

OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Autumn
2012

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Turn of the Century

It's almost impossible nowadays to open a newspaper or listen to a newscast without finding at least one article or report focusing on the criticisms of shale gas development, particularly as it relates to the heavy reliance on water. Perhaps the only thing garnering more criticism is a certain proposed inter-provincial pipeline-but that is the topic for a different, and far lengthier, article.

Concerns over water are at the forefront of the debate on multi-stage hydraulic fracturing (or "fracking"), the key technology behind the recent shale gas boom. In British Columbia, an over 100-year-old (and in some instances outdated) Water Act is seen by some as an impediment to water protection in the province.

Shale gas production is one of the driving forces behind the provincial government's decision to undertake an overhaul of its water regulation.

For a number of years now, the government has been contemplating proposed changes to water regulation, with a view to develop a system that takes into account the wide variety of interests in the province. In early 2010, the B.C. Ministry of the Environment began consultation with stakeholders. The government published a discussion paper in February 2010, and then released a policy proposal on the proposed Water Sustainability Act in December of that year. At that time the government had indicated that it was planning to move quickly, with a new Act becoming law by mid-to-late 2011. The proposed changes resulted in a flurry of submissions from all stakeholders and progress has since stalled. However, recent news indicates that we may see the Act introduced into the legislature later this year.

The proposed regulatory changes will not be limited to oil and gas development, but rather are expected to impact most industries operating in the province and are therefore worth monitoring closely.

THE GROUNDWATER CONNECTION

The stated objective of the proposed Water Sustainability Act is to focus the legislative framework on risk, competing demands, and scarcity of water, and to implement an area-based approach to water management. More specifically, the policy goals include: protecting aquatic environments, regulating groundwater use, regulating use during scarcity, improving security, water-use efficiency and conservation, and measuring and reporting.

Of particular note is the regulation of groundwater use. Currently, the Water Act governs the licensing, diversion, and use of water, but does not apply to groundwater. As a result, British Columbia remains the last province in Canada, and one of the last jurisdictions in the world, to not regulate groundwater use.

That is not to say there is no current regulation of groundwater in the oil and gas industry. To the contrary, in October 2010, with the introduction of the Oil and Gas Activities Act, stronger protection for groundwater in the oil and gas industry was introduced, including an approval requirement for fracking beyond a certain depth, permitting requirements for drilling wells to source water for use in oil and gas activities, and a monthly reporting requirement. However, apart from limited exceptions such as these, there is no regulated control over the withdrawal of groundwater in the province.

Continued on next page...

EDITORIAL

Give Wildlife Space

The other morning, at 6:30, the alarm clock went off as usual. Also as usual the newscast was just beginning. One of the feature stories was about a pack of wolves whose territory crossed the border between the United States and Canada, and who were accused of hunting and killing domestic livestock (Cattle). The newscast indicated that the American authorities were considering what to do about them.

When the next newscast came on an hour later, it was disclosed that the Americans had decided to eradicate the pack and, in fact, had already killed two of its members. They claimed that once wolves became habituated to hunting livestock there was no way to change the situation.

The newscast at noon indicated that a spokesperson for Canadian ranchers had come forward to support the hunting and killing of the pack and any others that were killing or damaging livestock.

That evening on the T.V. newscast it was reported that a bear and one of her multiple cubs had been killed after they were roaming and scavenging in a human neighbourhood else where in BC. The other cubs were sent off to be reared and then relocated.

Coupled with the sight of a local bear in a trap/cage being transported through our town the day prior to these newscasts, the reports of that day lead to the obvious questions, what's happening and why?

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

...continued from front

The Water Sustainability Act will differentiate between groundwater users making large withdrawals and those making smaller withdrawals. Regulation of large groundwater users will be stricter: all existing and new large groundwater users will be required to obtain a license or an approval. Smaller groundwater users, by contrast, will not be required to obtain a license or approval in most circumstances. The categorization of a large withdrawal is not known, however it is expected to be in the range of 250 to 500 cubic metres per day for wells in unconsolidated aquifers, and 100 cubic metres per day for wells in bedrock aquifers.

In areas that will be identified as problem areas, groundwater would be licensed more extensively. It is likely that licensing requirements will also apply to smaller users in problem areas. This may require private domestic well owners to obtain licenses if their wells are located in a sensitive or over-used aquifer. Maximum extraction quantities will be set out in groundwater licenses, along with terms and conditions of pumping and use.

