

OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Fall
2011

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EDITORIAL

Balanced Parks System

During the course of the summer I had the opportunity to travel across the western portion of our great nation during a trip to, and from, Winnipeg. I found some interesting information, and a lot of food for thought, during this trip.

One of the observations that I made was that most jurisdictions, towns, cities, provinces and the country its self, have developed 'parks' of some description or other. There are green spaces, recreation areas, reserves, and many additional manners of 'people places'. They are large and small with all manner of vegetation, wildlife and structures.

There is good evidence that these parks are valuable to the well-being, and mental health, of the rural, urban and suburban citizens of Canada. Studies have indicated that the ability to get out into nature, whatever that is relative to local geography, results in a diminished susceptibility to depression and other stress related illnesses. Likewise, physical fitness, generally the result of some sort of recreation, has been linked to a balanced life and good mental health and well-being.

I noticed many 'river walks' and took advantage of 'cross community paths' which tended to be populated by cyclists, skaters, walkers and runners. These paths combine the natural environment, be it bush, prairie, or some other, with an opportunity for physical activities, both of which are of great value to people. Many of the small towns that I visited this past summer have invested in these types of parks. Winnipeg, Medicine Hat, and Swift Current have constructed multiple paths, which often link larger parks or green spaces with each other.



Top predators hold a key to life itself.

Can people and predators coexist?

Can we afford not to?

lordsofnature.org

LORDS OF NATURE: Life in a Land of Great Predators

Documentary film

Fri, Nov 4, 2011
Centre Stage Theatre
Summerland BC
Secondary School

Doors open, 6:30 pm

Film, 7-8 pm

Discussion and questions:
Conservation Northwest's
Jay Kehne, 8-9 pm

Wolves and cougars, once driven to the edge of existence, are finding their way back—from the Yellowstone plateau to the canyons of Zion to the rugged open range of the West. This is the story of a science now discovering top carnivores as revitalizing forces of nature and of a society now learning tolerance for beasts they once banished.

Narrated by Peter Coyote

Free event!



Okanagan
Similkameen
Parks Society



Conservation
Northwest

Info: OkanaganSimilkameenParksSociety.com

We in the South Okanagan Similkameen have been developing all sorts of parks and, as with other places in western Canada, we need to keep our types and styles of parks in balance. We need to continue to follow a
continued on next page...

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

What's In This Issue?

The Autumn of 2011 appears to be a busy time for the people involved in the outdoors in the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys. Some of the activities are highlighted in this newsletter and others are occurring spontaneously throughout the region. Its good to be informed about the activities and goings on so that sensible opinions can be formed and directed to those challenged with making sensible decisions concerning our beautiful corner of the province.

FILM NIGHT

As you will have gathered from our front cover, the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society will be hosting a film night on Friday, November 4, 2011. The film on Grizzly Bears was so popular at our AGM last spring that we felt that we would like to host another. 'Lords of Nature: Life in the Land of Great Predators' by Jay Kehne was chosen and will be followed by a Q & A session featuring Jay.

Jay Kehne has worked for Conservation Northwest (CNW) since May, 2009 as an Okanagan Outreach Associate. Jay has a degree in Wildlife Biology from Washington State University and a degree in soil science, also from W.S.U. In his current position as Outreach Associate with CNW Jay is assisting ranchers with conservation easements that provide them with options other than selling to developers. These programs help preserve important open space for wildlife while providing capital to maintain working ranches. Working for CNW allows Jay to also spend time providing information and education on important local wildlife issues such as habitat connectivity, and the return of wolves to Washington.

Jay retired from a 33 year career with USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service in Washington and California to go to work for CNW. His positions with USDA included field soil scientist – Ellensburg, WA, soil survey party leader- Waterville, Wa. river-basin study soil specialist,- Moses Lake, Wa., area soil scientist,- Ephrata, Wa, district conservationist-Yakima, Wa, district conservationist-Lake Tahoe Ca., and RC&D

Coordinator-Chelan, and Okanogan, Wa.

Selected by the U.S China International Relations Committee in 2000 to participate in a Time-Life sponsored work assignment to Northeast China, Jay learned and brought back a broader perspective of landscapes, wildlife, natural resources and how to work with diverse cultures to solve resource issues.

Jay is married with 5 children ages 27, 25, 21, 18, and 12 and enjoys skiing, backpacking, hunting, golfing, gardening, and fishing. To round out their lives, he and his wife Rita have hosted 6 foreign exchange students from Norway, Denmark, Italy and Germany over the last 4 years. He lives with his family on 6 acres overlooking the Okanogan River in Omak, Wa.

NATURE TRUST

The OSPS has committed to participate in the Nature Trust of B.C.'s acquisition of 2,027 hectares of land around the Twin Lakes area. They will be purchasing private land and grazing tenure that will become a part of the White Lake – Vaseux Lake conservation corridor. The intent is to join existing conservation areas such as the Vaseux Bighorn National Wildlife Area and the White Lake Grasslands Protected Area, among others, to provide habitat protection for at risk species and forwarding the goals of the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program.

The Parks Society notes that work has been done in this conservation corridor since 1975. Groups such as the Canadian Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, the B.C. Ministry of the Environment, the Nature Trust and others have participated in this work. The board of the OSPS has committed \$10 000.00 to the purchase of the Twin Lakes land. The acquisition of this property fits well into the goals of the society. Read the reports on the land included in the newsletter.

