



Newsletter *Spring 2025*

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EDITORIAL

We are certainly living in incredibly turbulent times in all aspects of our environment, society, and often personal lives. It is very difficult to escape the noise that exists in our world, physically, metaphorically, and fantastically. Every day something occurs that detonates the interest and attention of people in our multiple communities until in a short while something else explodes into our awareness and replaces it.

As this is being written, we are engaged in a Canadian federal election, an escalating tariff war with our largest trading partner (an continent sharing neighbour), and our provincial and federal environmental goals are being, not just ignored but done so with relish. New events are being identified as having existential ramifications and what had been top priorities are sliding down a ranked list and placed onto a back burner, or maybe a black hole.

This is not to claim that we need to be ignorant about the things that are happening, at home or around the world, but if one thing is certain it is that news cycle events will keep occurring and if we are not diligent what was once of extreme importance will be lost in the noise of the latest scandal, mistake, or deft piece of disinformation. In other words, it is important to keep the eye on the ball.

The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society has been working for close to sixty years to protect one aspect of our world, the natural environment of the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys. Through conservation, stewardship, and education the society

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60th Annual General Meeting May 15, 2025

The sixtieth Annual General Meeting of The OSPS will take place on May 15, 2025. The in-person meeting will be held @ 6:30 in the meeting room at the Summerland branch of the Okanagan Public Library. Along with a short business meeting the proceedings include a celebration of the Life and Contributions of two of our former Executive Board members, Bert and Sheila White.

With Sheila's passing this past winter, the White's roles in, and contributions to, the OSPS were brought into a sharp focus. Both toiled on the executive of the society in a variety of important roles, including editing the newsletter, secretary, coordinating projects and membership, to name a few. It seemed that if Bert had something on the go, then Sheila would be assisting and vice versa. Obviously, we along with countless others miss them.

Part of the celebration will be a PowerPoint presentation depicting the Whites and some of the Parks that they were instrumental in assisting to bring about. If attendees have stories or memories that they would like to share they will have an opportunity to do so. If you would like to write out a piece and have it read that can also be accommodated.

The OSPS needs your help and participation. Plan to attend the AGM and celebrate some of our Parks and a couple of the wonderful people that helped to establish them. Together we can protect what we have built and make the future bright.



Sheila White, March 12, 1924 - September 26, 2024, was a Summerland municipal councilor and representative on the Regional District of the South Okanagan. She served as director, Membership secretary and News editor on the OSPS board. She was a tireless worker and the impetus for many of the undertakings of the OSPS over more than five decades. Who didn't purchase a fund-raising calendar from Sheila?



Bert White, 1926 - 2014, was a teacher and advocate for the conservation of the Okanagan Similkameen's most important ecosystems. Bert served as treasurer and director on the executive. He was a well-respected leader and organizer within the Parks Society.

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

endeavors to maintain this important part of our British Columbian, Canadian, and Cascadian world. The issues which we proactively follow and often react to are becoming more and more difficult to address, what with the flooding of the bandwidth with the noisy static that we are exposed to. The Forest Act, the National Park, wildlife culls, lake levels and river treaties, and even climate change, usually play third or fourth fiddle in the tumultuous symphony that is the 2025 news scape.

As individuals and groups, we need to ensure that the issues that are important to us are not drowned out by fake, manufactured or at best misleading “news.” While democracy, human rights and peace are all incredibly important to us as a species, many of the sub-plots around annexation, the names of water bodies, wokeness and DEI, are simple attempts to clutter up the acoustic track. Important alternatives for attention exist, such as establishing a protected, connected wildlife corridor up the spine of our region that allows for megafauna to migrate as they have been doing for thousands of years. Such a plan for protected areas, or more desirable, parks, would allow for the reestablishment of naturally occurring plants, animals, and fungi, which in turn helps to maintain a healthy environment that cleans air, provides a habitat for important creatures and plants, and provides a window onto nature for the people trying to escape the noise of our current people-made clatter of rattling sabers, verbose narcissists, and excitement craving hanger-oners.

Canadians want next government to prioritize climate change, poll finds

Survey results come as 14 environmental groups warn Ottawa that European Union import regulations will soon restrict wood products linked to forest degradation

STEFAN LABBÉ

Two-thirds of Canadians agree the next federal government should prioritize action on climate change and protecting nature, a new poll has found. The national poll was carried out by Leger on commission from the B.C.-based environmental group David Suzuki Foundation. A similar share of respondents supported Ottawa investing in renewable energy over fossil fuels.

