vancouver Island, all to be entered in BC's over-heated real estate mar-

ket. The lands west of Victoria include spectacular coastal property near China Beach and the surfers' point at Jordan River.

Affected First Nations, with their unresolved land rights to these territories, have not been consulted. The move is also seen as a way to circumvent local community controls over sprawl and development.

The government claims the withdrawals will allow the logging companies, especially Western Forest Products, to survive, but one company, Timber West, says bluntly that they should now be considered a "land management company" with two branches, real estate and forestry.

In the 1950s, forest companies put small amounts of privately owned forest lands into tree farm licenses subject to government control, in exchange for acquiring exclusive access to huge areas of publicly owned forest. The move was intended to

provide a sustainable forest land base and companies were exempted from paying the rural land tax rate or market-level stumpage. Most land in BC remains unceded aboriginal territory, and administratively belongs to the Crown. However, over 800,000 prime acres of the land on the southeast side of Vancouver Island was originally transferred to private ownership from the Crown for the E&N Railway land grant.

The University of Victoria's environmental law centre has asked the Auditor General to investigate the latest withdrawal, due to the lack of care for the public interest.

The BC Liberals received \$1.7 million in political donations between 1996 to 2006 from logging companies.

DELORES BROTEN  
*Watershed Sentinel – November 2007*

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## The Reality of Drinking Water in First Nations Communities

Not all First Nations communities have problems with their water sources, but there are hundreds across Canada that face challenges every day. Some of the issues are:

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- No running water in homes;
- No water treatment plants;
- Water treatments plants that don't serve a whole community, in part due to location, size, geography or funding to hook up all homes;
- Homes that utilize holding tanks and cisterns for water supply.

### CAPACITY

- Inefficient water testing and data;
- Improper maintenance for cisterns, holding tanks and water trucks;
- Lack of certified operators and no back up operators,

### RESOURCES AND ACCESS

- First Nations must wait for major capi-

tal project funding — such as water and sewage treatment plants, schools etc. — from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) based on funding and where they are on the list. Waits can be considerable and at times a project is dictated by how much funding is available.

### ROLES AND REGULATIONS

- Lack of clarity of roles among the principal players — the federal body as a collective (INAC, Public Works and Health Canada), provinces, Chief and Council and tribal councils in assuring water quality;
- No effective legislative base for regulating potable water on reserves. The federal standards set out in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality are just that, guidelines with no legislative teeth. The list of challenges is long and over the years there have been various attempts by different governments to try and address the long and multifaceted problems.

INAC over the years has developed strate-

gies and plans to attempt to deal with these issues. In 2001, INAC found a significant risk to the quality or safety of drinking water in three quarters of the systems. In the 2003 INAC National Assessment of Water and Wastewater in First Nations Communities, it stated there were 191 high-risk water systems across Canada.

In 2003, the government made drinking water safety in First Nations communities a priority and approved a budget of \$600 million over five years for the First Nations Water Management Strategy.

Future regulations for First Nations should be comparable with provinces and designed to protect the health and safety of First Nations people. These regulatory standards must be developed with the full participation of First Nations.

MELISSA HOTAIN  
*Canadian Water Treatment  
September/October 2007*

## End the Deforestation Before It's Too Late

I support the good work of the people [Western Canada Wilderness Committee] expressing our cumulative need to protect old growth forests, and I wanted to mention that in a flight over Vancouver Island in October en route to Knight Inlet to see Grizzly Bears in Glendale Cove (where there is a fish hatchery, not much sign of salmon anywhere else) I was sincerely shocked to see the logging and slashing burning of 2nd and 3rd growth forests on both Vancouver Island and the mainland.

BC has become a biological desert where the soils, after the massive logging taking place, aren't sufficient to support much of anything. It was a reality check for us here in Clayoquot where we are trying to protect what very little is left of old growth forests while forests everywhere are literally disappearing all over the place. Logging roads

wind their ugly way into every crevasse and valley and logging goes right to the edge of parks and mountain tops with nothing much left unturned and no wilderness left to speak of.

One lonely dead sockeye, chewed by an unseen bear was all that was seen at the headwaters of the amazing Nimkish watershed, an old portage route to Tahsis on the west coast and one of the most prominent watersheds on Vancouver Island.

I have enclosed some pictures taken in mid-October here in Clayoquot of some of the booms of log bundles of ancient old growth forest ready to go out on barges that come in at night and leave before dawn. This is in one of the few areas where salmon are still surviving, bears and wolves still frequent the area and there is still some old growth left to protect.

My concern is that while we make plans for a 5 year phasing out of old growth logging (at which time we will be lucky if anything much remains) that logging everywhere else will have to put us in serious debt to the planet regarding climate change, oxygen supplies, wild salmon populations and many other important and dependent species.