TRANS CANADA TRAIL

Also housed within this issue you will find articles on the Summerland portion of the Trans Canada Trail and the issue of motorized vehicles. Marilyn Hanson, President of the Summerland Trail Society, has written one article, another is from the local media. The OSPS has donated money to assist with

the upkeep and maintenance of the old rail bed that has become such a treasure to our region. Be informed about the issues that are addressed regarding the Trans Canada Trail.

LOTS MORE

Also included in this issue are some articles from Margaret Holm of the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance. Margaret writes about birds, deer and shorelines. We are proud to reproduce some of Margaret's excellent commentary for the pleasure of our readers.

There is also an update on hiking and biking trail built along the new stretch of highway between Oliver and Osoyoos. The board of the OSPS noted the great cooperation of MLA John Slater during discussions regarding this project. The path is set to a standard that we hope to see everywhere in the region.

Please enjoy your busy Fall and spend a little time looking over this issue. To paraphrase from the old saw about the starfishes being thrown into the sea, we may not get everything done perfectly but the activities that we do take on will benefit from our knowledge and input.

...continued from front page

vision of 'parks for all' and plan for a sustainable future. It will be important to consider the well-being of the planet and conserve pristine natural environments. Likewise, it will be important to put aside spaces that can be used to provide solitude and tranquility for people. Recreation of all sorts should be encouraged, and where possible protected from interfering with each other, through the creation of parks and facilities that have been designed for these activities.

Its amazing what one can learn when he or she is moving through a particular environment and allows the achievements and decisions of others to influence his or her thinking. We are not alone in the South Okanagan Similkameen but we are on the right path. With the South Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society working hard to keep this vision in the minds of the populace we will continue make progress and develop a sustainable parks system for our valleys.

Nature Trust eyes Twin property

PENTICTON HERALD, JUNE 3, 2011

While sage grasslands might look scrubby and unimportant to some people, they have a wide ranging importance.

Grasslands store and filter water and produce clean air and many unique wildlife species make this habitat their home. Grasslands provide important habitat for ranching, hunting and recreation.

But grasslands represent only 1 per cent of the province and since this fragile ecosystem has become limited and fragmented, remaining grassland parcels are identified as a top conservation priority in British Columbia.

The Nature Trust of BC has an opportunity to purchase a 2,000-acre property at Twin Lakes. Predominantly grasslands, the land also has significant riparian and wetland habitats.

It is adjacent to The Nature Trust White Lake Biodiversity Ranch, so it will help create a corridor or protected land.

Acquiring this property will effectively double the extent of conservation holdings in the White Lake Basin area. It is one of the largest intact private grassland properties in the South Okanagan Valley and has high potential for future development.

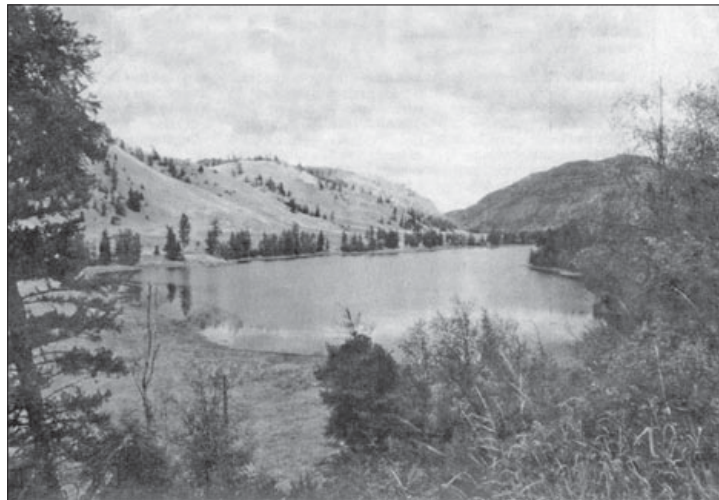
If The Nature Trust acquires it, critical grassland, sagebrush shrub-steppe, dry forested ecosystems and riparian habitats will be preserved forever.

The Nature Trust of British Columbia is a leading non profit land conservation organization dedicated to protecting BC's natural diversity of plants and animals through the acquisition and conservation of critical areas of ecological significance.

Along with other land trust partners, The Nature Trust has invested more than \$70

million to secure over 61,000 hectares of valuable natural habitat throughout British Columbia.

The Twin Lakes project is extremely significant due to the high number of species at risk living in the area. Due to the size and location of the privately owned parcel, its securement will help minimize habitat fragmentation and ensure connectivity with adjacent conservation lands, providing great opportunity for wildlife to thrive.



Twin Lakes property to be purchased for conservation by the Nature Trust of BC. Photo courtesy of The Nature Trust of BC

The property is adjacent to critical conservation lands currently protected in the White Lake Basin, connected further to the Vaseux Bighorn National Wildlife Area and White Lake Grasslands Protected Area.

The Nature Trust, Canadian Wildlife Service, the BC Ministry of Environment, Ducks Unlimited Canada and others have been working cooperatively on the management of this major complex of conservation properties in the White Lake-Vaseux Lake corridor since 1975.

The Nature Trust of British Columbia and its conservation partners have established two biodiversity ranches covering land that stretches from White Lake to Vaseux Lake.

