

OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Spring 2007

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

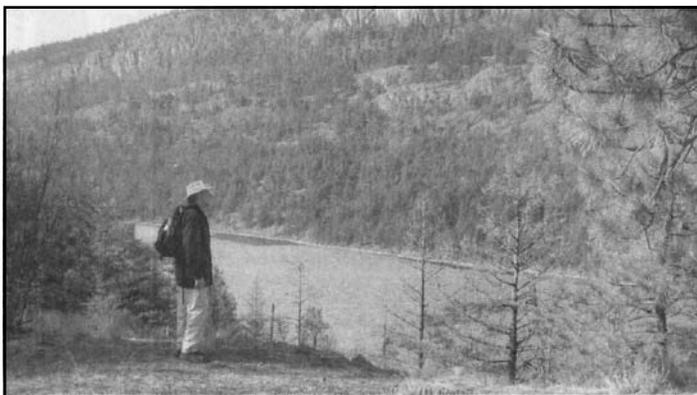
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The 42nd Annual General Meeting of the OSPS was held March 9, 2007 in the Centre Stage Theatre, Summerland, BC.

Chair Joe Klein opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He then spoke of the loss of 3 long time members: Doreen Tait, Vi Gibbard and Bert Kinsey who was a Charter Member. The OSPS has been named a beneficiary in Doreen Tait's will, and all three have caused donations to be made in remembrance.

REPORTS OF DIRECTORS:

1. Harold King said that much misinformation is being spread regarding the proposed National Park. (See report following page)
2. Don Guild talked about the proposal for park/protected land on Goat Peak which is located at the junction of Hwy. 97 and the Connector. The height of land there is part of a beautiful area which continues to Lakeshore. Some private properties have been created, but the Central Okanagan Regional District is examining the area with an eye to protecting habitat and trail therein. Don also spoke of the threat to the Mountain Caribou due mainly to the loss of habitat. He stressed there must be time allowed for recovery time for the species. Forestry and large scale mountain recreation plans are the greatest concerns for stress and loss of habitat for the animals.



Last year's March for Parks involved hikers exploring the shoreline and ridges around Rose Valley Lake on the Westside. Bob Fulton, a board member with the parks and trails society stands on a high bluff across Rose Valley Lake, the lookout point on McDougall Rim Trail.

OTHER BUSINESS:

1. OSPS website - a quotation has been received as to a possible set-up and will be considered at the next Director's meeting reported Joe Klein.
2. Jim Bryan suggested the OSPS might like to join with the South Okanagan Naturalists to install a bench on the KVR p above Arawana Rd. in Naramata in memory of Vi and Less Gibbard and their life-long interest in nature there. (See In Memoriam - Vi Gibbard following page)
3. Juergen Hansen told the audience of a meeting re: the importance of collaborative dynamic round table dialogue for outdoor groups as they strive to develop a common plan instead of being adversarial in their approach to conflicts.
4. On behalf of Marilyn Hansen, he spoke of the necessity to have legislation enacted re: the control and identification of ATV's. The 70 km stretch for which Summerland people, headed by Marilyn Hansen, have been working and raising funds successfully needs to be kept free of all motorized traffic, as all the Trans Canada Trail should be. The Provincial Ministers responsible need to hear of this important request.

10th Annual Meadowlark Festival



May 17th to May 21st

2007

Experience!
Explore!
Discover!

Participate in over 100 trips and events held under the open sky in the unique landscape of the South Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys. Participate in guided tours for birding, wild flowers, photography, canoeing, riding and more as you explore the valleys, desert, lakes and plateaus of this richly bio-diverse area.

For information and ticket sales visit our website:

www.meadowlarkfestival.bc.ca

Tel: 1-866-699-9453 or (250) 492-5275

Email: meadowlarkfestival@osca.org

The Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance
Box 20133, Penticton, BC, V2A 8K3

Donations are appreciated anytime - tax receipt will be issued. OSPS appreciates your continued support in our attempts to save OUR parks. 2007 memberships at \$10.00 individual, \$15.00 family, \$20.00 organization. Please renew now. THANKS! **Form - Page 5**

5. John Theberge informed the meeting of an educational forum to be held April 16/17 at the Naramata Centre. The forum is in regard to the proposed National Park in the Southern Okanagan. The forum is being sponsored by several groups and it is expected that there will be people from across Canada in attendance.

FEATURE PRESENTATION: by Dr. Ken Hall

Dr. Tom Northcote introduced his friend and colleague Ken Hall, who is an environmental chemist with a great love of the outdoors.

“Canoeing down the Coppermine River” was the subject of an extremely interesting trip taken by Ken Hall and seven other equally keen university compatriots. There were several maps included as the trip down the remote river which empties into Coronation Gulf so the audience could be located during the journey. Shots of tortuous rapids and wildlife as well as camping and cooking scenes made the trip real for everyone.

NATIONAL PARK PROPOSAL FOR THE SOUTH OKANAGAN

This project is ongoing. I believe that it is a GOOD project worthy of your support! Your society has been very involved with projects to preserve some of this land, so that future generations may see what it is to walk quietly and peacefully.

