

OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Fall
2009

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A Flood of Fears Over U.S. Dam Plans



BY LARRY PYNN
VANCOUVER SUN – AUG. 8, 2009

Dan Boettger, director of regulatory and environmental affairs of the Okanagan County public utility district no. 1.

Not far away, Boettger points to orange flagging tape on a wooden stake barely visible on the hillside across the river that marks the maximum high-water mark under a proposal for a dam here that would back water up into Canada's portion of the Similkameen.

"We don't take it lightly," Boettger insists. "We understand there are a lot of concerns.

It's typical human nature."

The dam is touted as providing numerous benefits on the U.S. side hydro-electric power, water for irrigation, flood control, and a reservoir from which water could be drawn in summer during low flows to raise water temperatures and benefit fish downstream of Similkameen Falls.

A lingering drought is part of the issue, as is the concern that not enough water is flowing from B.C. "There is that concern," Boettger says. "Less water is making it to the border."

Continued on next page...

EDITORIAL

The OSPS is one of a rare breed of not-for-profit volunteer societies which operates "in the black" without any government funding. Thanks to past members generosity and a couple of legacies and also due to the frugal ways of operation, the OSPS is financially stable, yet has managed over the years to have great success in the South Okanagan-Similkameen area.

However, your memberships are not just important, they are essential to the continued will being of the OSPS. Please complete the membership form in this issue and encourage others to renew or become new members. We know you have much to tell them of the value of the OSPS in the past, and the need for such a group for the future as we deal with continued pressure on our beautiful, fragile valleys.

Keep those email addresses coming if you wish to receive the newsletter that way. Sorry the summer issue was missing... an overload on the editor. Hope you will find this issue entertaining and informative.

Volunteers who would like to be more active would be most welcome to join our directors. We are in need of 3 or 4 new people on the Board now. Please consider the idea. We meet 10 times a year (not July and August), on the first Monday of every month in Penticton.

Continued on next page...

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

...**Flood of Fears**, continued from front

The largest of three potential options would inundate rare and important land on the Canadian side of the Similkameen, including Crown, aboriginal, and private lands. On the U.S. side it would flood largely federal Bureau of Land Management property, along with some private lands.

“All it is is a study, and it hasn’t been done in a vacuum,” Boettger emphasizes. “There have been lots of discussions on both sides of the border. And no decisions have been made.”

The *Vancouver Sun* first wrote about the Shanker’s Bend dam proposal in October 2007, but it wasn’t until March 2009 — two months before the provincial election — that Environment Minister Barry Penner sought intervenor status, a request refused because it came too late for the initial per-

mitting process.

In fact, only the B.C. chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society took issue seriously enough to get it’s act together and achieve intervenor status on behalf of any Canadian group or government agency.

“Nobody believed this could be a possibility,” executive director Chloe O’Loughlin said Friday of the dam proposal. “This is real. People need to pay attention.”

Penner wrote in a six-page letter to the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission seeking intervenor status that the largest dam proposal would flood at least 3,600 hectares of Canada, including two aboriginal reserves, two provincial protected areas, a potential national park, and high-quality agricultural land.

EDITORIAL

...continued from front page

A tribute to Eric Jacobson of Princeton; his funeral memorial. He was a very important link in the recovery and reestablishment of the Cascade trade trails.

Summerland has received attention for the preservation of marsh land in front of the resort buildings on the Lower Town Lakeshore. A hard sell to begin with, the marsh is now a focal point for walkers and bird watchers. The OSPS contributed to the interpretive sign pictured.

Conkle Lake Provincial Park was an early success for the OSPS. This beautiful lake was heavily used, but totally unorganized and unsupervised. Thanks to Director Bill and Pat Johnston for the story and photo.

Shankers Bend Dam proposals by some Washington State people would have long and serious consequences for BC, CDAWS deserves credit and thanks for being first (and for a time only) intervener. The OSPS is against any dam because of the resulting

damage, farming loss, and negative effect on First Nation land.

Run-of-River power may sound sensible, but in many cases there is desirable environmental damage. Moreover, power produced comes with the spring run-off, just as it does for BC Hydro existing dams. Yet BC Hydro has been ordered to buy Run-of-river power – at a high price. This perplexing requirement by the government will inevitably raise the price of electricity to many consumers.