Encompassing 43,830 hectares, the lands include purchased private land, leases, and

associated Crown grazing licenses.

The goal of the biodiversity ranch program is to develop working ranches that protect wildlife habitat while still functioning as viable, self-sustaining cattle businesses.

By maintaining and restoring ranch grasslands, the hope is that these properties can support thriving native plant and animal species and provide a stable income for a number of agriculture-based households.

In addition, the program demonstrates biodiversity friendly land use practices for other land owners and managers to consider.

The Nature Trust is accomplishing its goal through partnerships with ranchers, ecologists, the local community, government agencies and conservation organizations.

The Nature Trust needs to raise \$1.4 million to complete this \$3.2 million acquisition. They accept donations and publicly listed securities and all gifts receive a tax receipt.

They also raise funds in creative ways such as their annual "Earth, Wind, Fire" event in Kelowna, June 18 at the Delta Grand Okanagan Resort. This lively event features chefs from local restaurants and the Culinary Team BC, live entertainment and great local wines.

The Nature Trust of BC is turning 40 this year and we are lucky to have this organization committed to conserving land in the South Okanagan.

Margaret Holm works for OSCA, the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance, one of 50 organizations in the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program.

The OSPS has donated \$10,000 to this purchase.

Request for Funding Support from Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society Twin Lakes Property South Okanagan

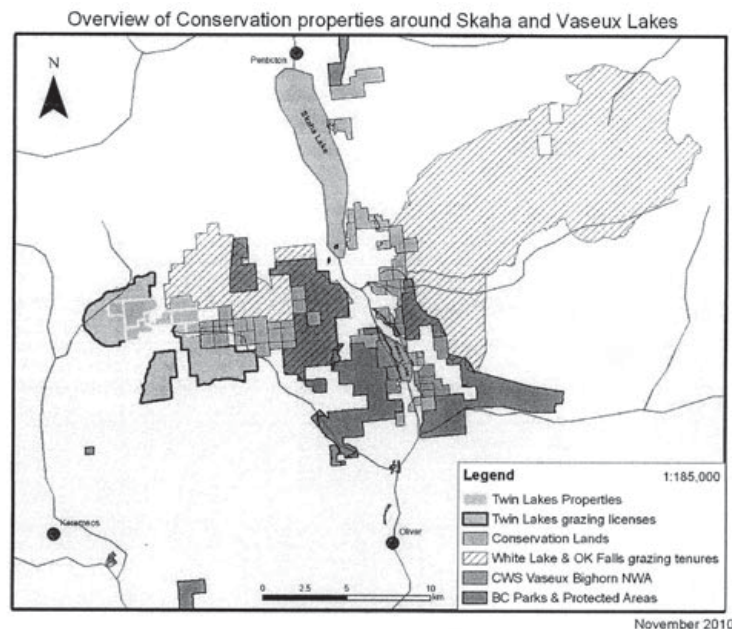
The Nature Trust of British Columbia (TNT) is requesting funding support from Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society to acquire a top priority conservation property in the South Okanagan. To conserve this critical land assembly requires a total cost of \$3,218,500.00. This total cost includes the purchase price, closing costs and stewardship endowment. Commitments to date include an eco-gift donation of \$650,000. We are applying to the federal Natural Area Conservation Program (NACP) funding as an Other Qualified Organization (OQO). It is noted that this property is listed as a priority in Nature Conservancy of Canada's (NCC's) NACP for the South Okanagan. The NACP application deadline is April 1, 2011. We are trying to get as much commitment of the matching funds as possible to support our application. As such the Nature Trust is looking to your Society to identify how much funding can be committed, by when or over what time frame.

The Nature Trust realizes that with the reduced funding available from traditional sources, private donations are going to be critical to closing on this project and will be directing fund raising efforts in this regard. Although the ecological significance and priority of this property is strongly recognized by government, there is little to no money coming from government at this time. It is also unknown at this time if and how much funding will be available from the NACP. However we are encouraged by our conservation partners' strong support for this priority acquisition, even if their funding is limited.

LOCATION AND CONSERVATION CONTEXT

This project involves the acquisition of 2,027 hectares of private land and grazing tenure, surrounding Twin Lakes. Adjacent to critical conservation lands currently protected in the White Lake Basin, this property is connected

to the Vaseux Bighorn National Wildlife Area, Vaseux Protected Area, White Lake Grasslands Protected Area, and extensive private conservation holdings in the Vaseux Lake area. The Nature Trust, Canadian Wildlife Service, the BC Ministry of Environment, Ducks Unlimited Canada and others have been working cooperatively on the management of this major complex of conservation properties in the White Lake – Vaseux Lake corridor since 1975 (Maps 1 and 2). This acquisition effectively doubles the extent of conservation holdings in the White Lake Basin, improving habitat protection measures for many species at risk, and forwarding the goals of the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP).



CONSERVATION VALUES

This project aims to conserve critical grassland, sagebrush shrub-steppe, dry forested ecosystems, open water, wetland and riparian habitats in the South Okanagan region of British Columbia, through securement of this 812 ha private property, with associated 1,215 ha of British Crown grazing area (Map 1). This project will protect:

- habitat in two biogeoclimatic zones of conservation concern: Ponderosa Pine (PP) and Interior Douglas –fir (IDF) which include

four biogeoclimatic subzone variants, (IDF_{xh1}, IDF_{xh1a}, PP_{xh1}, and PP_{xh1a});

- habitat for at least 10 COSEWIC-listed species are known to occupy the property a potential 26 SARA-listed species at risk along with 47 Red-listed and 64 Blue-listed species with potential to occupy this property; and

- important wildlife corridors in the White Lake Basin, as The Nature Trust manages adjacent properties and rangelands (Map 1).