Another policy direction worth noting is the

regulation of water during times of scarcity. Over the summer, the Oil and Gas Commission suspended short-term water licenses in north-eastern British Columbia due to drought conditions. Under the Water Sustainability Act, the government may require proportional reductions in water use depending on water supply forecasts. A staged approach is proposed whereby license holders would first be encouraged to implement efficiency and conservation measures, followed by the imposition of a proportional reduction on all users based on water supply forecasts. If those measures are insufficient, they would then require shut in based on priority date and, in exceptional circumstances, by importance of use. The Act will also establish flow requirements and guidelines, which will be incorporated as enforceable terms and conditions to water licenses. The protection of in-stream flows and the reduction of use during times of scarcity could result in increased enforcement and senior licensees, who historically were not regulated, could be periodically reduced or suspended.

To date no draft legislation has been released, which has stakeholders arguing that without more information on how the proposed policies will be implemented they are unable to

meaningfully comment on them.

Nevertheless, after a long process, the Province has indicated that it is moving to bring the proposed Water Sustainability Act into the legislature and into force. However, time is running short. With the next provincial election set for May 2013, if the Act is not introduced in the fall sitting we may see a change in government first. A new government could bring about a shift in focus on water regulation. Regardless, whether it is the proposed Water Sustainability Act or something else, the Water Act will be replaced. If not soon, then at least before it turns 200.

BY RICK WILLIAMS
AND LUKE DINELEY

WaterCanada – September/October 2012

Rick Williams is a partner in the Vancouver office of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) and is the regional leader of the firm's environmental and regulatory groups.

Luke Dineley is an associate in the Vancouver office of BLG and practices in the area of commercial litigation, with a focus on environmental law.

Adams Sanctuary

A real little jewel in the Okanagan is the Adams' Bird Sanctuary, located on Peach Orchard Road, on the hill down to Lake Okanagan in Summerland. It is located on the former home site of Irvine and Doreen Adams, artists, pioneers and conservationists.

The sanctuary, and its population, can be viewed from a winding pathway that crosses over a creek and cuts through forest and riparian habitat. The path, complete with bird identification signs, sponsored by local service groups, appears to be wheelchair friendly. Dogs are restricted from the area but a peaceful stroll can still be taken around the sanctuary.

Both Adams were born in 1902 and spent much of the century involved in working and organizing for the good of the local environment. Both were associated with the parks society in its formative years. Doreen,

whose maiden name was Milsom, was instrumental in bringing about the establishment of Okanagan Lake Park, one of the first to exist in this area. She was also a local delegate to Ottawa to plead the case for a wildlife buffer around the White Lake Observatory when it was being considered. Irvine was always quick to lend a helping hand regardless of the project if it was good for the Okanagan. Irvine Clinton Adams predeceased his wife by three years when he passed away in 1992 at ninety years of age. Doreen lived to be 93 years old and passed in 1995.

The sanctuary, and its signage, are sponsored by the Summerland Rotary Club with assistance from Penny Lane, S.A.D.I. (the Summerland Asset Development Initiative), and a number of individuals from the conservation community. The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society sponsored the



Doreen and Irvine Adams

plaque dedicated to the Adams found about half way along the path in a quiet little area great for bird watching or contemplation.

Enjoy the walk, the wildlife and the tranquility of the old Adams' Place. Always remember the people who worked hard to preserve places like the sanctuary so that we could all enjoy it today. Maybe you too have a vision that can be fulfilled, to be enjoyed by future generations. In the meantime let's give thanks to Doreen and Irvine Adams for their gift, for all to enjoy.

Wild Times – A Different View

If you want to know about someone, you have to come inside their home and hang out. It's the same with Mother Nature. You can't just stand out on the front porch – you have to come inside nature's home and stay a while.

That's what brought a friend and me to the wilds of Garibaldi Provincial Park this past August. We had sought a valley with no park trails or direction signs. With a pencil we circled the map at snowcap Creek on the east side of the park.

Our first day of backpacking brought us to a good place to camp beside the creek on a sand bar. Fresh bear tracks meandered down the riverside. In the evening the howling started. Wolves – calling to each other. They sounded mighty close to us. Several hundred metres perhaps. We didn't know. Whenever I have tried hollering in the forest my voice pretty much disappears amongst all that wood, moss, stone and rushing water. Those wolves sounded clear and close – like they were just beyond the tree line that bordered the sand bar. We stared into the darkening forest trying to discern any movement. Eventually the howling stopped and the stars came out.