If we call for an end to deforestation everywhere in light of the very serious situation humanity finds itself at this time, perhaps future generations, if there is hope for them, won't wonder at the madness that is the fastest deforestation this planet has ever experienced.

For all our relations.

SUSANNE HARE, WICKANNINISH ISLAND, BC  
*Watershed Sentinel – Nov.-Dec. 2007*

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## Trail Talk from the Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society

We have some positives to report: Three of our four bridges are completed and paid for, thanks to some of you and a generous grant from the province of BC. It was a joy to celebrate paying off the last of \$346,000 for the big bridge near the Research Station. We also have two new interpretive signs at the kiosk there.

This year, we were hosts to the Trails BC (the overarching trails organization in our province) annual general meeting. There was a good turnout of locals and from all across BC. We heard exciting historical talks, and it was a chance to compare problems and be buoyed up by the successes of other trail builders.

I also went to the annual national meeting of the Trans Canada Trail Foundation (the group that finances 10% of our projects) which was in Vancouver this year. There was representation from almost

every province including the Yukon. We found out how Quebec is ahead of us in making all of their Trans Canada Trail free of motorized traffic.

ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) and dirt bikes have been our nemesis in BC. Our Summerland TCT Society worked with the government to try and prevent a showdown with the local ATV Club when they hosted their provincial jamboree in August.

We had visions of ATVs ripping up everything we have attempted to build.

A compromise solution was found, the ATVers promised to stay off our supposed non-motorized trail if they were granted an ATV reserve. So far, BC doesn't have any legislation making the TCT non-motorized. But this legislation is in the works now, and for the first time, six different provincial ministries have met

to solve the problem. We have some very dedicated advocates in government, so we are hopeful that there'll be enforceable rules by spring. The ATV clubs are also very happy that they'll have a huge reserve.

As always, donations are most welcome: \$50 will buy you a donor's plaque with one name, and \$200 will give you a larger plaque for several names. What a nice way to celebrate an occasion, friend, family member or yourself! This makes a good Christmas present! Please send your donations to Geoff Solly, 6803 Nixon St., Summerland, BC, V0H-1Z9. You'll get a charity receipt and a certificate for your donation. We are thankful to you, who are helping to make the TCT a reality!

*Submitted by Marilyn Hansen (pres.)  
Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society,  
Ph. 250 494-9265.*

## GETTING BEYOND THE CONFLICTS

# Collaborative Decision-Making for a Sustainable Future. A New Book by Juergen and Marilyn Hansen

Old-time OSPS members will remember how our society started out as an advocacy group, complete with a cause (Protecting the California Bighorn Sheep at Vaseux Lake) and with an excitable board of directors that became known for its lively monthly meetings. It was New Wave environmental thinking at its best that fueled our brains and souls.

“Those were the days”, some of us still feel when we made quick and firm decisions, sometimes wisely, sometimes less so. Those were also the days when all environmentalists were branded as ecofanatics, peace disturbers, juvenile activists and pot-smoking air polluters.

In other words, we were seen as creating conflicts where, in fact, we were trying to prevent future environmental conflicts by protecting and preserving wildlife.

As the society grew, we took a broader view and changed the emphasis from independent conflict prevention to collaborating with the government in creating such parks as Okanagan Mountain, Cathedral Lakes, the Cascade Wilderness and Brent Mountain Protected Areas.

Originally, this collaboration was based on the Old Boys’ and Young Ladies’ system: we simply made a point of getting to know politicians and mandarins, provided them and the media with reasonable plans for future parks, relied on their common sense and hoped for the best.

When this personal system of advocacy and decision-making slowed down around 1990, the OSPS delegated Juergen Hansen to the latest B.C. think tank, the Round Table for Environment and Economy (BCRTEE). This round table was supposed to advise cabinet on ways in which the ongoing conflicts between environmen-

tal thinking and industrial and residential development could be channeled into a collaborative effort toward sustainability. The table did a credible job. But it was unable to come up with a clearly defined way in which such tables could work in the future. “By consensus” seemed to be the key idea, but nobody knew how to work that way.

When the round table was closed down, Juergen and his wife Marilyn continued the work that the consensus-seeking subcommittee had done. After 15 years of developing and testing different ADR (alternate dispute resolution) methods, they have now published a summary of their experiences with facilitating conflict resolution in several Okanagan communities. Most of these cases concerned conflicts between environmental principles and development proposals.

**For all practical purposes, “Getting Beyond the Conflicts” is a handy pocket guide for settling environmental conflicts by facilitating local community meetings that are dedicated to genuine progress and sustainability.**

The basic idea is that most groups (environmental, social or economic/commercial) and their members have in the past competed with each other and therefore have never had a chance to experience the power of cooperation.