Due to increasing urbanization in the South Okanagan, remaining natural habitats are becoming limited and fragmented. This project

is extremely significant due to the high number of species at risk that depend on the particular habitats on this property in the South Okanagan Valley and has high potential for future development, due to increased housing development in the Twin Lakes area (Map 3). The current owner of the property is ready to sell immediately, but would prefer to sell to a conservation interest.

Apart from the direct loss of habitat, the development of this property would impact adjoining conservation holdings, protected areas, and the dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory. Losing this property to development would jeopardize the opportunity to extend conservation

holdings to the west to the detriment of many species at risk. While the property is predominantly grassland habitat, it also contains significant riparian and wetland components, critical for amphibians and neo-tropical migrant birds.

Due to this property's size and location, its securement will help minimize habitat fragmentations and ensure connectivity with adjacent conservation lands, providing greater opportunity for species to adjust to climate changes over time.

Conservation partners celebrate 10 years “Keeping Nature in Our Future”

Penticton Herald, June 10, 2011

MARGARET HOLM

Ten years ago six wildlife and conservation agencies got together to form a unique partnership. They believed that the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys were critical natural areas within Canada that deserved special attention.

The South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program, or SOSCP, was formed to sustain the diversity of wildlife and habitats in this region.

The group of six has grown to 50 partners, including a dozen local conservation groups, many more provincial organizations and government agencies, and partnerships with the Regional District and all the local municipalities.

SOSCP operates from Princeton to Summerland and south to the border, in fact, several Washington State organizations are members to help coordinate cross-border conservation planning.

SOSCP represents a big partnership but it is a lean organization with a staff of one person – Program Manager Bryn White.

Asked to comment on the major accomplishments of the past 10 years, White stated, “There is an incredible depth of commitment and experience here among the partners and there is a lot of high-calibre work going on.”

She described how there isn’t one project that stands out in her mind, but a combination of successes such as land that has been purchased for conservation, work and landowners helping them restore natural areas, and educational programs in the community like the Meadowlark Festival.

In her five years at the helm of the program, White sees a shift in how nature is valued.

“We have taken a big step in considering ecological values as well as other bottom-line considerations. Elected officials and decision-makers have shown leadership in attempting to balance ecological and eco-

nomic factors.

“SOSCP Partners have helped with this, providing technical information and support so that municipalities get the environmental information they need for land use planning.”

White emphasized that the vision of the program is to balance environmental values with human aspirations for the South Okanagan and Similkameen.

She believes there is a strong link between our quality of life, the beautiful natural scenery of the valleys, the resilient communities, and a healthy environment.

Ten years is a major milestone and the 50 partners are getting together on June 14 to celebrate the past decade, and talk about where the organization is going in the next 10 years.

The conservation program provides an important opportunity for partners to prioritize conservation work, as well as pool their ideas and resources.

Almost all of the successful local conservation projects from school programs to habitat restoration, and big land purchases happen as a result of the SOSCP partners working together.

“Skaha Bluffs is a good example of how conservation adds value to our communities, it isn’t just about wildlife and watersheds. On any nice day, the parking lot is full of rock climbers’ cars, and now hikers and walkers are making use of the new trails,” said White.

“It took the cooperative efforts of The Land Conservancy of BC, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Mountain Equipment Coop, BC Parks, wildlife groups and other private donors to secure the \$5-million property.”

Because the South Okanagan and Similkameen is considered such an important natural area, organizations call on supporters from across BC and Canada to help raise funds. But conservation projects also need local support to be successful.

“If you want to leave a natural legacy here there are many ways to do that,” says White, “from enhancing nature on your property, gifting lands to land trusts, or directly donating to support the good work of conservation programs.”

White added, “The partners within the SOSCP have been really resilient, given the economy and pressures on the land. It is impressive what we have accomplished, but much more needs to be done.”

For more information about making a tax-deductible contribution to the program contact Program Manager Bryn White. Or join the partnership celebration on June 14 at Skaha Bluffs Provincial Park and Conservation Area.

There will be First Nations singers and dancers from the En’Owkin Centre and an opportunity to join a park ranger or naturalist for a guided walk.

The SOSCP event takes place from 1 to 3pm in the upper parking lot.

BRIGADE TRAIL

On the evening of Saturday, October 1 Summerland was treated to presentation on the historical importance of the local portion of the Fur Brigade Trail. The trail, the Summerland portion of which has been designated a community park, is celebrating its official 200th anniversary this year, although there is speculation that portions of the trail may date back to about 6 000 years as a first nations byway. The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society was thanked for the funding to provide new signage for the park/trail.

Historians Randy Manuel and Ken Favrholtz introduced us to the story of the Fur Brigade Trail and its connecting trails throughout what was once known as the Oregon Territory. The great, great, great grandson of Alexander Ross spoke about the writings of his trader forbearer. David Gregory gave a history of the park and its significance to B.C. history. Sharon Stone and others from the Summerland Museum and Faith Rebeeka Lodge dedicated a wonderful mural, painted by Larry Hunter, on the International Order Of Foresters building in downtown Summerland.