Trails in the North Okanagan have been greatly improved and lengthened in the past year. Cross-country skiers and hikers will benefit, as well as many visitors too discover the joy of trails.

The OSPS has, over the past 30 years, written letters, briefs and made representations to BC government cabinet ministers. No result. Now we see the South Okanagan also writing and awaiting some action (see letter). Other trail news scattered plus more pictures. Good local activity!

At least 20 blue- and red-listed animal and plant species would be impacted, Penner wrote, as well as 16 listed species at risk under Canada’s Species at Risk Act, “which prohibits any action which threatens, damages or destroys a threatened or endangered species or its habitat.”

Said Penner: “These potential impacts are unacceptable to the province.”

Boettger countered that killing the public utility’s effort may not prevent a private developer from coming forward in the future with another dam proposal.

Asked if the U.S. could change opponent’s positions through cash compensation, Hanson said: “I don’t think this can be bought, this particular issue. It’s a very beautiful part of Canada ... and I don’t think it’s for sale.”

Hon. Jim Prentice, P.C., M.P.
Minister of the Environment
Room 401 Confederation Bldg.
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Prentice,

As a follow-up to a letter sent to you by the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen, I would like to underline the importance of our federal government talking a definite position against the Shanker’s bend high dam project.

Please find attached my letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (and response) and to the Okanagan County Public Utilities District.

My staff has been attempting to arrange a meeting with you so that we can discuss this issue. hopefully, we can set that up soon.

Sincerely,

Alex Atamanenko, MP
BC Southern Interior

HISTORIC TRAILS

The work of the late Harley Hatfield and others of the Okanagan Historical Society and the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society in locating, publicizing and protecting the historic trails in the Cascade Mountains between Hope and Princeton was greatly assisted by a number of Princeton area individuals; from the field work and writings of Rev. John Goodfellow, Princeton United Church Minister from 1927 to 1968; Bud DeWolfe, Princeton Fish and Game Club; Alan Gill, Game Warden; Pat Wright, Guide and Outfitter to Eric Jacobsen, who travelled the upper Tulameen and Similkameen with Alan Gill on some of his outings related to his job.

It was Eric Jacobsen that Harley looked to when getting out on the ground and into the Cascade Mountains to locate the five major historic trails that Harley had researched historically.

Eric Jacobsen died this summer. At his memorial service Kelley Cook presented the following Tribute to Eric.

In comparison to many in this room, I only knew Eric for a short period of his life...but the friendship we shared was very special.

I first met Eric in 2006, this is when our paths first crossed, and I was researching historic trails in the Princeton area.

I was in search of information to locate them and Eric was the man that knew their whereabouts.

Our interviews soon became visits and our friendship grew...we shared a deep passion for the outdoors and the ancient trails that weaved through the mountains surrounding us.

In the 1960s and 70s he lead the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society and Okanagan Historical Society (OHS) groups through



the rugged country in search of trails, hardly recognizable and unused since the late 1800's. Eric had led the expeditions on the ground; he knew the country better than anyone and never backed away from the grueling work. Listening to all the amazing stories, it made me appreciate Eric and all the labourious endeavours he and Harley Hatfield along with many others encountered in their quest to re-locate and protect the trails for us and future generations to enjoy.

Then again, some 35 years later, he guided me, from the chair in his kitchen, along through those same mountain trails...his memories and stories kept me on track. To him it probably brought the memories of his childhood and he was back on that clothes-line (his sisters used to tie him on a clothes line to keep him in sight as he was always taking off exploring).

A year ago tomorrow, over 200 people gathered at Jacobson Lake to honour the past, a big part of the celebration was acknowledging Eric's contribution. Eric was one of the special guests that unveiled the kiosk and got long over due recognition for all his part in preserving this historic area. It was a day of renewed friendships, shared memories and above all honour, one of Princeton's finest citizens.

- Along with the trail stories, Eric shared

with me the story of his family's arrival in Princeton and it was a fascinating tale...I asked his daughter Marilyn if anyone had written their family history...she sheepishly said no...but agreed to work on it and work on it she did! It is an incredible story...there was more to Eric than he had revealed to me... much, much more...I had no idea of all the community projects he had done, nor the time spent on Council, the passion he had for this community... I was more in awe of Eric than ever.

I was so fortunate to have known Eric, even for a short time. I will always cherish our times together. As I continue on my path of life, I will always feel Eric is close, he will continue to guide and inspire me from above and I am so grateful for have known him. He will be my mentor and role model forever...