If and when these groups are willing to go through the transition from adversarial to collaborative thinking and planning, it’s easy to help them reach consensus on almost any controversial topic, even on sustainability which is rapidly emerging as our most urgent public policy goal.

All it takes, Juergen claims, is an experienced facilitator who helps the groups go through five dialogue steps, either within

a community volunteer group or between different groups: 1. Where do you want to go and what are you trying to achieve? 2. What means do you have to get you there? 3. How many different alternative options do you see for getting there? 4. And which do you think is the best?

Families that have tried to discuss their next summer vacation trip will know what Juergen is talking about: if you all want to pitch in, define your goals, pick the best one and go. “Analysis-Options-Decision!” as he puts it.

The round table structure and dialogue are summarized in the first two pages of the book and are described in more detail later on. In between are examples of successful local round tables that the Hansens have facilitated and some details about the role of the round table volunteers, convenors, chairs, scribes and facilitators.

The first 50 page summary edition is in press right now and will be available for \$20. - (either Canadian or US) before the end of the year. Contact The Green Group, Juergen and Marilyn Hansen, 7611 Oak Ave., Summerland, B.C. V0H 1Z9, or by e-mail: commonsproject@vip.net.

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*For Newsletter readers who are actively interested in collaborative consensus-based decision-making in their own community, we’d like to reproduce the first page of the foreword of...*

## GETTING BEYOND THE CONFLICTS

Twenty years ago, environmental colleagues of ours came up with two amazing statements:

*continued on next page...*

## Park Proposal Fully Transparent

*Dear Editor,*

The National Park Network, a local group of park supporters, would like to correct the misleading assertions of Greg Norton, representing the Grasslands Review Coalition in Penticton Herald article on Nov. 15 entitled "Group to pinpoint socio-economic impact."

Norton's claim of lack of transparency is without merit. Parks Canada has held many public meetings, established drop-in offices in local communities, and held face-to-face consultations with stakeholder groups such as Canadian Helicopters, ranchers and Greg Norton himself, just to name a few. All of these consultation efforts are to gather information and to develop measures that enhance benefits to the local community while easing adverse effects. Further, Parks

Canada has also published a number of fact sheets regarding the national park concept.

Regarding Norton's assertion of "hype" by Parks Canada. It is just not credible to imply that within this park concept area \$500 million of Crown land rental values will be lost. Who is engaging the 'hype'?

The upcoming four meetings are a continuation of these public consultation efforts, and are being funded by Parks Canada. By mutual consensus these meetings were intended to be non-confrontational. The meetings are primarily to help people make a decision based on credible information.

Real-world experience in communities near national parks has unequivocally shown that for the vast majority of people the benefits of a national park far outweigh the negatives. A public opinion poll of local people shows the national park will provide what

the large majority want.

Whether you are in business, or a recreationist, or a nature-lover wanting to conserve cherished natural values for you and your kids to enjoy, there are many potential benefits to a national park here. This national park proposal is a one-time-only opportunity. If forfeited, this opportunity will not come again. The National Park Network urges you to embrace the park proposal. Your community needs your participation. Come to these meetings.

The South Okanagan-Similkameen is undergoing the fastest rate of land development in Canada. A national park will be a change, but that change is preferable to changes that are inevitable without the national park.

*Dennis St. John, Willowbrook,  
Doreen Olson, White Lake,  
Bob Lincoln, Kaleden  
November 6, 2007 – Penticton Herald*

## B.C. Auditor Reviews Forest Release

**B**.C. Auditor-General John Doyle has agreed to review the forest ministry's decision to release Western Forest Products' privately owned lands

from tree farm licences on Vancouver Island and the central coast.

Forests Minister Rich Coleman continues to defend his decision in January to delete 28,000 hectares of land, including the popular surfing area at Jordan River on south Vancouver Island. Removal allows the com-

pany to sell land for development.

The NDP and the University of Victoria's environmental law clinic both called for the review.

*Western Daily – November 25, 2007*

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**"You'll never get all environmentalists to reach consensus on sustainability" and "It's ridiculous to think that the format of a dialogue influences its outcome!"**

Ever since, we have worked hard to disprove both views. It's been worth the effort.

In this condensed guide, we are presenting a consensus-based round table dialogue format that will help environmental groups work collaboratively with each other, with corporations and governments toward a sustainable greener future.

We hope that this description of the "dynamic round table" system will make it clear that collaborative dialogues can still be robust but flexible, participatory, consensus-based, facilitated instead of mediated, inclusive of all affected stake-

holders, focussed on holistic sustainability goals and – as a bonus in an age that's always in a hurry - easy to implement and quick to run through from vision to decision.