Fact Sheet Submitted by the Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society

A significant problem has become worse, and we need your written and verbal help. The Summerland ATV Club has started a petition to claim use of the Trans Canada Trail, otherwise known as the Trail of 2010 or the KVR Trail. This trail is 720 km long and unites 27 communities.

"There has never been a motorized recreation classification on the KVR line."

"The KVR was, for the most part, difficult to navigate until about 1999. This is when initial restoration of bridges and the fixing of wash-outs and slides began by non-motorized interests, Trails BC for the Trans Canada Trail and the provincial government for the Spirit of 2010 rail to trails project. Trails BC obtained permits and tenure to upgrade and use the KVR for non-motorized recreation."

"Motorized recreation has never obtained authorization to use the KVR. Instead of seeking permission, motorized users are assuming access and removing barriers and signs. In some instances they replaced signage with their own. On this basis, they have claimed historical rights to the trail."

The province owns the KVR rail grade and "has turned it over to the Recreation Sites and Trails BC Branch of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. This Branch is now within its right to put up signs reflecting a trail's intended use, not unlike the Provincial Parks Branch which regulates public lands within their jurisdiction."

They had signs installed prohibiting motorized traffic on the new surface of the KVR west of Faulder just before the May long weekend. Three of the five signs quickly vanished and there has been other vandalism. ATVs and dirt bikes roared along the KVR all that weekend and since then. Basically, they want to lay claim to all trails.

Expensive bollards have been thrown down into the Trout Creek ravine. Bollards have been bent, two bollards have been stolen, two biffies trashed, one wildlife sign wrecked, a bridge damaged, and worst of all, the new surface of the trail is being ruined by ruts.

"ATVs and other motorized vehicles are designed with knobby tires, very powerful engines, and in most cases, fixed rear axles. Their sudden acceleration and intense traction grind the trail's surface, scooping up and aerating the top layer of round stone dust. Typical ATV tires have the ability to displace several litres of trail surface material for every metre they travel. This results in a trail surface that is no longer packed, but actually "fluffed" into soft sand. Smaller rocks are ejected from the trail and larger rocks are dug up from below and strewn along the surface. Uphill/downhill sections are particularly affected. On flat sections, ruts and washboard quickly develop as ATV users accelerate, making the surface vulnerable to further erosion. Deep mud puddles form, and the edges of the trail deteriorate as further ATV traffic swerves to avoid these obstacles. A single ATV executing a U-turn can easily create long-lasting ruts due to its lack of a rear differential. The trail soon becomes unusable to bikers and especially unpleasant to hikers. ATV use will result in a dramatic and nearly instant decrease of non-motorized users on the trail."

Mixed motorized and non-motorized trails do not work, as has been shown in other jurisdictions. PEI and Quebec have completely separate motorized and non-motorized trails. ATV use on the latter is limited to patrolling and maintenance.

PROBLEMS WITH MOTORIZED TRAFFIC ON NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS

- 1.) Danger from speeding vehicles. There has been one accident and several near accidents on our trail portion.
- 2.) Trail surface is spoiled.
- 3.) Noise, dust, and air pollution from vehicles.
- 4.) Motorized traffic completely ruins the nature experience for non motorized recreationists, who use the outdoors for spiritual regeneration.
- 5.) Some bullying by certain vehicle

drivers.

- 6.) ATV and dirt bike use drive other outdoor recreationists away.

BENEFITS OF NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS

- 1.) Increased physical fitness. (We're supposed to become less obese.)
 - 2.) Sustainable trail surfaces.
 - 3.) No air pollution: We're encouraged to eliminate carbon dioxide emissions.
 - 4.) Open to all, even motorized wheel chair accessible if surface is suitable.
- (How many can afford an ATV and the truck to transport it?)

- 5.) Huge tourist draw as has been seen from other regions.

"It is estimated that our part of the Trans Canada Trail, the KVR or Spirit of 2010 Trail will generate in excess of \$10 million annually in tourism revenues, as well as creating healthy, active lifestyles." (Pinnacle consultant's report)

"Quebec has been promoting its non-motorized "Route Verte". This world class network of cycling trails and routes has recently been designated by National Geographic as the **top cycling destination in the world**," a great tourism draw. Many of the tourists are fit retirees. Think of what's ahead when the baby boomers retire!

- We have worked hard to get private donations and grants. The Trans Canada Trail Foundation will not help fund motorized trails. The ATV Club could build their own trails. Why don't they instead of demanding everything?

We're missing out on the tourism benefit, and we need your forceful voices to help reaffirm a non-motorized status for this important, scenic, historic tourist draw.

Trans Canada Trail

This is submitted by M. Hansen of the Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society

I had to give a time-limited talk to the Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen. This was basically it, and afterwards there was a question period. The ATVers claim a "historic right" to the trail, but that's straight nonsense. There weren't many ATVs 30 years ago, and two bridges west of Faulder were completely missing. We restored the last one in 2009. We had to become a charitable organization, get a stewardship agreement with the province and pay fees for this and for insurance, We also had to make many grant applications and get charitable donations. Our hope is that future generations will have the TCT as a non-motorized heritage trail across this wonderful country.