Sixty-two per cent of those surveyed said Canada should maintain its commitments on climate change despite the U.S. government’s recent decision to pull out of the United Nations Paris agreement to lower greenhouse gas emissions. The poll questioned a panel of 1,548 Canadian adults in an online survey from March 7-10.

In a letter sent Tuesday, (March 18, 2025) to the leaders of all major federal political parties, the David Suzuki Foundation joined 13 other environmental groups calling on the next government to provide tariff relief measures that don’t lead to the over-har-

vesting of Canadian forests. The letter also lobbies the next federal government to craft tariff relief measures that prioritize funding Canadian workers — not foreign-owned forestry corporations.

Accessing European markets, it adds, will soon require falling in line with new regulations that prohibit the importation of forest products linked to deforestation or forest degradation. “Unsustainable logging practices in Canada put this key export market at risk,” the letter notes. “Canada must acknowledge and reform current industrial logging practices that degrade forest ecosystems.”

Michael Polanyi, a policy and campaign manager at Nature Canada, said his group signed the letter because it’s concerned the \$6.5 billion promised to industry last week does not come with guidelines that would prioritize workers and limit harms to nature. “It’s in Canada’s economic interest in terms of accessing global markets that we’re not further degrading forests,” Polanyi added, pointing to tightening EU regulations. “There’s a risk of closing market off to Canadian forest products.”



'State of disrepair': It's time for a reboot of B.C. Parks

PUBLISHED OCT 19, 2024, VANCOUVER SUN

Metro Vancouver's parks department, with 23 parks, has a larger budget than B.C. Parks, with over 1,000 parks

Underfunded, understaffed and with infrastructure that is increasingly unsafe, B.C.'s provincial park system is in drastic need of a reboot. Master plans have been promised, but never delivered. Trails have been proposed, but never built. Or they've been built, then never maintained.

Budgets have fallen desperately behind as the province's population — and demand for outdoor recreation opportunities — has exploded. In an open letter to the leaders of the political parties that were running for election, the Elders Council for Parks in B.C. recently called for a change of direction. "The current state of B.C. Parks is unhealthy," our letter said. "Aging infrastructure is in a state of disrepair, and in some cases unsafe. There is a dire need for informed, participatory management planning for many parks that is long overdue." The letter made four key demands.

INCREASE THE BUDGET

The provincial park budget should be significantly increased to provide better maintenance, additional park opportunities and park management. B.C. Parks, which manages more than 1,000 parks and protected areas, has a smaller budget than Metro Vancouver Parks, which manages 23 regional parks and conservation areas.

Not surprisingly, B.C.'s provincial park system has begun to fall apart. "Use caution when travelling over creek crossings. Bridges and boardwalks are in poor condition," warns the B.C. Parks web page for Pinecone Burke, a provincial park that sits on Vancouver's doorstep, 40 kilometres from the downtown core.

The park, a magnificent area of old growth forests, remnant ice fields, dramatic mountains, meadows and lakes, was established in 1995 when the population of Metro Vancouver was 1.7 million. Today, with a population approaching three million, the park infra-

structure remains undeveloped and in need of repair. A master plan for Pinecone Burke was overcrowded that visitors to Golden Ears, Garibaldi and Mount Seymour have to apply online during high use seasons. If there is sufficient space, they might obtain day use passes to go for a walk in the woods.

While demand has increased dramatically because of population growth and a renewed interest in the healthy outdoors driven by the COVID epidemic, B.C. parks have been in decline across the province.

GIVE B.C. RESIDENTS BOOKING PRIORITY

British Columbians should have priority when booking campsites. If you want to go camping, it is often difficult to find an available site as 95 per cent of the sites can be reserved four months in advance. When B.C. residents go online to book, they often find all the campsites are taken. In the U.S. National Park system, best practices allow a percentage of campsites to be released closer to real time, two days, enabling a greater opportunity for everyone to reserve a site. And more campsites are clearly needed to meet the demand.

GIVE BRITISH COLUMBIANS A SAY

All British Columbians must have the opportunity to have a say in the designation and management of parks and protected areas.

A federal and provincial conservation plan is underway with the goal of conserving 30 per cent of Canada's land and water by 2030. In B.C., that means a further 12 per cent of the province is to be set aside. Although Indigenous governments are partners in the decisions, B.C. Parks has no role, and the public has no formal input in the 30 x 30 plan.

To ensure land use decisions are meaningful and to support reconciliation, the public must be part of the discussions on the future of provincial land. This wider equitable participation will further reconciliation by establishing broad public support for the resulting land use decisions through dialogue, concessions and increased understanding. The public

should be part of all discussions towards designating new protected areas.