We were less than a day's travel from our city homes – but our camp was a room with a difference view.

A couple of days later, while crossing Snowcap

Creek on a log, I slipped and fell in. I remember thinking before I started the log crossing that if I fell into the torrent, swollen with summer snow melt, I'd risk being swept over a waterfall just a bit downstream. To be extra careful, I had decided to crawl across the log. However, I had almost made it to the other side when my left hand suddenly slipped, and pushed down by my pack, I toppled over into the creek on the upstream side of the log. I clung to the log for a split second, but the current tore me loose and forced me under.

Time slowed right down. I kicked down hard and hit bottom. When my head broke the surface I could see I was close to the river bank, so I kicked bottom again and grabbed a hold of the shore. Six seconds. From the moment I fell in to the moment I grabbed the shore was six seconds. I had thought I was a goner. I hauled my pack onto the shore, and celebrated being alive.

For eight days, my friend and I backpacked the snowcap Creek Valley. We wandered amongst huge old growth Douglas fir and red cedar trees. We drank from quiet mountain streams and were awed by thundering falls and rapids. While in the high country we sheltered in our tent as lightning flickered and flashed and thunder boomed, echoing from peak to peak.

Only a couple of weeks earlier I had made a

presentation to the BC Government's Timber Supply Review Panel – a committee made up of MLAs from both the governing Liberals and the opposition NDP. The panel was looking at ways to deal with a timber supply shortfall brought about by the record breaking pine beetle epidemic of the past few years.

I and other conservationists had recommended that the amount of logging be decreased, that raw log exports be banned, and that the protection of wilderness and old growth forests be increased, to protect both the environment and woodworker jobs.

However the panel didn't see it that way and came out with a recommendation to allow logging in some previously protected old growth forests.

So what did my Snowcap Creek experience teach me? I believe we are going to have to kick like hell to get that recommendation quashed so those old growth forests, and wildlife that depends on them can survive.

BY JOE FOY

Joe Foy is Campaign Director for the Wilderness Committee, Canada's largest citizen-funded membership-based wilderness preservation organization.

Watershed Sentinel – September-October 2012

...EDITORIAL - from front page

In the case of the cattle and the wolves, who incidentally had been part of a reintroduction program in the area after the indigenous packs had been eradicated in the last century, one certainly has to feel for the ranchers that work hard and invest in resources that many of us demand. However, as with the stories of the bears, it is clear that the wild animals were not engaging in their behaviours in order to endanger people but rather acted as they did because easy access to 'food' was to be had with little effort. In yet, in these cases as with so many others that grace our

communication systems, it was the wildlife that paid the ultimate penalty.

Humanity is expanding into areas that were once the preserve of wildlife. Some animals such as the coyotes that howl on our hillsides each night and feast on unfortunate small animals, domesticated or not, have adapted to having people around them. Others, such as wolves, bears, and some of the big wildcats, have not. As with the risks associated with wildfires, avalanches and water shortages, interaction with wild predators and other animals, should not come as a surprise to people living in what was once their habitat.

While it is now too late for these wolves and bears, and there may not be an easy solution to all issues involved in wildlife and human interaction, one idea that may go along way to ease the pressures that these animals feel for survival and that the humans feel to protect their property, is to ensure that there are enough wildlife habitats left alone or maintained to allow for migration patterns and routes, to facilitate animals' required size and makeup of territories and to allow nature, including the predators and their natural prey to flourish.

Protect First, Restore Later

Why wetland triage might put rehab on hold

BY PASCAL BADIOU

Water/Canada-September October 2012

Wetlands are tremendously productive ecosystems that provide a myriad of environmental services to society. The annual value of the services provided by the world's wetlands has been estimated to be between \$3.8 billion and \$70 billion. We have lost 50 per cent of the world's wetlands in the last century. This statistic is staggering. Some people believe that wetland loss has slowed and/or stopped, but a recent report indicates that there was a six percent decline in global wetland extent between 1993 and 2007. In the Prairie Pothole Region of North America, recent studies confirm wetland loss continues and, in some cases, is escalating.