People who like quiet walks, cycling, horse-back riding, or cross-country skiing shouldn't have to put up with dust and the whine of motors. I walked westward from Faulder recently and saw 1 deer, a coyote, and a small grass snake. Well, last spring there was a different story. We saw a man in his birthday suit, probably attempting to get an all-over tan. When he saw us, he quickly donned his shorts and walked past us as if we were invisible.

But one of the major disturbances from off-road-vehicles, now called ORVs, is that they wreck the surface of the trail for other recreationists. Surfacing has cost a lot of money, and it isn't fair that ORVs use the trail when they've been given a huge area with hundreds of kilometres of forestry roads and other places to ride. We are the only province in

Canada where ATVs and dirt bikes are not licensed, so we can't even determine who the "bad actors" are.

Please read the attachment for more information. I would like each park society member to write the gov. employees at the accompanying addresses. The major issues are noise, dust, danger and the ruining of the trail surface. This trail is supposed to attract tourists to our area, but it won't if we continue having ORVs on it.

WHERE IS THE TRANS CANADA TRAIL IN SUMMERLAND AND BEYOND?

The Trans Canada Trail is on the bridge at the Research Station. This bridge had private fund raising and a small amount of gov. help. Otherwise, the trail goes through Summerland along the Road until Victoria Rd. S. Turn right on Simpson Rd., left on Fenwick, and left again on Ffyfe, where you can park. From there, the trail goes across Conkle Mountain to the Rodeo Grounds (3.8 km.). There's a gazebo along the way for a wonderful view over Prairie Valley.

NEXT SECTION: Turn right at the Rodeo Grounds, walk past the KVR station until you come to two rocks and a sign on the left side of Bathville Rd. The trail meanders along the Trout Creek for 6 km. to Faulder. Walk with friends and leave a car at each end.

THIRD SECTION: Faulder to Osprey Lake. We have improved approximately 17 km. of this old rail bed which was in miserable condition. There are still more kilometres to improve until 1.5 km. east of Osprey Lake, but ATVs and dirt bikes are ruining this trail surface. We want the trail to be for everybody, but not for all vehicles. We'd like the surface

to be good for baby strollers, slow electric motor scooters that seniors use, and bikes with training wheels that children use when riding with their parents.

The Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society is part of the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society, a member of Trails BC and the heritage Trans Canada Trail project across all of Canada. The Trail is a NATIONAL PROJECT. Please don't let a small group who can afford noisy motorized vehicles take what should be for the general public! Please take time to write the following addresses. If you don't have e-mail, you can write all at the Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC, but please take time to do this! We need action from the government, but we're not getting it.

CONTACTS:

Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations- Hon. Steve Thomson, MLA- Kelowna Mission, FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca P.O. box 9049, Stn Prov Govt VICTORIA BC V8W 9E2

Premier Christy Clark christy@christyclark.ca

Okanagan Westside MLA Ben Stewart
ben.stewart.mla@leg.bc.ca

Kelowna Lake Country MLA Norm Letnick
norm.letnick.mla@leg.bc.ca

East Kootenay MLA Bill Bennett
bill.bennett.mla@leg.bc.ca (just appointed to the government land use and environment committee)

Penticton-Okanagan, MLA and Speaker of the House, Bill Barisoff
bill.barisoff.mla@leg.bc.ca

Léon Lebrun, Vice-President or Al Skucas, President, Trails BC, trailsbc@trailsbc.ca
Phone: 604-737-3188

Deborah Apps, President and CEO, Trans Canada, info@tctrail.ca, 1-800-465-3636

Marilyn Hansen, pres. of Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society marilynhansen@vip.net
250- 494-9265

Geoff Solly, treasurer, Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society gsolly@telus.net
250-494-1459

Work completed on passing lanes

Western News Staff, August 9, 2011

The \$9 million passing lane and hike and bike trail on Highway 97 between Oliver and Osoyoos is complete.

"It's easy to see the benefits of this project for the South Okanagan communities, families and our visitors — safer travel between Oliver and Osoyoos on Highway 97 and a great new

opportunity to hike and bike our beautiful region," said John Slater, MLA for Boundary Similkameen.

Passing lanes were added on Highway 97 north of Osoyoos to provide assured passing opportunities between Oliver and Osoyoos. The length of the new passing lanes (four-lane

continued on page 9...

Conflict on KVR corridor

Trail society president says motorized vehicles causing problems for those using corridor for other purposes

BY RON SEYMOUR
Penticton Herald • June 30, 2011

Banning motorized vehicles from the KVR is justified because ATV owners and dirt bikers have plenty of other places to go riding, the president of the Summerland Trans-Canada Trail society says.

Heavy use of the KVR recreation corridor by motorized vehicles is causing significant damage to the trail and creating conflicts with hikers, cyclists, and horse-back riders, Marilyn Hansen said Wednesday.

"ATV users and dirt bikers have access to a hundred thousand kilometres of other back-roads and trails," Hansen said. "We think it's only fair that hikers and cyclists and equestrians have this one trailer where they go out and enjoy nature without a motorized vehicle coming at them."

Operators of motorized vehicles occasionally "terrorize" other KVR trailer users by rid-

ing fast and failing to yield the right-of-way, Hansen says.

"They're wrecking the KVR experience for those who don't want to deal with the noise and dust they produce," she said. "Our hope is to make the entire KVR off-limits to motorized vehicles."