Many people have been working on this project, NOT I might add, in an effort to CHANGE people’s minds, but rather to make certain that people understand all the implications, all the Pros as well as the Cons. Much information has been misleading. Much effort has been put into correcting that, as far as possible.

Studies done, here in the Valley, would indicate that a large majority of people, over seventy per cent (70%) believe that a growing population needs more land set aside for Recreation. Our aim is JUST that! We are in need of support in the form of letters to our MP who says that he is NOT hearing from his constituents!

Addresses:

Hon. Bill Barisoff, 34853A - 97th St., Oliver, BC V0H 1T0

Hon. Alex Atamenenko, House of Commons, 535 Confederation Building, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6 or atamaa1@parl.gc.ca

Hon. Barry Penner, Minister of the Environment, P.O. Box 9426, Stn. Prov. Govt., Victoria, BC V8W 9V1

Premier Gordon Campbell, P.O. Box 9041, Stn. Prov. Govt., Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Your input will be VERY valuable.

Harold King, Director OSPS & Naturalists

In Memoriam – Violet Hazel Gibbard (1910 - 2006)



On November 25, the naturalist community of BC lost a long-time champion and friend with the passing of Violet Gibbard of Naramata. Violet and her husband Les, who died in 1996, were pioneer members of

that naturalist community and contributed a tremendous amount of its development.

In 1952, Les and Violet bought 23 acres of land on Arawana Road in Naramata and Violet immediately began gardening. Eventually the lawns, shrubs and flower beds expanded to locally famous 2.5 acre garden. It was most spectacular in spring, when 80,000 daffodils of 83 varieties bloomed under the big pines. Violet opened the garden to the public for three Sundays each spring for over 20 years, the admission fees going to the Penticton Hospital Medical Foundation.

In 1962, Violet and Les, along with Steve and Jean Cannings, founded the South Okanagan Naturalists Club and all four later became honorary life members.

Violet and Les were active in early conservation efforts in the Okanagan, both through the South Okanagan Naturalists Club and the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society. The latter group spearheaded successful efforts to preserve large parts of Okanagan Mountain, Cathedral Lakes, Vaseux Lake and the Osoyoos pocket desert. Violet and Les were particularly instrumental in the creation of Rock Ovens Regional Park in Naramata, setting aside one of the most impressive stands of old-growth ponderosa pines in the valley as well as a number of unique historical features. The designation of this park came at the end of a 10-year struggle with provincial bureaucracy, a struggle that stands as a testament to the Gibbards’ tenacity and persistence in the face of government inaction. Rock Ovens is one of my favourite places and is still the only large regional park in the south Okanagan.

Violet kept gardening until she suffered a stroke just after her 95th birthday. I and many other British Columbians will miss her. I am glad that I have daffodils and irises in my garden to remember her by, plants that Violet gave to me one fall a few years ago. We all benefit from her legacy.

I would like to thank Fern Gibbard and Melody Hessing for allowing me to draw directly on eulogies that they wrote for Violet.

Dick Cannings

*OSPS has joined with a financial commemoration.
BC Nature, Spring 2007*

Trans Canada Trail Challenge 2007: Greater Vancouver North Shore - June 24

Below is an invitation to cyclists, walkers, and runners to participate in a Trans Canada Trail Challenge 2007 event. We would greatly appreciate it if this information could be passed on to your membership in some form.

Trails BC, Southwest Region is pleased to announce its Greater Vancouver North Shore Trans Canada Trail Challenge 2007 on June 24th. This event follows six successful editions staged from 2003 to 2006. So far, more than 2000 people have participated.

Participants choose to walk, bike, or run on the Trans Canada Trail up to 33 km between Horseshoe Bay and Lonsdale Quay (Waterfront Park) with an option of an additional 30 km to New Brighton Park through the City of Vancouver. There is a variety of difficulty levels from which to choose.

The focus of the Trans Canada Trail challenge events is to experience the spirit of the Trans Canada Trail in a non-competitive and personally challenging way. The trail event also: provides educational opportunities through the assistance of an interpretive guide; involves the communities along the trail; and provides strategies and services for the benefit of participants.

This unique Trans Canada Trail experience is hosted by Trails BC. Proceeds go towards trail construction and maintenance of the Trans Canada Trail. Go to the Trails BC website, www.trailsbc.ca for more information and to register on-line, by fax or by regular mail.

Because we have to make advance preparations for transportation, we will limit the number of participants. It is important to register well in advance.

Contact information:

Léon Lebrun
604-942-6768
southwest@trailsbc.ca

Solid Progress in Myra Canyon

Twelve of the sixteen wooden trestles in Myra Bellevue Provincial Park were destroyed in the Okanagan Mountain Park fire on August 16, 2003, and the wooden decking on the two steel trestles also burned.

The reconstruction project started in March 2005 and, according to Leigh-Ann Johnson, owner and president of Katim Enterprises Ltd., the project manager for the restoration, it will be completed by the Fall of 2007 or the Spring of 2008.