Canadians are stewards to 25 percent of the world's wetlands. However, a significant amount of the wetlands in developed areas of Canada has been lost. Wetland losses have been particularly high in the prairies as a result of agricultural intensification. For example, Ducks Unlimited Canada estimates that we've lost approximately 250,000 hectares of wetlands in southern Saskatchewan and 100,000 hectares of wetlands in southwestern Manitoba over the last 40 to 60 years. There has also been substantial wetland loss in Alberta, where approximately 64 per cent of wetlands have been lost in the settled area of the province and annual loss rates have been pegged at 0.5 per cent. That may not seem like a lot, but it is actually higher than the loss rate for the Amazon rainforest (0.4 per cent). Across the prairies there are many regions where losses exceed 90 per cent, one example being the Manitoba portion of the Red River watershed.

These drainage activities have dramatically altered the hydrology of the prairies. Wetland drainage significantly reduces the amount of water that can be stored in a given watershed. When they're healthy, wetlands hold slowly release water, thereby reducing and delaying peak flows, which would otherwise help to decrease the impacts of flooding. Additionally, the ditches used to drain wet-

lands not only drain water from the wetlands, they also drain the lands that surround each wetland. For every hectare of wetland drained, roughly four hectares of surrounding lands are also drained. This increase in the effective contributing area (that portion of a drainage basin which might be expected to entirely contribute runoff to the main stream during a flood with a return period of two years) greatly increases the amount of water moving downstream, as well as the speed at which it travels. Although the recent flooding across the Prairies in 2011 and 2012 is often attributed to extreme precipitation, wetland drainage has certainly exacerbated the problem.

Along with this additional water, a tremendous amount of nutrients are being delivered to downstream aquatic environments as a result of wetland drainage. Research conducted by Ducks Unlimited Canada's Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research has concluded that wetland drainage between 1968 and 2005 in the Broughton's Creek watershed situated in southwestern Manitoba increased phosphorus and nitrogen export from the watershed by 32 and 57 per cent, respectively. This is of particular concern in the Canadian Prairies as most of the water rushed off the landscape in a short period of time following snowmelt, when soils are still mostly frozen and there is very little opportunity for biological uptake. This is also the period of the year when nutrient concentrations are highest, with most of the nutrient mass contained in runoff in dissolved form and bioavailability. This increased nutrient loading causes many of the problems that we see in our lakes and rivers today, including eutrophication and its associated algal blooms. Wetland drainage also facilitates the transfer of pathogens and pesticides to downstream water bodies-many of which often serve as drinking water reservoirs.

Until now, governments and conservation agencies have focused mostly on wetland restoration to offset some of the impacts

of historical loss. At first glance, this seems reasonable given the fact that there is ample opportunity to restore wetlands across the Canadian prairies, and restoration of these systems is relatively easy. However, restoring just 25 per cent of the wetlands lost in the last 40 to 60 years in southwestern Manitoba and southern Saskatchewan would cost approximately \$250 million. This level of investment may be difficult to justify, since watershed modeling conducted in Manitoba and Minnesota suggests we would need to restore approximately 50 per cent of wetlands to be cost effective.

The truth is wetlands are still being lost at an alarming rate. Even during the course of the Manitoba government's wetland Restoration Incentive Program (one of the most financially attractive wetland restoration incentive programs in the prairies), 10 hectares of wetlands were lost for every one hectare restored. Therefore the priority should be to do landscape or watershed triage, stop the bleeding, and focus on protecting our remaining intact wetlands.

Wetland restoration should not be overlooked or discouraged as a best management practice, but investments in restoration programs only make financial sense if we are able to protect and maintain the remaining wetlands on the landscape, allowing restoration efforts to truly provide incremental benefits rather than simply slowing the rate of loss.

If wetland drainage continues unabated, the unpredictability of our prairie streams and rivers will increase. If we hope to effectively manage flood risks and non-point source pollution, wetland drainage must stop.

Video Contest

Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society will be hosting a video contest for youth and young adults. Look for information in the winter newsletter.



June 13, 2012

The Honourable Christy Clark, Premier
Government of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E1
(by letter mail)

and

The Honourable Terry Lake
Minister of the Environment
PO Box 9047 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
(by e-mail)

Dear Premier Clark and Minister Lake

Re ORC Resolution 2012 - 01: South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Reserve.

The Annual General Meeting of the Outdoor Recreation Council was held at BCIT in Burnaby on June 9. In addition to four of the Council's eight person Executive Board of Directors, each of whom is nominated by one of the Council's Provincial Group Members, the meeting was attended by representatives of 11 of the Provincial Group Members. Each of these groups represents an outdoor recreation group which is active throughout the Province. Some Participating Groups Members, which are generally regional in nature, also had representatives in attendance but they do not have a vote..