Currently, people on motorized vehicles can use most sections of the KVR railbed through the Okanagan, except for the Myra Canyon trestles southeast of Kelowna and through the City of Penticton.

Two weeks ago, the Ministry of Forests made signs prohibiting the use of motorized vehicles in the summer on a section of the KVR west of Summerland. Members of the Trans-Canada Trail society put up the signs.

"That 20 kilometre section has been legally designated for non-motorized use to protect the trail surface," ministry spokeswoman Vivian Thomas said. "The trail was always

intended for hikers and bikers."

In response, members of the Summerland QTV club started a petition aimed at ensuring continued access to the KVR by people with motorized vehicles.

"There are some yahoos on dirt bikes who don't follow the proper etiquette," but that's no reason the entire trail should be declared off-limits to all motorized vehicles, says Stan Wiczorek, vice-president of the Summerland ATV Club.

Club members have gathered more than 1,000 names on petition, and plan on presenting it to the government when the total surpasses 5,000.

The government understands the change is upsetting to ATV users, and is committed to working with them to ensure they still have access to other trails around the Summerland backcountry, Thomas said.

Penticton MLA Bill Barisoff, who has met with representatives of both the Summerland ATVers and the Trans-Canada Trail Society, hopes a compromise can be struck.

"Hopefully, we can accommodate both sides," Barisoff said.

Protecting Shorelines

MARGARET HOLM
Penticton Herald, March 11, 2011

When you consider the Okanagan's great climate and large lakes it is no surprise that so many people choose to live and recreate close to the large lakes.

We are lucky to have large stretches of natural shoreline along our lakes where kokanee spawn and other fish and aquatic life spend part of their life cycle.

There are also areas with dense housing and recreational development with docks and other structures accommodating a variety of watercraft.

Many people are unaware of laws that regulate development and construction near lakes and other watercourses.

Lakeside residents need to familiarize themselves with these regulations that are meant to preserve a healthy lake environment.

Land below the high water belongs to the Provincial Crown; therefore construction of docks and other hard landscape structures require approval by one or more government agencies.

To apply for private moorage on Crown land or you would like more information regarding regulations visit the Ministry of Environment Front Counter BC website www.frontcounter-bc.gov.bc.ca to see if you need a permit or approval for your development.

Solid docks and retaining walls can, if not properly installed, promote erosion of both your property and potentially that of your neighbour's. They can also disrupt natural water currents leading to a build-up of unwanted sediment and pollutants.

Floating docks or pipe docks are usually considered better alternatives since they are less damaging to the lakebed and allow better water-flow and sunlight to come through. The cheapest and least intrusive option would be to use a buoy to moor your vessel.

The physical nature of your property will determine what is right for you. Nobody wants the water quality and aquatic life in our lakes to decline so it is essential to plan and get advice before building groynes, retaining walls and docks.

Building structures that are safe and sustainable for the environment and approved by the appropriate officials can go a long way in saving you money and ensuring that your shoreline structures don't have unintentional negative impacts.

The BC Lake Stewardship Society website is a great recourse for people living on the water.

Fencing keeps wildlife at bay

BY MARGARET HOLM

Special to The Herald, Feb. 18, 2011

Fences not only make good neighbours but they are increasingly needed for vineyards and high-yield apple trees to keep deer from damaging crops.

High deer fences as well as older barbed wire fences now criss-cross the landscape aimed at keeping in cows and horses and keeping out wildlife.

Increasingly agricultural deer fencing runs for kilometres along highways and rural roads often funneling deer onto roads and creating high hazard areas when wildlife corridors intersect roadways.

Wildlife damage to crops and to fencing is expensive and the unintended death and injury to wildlife getting caught up or trapped in fences is tragic.

British Columbia has a rich natural landscape with a diversity of wildlife that must travel between different habitats to get food, water, and shelter they need.

Summer and winter travel patterns vary as ungulates — a term for hoofed mammals, move to areas that offer escape from predators or access to better food.

Although a less common problem, owls and hawks can also get tangled and caught in barbed wire fences that they simply don't see when flying at a high-speed.

By being aware of wildlife-friendly fencing options, agricultural property owners can help prevent accidental entrapment, stress and death to local species and can reduce the need for fence repair.

FENCE LOCATION

If at all possible fencing should be erected within a property line rather than right on the property margin. This gives wildlife a buffer area to travel along rather than be forced to travel close to road shoulders. If your property is bounded by or includes a wildlife travel corridor such as a creek or gulley try to located fencing as far away as possible from the corridor so that animals still have access

to the habitat without having to go through your property.

FENCE DESIGN

Low fences augmented with higher strands of barbed wire are not recommended for deer fencing. This type of fence is most commonly implicated in injury and deaths. Ideally make the top wire of any fence more visible with wooden slats or plastic or metal tabs along the top wire. Barbed wire can catch and hold large birds and mammals as they try to clear fence tops.

The use of smooth wire is just as effective a deterrent without causing injury. Eight foot high wire deer fences with smooth wire tops are the best deterrent and prevent fence-jumping injuries.

Growers are reminded that the Province of BC is responsible for wildlife so all deaths should be reported. Although entrapment and injury is unfortunate, a person is not allowed to kill wildlife unless it is within open hunting season, within a legal hunting and shooting area, or directed by a Conservation Officer.

