



# Newsletter

## FALL 2013

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

Phone: 250-494-8996 • Email: [anglerem@telus.net](mailto:anglerem@telus.net)

## Remaining Wetlands Need Protection

BY JUDIE STEEVES – STAFF REPORTER

CAPITAL NEWS, FRIDAY OCTOBER 25, 2013

**I**n a sense, we're all guilty of destroying wetlands, habitat for a myriad of often-endangered species in the Okanagan.

After all, Kelowna's downtown area used to be all wetlands, as did much of the property for miles around Mission Creek, where the land is now farmed and the creek has been channeled away in a ditch to prevent it from inundating acres of land during its peak runoff each spring.

"In the historical context, this city was built on the destruction of local wetlands," points out Nelson Jatel, water stewardship director for the Okanagan Basin Water Board, who has lived in the valley for most of his life. "We collectively share in the guilt."

He's project manager for the first phase of the Okanagan Wetlands Strategy, a collaboration of the OBWB, B.C. Wildlife Federation and Central Okanagan Regional District, each of which will contribute in-kind work toward the project.

Jatel notes that we all are beneficiaries of channelizing and damming projects of the 1940s and 1950s in the Okanagan Valley; projects that have changed the face of the valley in the past 200 years or so.

"Hopefully this project will capture some of the history and alert people to the importance of what's remaining," he added.

He's excited about the project which he sees as 'putting our house in order,' and putting wetlands on people's radar.

It's a role he sees as very fitting for the OBWB, bringing resources and people together to

create a warehouse of comprehensive information about wetlands.

Because the Okanagan has such a dry climate, wetlands are home to many species at risk, from Tiger Salamanders to Painted Turtles and a variety of ducks and geese.

The idea will be to pull information from all sources, including individuals, to locate as many wetlands as possible and to get a feeling for how people view wetlands; whether they value them, and if so, in what ways.

The data will all be integrated in a map with many layers for the whole Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys, so it will be a map that reflects the different lenses of the different people who value wetlands-or not.

Involved in a technical advisory capacity are the City of Kelowna, Ducks Unlimited, the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program, the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program, North Okanagan Regional District, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Environment Canada, the Okanagan Nation Alliance, Okanagan College, and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Armed with an Environment Canada Sustainable Ecosystems Program grant of \$35,000 the \$64,800 project is now in the collecting-information stage, a task that's been contracted to Ecoscape Environmental Consultants, led by senior aquatic biologist Kyle Hawes, one of its principals.

*Continued on next page...*

## EDITORIAL

**C**ontrary to the message delivered in any one of the numerous television and internet commercials depicting trucks and ATVs splashing through wilderness creeks and streams, our wilderness waterways are precious and need to be protected. The waterways that feed our lakes, marshes and rivers serve numerous purposes and provide important habitats. The streams of the Okanagan Similkameen are no exception.

The creeks that feed Okanagan Lake provide a network to drain a very large watershed. In so doing they interact with thousands of hectares of our province. Innumerable species of wildlife inhabit this area and rely on the access to water that the creeks, and their water collection areas, provide. The various plant species found in this same area are also there due in no small part to the availability of moisture that is a by-product of the water.

Trout, kokanee and other fish use the creeks for spawning and maturing prior to making their way to the great interior lake. In the fields and marshes bordering waterways many amphibians make their homes. The spore and tracks of larger mammals, predator and prey, are to be found adjacent to most watering spots.

Depending on the time of year, migratory fowl, birthing ungulates and their predators, and hibernating bruins make their homes near the water. Varying rates of water flow change the suitability of the various waterways

*Continued on next page...*

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## *"Wetlands" continued from front*

He points out that 85 percent of wildlife use wetlands directly or indirectly, so they're critical habitat, particularly in the Okanagan, which is home to many rare and endangered species.

As well, they have spiritual values to First Nations people and esthetic values to many other people, as serene places to enjoy nature, for education and for recreation.

In addition to providing biodiversity and habitat for species at risk, wetlands are important tools in flood control. "They act like a sponge to hold back water; to allow it to spill over into riparian areas and release it slowly," he explained. They also help recharge groundwater resources.

Wetlands remove excess nutrients and purify water. In fact, engineers today construct wet-

lands specifically to filter runoff and storm water.