On the west side Trestles 2 and 3 were rebuilt in 2005 and Trestle 4 in 2006. Trestles 5,7 and 8 will be rebuilt in 2007. The largest wooden trestle is No. 4, which is 497 feet long and 120 feet tall. The largest steel trestle - No. 6 is 720 feet long and 176 feet tall.

Trestles have been designed to have the same appearance as the heritage structures they are replacing. They are strong enough to take construction equipment and highway vehicles, but not locomotives!

As for access, there is presently partial access from both ends. Viewed on a map the route through the canyon resembles the letter U. From the east side, (Myra Station parking lot) there is access over Trestles 18 through to Trestle 13. Although Trestle 12 is also usable it is presently restricted to construction traffic. From Okanagan Lake side (Ruth Station parking lot) there is access over Trestle 1, which was not damaged, through to Trestle 6, which is built of steel and has been re-decked.

No through route will be possible until completion of the entire project because of the need to reconstruct Trestles 7 and 8.

The trails between the structures will be graded on completion of the heavy construction using funds raised by the Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society, which has raised over \$400,000 to date.

The original estimate of the cost of reconstruction was \$13.5 million. It is being funded by the Federal - Provincial Disaster Relief Fund so the cost is being shared 90% by the Government of Canada and 10% by the BC Government.

A detailed listing of the damaged trestles can be obtained in the copies of the Outdoor Report from the Outdoor Recreational Council office at orc@intergate.ca

Jeremy McCall
Outdoor Report, Winter 2006/07



Trestle 11 on the way to completion!
Photo by Murphy Shewchuk

A little respect For Caribou

Mountain caribou are getting a little peace and quiet in some of their special places this winter, thanks to cooperation between snowmobilers and conservationists. The Cranbrook Snowmobile Club has agreed to a voluntary closure of several key pockets of critical caribou winter range. Wildsight, a conservation organization in Canada's Columbia and Southern Rocky Mountains, with funding from the Columbia Basin Trust and Ministry of



Environment, partnered with the club to install signage indicating closed areas. As few as 20 caribou remain in the Southern Purcell mountains west of Cranbrook, down from close to 100 as recently as 1994. For more information visit: www.mountaincaribou.ca

Wildsight, January 2007

People Protecting Special Places

Thousands of people across BC have left a legacy for future generations of protected places in or near their communities through support and participation with land trusts. Protecting natural areas is the best way of absorbing carbon from the atmosphere, providing a landscape adaptable to change and the conservation of water. Since 1997, over 32 land trusts have formed across BC, working as charitable non-profit organizations to protect BC's natural and cultural heritage.

Dale and Anita Lehman donated their 60 acre old-growth forest with artesian springs near Osoyoos as a nature reserve to TLC The Land Conservancy of BC.

The Thomson family donated a portion of their farm for wetland restoration and a wildlife sanctuary in Kelowna.

Watershed Sentinel, March-April 2007

"No Timber Sales" From Wisdom to Tyranny

Communities in British Columbia originally enjoyed protection for the watersheds which provided their drinking water, but over the years, that protection for the Commons has been systematically eroded, its memory, "disappeared," and the public trust betrayed.

For over one hundred years the protection of intact forested drinking water sources in British Columbia was a well established legislative tradition. However, this purpose and the administrative instruments dedicated to maintaining a healthy abundant supply of domestic water were later systematically obscured from public and municipal/community administrators. Beginning in 1975, three successive governments, Social Credit, the NDP, and the BC Liberals undertook the purposeful dismantling of "Community Watershed Reserve" policy, procedure and legislation nullifying the traditional oversight mandates of the Ministries of Environment and Health.

From the mid-1960s, short term timber supply of old growth at the current rate of cut was recognized to be unsustainable. Instead of adjusting the Allowable Annual Cut accordingly, provincial administrators, principally with the Forest Service, began to eye forested Watershed Reserve lands to bridge the predicted shortfall before the second growth forests were ready for harvest.

Watershed Sentinel, March-April 2007

New Wetlands Rules Weaker, Environmental Lawyer Says

An environmental expert says new legislation for the protection of local wetlands and fish habitats is "significantly weaker" than the existing one.

"This regulation was specifically designed to give developers more flexibility about development along stream sides," said Devon Page, a staff lawyer with the Sierra Legal Defence Fund. "I have a hard time believing it is being interpreted that it is actually reducing their flexibility. I think the only way that would happen is if local governments pass bylaws providing effective protection for riparian habitats and in that case ... you could make that argument."

Page made that comment after Penticton city council heard an update on the new Riparian Area Regulation that come into effect March 31. Council later that day moved forward an offer to hire a qualified environmental professional (QEP).

"They are deliberately trying to reduce the environmental protection under this and it is consistent with what the B.C. government has done across the board, including environmental assessment legislation," he said.

OSPS NOTE: It would be worth investigating the QEP's comments on various logged slopes which have recently become landslides under heavy rain. — Editor

Wolf Depner

Penticton Western News, February 22, 2006

Fossil fuel and global warming – BC's dirty secret?