Kelley Cook was raised in Princeton and resides there now, a member of an old time Princeton family. Kelley will be remembered as our Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society – Annual General Meeting speaker this past spring.

Kelley carries on in the tradition of Rev. John Goodfellow, Harley Hatfield and Eric Jacobsen, as the "Trail Rehabilitation Project Coordinator for the Historic Trails in the Cascade Mountains between Hope and Princeton.

Biomass Nightmare

BY STEPHEN LEAHY
WATERSHED SENTINEL
– SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009

Climate and economics largely militate against fast-growing pine and poplar plantations in Canada, with a few exceptions in southern BC and Ontario. Simply put, it's too cold and far cheaper to cut existing old growth here, says Catharine Grant of Forest Ethics, an environmental organization focused on forest conservation. Governments require forest companies to "regenerate" forest but such lands remain impoverished in terms of biodiversity, ecological function and ability to provide timber. In the boreal forest region where all logging is old growth, companies "do nothing, in terms of regeneration, they just let it grow back" which might take 80 years, Grant says.

Canada's long legacy of "silviculture failure" forces companies to keep looking for old

growth to cut. And yet the official FAO forestry statistics show Canada's forest cover is unchanged, despite cutting enough trees to produce 50-60 million tones of pulp, paper, softwood lumber and hardwood every year.

Forestry is an essential part of the Canadian economy but needs to be done far better, Grant says. Essentially, large tracts of untouched forest should be off limits because there are already huge areas of disturbed forests that could be far better used and managed. Although intensively-managed plantations have no biodiversity, they can provide needed wood fibre.

BC Hydro recently signed four contracts for long-term supply of electricity from burning wood waste and beetle kill.

Ontario's huge 4,000 megawatt Nanticoke coal power plant, the largest in North America, may be converted to burning

wood chips, in a nightmarish scenario right out of Lord of the Rings. Ontario plans to phase out all of its coal plants by 2014 as part of its carbon emission and air pollution reduction strategy.

"Burning is the most wasteful use of a tree," says Richard Brooks of Greenpeace Canada. "that is not the way for the forest industry to survive," Brooks said from his Toronto office.

Burning a tree puts its stored carbon into the air today in the hopes that a planted tree will absorb an equal amount of carbon 40 years into the future – providing it survives that long, says Brooks.

"We need carbon reductions today, not forty years from now. And the best way to do that is halt deforestation of old growth forests."

New Kaleden Kiosk highlights section of Kettle Valley Trail

BY PENTICTON HERALD STAFF –
SEPTEMBER 22, 2009

The South Okanagan Chamber of Commerce unveiled a new Kettle Valley Trail kiosk marker in Kaleden.

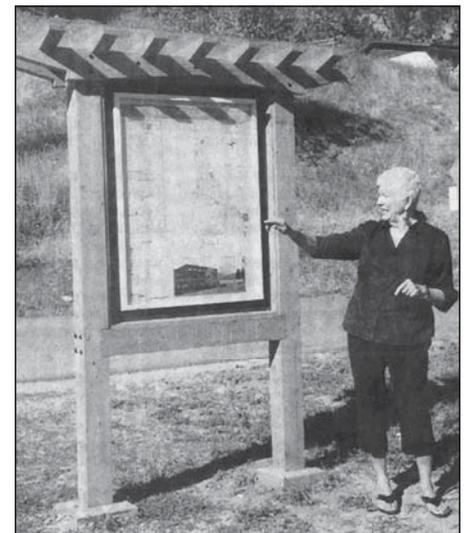
A ceremony was held recently at Kaleden's Pioneer Park to unveil the kiosk and celebrate the completion of the project.

Funded by the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in conjunction with the Union of BC Municipalities, the project saw the installation of a sign to mark the trail as it progresses through Kaleden.

The kiosk has information panels explaining the history and unique geographical information about the area, said rural electoral area D Director Bill Schwarz. It also has a map of the entire KVR Trail, and directs users to the next portion as it travels through from Penticton to Okanagan Falls.

The project was completed with the cooperation of the SOCC and the Kaleden Parks and Recreation Commission.

It was part of a series of small projects, which included renovations to the Okanagan Falls Visitors Information Centre and a mapping project.



Jane Bland, from Kaleden's parks and recreation department, points out some of the features of the new sign unveiled at the KVR Trail marker in Pioneer Park.