STRENGTHEN PROTECTED AREAS

The B.C. Park Act must be reformed to strengthen parks and protected areas.

B.C. is globally recognized for its ecological treasures, some of the last stands of giant old-growth forest in the world, mist-shrouded islands, estuaries alive with salmon, birds and bears, snow-capped mountains, pristine lakes and raging rivers.

Provincial parks were envisioned as portals — drawing people to the outdoors, where they could experience nature, set up a tent or trailer, enjoy a picnic, swim in a lake, or hike to alpine meadows. B.C. needs to do a much better job of protecting the magnificent parks that it has, it needs to expand the park system and conserve ecosystems, and it needs to repair and maintain the infrastructure meant to help people enjoy the outdoors. That's not happening, and it needs to change.

The Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia is made up of retired government and non-government people who have a deep understanding and compassion for the well-being of the province's national, provincial and regional parks

Author: Elders' Council for Parks in B.C.



Survey Cited by Premier on National Park Doesn't Exist

BY RICHARD MCGUIRE
Oliver Chronicle

When Premier Christy Clark said in a television interview in July that a majority of people in the South Okanagan don't want a national park and that surveys back her up, there was much scratching of heads. Now, a Freedom of Information (FOI) request by the *Osoyoos Times* for information on the survey or polls Clark referred to has come up empty.

"Although a thorough search was conducted, no records were located in response to your request," said a letter received last week from Cindy Elbahir, manager, Central Agency

Team, Information Access Operations with the provincial government.

Clark made the claim in a July 12 interview with Rick Webber of *Global Okanagan*. When Webber corrected the premier and pointed out that polls show a majority supports a national park reserve, Clark responded: "Well, there's competing surveys."

In fact, a poll by McAllister Opinion Research, released in April 2015, showed two-to-one support for a national park among residents of Boundary-Similkameen and three quarters support in Penticton. The only other scientific poll on the subject was done by the same Vancouver-based polling firm in 2010 and showed a smaller majority supporting a national park.

The *Osoyoos Times*' FOI request asked the premier's office to provide tables and methodology of the survey or poll Clark was referring to in her response to Webber. The request asked only about surveys or polls released after Jan. 1, 2011. Although there was a 6,000-name petition opposing the park

in 2005, the *Osoyoos Times* has not found any record of a scientific poll.

Asked if the premier was wrong in referring to "competing surveys," park supporter Doreen Olson replied: "I think she's probably misinformed."

Clark's office was invited last week to respond to this story. A statement from her office received Monday said: "Premier Clark's comments were referring to the extensive amount of community consultation, dialogue, media commentary, and public feedback on the South Okanagan National Park proposal that has taken place over the past few years. In particular, she was alluding to the fact much of this feedback has shown the issue to be extremely divisive within the region, with local residents split on the creation of a full national park in the area. Her comment was not intended to suggest government was relying on a single survey or poll to guide its actions on this issue."

Olson, however, was surprised by Clark's comments. "When I heard the interview, I thought for sure she was looking at very old information," said Olson, co-ordinator of the South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Network. "It doesn't surprise me at all that there isn't a survey that would show more people opposed than support."

Peter Maser, a retired journalist now living in Penticton, was also taken aback by Clark's comment in the interview with Webber. He sent letters in August to several media outlets, including the *Osoyoos Times* questioning Clark's claim. "For those who follow this issue, the premier's comments were a revelation," Maser wrote. "A competing survey or surveys? Majority opposition to the park? To paraphrase *Oliver Twist*: please, madam, may we have some more – information that is."

Maser wrote to Clark at the same time asking her for information on the "competing surveys." "What is the survey (or surveys) you referred to?" he asked the premier. "When was it conducted and by whom? What was the sample size, margin of error and methodology? Was the survey conducted with

public monies? If so, why have the survey results not been made public?"

Clark did not respond to Maser, but instead Environment Minister Mary Polak responded on the premier's behalf. Polak did not answer Maser's questions, but only made a general statement. "Through the feasibility assessment process for the proposed national park reserve that Parks Canada conducted in co-operation with the province in 2010, it became clear that, while there was support for the proposal, there were a significant number of people who were (and remain) opposed," Polak wrote.

Maser wrote back to Polak saying he was disappointed she didn't answer his direct questions. He again asked her if the polls exist. He has not received a reply. Asked for his reaction to news that an FOI request failed to turn up a poll, Maser replied: "I'm not surprised because I do not believe that such a survey was ever taken. I think the premier was being creative, shall we say, in her comments about the existence of a public opinion survey and the existence of strong resistance to the creation of a national park."