They're also important in erosion control.

More than 85 per cent of the Okanagan's wetland and natural riparian habitat has been lost, most filled in for development of one sort or another – and the loss continues, although it's slowed, says Hawes.

Wetlands are at risk from vineyard and other agricultural development and activities, cattle grazing, improper drainage management, road construction and hazard tree removal in addition to development.

Contamination and invasive species threaten their health. Climate change will likely alter wetlands habitats, and with development of other sorts, fragmentation can reduce their effectiveness.

## *Editorial continued from front*

as habitat throughout the seasons of the year. Each of the states of these habitats is important to the ecosystem that exists there.

Of course many of the creeks, such as the South Okanagan's Trout Creek, provide water for drinking, food procurement and recreation for the local human community. Regardless of one's feelings about population

growth in the Okanagan this need is becoming greater year in and year out. Keeping the water clean and pristine is very important to all species and the environment in general.

Please join with the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society to maintain a watch on our water resources. Our wilderness, parks and protected areas depend on water to support their own unique ecosystems.



*Okanagan Lake off of a picnic site on highway 97*

# The Cascade Recreation Area

## A Wilderness in the Waiting

*"In our times, young and old can benefit greatly from it, in the future its benefits will doubtless be greater, its acquirements more and more difficult" H. Hatfield (1980)*

From the vision of a dedicated group of volunteer park stewards, came a movement to protect one of British Columbia's premier wilderness areas...the Cascade Wilderness.

Early mapping and reconnaissance by Harley Hatfield and the Okanagan Historical Society laid the ground work for the Cascade Wilderness Study. This was followed by the Wilderness Advisory Committee and the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society making a political push to have 16,680 hectares of land set aside for protection. The recreation area was an interim designation to allow for mineral resource evaluation. In 2012, the recreation area was upgraded to Class A park status and the lands were added to E.C. Manning Provincial Park.

First Nations have been utilizing the Cascade Mountains for hunting, gathering, and spiritual practices for thousands of years. Many of the First Nation routes became notable historic trails such as the Dewdney and Whatcom trails. The trails were enhanced in the 1800's by colonial governments trying to find a passable route through the inhospitable Cascade Mountains.

Today, the area preserves a representative portion of the Leeward Pacific Ranges and a large portion of the Cascade Mountains. The area plays an important role in protecting the headwaters of the Similkameen, Skagit and Tulameen river systems. There are old growth ecosystems and wetlands in the area which provides habitat for grizzly bear, elk and a host of other wildlife.

[www.bcpark.ca](http://www.bcpark.ca)



# Canada Parks Day

BY OSPS DIRECTOR SHEILA WHITE

July 20, 2013, will be remembered as a banner day for celebrating the Manning Park historical trails as well as welcoming the 16,000-hectare recreation area abutting Manning Park north to full Class A park status. This has been an objective of the OSPS for many years, and it is good to see it finally declared officially.

Keith Baric, the planning section head of BC Parks Okanagan, was MC. He spoke of his pleasure at seeing those who travelled to attend the occasion, and of other events being held today in Manning Park. He was delighted that Peter, John and Alyson Hatfield were present to join in honouring the pioneer trail work of their father, Harley Hatfield.

Keith said the trails were in a land of fives:

- 5 major streams: the Podunk, Skaist, Snass, Upper Sawoqua and the Upper Tulameen
- 5 historic trails: Blackeye's, Dewdney, HBC Brigade Trail, Hope and the Whatcom
- 5 major parks: Outram, Dewdney, Snass, Tulameen and Skaist
- 5 points of entry from main roads (Highways 3 and 5)

and stimulation to all five senses which "would constantly be aroused by the sights, sounds, smells and by the very feel of the land which brings peace and relaxation to mind and spirit" (quoted from the OSPS historical trails briefing to the provincial government).

Today the Cascade wilderness component of Manning Provincial Park protects a land area that ranges from 366 metres to over 2,286 metres above sea level. There are old-growth forested valleys, lush alpine meadows and expansive wetlands which remain relatively free from human interference; wildlife such as pika and mountain beavers, herds of elk and deer, elusive wolverines, gray wolves and even grizzlies.