The recent Throne Speech, Budget and Energy Plan announced by the government made bold statements about the need for action, not procrastination, on global warming and set targets to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in the coming years. This is truly a significant shift for a government that until recently, questioned whether global warming was indeed happening.

Despite the conservation efforts the government is making to deal with the impacts of global warming, there are some very significant concerns that these efforts may be nothing more than hot air.

Foremost among these concerns is the inconsistency between the conservation goals and budget 2007-2008. Not only was there minimal funding for the ambitious goals the government set in the Throne Speech, the government has budgeted an increase of approximately 40 percent in subsidies to the oil and gas sector. In continuing to heavily subsidize the oil and gas industry, the government is putting all of its conservation measures at risk.

By giving these breaks to the fossil fuel industry, the government is using British Columbians' tax dollars to fund global warming – despite British Columbians' clear demands for mandatory emission reduction targets and a shift to alternative energy sources.

Law reforms are required to BC's oil and gas legislation to reduce subsidies to the oil and gas industry and require reinvestment in renewable energy. Such changes would put BC on a path to a sustainable future and fight global warming – the path that British Columbians clearly want, and expect, the government to take.

The inconsistencies between the government's talk and action become even more glaring when compared to continued focus on development of new types of fossil fuels, like coal bed methane, and lifting the moratorium on coastal exploration and drilling off BC's fragile north coast.

Currently, there are at least six pipeline and marine tanker terminal projects on the horizon for northern BC. The main purpose of these projects is to accelerate the development of the Alberta Tar sands - simply put, these tankers and pipelines are the tar sands' infrastructure.

In order to address BC's contributions to global warming, we need to consider the impacts of all our actions, including those occurring outside of our borders.

The government has made a start with its new Energy Plan. But it must go further and ensure that its treatment of our biggest greenhouse gas emitters, the oil and gas industry, does not undermine the gains it has made and the expectations of British Columbians.

Margot McMillan

West Coast Environmental Law, March 06/07

Summerland Makes Room for Park

Crews will demolish four houses and a garage on Lakeshore Drive in Summerland this fall to make way for a new park.

Parks and Recreation director Dale MacDonald said the municipality acquired five lots along Lakeshore Drive last year for the park with demolition work scheduled for October.

John Arendt

Penticton Western News, March 2, 2007

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

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Postal Code: _____

Individual (\$10.00) _____ Family (\$15.00) _____ Organization (\$20.00) _____

Donation: _____ (Income Tax Deductible)

Please help support our continuing programs

BC's Ecological Treasures Need Wardens!

The BC Ecological Reserves system started in the 1970s and over the years has expanded to include 152 of these special areas across the province. Also in the 1970s, a volunteer wardens systems was established under which individuals and occasionally naturalist clubs took on the responsibility of helping parks staff protect the ERs through regular visits. Wardens with the interest and skills needed also carry out surveys, monitoring and research in their ERs.

Ecological reserves are defined as "areas selected to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and phenomena." They are intended to have a minimum of human presence and intervention, with uses confined largely to scientific research and educational purposes. They are not intended as recreation areas though some walking, birding, photography and other such low-impact activities are tolerated in the more accessible ERs.

While organizing a provincial wardens' gathering in September 2003, we discovered that a large number of ERs had no warden - including some easily accessible ERs and a list was compiled. If anyone is already a warden of any of the ERs listed, please contact your regional office and either Eva Durance (BC Nature) at edurance@vip.net or Marilyn Lambert (Friends of Ecological Reserves) at marilynambert@pacificcoast.net so that records and contact information can be undated.

Many ERs on the list are in remote areas; however, we are looking at possible ways to have some monitored once a year. It is very important to have volunteer wardens for as many ERs as possible to act as eyes and ears for parks staff and to help gather data on the reserve.

Highlights From the Okanagan Region Warden's Meeting:

- Almost all of the wardens and all parks staff for the region were able to attend the meeting.
- Each warden on his or her ER gave a brief account.
- A new warden, present at the meeting, took on an ER previously without a warden and responsibility for a second ER where the previous warden retired. Therefore, all ERs in the Okanagan Region now have wardens.
- A plan was adopted to bring in additional volunteer wardens whenever possible, to work with the current wardens on the understanding that the new people will take over as warden when the current warden retires.
- Parks staff were to locate updated presentation material to provide to wardens to take to any public forums.
- Parks staff presented the hows and whys of photo monitoring in ERs to track change in their conditions.
- A new position in the region was announced with the responsibility to gather and store past and current information on parks and other protected areas including ERs. This central data gathering has been lacking for a long time.
- Both staff and wardens were enthusiastic about taking periodic group visits to ERs in various parts of the region to acquaint themselves with all the ERs. These visits will begin in the spring.
- Parks staff made a commitment to include wardens in spring training for park rangers.
- Harold King was recognized for his long service to the warden program. He is a long serving Director of the OSPS.