Olson noted that support for a park grew between the two surveys conducted by McAllister Opinion Research. She added that recent comments received in response to the government's August 2015 Intentions Paper mirror the latest McAllister poll. Those comments also show strong support for the inclusion of the area surrounding Mount Kobau in a national park reserve. Neither the comments received in response to the Intentions Paper, nor the 2005 petition opposing the park, are scientifically valid because respondents are not randomly chosen, but are self-selected.

Answers to Some Questions About a Proposed National Park

BY RICHARD CANNINGS, M.P.
Nov. 6, 2017

Federal and provincial environment ministers and local First Nations chiefs announced last week that they will re-open talks to create a national park in the south Okanagan. This was the latest step in long process that began in 2002, when a delegation of local mayors, First Nations leaders, and other concerned citizens met with Prime Minister Jean Chretien to convince him that a national park was needed in this area.

That visit led to a federal-provincial agreement, and in 2011 a feasibility study recommended proceeding with the park proposal. The provincial government subsequently dropped out of the process, but re-entered it in 2016 with an intentions paper that eventually announced a renewed interest in a national park.

I believe that a national park would be a tremendous legacy for the valley, both in terms of conservation, the economic activity it would stimulate, and the facilities it

would provide for resident and visitors alike. Scientific public opinion polls have found strong support for the park proposal in the region, however it's understandable that many local residents have questions and concerns. I'd like to cover a few of those here, with the caveat that I can't presume to know all the exact details of the final park proposal, since many of them will be worked out over the months (and years) to come.

What area is covered by the park proposal? Previous park boundaries outlined in the 2011 feasibility study and the provincial intentions paper would suggest that the park would consist of the South Okanagan Grasslands Protected Area (Crown Lands on the east side of the Okanagan Valley from Mount Kobau south), and perhaps also the White Lake Grasslands Protected Area (Crown Lands southwest of Okanagan Falls) and the Vaseux Bighorn National Wildlife area. Private lands are not included, as they would only be added to the park on a willing seller basis. There will be no change in private land use regulations in place now as the result of a new park.

Ranching: It's important that any new park proposal should accommodate people who make their livelihoods on the Crown Lands in question, so it is heartening to hear that Parks Canada has indicated that this would be the first National Park allowing grazing exactly as it had been done under provincial regulations.

Helicopter training: HNZ Topflight is a significant economic driver in the south Okanagan. They now operate under permit with BC Parks and would have to obtain a similar permit from Parks Canada when a new park is established. I recently met with HNZ, and they have already met with Parks Canada about their concerns; they are "cautiously optimistic" that this issue will be resolved to their satisfaction.

Fishing is allowed in National Parks. Firewood cutting is already not allowed in the provincial Protected Areas that could become part of the new National Park. Most people I've talked to get their firewood on the east side of the Okanagan Valley in areas not included in the previously proposed park boundaries.

If you have other concerns or comments, please email me at Richard.Cannings@parl.gc.ca

Quote Of Note

"Our audit found that the ministry did not use defined methodologies to calculate consistent and transparent forest carbon projections to inform forest management decision" Auditor General's Office, 2025, Report: Ministry of Forests: Calculating Carbon Projections.



Local community defends itself from unwanted destruction of important winter habitat for large herbivores.

BOOK REVIEW

An exceptional read for conservationists and others alike is Tucker Malarkey's *Stronghold: One man's Quest to save the World's Wild Salmon*. Published by New York's Spiegel and Grau in 2019, it is the story of American fly-fisher extraordinaire, Guido Rahr's, adventures and undertakings all around the Pacific Rim. Rahr is the focus of his cousin, the author Malarkey's, story but excellent research and a gift for story telling enables her to craft a much wider tale of political, social, and downright perilous intrigue.

Stronghold addresses the battle fought by Rahr's Wild Salmon Center and other conservation and environmental groups during the final decades of the last century to curtail the plummeting stocks of several species of

Pacific salmon through protection of spawning grounds and the access to them. Working diligently to have the Pacific salmon end up with a different outcome than their Atlantic cousins, Guido Rahr engaged in constant education and organizing. The story plays out in the rivers of Oregon, B.C., Alaska, and Russia, and in the corporate and political board rooms of the world.