The persons present passed five resolutions. With this letter we wish to advise you of Resolution 2012 - 01 in particular. It concerns the proposed South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Reserve. It was proposed by the BC Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, a Provincial Group Member. A copy of the resolution is appended to this letter. When the votes of the Provincial Group Members and the Executive were tallied, the resolution was carried by a majority of approximately three to one.

Given the strong vote in favour of the resolution, the Outdoor Recreation Council urges you and the BC Government to immediately express your support for a new national park reserve in the South Okanagan and to take the steps necessary to create the national park reserve.

I have attached a list of the Council's member organizations as Appendix 2.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy McCall
Executive Director

Appendix 1 to Outdoor Recreation Council of BC letter dated June 13 to Premier Christy Clark and the Honourable Terry Lake, Minister of Environment

Rogers Pass a Rainforest After All

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2012
J. P. SQUIRE

The pitter patter of rain on the metal roof of our camper was slow and rhythmic. And we marvelled at how gentle and relaxing it was as we slowly drifted off to sleep in Rogers Pass.

It was not to last. Within minutes, everyone in the band decided to play drums and the rain thundered down on the Illecillewaet Campground. A dozen members of the Central Okanagan Hiking Club, almost all in tents, were trying to stay dry.

When a park ranger dropped by our campsites the next night, we huddled under dripping tarps trying to keep warm.

"You came to the interior rainforest," he said simply as if surprised that we would be surprised by rain. "Perhaps September wasn't the right time to hike in Rogers Pass," muttered my companion as she prepared to join other hikers who dared to venture out on a short hike in the immediate area that Saturday.

All it took was a hint of blue sky and our intrepid leader suggested attempting the original goal of climbing Perley Rock Trail: 5.6 kilometres one-way, three hours uphill, 900 metres vertical to Perley Rock, elevation 2,412 metres ASL.

"H.A. Perley undoubtedly sent Glacier House guests up to this area of the park many times during his tenure as hotel manager in the early days of the park. This Canadian Pacific Railway hotel is now gone," says Footloose in the Columbias, a hiker's guide published by Friends of Mt. Revelstoke and Glacier.

"Perley Rock is an ambitious hike," it warns. To get there, start on the Sir Donald Trail named after Sir Donald A. Smith, the famous CPR director who drove the last spike at Craigellachie in 1885.

Sir Donald Trail was built by the CPR for mountain climbers, but after a series of switchbacks, an avalanche path and several creeks, you take Perley Rock Trail to the right

at the 2.5 kilometre point.

Sub-alpine forest turns into meadows filled with steep switchbacks and the low knoll of Perley Rock visible ahead. Warning: if there are steep snow slopes, cross carefully since one slip and you could be seriously injured by sliding into rock piles at the bottom.

That's according to the guidebook. The reality of our hike was rain which turned into sleet which turned into snow. The low cloud descended until it became the more familiar fog.

With the chance of a panoramic view of the surrounding mountains and glaciers disappearing, and some hikers starting to shiver - the first sign of hypothermia - the collective decision was to turn back.

On a bright sunny day, many continue past Perley Rock to the base of the Illecillewaet Glacier. However, the guidebook strongly recommends: "Under no conditions should you walk onto the ice without proper mountaineering gear and registration with the park warden service."

After a soggy evening around a flickering campfire, Sunday was to be another adventure, the Abbott Ridge Trail named after CPR director Henry Abbott - "one of the bold breeds of railway men who dared challenge these mountains nearly a century ago."

It takes you up to the true alpine tundra and ends on a narrow ridge which has incredible peak-to-peak views.

"For strong hikers, there are few routes that more closely simulate a mountain-top experience from the security of an established trail," says the guidebook.

Reading the description of the surrounding Matterhorn-like peaks, icefields and glaciers just doesn't do this hike justice. It is literally and figuratively breath-taking as you survey your kingdom like the Greek gods of ancient Olympus. Human activity in the pass far below seems insignificant and trivial.

The Abbott Ridge Trail initially follows the seemingly endless switchbacks of Marion

Lake Trail, named after Marion Green, the daughter of Rev. William Spotswood Green. He and Rev. Swanzy put Glacier National Park on the mountain-climbing map in the late 19th century.

Lakes are uncommon on the central Columbia Mountains. Marion Lake came to be because it sits in a basin gouged out by glaciers during the last ice age.