Eva Durance

BC Nature, Spring 2007

Parks and Protected Areas

The South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Proposal feasibility study is in its final year and a positive outlook is looking considerable more possible than a year ago. A public forum was held recently at which the vast majority of the 150 or so people attending were strongly in favour of the park. A final round of public open houses will be held in late spring, and the final report to the federal government is expected to go out by the end of 2007 or early 2008. The SOSNP Network will continue to have information booths at Farmers' markets and other venues to gather more support.

BC Nature would like to encourage our members and clubs to write letters of support for the South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Reserve. Address your letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, House of Commons,

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Copy your letter to your local MP and to the two South Okanagan MPs' Hon. Stockwell Day (Okanagan-Coquihalla) and MP Alex Atamanenko (Southern Interior), at the same House of Commons address. Copy your letter as well to Parks Canada, 102 Industrial Place, Penticton, BC V2A 7C8. In addition, mail a similar letter to Premier Gordon Campbell, PO Box 9041, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9E1. Copy that letter to your local MLA and to MLA Bill Barisoff, Penticton-Okanagan. It is essential to have BC support to transfer provincial land to form the national park reserve.

More information is on Parks Canada website at www.pc.gc.ca/sols

Eva Durance

BC Nature, Spring 2007

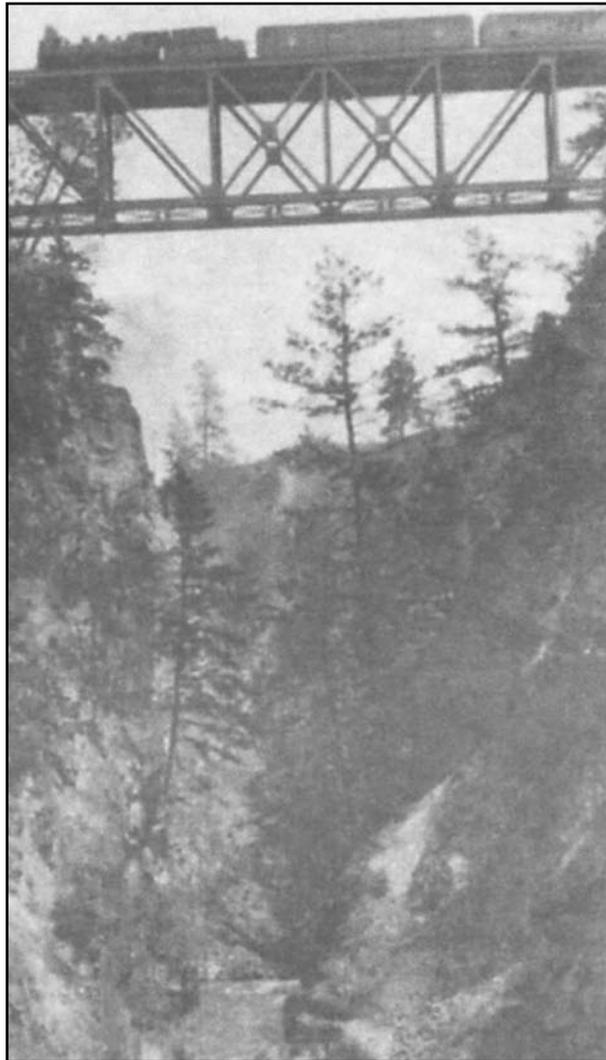
TRAIL TALK

April: Friday the 13th was a lucky day! After 70 meetings with Rick Valenti as chair, over seven years, the big bridge at the Research Station was finally paid off, thanks to Rick Thorpe, Mike Reed, and the province of BC, which handed the Mayor of Summerland a \$50,000 cheque to cover the remaining debt. In total, this safety project cost \$350,000. Your Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society was involved from beginning to end.

Other news from the Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society: We're hosting the AGM of Trails BC, the overarching trails' organization for building the Trans Canada Trail across all of BC. Dates: Saturday, May 5th and Sunday, May 6th. Location, Summerland Council Chambers upstairs in the city hall on Henry St. Registration check-in: 8:30 Saturday, 8:30 Sunday. You can access the registration on line at Trails BC. You need to get busy registering beforehand as we need to know numbers. The programme is also listed there. There is a fee of \$15 for the Saturday session which includes lunch, coffee, tea, cookies. Saturday's session includes the top government trail people, history of the KVR camps by a UBC professor, and a history talk by Summerland's Mayor, David Gregory, representation from the Trans Canada Trail Foundation of Montreal and more. It's going

to be lively. If you want to come, don't delay because I have to order the lunches!

Any questions? Call Marilyn Hansen, Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society: 250-494-9265



On the bridge
The Trout Creek Trestle/Bridge was constructed 91 years ago, in 1913 and allowed rail service in Summerland. Safety improvements to the bridge have been completed and the bridge was officially opened on Friday.

There has been more vandalism on the Trans Canada Trail and Summerland's Centennial Trail: historical signs wrecked or torn down, bollards ruined man-made mud bog holes. We need provincial legislation to keep ATVs and dirt bikes off our hiking-cycling-equestrian trails. Please write Minister of Tourism, Sports & the Arts, Stan Hagen, at the Provincial Buildings in Victoria or e-mail him at TSA. Minister@gov.bc.ca So far, there is absolutely no legislation to keep motorized vehicles off Crown Land trails. Aren't we naturalists entitled to some safe quiet space? Please, this is really important, especially because the Summerland ATV Club is intending to host their provincial rally on a portion of our trail outside the municipality. So far, we are unable to stop them. Besides the noise, dust, and ruts they cause, they also are a safety hazard. Also, ATVs and dirt bikes need large, visible license plates so that we can spot the bad actors.