Dogs are specifically prohibited from harassing wildlife and owners can be charged. Animals wounded or killed by accident even on private property must be reported to the Conservation Officer RAPP like at 1-877-952-7277.

Despite high fences, wildlife do get into fenced areas — most commonly from manuals or electric entrance gates that have been left open. When discovered the panicked deer, elk or big-horn sheep will race around the property looking for an opening. Conservation Officers report that every year they receive calls to address ungulates that are trapped, injured, stressed by dogs and killed due to fencing entrapment. Most tragic are deer that are hung up by one leg on fences then are eaten by predators. There are a variety of fence solutions that can prevent these occurrences.

The simplest solution is to install one or more manual gates at the opposite end of the property, the bigger the need for one or more gates in addition to the main vehicle access gate that can be left open so the animal can exit the property. usually gates are located near a back corner or upslope where animals naturally

go when they try to escape. There is little or no cost involved when gates are installed as part of a new perimeter fence.

The BC Ministry of Transportation and Highways which has erected several wildlife fencing along extensive stretches of highway, uses one-way wildlife gates so that ungulates that end up on the wrong side of a fence can push open a gate to get back to their habitat.

There are at least two designs: spring-orientated metal tine gates and clear plastic gates. For larger remote properties adjacent to wildlife travel areas where people aren't always on the property, a one-way wildlife gate might be a good investment and prevent wildlife damage to trees and vines.

Margaret Holm works for OSCA, the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance, one of 50 groups working to keep nature in our future in the southern interior. For further information on wildlife fencing contact outreach@osca.org.

"Passing Lanes"

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section) is approximately two kilometres.

The three-metre wide gravel surface hike and bike trail runs parallel to the highway between 204th Road and Road 22. The trail will add approximately two kilometres to the hike and bike trail between the communities of Osoyoos and Oliver.

"This important project demonstrates our government's commitment to providing safer, more efficient travel opportunities for Okanagan residents and their families," said Okanagan Coquihalla MP Dan Albas, on behalf of Denis Lebel, minister of transport, infrastructure and communities.

The \$8 million passing lanes project was funded under the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund and cost-shared between the federal and provincial governments. The hike and bike trail parallel to the Highway 97 improvements is a \$1 million project funded solely by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. Almost 60 jobs were generated over the life of the two projects.

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

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Starlings bad news for native birds

PENTICTON HERALD, AUG. 12, 2011

August is a bountiful month in the Okanagan. Cherries are just ending, peaches and apricots are ready for picking, and grapes are ripening.

Unfortunately, this is also the time of year when noisy groups of starlings congregate to feast on fruit, roost in large noisy communal groups, and leave their droppings on cars and sidewalks.

All starlings in North America are the descendants of 100 birds released in New York's Central Park in the early 1890s.

Fifty-five years later they arrived in the Okanagan and today we are living with the consequences. European Starlings range from Alaska to northern Mexico, and their population is estimated at over 200 million birds.

Their successful spread can be attributed to their great ability to thrive amongst humans at the expense of many native birds species that compete with starlings for nest space.

Starlings are an attractive bird with glossy black plumage that shines with green-purple iridescence. As the glossy spring plumage wears away, pale yellow spots on the end of each feather are more prominent, so summer and winter birds look quite different.

Starlings nest in tree cavities in holes made

by woodpeckers. They are aggressive birds, so often turn out native birds like bluebirds and swallows from the nest holes. They can even chase out and kill larger woodpeckers. Unlike native birds, starlings are not afraid to get into the hole in urban houses and sheds.

The young make a racket inside the walls, and since starlings often have two broods, one nest hole can result in 10 new starlings a year. The grey-brown young birds can be seen now on backyard lawns where they follow their parents begging for food.

Starlings make an impressive range of sounds, including whistles, warbles, harsh chattering, high-pitched trills and rattles. They can mimic tree frogs, engines, quail, and many other birds.

Starling success is due to this species varied diet and use of urban buildings as nest sites. They have adapted to country and city life and congregate in the big communal roosts with hundred and even thousands of birds gathering in one spot. This species has adapted to human habitat at the edge of wild areas — for example, you don't find them in forests.

Because humans have created lots of "edge habitat", starlings are doing very well indeed.

Fruit growers now need to use noise deterrents to keep birds away from trees and vineyards. However, birds can get habituated to these ploys. Many growers now rely on anti-bird netting as the only way to get complete protection for their crops.

For those that use nets, it is extremely important to use material custom made for starlings. Nests must be pegged so that there are no slack points or openings where birds will be able to enter.

Modern bird netting is made up of a fabric-mesh with square openings about 15mm in diameter which should prevent all birds from getting through.

Most importantly, other birds should not get trapped, including birds of prey which are attracted to birds that get inside incorrectly applied nets.

It is legal to exterminate starlings because they are an introduced pest species. But it is not legal to kill native birds and their nests, as detailed in the "Migratory Birds Convention Act" and the "BC Wildlife Act."

Be aware that similar legislation is in place for other native animals that can be found on your property.

The best thing to do for starlings is to cover up the holes they are using for nests with wire mesh or metal sheeting. This is the right time of year to do it, when the young have left the nest but you still have memories of young birds waking you up in the morning as they get feed somewhere inside the walls of your home.

Margaret Holm works for OSCA, the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance, one of 50 organizations in the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program.