Keith reminded everyone that the area we are speaking of today contains the traditional lands of at least 17 First Nations. Some of those nations include the Stolo, Nlaka'pamux and Okanagan. Many of the historic trails

we have come to know within Manning Park were used by First Peoples dating back thousands of years.

By contrast, the Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail was developed in the 1850s to serve the gold miners heading from Hope through the Cascades on their way to the Cariboo. The trails remained largely unused and almost forgotten for 100 years.

Keith Baric called on several speakers who had themselves worked with Harley Hatfield in the early days of trail discovery and openings: Randy Manuel, Ray Travers, Dennis O'Gorman, Robert Goodfellow (whose grandfather was the first white man to walk all the trails) and Bill Johnston.

They mentioned and praised the special contributions of others: the late Bob Harris, Victor Wilson and Eric Jacobson. Each of them had assisted Harley and enabled the "historic trails" dream to become a reality.

Bill Johnston recalled his time as a teenager when he had assisted in early trail work and whose love of hiking, camping and mountains became life long. He has for many years been the Cascade Committee head for the OSPS. Randy Manuel, a historian like Harley and the late Bill Barlee, were other OSPS members. Randy did the maps and drawings for the OSPS-produced "Old Pack Trails" booklet – a lovely, authentic record of the historic trails area. The publication continues to please today, as sales mount.

The OSPS has been able, over the past 40 years, to assist in trail development and recognition by: the Old Pack Trails booklet; lobbying the provincial government for trail recognition and protection; and by continuous financial support.

Today, work is being carried out by Kelley Cook of Princeton and her crew in co-operation with BC Parks and funding assistance from the OSPS. As more improvements are



*Bill Johnston speaking at the Parks Day dedication in Manning Park*

made at campsites and further trail work, so use of the Cascade Historic Trails increases – a wonderful tribute to the hopes and dreams of the early enthusiasts.

Interpretive signs were shown to the Parks Day gathering. An excellent lunch organized by Kelley Cook, Mary Mitchell of the Friends of Manning Park and members of the Vermillion Forks Field Naturalists was served.

Following that, the group assembled again on Blackwall Mountain for the unveiling of a bronze plaque featuring the historic trails and naming Harley Hatfield for his original work.

The drive up Blackwall is interesting and the views from the peak were on that sunny day, fabulous. All in all, it was a day of great memories and rejoicing in the shared success of achievement for posterity.



*Plaque commemorating the addition of the Cascade Wilderness Area to Manning Park*

# Taking Care of the South Okanagan-Similkameen

*This article is an abridged and updated version of an article that will appear in the Okanagan Historical Society's annual report for 2013. The original article was written by Sheila White and Bill Johnston and was edited by Mary Trainer.*

As early as 1964, enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers played a substantial role in protecting and preserving land and water in the South Okanagan-Similkameen area for the benefit of both the natural landscape and people.

The original purpose of the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society was the perceived need by Katy Madsen and others for a secure winter range for the California Bighorn Sheep at Vaseux Lake. Numerous meetings culminated in an open meeting in 1966 at which time the formalities of a name, constitution and bylaws were adopted.

The OSPS has, from the outset, relied on independent committees to carry on their work, reporting to the executive as a whole for major plans and funding.

The first significant project came about in 1966, when 800 acres (324 hectares) of rangeland, which was winter range for a large herd of California Bighorn Sheep on the east side of Vaseux Lake, owned by Vic Casorso of Oliver, was listed for sale. A fundraising drive secured the approximately \$23,000 purchase price.

This land was held by the society for two years until the Canadian Wildlife Service could raise the federal funds to purchase the land from the society.

From this original core purchase, the Vaseux Bighorn National Wildlife Area has expanded to its present size of 2006 acres (812 ha).

Funds from the sale of the Vaseux Lake property were invested in the purchase of 250 acres (101 ha) at the north end of Osoyoos Lake, known historically as the Haynes Lease and locally called the Osoyoos Arid Biotic Area. Eventually the provincial government raised the funds to purchase this land from the OSPS.

In 1980, the Haynes Lease Ecological Reserve was established as Ecological Reserve #100 on this property. The reserve is still an important area of study, observation and conservation today. Harold King (former chair of OSPS) and his wife Joan (residents across the valley from the reserve) were its wardens for many years.