Marilyn Hansen

IT WAS ABOUT TIME!

Apex back country trails designated for XC use.

Sometimes, it helps to be persistent!

About 1968, two members of our newly-formed Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society (Dave McMullen and Juergen Hansen) were plowing through knee-deep powder snow up at Apex. It was a clear wind still day, with temperatures around minus 12 degrees C., and we were coming down from "The Old Burn" north of the Apex – Hedley Road. During a brief lunch break, we started to wonder what it would take to protect this area from future commercial exploitation and motorized use. Looking at the fresh powder snow and the lack of piston-bully-packed trails, we may even have used the term "pristine" or "virgin" for this scenic and quiet area. The open forest had seen some previous logging and The Old Burn had been cleared by fire many years before. But otherwise, it was untouched, natural, easily accessible, safe for families with children and ideal for outdoor recreation activities such as summer hiking and winter XC skiing.

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Those were the days when the Parks' Society had just been formed and when nobody had any experience in how to designate such crown land for outdoor recreation. So we set to work, writing letters to government and to the local papers, pointing out the need to protect such splendid natural areas. We got a lot of positive and supportive responses from the public for our proposals, but little enthusiasm from successive governments.

Twenty-five years passed before we had a golden opportunity to add this area to the official OSPS proposal for provincial park status for Brent Mountain. The Okanagan LRMP, the big Land and Resource Management Plan, at first included this small piece of land in the park proposal, then removed it again, diddled some more and finally made it into a temporary undifferentiated recreation area, with the proviso that details, such as the obvious conflict between XC skiing trails and motorized use, should be sorted out at a later date.

The good news is that this sorting out has now taken place, during a round table dialogue between the interested snowmobilers, skiers, tourism interests and naturalists. The table reached consensus that the three major loops (Okanagan Vista loop; snowflake loop; and The Old Burn periphery) as well as the connecting trails (such as the Burn-to-Lake trail) should be designated as XC trails by the Ministry of Tourism, Sports and the Arts!

In order to make sure that this decisions will be implemented, a smaller follow-up table will discuss the issue further and will suggest specific education measures and trail signage.

So please spread the word, OSPS members, and don't tell us that there is no more good news in the world.

Thanks to all of you who helped with this effort and to the Penticton Outdoors Club that did most of the XC trail building and maintenance work.

*By a former director and chairman,
Juergen Hansen*

Increased Logging Concerns Forestry Watchdog

Prince George — The B.C. Forest Practices Board is investigating how much timber is being harvested in areas where logging has increased to salvage beetle-killed lodgepole pine.

The province's forestry watchdog says in a report that the investigation is the result of several complaints and informal concerns.

The probe will focus on the current beetle outbreak that includes the Prince George, Kamloops, Burns Lake, Quesnel and Williams Lake areas.

"The significantly increased harvest level has raised concerns about maintaining the mid-term and long-term timber supply," the Forest Practices Board says.

"While it may be desirable to recover as much value from the dead lodgepole pine as possible, research indicated that

increasing harvest levels to do so may also dramatically increase the amount of non-pine that is harvested."

The board noted that the Forests Ministry is aware of the concern and has said it's essential to ensure that non-pine stands are reserved for future timber supply.

The ministry has also said it's important to question whether enough is being done to avoid harvesting non-pine trees within cut blocks.

The amount of logging allowed each year has been significantly increased in the Northern Interior to allow salvage of beetle-killed timber before it decays.

The timber supply is already expected to drop because of the beetle epidemic — as much as 40 per cent in some hard-hit areas.

February 12, 2007

Licensing and Registration of Off Road Vehicles

What happens during this winter and spring will be critical for the question of whether BC introduces legislation for licensing and registering off road vehicles (ORVs). In December 2005 the Coalition for Licensing and Registration of ORVs in BC, in which not only ORC but several of its member groups are members, submitted 47 recommendations to the BC Government. This broadly based Coalition of stakeholders, consisting of 19 non-profit organizations, ranging from ranchers to snowmobile clubs, and 8 government agencies, was formed in 2002 to improve the management of ORVs in BC. If this legislation is to be achieved during the life of the current government it is now or never for our legislators to introduce it in the legislature.

By way of background, nearly all jurisdictions in North America have licensing and registration requirements for ORVs. For example New Brunswick recently introduced a new Off-Road Vehicle Act. BC is one of the few jurisdictions in North America, if not the only one, that does not require registration or licensing of ATVs for recreational use. It has been estimated that there are about 150,000 ORVs in BC. Legislation is urgently needed for issues related to vehicle use, for theft prevention, improved management, communication and education and as a means of enforcing compliance with legal requirements. The Coalition's recommendations fall into nine categories: legislation, vehicle registration, vehicle licensing, formation of a trust fund, education, safety, trails, compliance and enforcement, and conservation.