When you get to a T intersection, Abbott Ridge Trail is to your left, but take the short right trail to an impressive lookout with views of the Illecillewaet River Valley to the west and Rogers Pass to the northeast. Use the break to catch your breath before climbing past the Abbott Observatory which monitors snowpack and weather conditions.

Almost everyone takes a photo of what some say is the highest outhouse in the world. Some sit inside and try to capture the view with a wide-angle lens. Other usage is discouraged.

The trail ends as the ridge narrows, but in the past, we have ventured along the rocks for a final adrenalin rush. On this Sunday, with low cloud and lack of warming sunshine, almost everyone wanted to get back to the campground and then a second drive to Canyon Hot Springs.

The mountains are steep and the valleys narrow in Mountain Revelstoke and Glacier national parks, so there are only a few easy hikes, quite a few along the Trans Canada Highway: Hemlock Grove, Rock Garden and Loop Brook, for example.

Every trip, we swear we're going to do a series of them as we leave, but it never seems to happen. The steeper trails with the fantastic views always beckon and anything after that is a letdown.

If you go, it is highly recommended that you drop into the Rogers Pass Centre and pick up a copy of Rogers Pass by The Adventure Map company. In addition to a coloured topographic map showing all of the trails, the other side has wealth of information

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including short trail descriptions, human history, natural history, plants, flowers, trees, birds, animals, bears and weather. Best of all, it's waterproof and will last for many trips to one of the most rugged landscapes in the country.

To quote: "Weather in the mountains is always unpredictable and you would be wise to prepare for almost any conditions on the trail."

At lower elevations, snow leaves in May; June has heavy rains; July and August are the hottest and driest months; "some fine weather occurs in September;" and winter returns in October. The emphasis should be on "some" fine weather in September.

At the higher elevations (above 1,900 metres), heavy rainfall and warmer temperatures in May result in the avalanche peak season; June and July have heavy rain; late July and especially August are the hottest and driest; occasional snow can come in early September; and heavy snow arrives in October.

From: Minister, ENV ENV:EX
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2012 3:34 PM
To: Minister, ENV ENV:EX
Subject: BC Parks Volunteer Strategy 2012-2015
Reference: 177756
September 28, 2012

Dear BC Parks Volunteers:

Since January, BC Parks has been reviewing and updating our volunteer program through the development of a Volunteer Strategy that has been directly informed by you, our valued volunteers.

Please find a copy of the BC Parks Volunteer Strategy attached. I assure you that we are committed to implementing the strategy in a timely and efficient manner. As components of the volunteer program are developed they will be available through our new online volunteer community (www.bcparksvolunteers.ca).

I am excited to report that based on your feedback, we have recently hired a Provincial Community Engagement Specialist to liaise with community partners, ensure consistency of our volunteer program and continue to engage with communities across the province. Ms. Becs Hoskins can be reached at Becs.Hoskins@gov.bc.ca or at

250 953-3428.

As promised, we are also continuing to work with Risk Management Branch on the development of a Group Insurance Program that we aim to launch in early 2013.

In April 2012, BC Parks committed \$200,000 to support volunteer projects in parks and protected areas across the province. This funding has supported numerous community groups to carry out recreation and conservation projects over the past several months. From a historical trails project by UNBC Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management students to a remote beach cleanup on Vargas Island with Surfrider Foundation, the projects have exemplified the diversity and impressive capacity of our volunteers.

Volunteers and other community partners are vital to the continued success of BC Parks. Thank you for all that you contribute to our world-class parks and protected areas system.

Sincerely,

Terry Lake
Minister of Environment
cc: Becs Hoskins, Project Coordinator, BC Parks and Conservation Officer Service Division, Ministry of Environment

Ramshackle Property Purchased by RDOS for Rec Use

BY PENTICTON WESTERN NEWS
SEPTEMBER 13, 2012

Taxpayers now own a ramshackle property attached to the southwest corner of Okanagan Falls Provincial Park. The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen announced Wednesday it bought the property at 1295 Green Lake Road for \$175,000, well under the 2012 assessed value of \$229,700.

Tom Siddon, the RDOS director for the area, said it was a court-ordered sale triggered by the death of the owner and subsequent disagreements by the owner's heirs. The property has long been in a "terrible state of desecration," he noted, so when the opportunity to buy presented itself, he recommended the RDOS do it.

"There are some people in (Okanagan Falls) who might say, 'That's private land, we didn't

need to get it.' But on the other hand, once you pass up the opportunity you can't get it back except by paying a lot more money."