Scientists, fishing guides, fundraisers and Russian oligarchs all play a role in Rahr's adventures. And rest assured that Guido, the heir to a malting conglomerate, that grew up spending summers in his family's compound on the Deschutes River near Oregon's Warm Springs Indian Reservation, lived through several of them. Human interaction easily rivals the physical dangers experienced in

isolated ecosystems when identifying the most exciting aspects of the book. Many of the characters appear larger than life but we are assured that they exist. Malarkey's success as a novelist, and her nearness to her cousin, probably allowed her to tell this tale in a manner that few others could.

Whether curled up in a big chair at home or situated on a river or lakefront in the Okanagan the contents of this book are well worth spending your time investigating. Complete with colour and black and white photos, the hard cover edition runs to 338 easy to follow pages. You are likely to come away from it with a new appreciation of how environmental and conservation issues can be addressed.

Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society

Our valleys: worth protecting and worth enjoying!

OUR MISSION

The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society (OSPS) has following mission:

- to acquire and preserve parklands for the health, recreation, education and natural enjoyment of the public
- to seek preservation of habitat for wildlife
- to protect natural biotic areas for scientific study
- to evoke public awareness of the quality of life, and appreciation of the beauty and wonders of the natural environment

Our mission is due to the present time being a crucial time. In the face of fast increasing population, conservation of lands is vital both for this and future generations; otherwise, wilderness may be lost to us and become but a memory of the Canada that was.

OUR VALUE

We believe in the paramount importance of involving the private citizen in the preservation of wild lands.

MILESTONE

Formed in 1966, the OSPS has successfully got established parks, reserved areas and helped to preserve historical trails. Well-known milestones are the following:

Parks established Trails preserved & areas reserved:

- Vaseux Bighorn National Wildlife Area
- Hudson's Bay Fur Brigade trail
- Cathedral Lakes Park
- The Kettle Valley Railroad
- Conkle Lake Park
- Haynes Lease
- Okanagan Mountain Park Ecological Resources

Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society

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The OSPS is registered as a charitable organization in Canada, and issues receipts for income tax purposes

Beaver family helps control flooding in West London

HANNAH HOAG
CBC *What on Earth*

Along the muddy banks of a waterlogged woodland in West London, a mound of sticks and bark-stripped branches rises from a pond against a backdrop of willow trees. “This is arguably one of the most urban beaver lodges in Britain,” says Sean McCormack, a veterinarian and wildlife conservationist. Trucks, buses and cars lumber along a busy road nearby. Some turn into a McDonald’s restaurant parking lot. Others veer toward one of the many low-slung distribution centres for groceries, mail or hospital supplies.

The beavers that built the dam — a tight-knit family of five with three daughters — moved in a little more than a year ago. They were relocated from Scotland to Paradise Fields, a 10-hectare public park about a 20-minute Tube ride from downtown London, where they live in an enclosure that’s fully accessible to the public. They’re part of an effort to re-wild London — and return the furry rodent to the United Kingdom.

The Eurasian beaver, *Castor fiber*, was prized for its meat, fur and castoreum — a fragrant secretion used in perfumes and to flavour food. They were hunted to extinction in England and Wales roughly 800 years ago, although some hung on in Scotland until the 16th century. Wild beavers were essentially absent from the U.K. until the early 2000s, when a couple dozen animals were found living in the River Tay, in Scotland. Conservationists have been reintroducing beavers at locations across the U.K. ever since.

Alastair Driver, a rewilding specialist and the former head of conservation for the U.K. Environment Agency, estimates there are now about 2,000 beavers in Scotland and more than 1,000 in England, with smaller numbers in Wales. He was also part of the London Rewilding Task Force that supported the beaver reintroduction. “Beavers are brilliant ecosystem engineers and can transform habitats for a huge range of other species,” said Driver. “I spent decades of my career rewiggling rivers and installing leaky dams, trying to generally renaturalize rivers,” or help them resume their natural, often meandering

path. “Beavers do it for free, one thousand times better than people like me ever did.”

Since their arrival in Paradise Fields in October 2023, the beavers have re-shaped their portion of the park. They have built dams, dug channels and selectively cut down trees — willows and birch are their favourites. Their arboreal engineering allows pockets of light to reach parts of the ground below, creating a mosaic of micro-habitats that add variety to the ecosystem, says McCormack, who heads up the Ealing Beaver Project.

In a short time, their work seems to have helped boost the diversity of aquatic insects and attract at least three new bird species — including kingfishers and the common snipe, a long-billed, stocky wader — several species of bat and a rare butterfly called the brown hairstreak. “The whole place is springing back to life since the beavers arrived,” said McCormack. The beavers have also managed to cushion against the rising risk of flooding that comes with climate change in the City of London. During heavy rainfalls, the brook that runs through Paradise Fields often floods and spills over into the nearby road and shopping mall. Now, by damming the brook, the beavers have increased the surface area of the wetland. During a recent heavy rainfall, the larger wetland helped slow the release of water and there was less downstream flooding.