The recommendation for legislation would require the BC Government to develop and pass an Off-Road Vehicle Act to replace the out-of-date Motor Vehicle (All Terrain) Act. The new Act would be responsive to the different types of ORVs. The Coalition further recommended that the BC government engage the coalition and its partners in a review of the new Act and regulations.

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With respect to vehicle registration the Coalition recommends that there be a single registration of all ORVs for each owner at the time of original purchase or transfer to record the ownership and that there be a visible identification of the vehicle. It also recommends that the cost of registration not exceed the comparable cost of registering road vehicles and that ICBC be mandated to register ORVs. The Coalition also recommended that there be a one year transition period of "no cost" registration as an incentive for all ORV owners to register.

Jeremy McCall

The Outdoor Report, Winter 2006/07

The OSPS has sent drafts of legislation to the provincial government. Directors have met over the years with a number of Environment Ministers. But nothing has yet been done. It is the OSPS view that some areas be "off limits" to any motorized traffic, eg. the Trans Canada Trail, sensitive watershed and newly planted forest land. That would still have many roads and much other ORV area.

Please write your MLA and the Premiere to tell them your view.

Editor

Meadowlark Festival celebrates 10th year

Each May, thousands of nature enthusiasts gather to explore and celebrate the richly diverse landscape of the beautiful South Okanagan Similkameen Valleys at the Meadowlark Festival, which celebrates its 10th Anniversary this year. It started as a small local event in 1997 and has grown to become one of the most popular birding and outdoor festivals in Canada.

This year, the festival - an initiative of the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance - takes place May 17 to 21.

Participants can join renowned birders, biologists, botanists and other nature experts on the 100 or so tours that take place throughout this scenic, biodiverse area.

Take an easy stroll around Max Lake, a little jewel set in the West Bench above Penticton and listen for meadowlarks, rails and a host of other birds. Watch for painted turtles and dragonflies in the marsh habitat that supports several wetland species. Or join bat biologist Tanya Luszczyk at Vaseux Lake for an evening exploring the diversity of bats in the Okanagan.

From canoeing, hiking, horseback riding and easy strolls, there are activities for the whole family to enjoy together, all while learning about the importance of conserving this unique landscape.

For more information and tickets, go to www.meadowlarkfestival.bc.ca, email meadowlarkfestival@osca.org or call (250) 492-5275.

BC Nature, Spring 2007

Area Trail Network Gets \$4.2 Million

Senior and local government officials came together Friday to announce \$4.2 million for the Spirit of 2010 Trail Networking linking communities throughout the Okanagan Similkameen.

The funding partnership — Tourism B.C., the federal government and four regional districts including the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen — will pay to upgrade and make the trails tourist friendly. Spirit of 2010 Trail, or the locally known Rails to Trails network, will cover 700 kms of trail across B.C.

The local network is the Kettle Valley Railroad Rail Trail, which will stretch from Brodie Station to Princeton, Princeton to Summerland, Penticton to June Springs, Myra Station to Beaverdell, Beaverdell to Rock Creek, Rock Creek to Midway, Midway to Grand Forks to Christina Lake, Christina Lake to Castlegar.

The Slocan Rail Trail will snake from South Slocan to Slocan, Salmo's Troupe Rail Trail will stretch from Salmo to Ymir/Nelson/Troupe and the Cowichan Valley Rail Trail will go from Lake Cowichan to Shawnigan Lake.

Tracy Clark

Summerland Review, Sept. 2, 2003

Forum highlights need for national park

The Environmental Issues, Research and Education Forum in Naramata (April 16 and 17, 2007)

One of the themes of the forum was the impact of climate change on ecosystems.

Because there is so much uncertainty as to the effects of climate change, Theberge said researchers need areas where they can understand what is happening naturally without human impacts.

The creation of a national park in this region would

provide a high enough level of conservation to allow this to happen and to provide a benchmark for such research, he said, adding that establishing a park here is important for more than residents of the South Okanagan.

"This is one of the two biological hotspots in Canada," he said - the other is in Southern Ontario. "If we don't do something here, we have caused irreparable harm. We have a responsibility to Canada and the rest of the international community.