Siddon said he expects RDOS staff will begin cleaning up the property this fall by removing some of the junk that's strewn about. It would be fitting to then sell or lease the land to BC Parks to increase the size of the campground, Siddon said, "but other ideas came to the table as well, as to what the community's interest might be."

"It certainly one way or another has to be used for recreational use," Siddon continued, adding it could also be a bargaining chip in separate negotiations with B.C. Parks to have Christie Memorial Park at the south end of Skaha Lake placed under RDOS control.

Dan Ashton, chair of the RDOS board, said the acquisition on Green Lake Road was "a great purchase for us (and) a great purchase

for everybody in the province, we hope."

He said the property ought to be tacked on to the campground "to make a bigger and better park for everybody to utilize. It's an absolutely beautiful spot."

The 25-site, two-hectare campground could probably grow by a handful of spaces with the new addition.

"BC Parks has a very limited budget for land acquisitions and we rely on strong partnerships with other levels of government and the community to assist in key acquisitions," spokesperson Suntanu Dalal said via email.

"In this case, BC Parks is exploring mechanisms, such as a lease agreement, that would create a strong partnership with the RDOS to manage this land for park purposes."

Save the Quiet Places

On a recent Sunday morning, my wife and I went on what we expected to be a relaxing hike along the KVR trail on Conkle Mountain.

Rising from some house in the Prairie Valley came the blast of a radio so loud that we walked a full mile before we ceased hearing it. We were lucky that no motorcycle came upon us during our walk, although we could plainly see the ruts created by motorized vehicles in the trail. Which brings to mind the sad reality of this increasingly inhuman world in which we live that even in nature, even in rural Okanagan, it has become difficult to find real peace, places where one hears nothing else than the sounds of nature.

It is therefore shocking to learn that bureaucrats on the RDOS are mindless enough to even purpose allowing the use of the KVR trail by motorized vehicles.

Are those people thick-skulled to the point of not understanding that some places in nature need to be preserved where people can enjoy peace and beauty and where wildlife is not harassed by motorized vehicles?

It is appalling that at a recent hearing over the use of the KVR trail section from Naramata to Chute Lake, members of the Penticton Adventurers Club, who attempted to submit in a civil manner their arguments against the RDOS intent, were intimidated and bullied into silence by aggressive individuals who believe that they are entitled to drive wherever they want.

Are there not enough places already (such as the hills north of Summerland, alas) where motorized morons can indulge what they regard as sport?

RENE GOLDMAN

The Okanagan Saturday, October 13, 2012

Reference: 171407

August 8, 2012

Jeremy McCall

Executive Director

Outdoor Recreation Council of British Columbia

Email: outdoorrec@orc.bc.ca

Dear Mr. McCall:

Thank you for your letter of June 13, 2012, expressing the Outdoor Recreation Council's support for the proposed national park reserve in the South Okanagan-Lower Similkameen.

I appreciate that you took the time to advise me of the Council's resolution on this matter.

As you are likely aware, the Government of British Columbia (BC) recently announced that it is not considering a national park reserve at this time. The Province recognizes the important conservation values in the South Okanagan area, including some of the most ecologically valuable grasslands in BC. That is why approximately 20 per cent of the South Okanagan is included in a variety of provincial conservation designations, includ-

ing provincial parks, ecological reserves, protected areas, wildlife management areas, Land Act reserves and private lands and donations acquired by the Province.

Through the feasibility assessment process for the proposed national park reserve that Parks Canada conducted in cooperation with the Province, it became clear that, while there was support for the proposal, there were a significant number of people who were opposed. Like other national protected area initiatives involving Crown lands, the Province considers local and regional government, First Nations, stakeholder and public support as critical toward supporting the transfer of lands and eventual designation for federal protected area purposes. In this case, the Province is concerned that significant opposition remains and as a result, we are not prepared to move forward with this proposal at this time.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

Terry Lake

Minister of Environment



Unveiling a plaque

A plaque in dedication to Irvine and Doreen Adams was unveiled by nephew Brian Adams, at the Adams Bird Sanctuary on Monday. The Campbells of Dirty Laundry Vineyards donated the rock for the plaque, the Summerland Museum paid for the plaque and the Okanagan Similkameen Park Society financed the mounting. Adams expressed thanks to all those involved and encouraged the viewing of a video on the life story of the Adams couple, that can be found on a link through the museum's website.