People also benefit, according to both Driver and McCormack. “These urban rewilding projects are just brilliant for connecting people in nature,” said Driver. “You’ve got many more opportunities than in some remote mountain ... in the north of England.”

Last spring, two kits were born — a first for London for centuries. With the family expanding, McCormack spent several days in January baiting large metal traps with carrots and apples. He had hoped to capture the three-year-old adolescent daughter, who would typically be ready to leave her parents’ territory. “We need to help her out on that mission ... and bring her to a new project in Wales, where there’s a bachelor beaver waiting in the wings,” said McCormack. So far, she’s eluded him and he’s put the mission on hold until the fall.

When the time comes for the two youngest beavers to head out on their own, McCormack hopes he’ll be able to release them into the wild, instead of an enclosure. For now, it’s illegal for anyone to release a beaver into the wild in England. “I would say we need beavers back in almost every river catchment in Britain,” he said. “We got rid of them, and I think we have a moral duty to bring them back.”

Brent Mountain from Naramata.



Inside Climate News

UPDATES:

The Trump administration announced Friday (April 4, 2025) that it plans to remove protections on tens of millions of acres of public forest by declaring a wildfire-related emergency, a move that critics believe will lead to the destruction of massive swaths of older trees that are actually more resilient to fire.

In a memo released internally Thursday (April 3, 2025), Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins issued an "Emergency Situation Determination" covering more than 110 million acres of land in the National Forest System. The memo comes on the heels of an executive order issued by President Donald Trump to expand timber production in the country by 25 percent.

The agency says the declaration will authorize emergency operations to "reduce wildfire risk and save American lives and communities." Environmental groups say the move is the administration's next step toward achieving its goal of increasing timber production under the guise of wildfire protection.

"Nobody should be fooled into thinking that

this secretarial order or Trump's executive order are anything more than a handout to the industry to basically log-baby-log on our public lands," said Randi Spivak, the public lands policy director for the Center for Biological Diversity. "Nobody should be fooled that this has anything to do with wildfires."

The most destructive and notable fires in recent years—in Lahaina, Hawaii, in 2023, and in Los Angeles earlier this year—were in urban areas, far from U.S. Forest Service land covered by the new order.

"Those weren't forest fires," said Anna Medema, who works on forest and public land issues for the Sierra Club. "No amount of forest management would have changed those tragedies." The move comes amid massive staffing cuts at the Forest Service, including of many employees certified to fight wildfires, and funding freezes that have halted projects aimed at reducing wildfire risk.

"There are a lot of shovel-ready projects ready to go, but they don't have the staff now to do them," Medema said. "They're using fear and the moment, saying we need to get into the forests and log, but they're removing the resources to fight wildfires."

The declaration covers roughly 60 percent of the lands in the national forest system, much

of it home to older trees, which are more resilient to wildfires because of their thicker bark and extensive root systems. These trees are targeted by industrial logging because of their size.

"Science shows that harvesting mature and old-growth trees can actually make wildfires worse," Medema said.