Penticton Western News

April 22, 2007

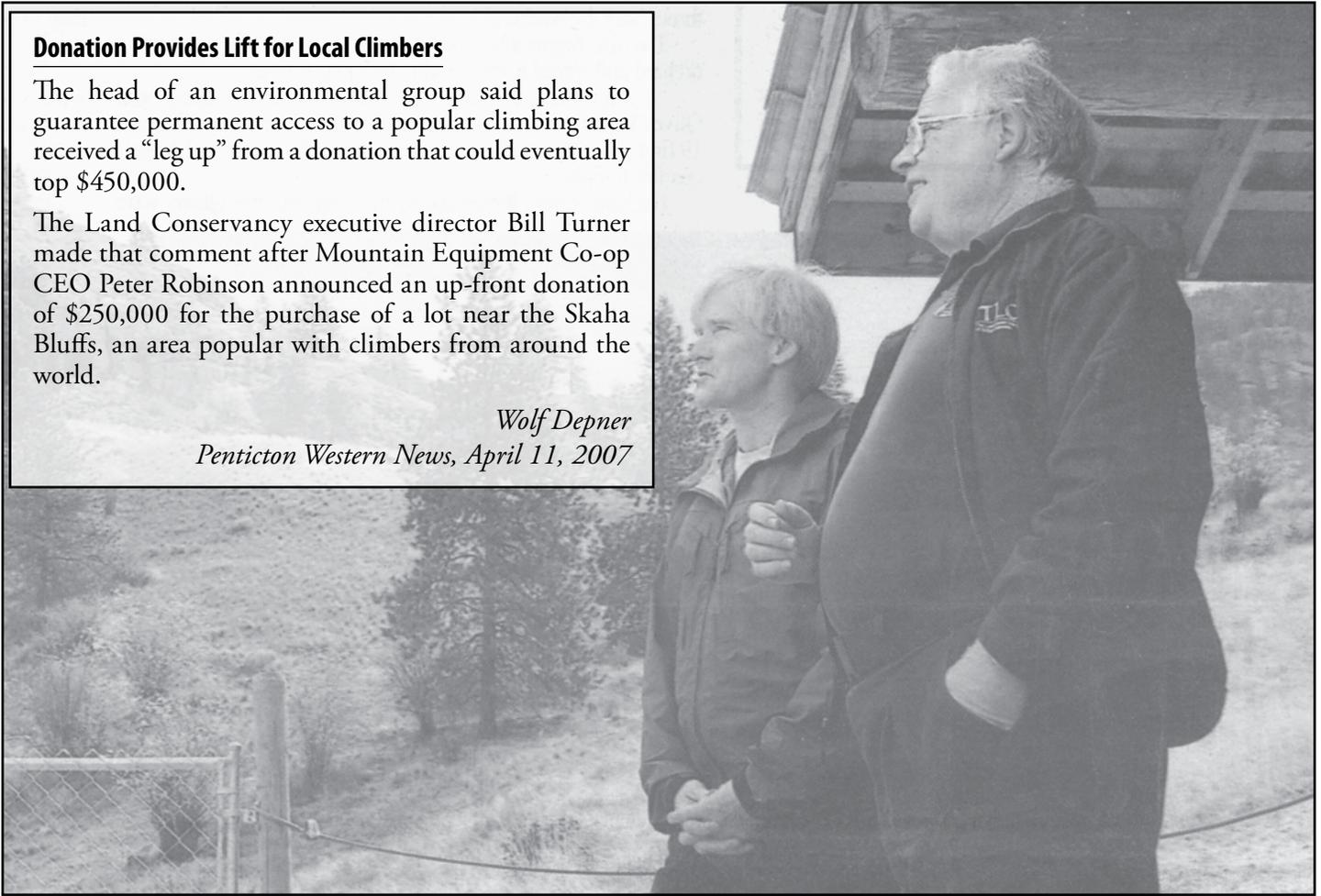
Donation Provides Lift for Local Climbers

The head of an environmental group said plans to guarantee permanent access to a popular climbing area received a “leg up” from a donation that could eventually top \$450,000.

The Land Conservancy executive director Bill Turner made that comment after Mountain Equipment Co-op CEO Peter Robinson announced an up-front donation of \$250,000 for the purchase of a lot near the Skaha Bluffs, an area popular with climbers from around the world.

Wolf Depner

Penticton Western News, April 11, 2007



Mountain Equipment Co-op chief executive officer Peter Robinson and Bill Turner, executive director for the Land Conservancy, announce a partnership that will see a minimum of \$250,000 go towards keeping the Skaha Bluffs open to the public.

Climate Change

Whatever the reason, climate change has gone mainstream, as is evident from the number of politicians of all stripes now clambering on the global warming bandwagon. So, you're likely going to hear a lot more about climate change, about things like trends in precipitation, trends in average temperatures, trends in sea surface temperature. What you might not hear as much about is what it will mean to the nature of BC, as we know it.

- In the alpine tundra, treeline will rise, reducing the extent of alpine ecosystems.
- Wetland ecosystems will shrink, reducing habitat for rare and uncommon wetland plants.

- Grasslands will likely expand,, but then so could the range for knapweed and other notorious grassland invaders.
- The composition of forests will change e.g. moisture-loving species such as western red cedar will decline in southern BC.

It's hard not to sound gloomy when considering such impacts, but all is not writ in stone yet. We still have an opportunity to do something to at least lessen the impacts that are likely headed our way.

Dawn Hanna

BC Nature, Spring 2007

**Have you renewed your membership?
OSPS needs you!**

More Bighorn Sheep Captured, Released

A second capture and release of California Bighorn Sheep in Keremeos last Thursday yielded a total of 23.

An additional eight sheep were caught to go with the 15 from the previous day's capture.

All sheep were released in Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park.

Penticton Herald, January 15, 2007