Carla McLeod Special to the Review

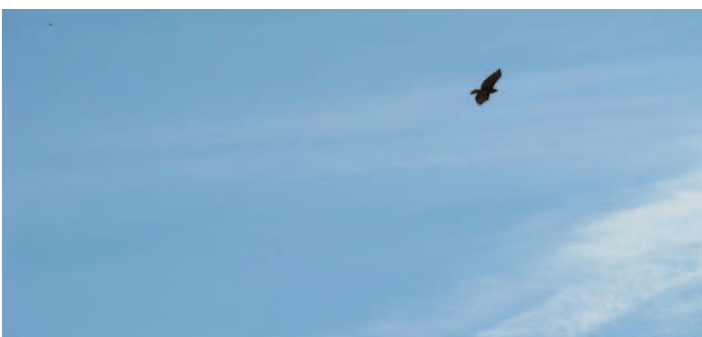
GARNETT VALLEY - *Donna Graham*



BRENT MOUNTAIN - *Shaun Johnston*



ELLISON LAKE - *Donna Graham*



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REVIEW OF NOVEMBER 2005...

Our Environment Takes A Back Seat!

Hurricanes, Tsunamis, threat of an election, local elections, failure to solve the softwood dispute with our neighbour, United States takes first place in our news. However, there is much more which concerns an environmental organization!

Our woods continue to be clear cut. We have a beetle problem. Mills are being closed - no longer do the logging companies have to process logs in the area where they are cut. Loggers report waste as trees are cut so that companies can sell them as raw logs - often some of the tree is left on the ground because it does not meet the requirements - when it could have been processed by small mills.

Too many other priorities mean that a National Park in the South Okanagan is not getting the promotion it needs; in fact, there is little we hear from those working on the process.

Meanwhile much work in our Provincial Parks has been privatized and even if we hear rumours about second thoughts, re-fees, upkeep etc... we wonder if the contracts are of sufficient length that change cannot take place? The Kettle Valley Trestles in Myra Canyon continue to be replaced and that is good news!

Government Funding Of Outdoor Recreation Lacking

A major decline in government commitment and services to outdoor recreation has occurred. The BC

Ministry of Forests' recreation programme has been decimated. BC Parks has lost staff, and there has been a 25% drop in park visits. Parks are being increasingly commercialized. What can, or should, ORC do? We have protested these service cuts to service in many letters and attended many meetings. Is the inevitably approaching federal election a chance to query candidates about their positions on outdoor recreation? Although, we are not a lobby group we think that asking questions of political candidates whenever feasible could be useful.

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Two Years After Fire Park In Bloom Again

From a landscape of dark and grey, the charred forest south and east of Kelowna has blossomed into the colours of each of the two growing seasons since the Okanagan Mountain Park fire altered the landscape. Against a backdrop of blackened spires, the bright green new growth, the yellow of arnica, blue of lupine, purple of fireweed and white of daisies is in sharp contrast.

It has been two years last week since flames followed smoke over the hill into Kelowna, and plant, animal and human communities have been busy in that time rebuilding. The natural regeneration of a forest is an exciting thing to watch, as biology teacher, Harold Baumbrough clearly illustrated with a slide presentation this week. (At March 10/06 OSPS annual meeting, Harold Baumbrough will present "Recovery pictures of the park"). However, his description of what he recorded

faithfully every week occurring on one plot of land includes very little about trees returning to the landscape.

With a fire as severe as this one, many of the cones that would be opened by natural fires in this ecosystem were so completely destroyed by the heat of this fire that the seeds themselves were even fried. Baumbrough describes finding rocks which have fractured and splintered from the heat. That's a danger that climbers returning to favourite spots in the fire-affected area will also face. Because of our fire suppression efforts in recent history, when the layer of dead and dry material on the forest floor caught fire, it didn't just race through, lightly burning off dead grasses and moving on. Instead, it burned hot and created intense heat, taking venerable old firs and pines as well as just their dead lower limbs.

Even the thick-barked ponderosa pines and Douglas firs went up like torches in the heat of this fire, as did their cones, complete with the seeds which should have been released to start a new forest. In Cedar Mountain Regional Park, there are areas where the fire burned at its most severe, it doesn't appear that there's much natural regeneration of evergreens. I would suspect the same is true in much of Okanagan Mountain Park, but the province has said it doesn't intend to do any replanting in provincial parks, so it could be a long time before trees return to those rocky slopes.

*Judie Steeves
Western, August 21, 2005*