Photo by Pat Johnston

Conkle Lake Park

In the early years of the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society the South Okanagan was represented by Joe Smith, Bill Kreller and Doug Fraser as Directors. Their local interests and efforts helped secure the preservation of the Vaseux California big Horn Sheep range, the Haynes Ecological Reserve at the north end of Osoyoos Lake and Conkle Lake Provincial Park northeast of Bridesville.

There are two access routes to Conkle Lake Park:

- off Highway 33, 4 miles (6 km) north of west bridge via Ripperto Creek Forest Service Road, a 26 km long, single lane very rough gravel road, but handy if traveling Highway 33 south of Kelowna
- or from highway 3, just west of Johnstone Creek Provincial Park (between Bridesville and Rock Creek) via Johnstone Creek West Road – Conkle Lake Road, which is well

signed at Highway 3 and at side roads, 25km gravel, mostly rough

Both roads are listed as 2 wheel drive.

With no recent logging in the area these roads have not been maintained for several years.

A good reference is the “Backroad Map Book”, published by Mussio Ventures Ltd. Vol III, Kamloops/Okanagan, available at book stores and sports shops. This is in response to a detailed request by the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society.

Conkle Lake Park was established March 15, 1973. It has an area of 1467 acres (587 ha), with 34 vehicle/tent campsites and 2 groups camp sites located on a bench above the north end of the lake. Also provided are pit toilets, hand pumped water and a car top boat launch.

The lake lies north-south, at an elevation of approximately 3700ft. (1228m) is 1.9 miles (3km) long and the north, (campground end) of the lake is a 550yds (500m) wide sandy beach as shown on the enclosed photo. The south facing aspect of the campground and beach result in warming this site, beach and water early in the camping season makes swimming great for a longer season. Besides swimming the lake also provides reasonably good fishing.

A hiking trail circles the lake as well as leads to the west from the campground to a scenic falls.

This is a very busy Park and Campground in the summer months but lightly used after Labour Day.

It is thanks to the foresight of your early directors and your Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society we have this gem of a Provincial Park today.

Similkameen Trails

Sometime in 2005 a group of like minded folks met to secure local recreational walks from development and encroachment, in 2006 a society was formed with a mission to...

To promote and enhance the trails of the Similkameen

To raise funds necessary for trails stewardship

To promote courtesy to stakeholders and respect the environment

To cooperate with stakeholders and all levels of government

A society was formed with a plan defining

the Valley as mutual neighborhoods, separated by environmental changes; as the Similkameen flows from the Pacific Rain forest at Manning Park to the desert area of the lower Similkameen; allowing for a staged process that will if completed reflect this mission. The first part of the plan is centred on Keremeos neighbourhood.



From Red Bridge in the west to Kobua Park in the east a hundred and twenty five people became paid-up member supporters and some director work groups were formed.

They formed a committee, set about raising funds and applying for grants, performed a detailed inventory of the Neighbourhood Trails and determined to create a village Promenade. The Promenade was opened

by the Mayor of Keremeos on Canada Day in 2007. He led the community over the route and along the dike. The project is ongoing; we expect to be granted a license of occupation from RDOS who in turn will be responsible to Highways financing authority and the Provincial Trails manager at the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Arts. Now a district for the community led by the community we are totally on community volunteers.

The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society endorses the South Okanagan Naturalists Club by the following letter. We trust Mr. Barisoff will give a positive concrete answer as to action taken re: Off Road Vehicles control.

South Okanagan Naturalists Club
October 17, 2009

The Honourable W. Barisoff,
Speaker & M.L.A.
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. Barisoff:

We remain concerned that your government has not yet introduced an act to control ORVs (off road vehicles) as detailed in the enclosed copies of our two previous letters about ORVs (March 2009 and March 2007). So far, we have not received a reply to either of these two previous letters.