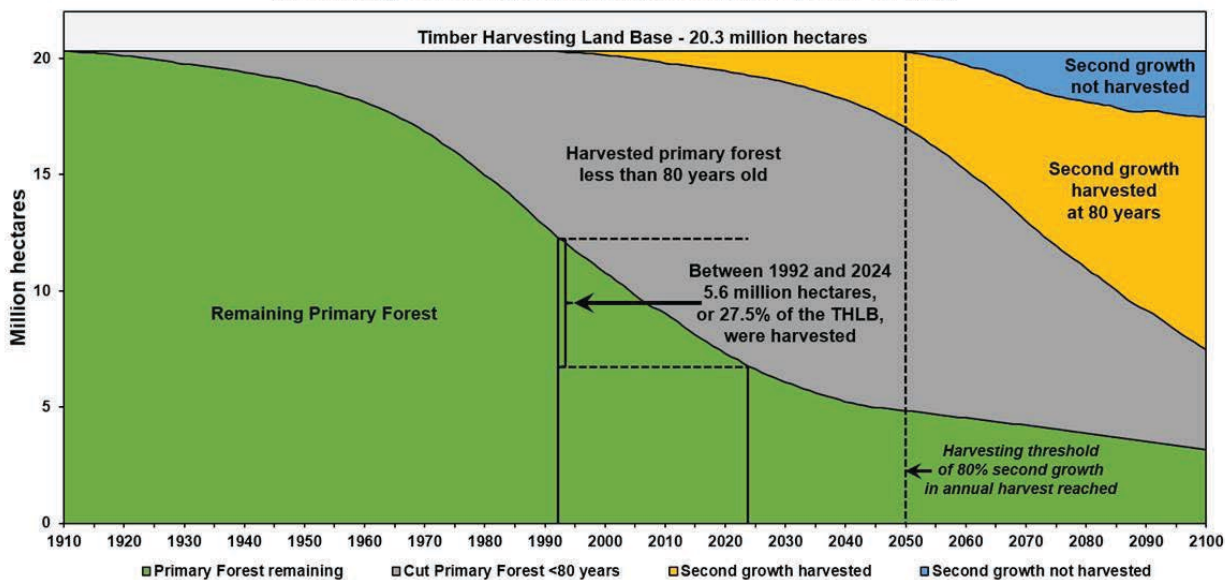
Trump's executive order, issued last month, demands that agency leaders "streamline" the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act to expedite logging operations. Environmental groups believe the administration will likely issue additional emergency orders under the ESA that would allow logging companies to bypass more rigorous review processes. The 2001 "roadless rule" that prohibits the construction of roads on Forest Service land—a rule designed to limit access—is also likely in the administration's crosshairs.

"I don't think this is the end of it," Spivak said. "Trump is saying, in a nutshell: Any regulations or protections that get in the way of timber production, get them out of the way."

The USDA did not respond to a request for comment Friday.

VERNON LOEB
Executive Editor

B.C. timber harvest history and forecast, 1910-2100
(assuming second growth harvested at 80 years of age)



Looking back over most of the 20th century provides a very good picture of how our province used to look and how it has changed as we move into the third decade of the 21st century. Graphic used with the permission of D. Hughes.

© Hughes GSR Inc, 2023 (harvest data and forecast from B.C. Forest Inventory and Evaluation Branch, May, 2018; Timber harvesting land base from B.C. Government, March, 2023; Minimum Harvest Criteria from Provincial Guide for the preparation of Information Packages and Analysis Reports for Area-based Tenures, June, 2021)

We don't see the forest for the trees

RAY TRAVERS

Victoria forestry engineer and writer.

JAN 31 1992

THE APPOINTMENT of Ombudsman Stephen Owen as Commissioner of Resources and Environment is good news in the quest for a way out of the forest land use morass in B.C.

Until now, our official attitude could be likened to the man who fell from the top of a 100-story building. As he passed the spectators on the 10th floor, he shouted: "Everything's okay so far!"

While it may appear Owen's primary task is to find peace in the woods by a judicious slicing of the resource pie, the issues and problems we face are bigger than that. In the Oct. 28, 1991, *Financial Times* the reporter commented on the Harvard Business School report on Canada's future competitive capability. He said:



TRAVERS

Wake up, folks, the party's over. Canada's affluent, resources-rich economy is cruising straight towards a cliff edge. We've cut the best trees,

mined the best mines, fished the fish, and made a mint exporting all of it. Now we need a different kind of economy and a host of new export industries to pay the bills.

In other words, we have been living off our resource capital and not the interest. Harvard's Prof. Michael Porter also told us that maximizing the quantity of resource products without adequate attention to maintaining quality is no longer an option. By inference, he also said that pushing roads to the end of every wilderness valley without fundamental economic and institutional reform will not provide a lasting solution to anything.

In short, we have witnessed the "tragedy of the commons" where rational economic self-interest inevitably results in ecosystem failure of a commonly owned resource, namely our public forest.

It's time for resource statesmanship. We will not make significant progress until the processes of forest resource allocation (who gets what) and forest management (how operations are carried out) are reformed.

Our forest management system has fundamental flaws that appear to be held in place only by political expediency. Fortunately some were recognized in the forests ministry June 1991 B.C. Timber Supply Area Action Plan, which states existing

timber supply policy is out of date and there is an "overwhelming need" to change.

Judging by Porter's comments it seems that metaphorically we have had false teeth inserted upside down into our crania and have subsequently proceeded to chew off our own heads.

We need to answer the fundamental question, "What will we choose to do with our forests?" The qualities of forest ecosystems we value are the foundation for our ecological health and our economic wealth and we must better understand the limits to their use. For instance, ecosystem failure occurs when old-growth-dependent species like the marbled murrelet and woodland caribou become extinct.