Many of you have asked us how we became interested in finding or creating a clearly defined alternate or appropriate dispute resolution (ADR) process. So we'd like to give you a little history to show why we look at dynamic round tables as ideal and broadly useful standardized forums for resolving environmental conflicts and planning better sustainability strategies.

In the 1980s, green NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and their lively public protests lit a fire under the Canadian and US political establishments. Some media and opinion leaders wondered whether they were witnessing the beginning of a breakdown of law and order and of our supposedly democratic way of life

Gradually, many environmentalists began to think that there must be a better way than open revolt and barricades to settle policy disagreements over clear cut logging, wilderness parks, vanishing species, pesticides, seal hunting, fisheries' management, health care and water management privatization, the WTO and global warming.

We checked and tested different types of modern round tables and dialogue formats that allow interested stakeholders, grass-roots groups, industries and governments collaborate with each other. The NGOs' interests were mostly in resolving environmental and social conflicts. Our interest was increasingly in helping communities develop long range strategies for environmentally sane, socially fair and economically sound management. In other words, we were trying to find a better and faster road toward sustainability, here and now.

# Survey of Environmental Law, Enforcement and Compliance in BC

## CLOSING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the last two decades, the level of environmental protection afforded by the province's law and policies has risen and fallen dramatically. Government efforts to enforce and ensure compliance with these laws have mirrored these changes.

Since 1995, there has been a significant decline in the number of enforcement activities taken by the Conservation Officer Service; this is true even for enforcement actions that lack an immediate consequence, such as written warnings. Two possible causes for this decline are the loss of staffing resources during the same period, combined with the creation of a number of difficult to enforce "result-based" laws.

It appears that the government has moved towards a potentially difficult to enforce "results-based" regulations system, without implementing an adequate check and balance system. While further research needs to be done, it seems that when easier to enforce, more prescriptive laws were dismantled, and replaced with laws which require more data and effort to enforce effectively, the government failed to ensure that a fully developed and adequately funded monitoring, compliance and enforcement program was in place.

Ministry staff have suggested that the tools necessary to track the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement efforts are being developed, but these accountability systems have yet to be adopted. Meanwhile the dramatic decline in enforcement actions should concern all British Columbians who want to see their laws upheld and the environment protected.

*West Coast Environmental Law - 2007*

# Our Parks Are More Than Just Protected Areas ...

## 1. Climate Change

Climate change has already started to impact the earth's web of life by melting glaciers, increasing wildfires, triggering pest infestations and causing extreme weather events. Healthy ecosystems are not only important for cleaning our air and purifying our water, but they also mitigate climate change by serving as "carbon sinks" absorbing carbon dioxide, one of the primary greenhouse gases causing climate change.

## 2. Habitat & Biological Diversity

Loss of habitat is the primary reason why more than 80% of British Columbia's 1300 species at risk are endangered. Wildlife such as burrowing owls, western bluebirds, mountain caribou and northern spotted owls are in danger of disappearing from BC due to the loss of the meadows, forests and grasslands they call home. Parks play an important role in the prevention of extinction and the maintenance of biodiversity by preserving healthy ecosystems. Unfortunately, many of our parks, due to their small size and lack of interconnected areas, are in danger of becoming "islands of extinction", where wildlife are unable to disperse and ecosystems slowly degrade because of the fragmentation of the surrounding landscape.

## 3. Recreation

Provincial parks provide recreational activities for both young and old, urban and rural, outdoor adventurer and occasional visitor. Whether swimming, canoeing, fishing, hiking, camping, bird watching, or roasting marshmallows over an open fire, provincial parks offer an array of activities for people throughout the province. Parks give us a way to get away from the hustle and bustle of the everyday life- to turn off the computer, switch off the TV, leave the cell phone at home and reconnect with nature.

## 4. Economic Benefits

British Columbia's parks provide a wealth of ecosystem services, but they also contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to local towns and cities across the province. According to a government report released in 2001. BC's parks system contributes \$521 million to our Gross Domestic Product with "over one-half of the benefits occurring outside of the Lower Mainland and Victoria regions" Despite this large monetary contribution the operational budget for BC Parks is just \$33 million, the same as it was in 1994 when our protected area system was half the size.

## BC's Parks System - A Comparison

	NATIONAL PARKS	BC	ALBERTA
<b>Hectares Protected</b>	27,000,000	852	504
<b>Annual Budget</b>	\$532,000,000	\$33,000,000	\$46,000,000
<b>Dollars per Hectare</b>	\$19.70	\$2.52	\$17.03
<b>Staff</b>	4,200	179	432
<b>Park Rangers (full time equivalents)</b>	425	64	105
<b>Visitors (annual)</b>	28,000,000	18,300,000	8,500,000
<b>Ranger per visitor ratio</b>	1/65,882	1/282,937	1/80,952

Sources for this table can be found online.