I attended the all-candidates meeting in Penticton last spring where you said that you always provide feedback to each of your constituents. You also



OHV damage to the landscape such as this prompted Alberta Wildlands Advocate to undertake its 5-year Bighorn monitoring study.

said that your role as Speaker does not impede your responsibilities as our MLA. Since most, if not all, of our some 100 members are also your constituents, we hope to receive a reply to this letter and our two previous letters in the near future. Please note that the mailing address on our two previous letters is no longer correct due to the closure of Penticton's downtown post office, so

please reply to the return address on this letter. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Dr. J. E. Bryan, Conservation
Committee Chair, South Okanagan
Naturalists Club

Cc: BC Nature, Okanagan Similkameen
Parks Society

Habitat Conservation Efforts Noted

BY SUMMERLAND REVIEW
OCTOBER 15, 2009

Communities in Bloom Judges Praise Work at Waterfront

For the first time in their involvement with the Communities in Bloom Program, Summerland did not walk away from the annual CiB awards ceremony with a first place win.

In 2006, mentored by Kelowna in the Canadian Classic category, a win with five blooms was awarded to Summerland with special mention of the waterfront riparian project.

Summerland as a national finalist received five blooms and special mention for its natural habitat heritage conservation.

Along the shoreline of the lake, the efforts being made to restore areas to their natural state are paying dividends; native flora has been planted and the native flora has been planted and the native fauna are finding these sites, becoming established and thriving.”

CiB chair Donna Lane added her thoughts thanking committee members Helen Poncelet, Marilyn Hansen, Sherril Foster, Celia and Don Burton and Dale MacDonald

for all of their efforts. Lane hopes that down the road the program can be carried on in Summerland as nothing but good things have come about as a result of our involvement.

At the Awards Ceremony, National Chairman Ted Blowes and Raymond Carriere, President Fondateur, on behalf of the National Committee, Judges and Sponsors, sincerely thanked all the communities for their involvement in the program.

“Within the actual context of global warming and environmental challenges, all can rightfully and proudly state that, through the efforts of all those involved in their communities, they are actually contributing to the solutions”.

Communities in Bloom is a Canadian non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility, and beautification through community



An interpretive sign has been installed at the Summerland Marsh on the lakeside of the Summerland Waterfront Resort thanks to collaborative efforts of naturalist, parks and municipal groups and other friends of the marsh. Above Sheila White of the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society and Bob Handfield, president of the South Okanagan Naturalist Club, read the sign.

involvement and the challenge of a national program, with focus on the promotion of green spaces in urban settings.



Summerland's efforts to preserve a waterfront riparian area were noted by the judges in the Communities in Bloom competition.

Letter sent by Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society

To: CPAWS
RDOS
MP Alex Atamenenko
MLA John Slater

RE: Shanker's Bend Dam Proposals

Although the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society is not an intervener in the discussions regarding proposals to dam the Similkameen River at Shanker's Bend, nevertheless the Okanagan Similkameen

Parks Society Directors wish to voice their concerns and full opposition to any such dam.

Any dam at Shanker's Bend location would inevitably flood some – or a lot – of land in the South Cawston area. Not only would storage water render the land useless in spring, but there would also be a dust bowl for the rest of the year.

Directly affected would be the Lower Similkameen Band and a number of growers and farmers whose very livelihood would be destroyed.

There is no doubt more water could be utilized in Washington State, but would there ever be enough to meet some people's aspirations?

We hope you will speak out against this proposal in which benefits flow south leaving impoverished land, people, and wildlife in BC.

It is right and responsible to oppose Shanker's Bend proposals.

Sincerely,

Sheila White, Secretary

In Bloom

CANADIAN WATER TREATMENT
– SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009

“Israel is a candy store for technologies.”

– Avi Broder

“Necessity is the other of invention,” says Oded Distel, director of Israel NEWTech (Novel Efficient Water Technologies). When it comes to Israel’s water supply, he’s dead-on. The country that brought modern drip irrigation to the global market continues to innovate, making the best of its water scarcity issues and introducing those homegrown solutions to the world. In fact, Booky Oren, chair of the upcoming WATEC 2009 Conference, tells us that Israel is the “global Silicon Valley” for water technology solutions.

After day one of our press tour, we were suitably impressed. We’d spent most of our day in Jerusalem visiting Hagihon, the water and wastewater works corporation, talking with representatives from companies with impressive and varied new technologies, including A.R.I.’s unmeasured flow reducer device, Tahal Group’s real-time modeling for water contamination and security, and TaKaDu’s smart network for monitoring water loss reduction.

The implementation and success of these new technologies is in large part due to Israel’s social climate, which allows for unique partnerships between academics, industry, government and what Distel calls

a “seasoned” community of venture capital funds. And the country’s small size doesn’t hurt either. Its informal, open atmosphere and well-connected networks make it easier for Israeli upstarts to burgeon and quickly enter the global market.