As we think, so we manage. We need to understand the conflicts between the way ecological systems operate and our management system. Ecological systems are alive, flexible, operate in cycles, with a timeless continuum of species. Our management system is mechanical, linear, and intended to operate in a time-constrained monoculture.

As a result, we practise extensive clearcutting, and create progressively degraded ecosystems for many uses. There are ways to reduce the conflict. We must stop fighting the ecosystems that sustain us.

In the December 16, 1991, *Maclean's* magazine, B.C.'s forest management had a failing score of 4/10 in comparison to other Canadian provinces. This rating can be improved by replacing our present concepts of integrated forest management with the principles of quality forest management for all values.

Stephen Owen's task is large. British Columbian's strong sense of place should be the foundation of a social policy to determine for whom and for what purpose our forests are managed. The forest management principle must be, regardless of political pressure, first to do what is right for the forest.

That means in part an adequate system of protected areas, to act as a blueprint, library and parts manual for the managed forest, for without a sustainable forest there cannot be a sustainable forest economy.

Second, we need to ecologically manage and develop sustainable uses of forests for people. This means a major change in emphasis to the maintenance of the structure, function and composition of the future forest. This is the path to ensuring the capability of a healthy forest to sustain long-term forest benefits for people. Our children are depending on it, and wisdom is demanding it. □

This editorial from 1992 in the Victoria News speaks of high hopes for the position of the Ombudsman as it pertains to our environment. How have things gone?



The Okanagan River is an important ecological artery for the South Okanagan Valley. Fish, birds, reptiles and other fauna benefit from its relatively natural state. Work is being done to accomplish even more rewilding. Now is the time to become active in the establishment of a mountain side corridor for mega fauna and the ecosystems that they live in. A corridor from the border to Salmon Arm should be considered before it is too late.

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O.S.P.S. Sponsors Naturalist Presentations for Grade Sevens

One of the programs that the OSPS has undertaken over the past two years is to provide education on the environment of the South Okanagan Similkameen to the young people of our communities. Focused on the grade sevens in our major communities, we have been sponsoring presentations connecting the Flora and Fauna of our region and the grade seven learning outcomes. Last year the OSPS sponsored a pilot in Penticton and Summerland, while this year the program has been expanded into Oliver, Keremeos and Osoyoos.

The presentation currently underway spotlights the three Fs of our environment: Flora, Fauna, and Fungi indigenous to our region.



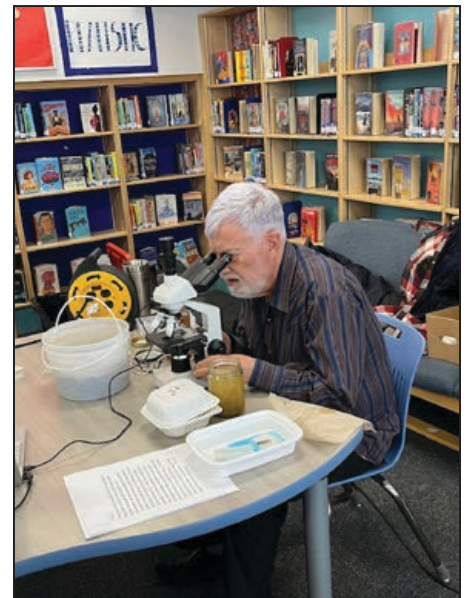
One of the Okanagan pictures used in the grade seven presentation is of a Bobcat prowling the deck of an Okanagan resident this past winter. Students were asked to classify this creature according to its size.

These domains are examined according to their size as the program depicts examples of all three as mega to micro entities. The hands-on hour to ninety-minute presentation makes use of pictures, artifacts, and a projecting microscope to share information with the students.

The program is fully sponsored by the OSPS with no cost to the schools of individual students. Over three hundred students from three schools took part during the initial sessions prior to the school's Spring Break. The remaining classes will be included during April and May.

As well as the presentations, the Parks Society has also developed a Mathematics Station Study for the grade sevens, also based on local Flora and Fauna. In a digital format for easy sharing the study is intended to augment the regular math program. Each school has access to this curricular aid.

The presentations and curricular augmentations, which are intended to occur annually, are expensive and require OSPS funding. As always, donations are accepted to assist with this and other programs. Cheques can be mailed to OSPS, Box 787, Summerland, B.C., V0H 1Z0.



Gordon Northcote, a former Summerland Senior Biology teacher, sets up some slides of micro-organisms for the grade sevens participating in the OSPS sponsored Fauna, Flora, and Fungi presentation. The microscope has a camera that allows for projection of its stage onto a screen.