CANADA AND ISRAEL

Several avenues exist that support Canadian-Israeli partnership. Our countries share a free trade agreement (CIFTA), and there’s the Canada Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation (CIIRDF), which funds Canadian and Israeli companies joint R& D projects. “Through funding, there can be a sharing of experts,” says Catherine Gosselin, a Canadian trade commissioner to Israel. “We continue to support import-export, but we’re also trying to foster relationships between researchers and companies.”

Beyond these initiatives, Canadian investment companies are showing interest in Israeli water technologies. Kinrot Technology Ventures, Israel’s leading seed investor in water and clean technologies, was privatized in 2006 by Vancouver’s Stern Group in co-operation with the Israeli chief scientist’s offices. Kinrot subsidizes 24 incubators and has approximately 200 projects in the development stage at

any given time in several areas, including telecommunications and medical.

The interest goes both ways, “Canadian products are very well-perceived here in Israel,” says Gosselin. “One company that’s been very successful, for instance, is Zenon—they were one of the first success stories for Canadian companies here in Israel.” In 2004 and 2005, Zenon and Mekorot, Israel’s national water company, received funding from CIIDRF to work together on the development of new ultra filtration membranes for seawater desalination and purification.

More recently, Clear Flow Consulting Inc., a Canadian company that develops wastewater and erosion control technology to improve water quality, received a national Research Council of Canada grant of \$125,000 to install a pilot project at the Nablus River in Israel. The project is based on wastewater and aquaculture wastewater (release water from fish farms that’s high in ammonia, nitrates and nitrites), and, since installation, Clear Flow’s products have been able to reduce these levels dramatically. “Israel is open to many avenues in water treatment that will help develop their water management,” says Jerry Hanna, Clear Flow’s president.

...MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

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The Okanagan Highlands Trail is more of a wilderness trail so there is not as much excavating and reconstruction, he said.

The work done by Cabin Forestry this year means minimal maintenance for the next

three to five years.

Hargreaves is hoping volunteers will assess it every year and clear any trees blown down.

Funding for the High Rim Trail project came from Mountain Equipment Co-op, Valley First Financial Group, Western Wilderness Committee, Friends of the

Environment Foundation and the Central Okanagan Foundation.

With an initial \$5,000 from fund-raising, 10,000 High Rim Trail brochures were published last year and distributed throughout the Okanagan. The rest of the money went into trail-clearing expenses for the volunteers.

Mission Accomplished

BY J.P. SQUIRE – THE OKANAGAN SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2009

The celebration east of Lake Country commemorated the completion of work on the 55-kilometre High Rim Trail which extends from Joe Rich east of Kelowna to Cosens Bay in Vernon.

About 50 volunteers, led by the cross-country club, started restoring the High Rim Trail four years ago.

The original builders from the 1990s could no longer maintain it and were looking for someone to take it over. North Okanagan outdoor groups declined. So did the Central Okanagan Naturalist Club. In December 2005, however, the Kelowna Nordic executive decided it would be a great summer project.

Although it was given a different name by original builder Bruce Sumner of Kelowna, the High Rim Trail is part of the Okanagan Highlands Trail.

The original vision was an Okanagan Highlands Trail on both sides of the Okanagan Valley from the Canada-U.S. border to the North Okanagan. But only the two sections from Vernon to Mission Creek (in Joe rich) and Joe Rich to Little white were built.

After three years of volunteers working on the High Rim Trail, Cabin Forestry Services received a \$241,000 contract through a provincial Job Opportunities fund to upgrade it to an even higher standard.

The labour-intensive work included: widening the trail and re-cutting it in places, building water bars to divert runoff away, restoring eroded sections, removing more than 1,700 fallen or danger trees, new creek crossings, new signs identifying the trail and kilometre markers. The two crews have also opened up more viewpoints and built

log benches.

“When I took on the co-ordination of the High Rim Trail project in 2005, I had no idea that it would become a beacon for greater things to come,” said Alice Hargreaves, project co-ordinator for the Kelowna Nordic club, who drove ‘the last spike’ into a Wrinkly Face sign.

“From the beginning, volunteers were always enthusiastic and ready to get out on the trail with hand saws, clippers and chainsaws to do a day of hard work clearing the trail. A half-kilometre section that was so overgrown with vegetation would take a day to clear”. Volunteers spent hundreds of hours in work parties from May to October each year flagging and maintaining the trail before Cabin Forestry took over.

“The trail crews have done an awesome job. I am just delighted this day has finally arrived; there’s very much a sense of satisfaction. The trail is beautiful, it’s more than I ever imagined it would be, a dream come true. There’s more excitement, more users since Cabin Forestry same on. We look forward to hiking and snowshoeing this trail for many years to come,” said Hargreaves.

“It’s a great day,” agreed Steve Milne, owner of Cabin Forestry.” It’s been alot of work but the crew has done an awesome job. We actually joked about this day in June when we started, about meeting at Wrinkly Face and driving the last spike. Now we’ve done it.”

The unemployed forestry workers took a lot of pride in the project, he added.

“It’s not just a job, to keep them busy and



Cabin Forestry Services used unemployed forestry workers to upgrade the scenic 55-kilometer High Rim Trail between Joe Rich and Vernon. They completed the last section at Wrinkly Face Cliff, above, just before the wrap-up celebration on the hillside east of Lake Country.

keep money in the pockets. They actually really enjoyed doing it. So it’s been a lot of fun for everybody.”

“I think a lot of the guys working with us here are pretty proud of their work,” commented Keith Tucker, lead hand for the south crew which restored the trail from Joe Rich to Beaver Lake Road.

Cabin Forestry usually does cutblock and road development for logging companies.

“So this was a new project for us. There’s lots of things we had to learn as we went. You’re still in the forest but you’re doing a different kind of job and you’re giving something back to the community,” Tucker said.

Asked if the crews were sad to see the end of the High Rim Trail project, Milne said his company also has a \$242,000 contract to work on the 55-kilometre Okanagan Highlands Trail to the south.

The High Rim Trail is more of an urban trail, close to town and great for family hikes.

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

Name: _____ Phone: _____

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

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



Vacuuming Rivers ...and Wallets

BY JOE FOY
WATERSHED SENTINEL
– SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009

A fellow I knew once told me how he spent a summer selling vacuum cleaners door to door in small towns on the prairies. He soon developed a simple three step programme. First, he would get invited into the home. Second, he would find dust under the sofa and in the corners. He's talk and talk about potential health effects, until the dust bunnies under the couch took on the proportions of King Kong. And third, he just happened to have the solution to the "dust problem" in the trunk of his car - a brand new vacuum cleaner. In the wink of an eye people were making monthly payments on vacuum cleaners they didn't even know they needed!

That's exactly what is going on in BC right now with our wild rivers.

The BC Liberal government of Gordon Campbell has teamed up with private power companies to sell us unreliable hydro-power we can't use, can't afford, and don't want. And so far they are doing pretty good for themselves, with signed long-term contracts worth 31 billion dollars and hundreds of wild rivers staked for future power projects. If the massive Bute Inlet project goes through, the public will

be on the hook to the private power guys for more than \$50 billion, which is larger than the provincial debt! Ever so grateful, the private power guys have been donating to the BC Liberals like crazy.

So, how did they do it?

It's been pretty much like selling vacuum cleaners. First, the provincial government invited the private power companies into the province by bringing in the 2002 Energy Plan.

The 2002 Energy Plan manufactures the need for private hydro-power by restricting BC Hydro's ability to plan and build new hydro power plants. **BC Hydro has been ordered to buy power from the private guys in long-term contracts at far above market rates.** And Hydro has been ordered to buy a lot of power, in part because Hydro is no longer allowed to rely as much on Port Moody's Burrard Thermal power plant as a back-up for winter-time peak power use or for an emergency. The result has been a staking good rush on BC's wild mountain rivers, as companies make plans to dam and divert them for power production.

But BC's wild mountain rivers freeze up in the winter months, which makes private power a lousy, unreliable, and expensive winter backup power source.



Joe Foy on the Blaeberry River at Thomson Falls, near Golden, BC. There is a private power scheme to divert the river around the falls, which local people strongly oppose.



Fire Creek being "prepared" for river diversion.

And that's exactly what the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) ruled on July 27 when they stated that the BC government should rely on Burrard Thermal as a back-up power plant instead of the private power guys, and do more to conserve power.

The BCUC rightly concluded that, though the Burrard plant has a massive power potential, it sits idle for most of the time like a spare tire in the back of a car.