The funds raised in 1966, returned to the society after the sale of the Osoyoos land, have been a legacy, sustaining all of the subsequent projects taken on by the society to the present day.

Reports on the unfavourable conditions at Conkle Lake caused by unrestricted camping at this beautiful lake spurred the Conkle Lake Committee to try for corrective action. At the urging of the OSPS, the area was declared a provincial park in 1973 and orderly camping, sanitation, etc. were instituted.

Obtaining park status for Brent Mountain has also been of concern to the OSPS. It is the only Okanagan mountain without a road to the top. Unfortunately, logging has continued on all sides until only the rocky summit is untouched. The trail is still a wonderful day's outing, and hope continues for protective status for the peak and surrounding area.

The Okanagan Mountain Committee successfully lobbied the provincial government, and in 1973 Okanagan Mountain was declared a provincial park.

The OSPS published a booklet by John Woodworth titled "Is Everything All Right Up There?" that commented on adverse affects of clearcut logging as demanded by the government. It caused a considerable stir even beyond B.C. John then went on to organize and successfully rediscover the Alexander Mackenzie (Grease) Trail into the interior of B.C.

The OSPS was an early proponent of the value of the abandoned Kettle Valley Railway rail bed through the Okanagan. The society designed and distributed more than 20,000 brochures showing the hiking/cycling routes along the rail bed from Midway to Penticton.

Cathedral Lakes is a unique area of arid-alpine near Keremeos. Although declared a provincial park in 1968, the OSPS lobbied for its expansion. Members Robert Quadvlieg and Vic Wilson consulted with and gained co-operation from ranchers, private land owners and a helicopter school. The OSPS submitted a brief of their recommendations to the provincial government in 1973, and in 1975 the park was greatly expanded.

## TRAILS AND OTHER NOTEWORTHY PROJECTS

The Trails and Wilderness Committee had its origin with Harley Hatfield and the Okanagan Historical Society in 1967.

The historic trails in the area east of Hope that were used by Indians, then by the Hudson's Bay traders and then the miners and traders seeking a route to Kamloops and beyond were of interest to many people.

OSPS member Harley Hatfield of Penticton, a retired surveyor, decided to seek out the trails, now unused for more than 100 years. Bob Harris, a Vancouver engineer, joined the search with Harley and others. It took several years of bush work, digging into journals and even helicopter flights to find the HBC Fur Brigade Trail.

Briefs to the B.C. cabinet were presented in 1972 and 1975 to protect the five main historic trails (Blackeye's Trail, antiquity; Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail, 1849; Whatcom Trail, 1858; Dewdney Trail 1860-61; and Hope Pass Trail, 1961) and the area surrounding the trails in the North Cascade Mountains north of Manning Provincial Park, to be known as the Cascade Wilderness Proposal.

In 1978, Bill Johnston joined the OSPS as chair of the Trails and Wilderness Committee and took over the "Proposed Cascade Wilderness" file from Harley Hatfield and the Okanagan Historical Society.

In 1979, a group presentation and written brief to the Environment and Land Use Committee of the Legislature in Victoria, organized and led by Harley Hatfield, was made by the Okanagan Historical Society





*Bridge on the trail at Deep Creek*



*Kokanee, a land locked species of salmon, Spawn in a number of Creeks including Deep Creek and the Okanagan River Channel*

and OSPS.

In 1987, at the recommendation of the Wilderness Advisory Committee, approximately 40 per cent (167 sq. km or 64 sq. miles) of our proposal was designated as the Cascade Recreation Area with the equivalent removed from Manning Park to compensate the Forest Ministry.

A 20-year-period of mineral exploration followed to ensure no commercial mineralization was present in the area.

While Bill Barlee was minister responsible for heritage in the 1990s, heritage trail designation was applied to the five historic trails providing a 10-chain (200 metre)-wide-corridor of undisturbed land along the lengths of the trails, outside of the Recreation Area core, in the Cascade Mountains, north of Manning Provincial Park. This was absolutely critical to the integrity of the surviving historic trails in the area.

On May 7, 2012, 45 years after Harley Hatfield began the quest, the Cascade Recreation Area was upgraded to Class A park status and included within the boundary of Manning Provincial Park. This completed Harley Hatfield's "extension of Manning Park" as envisioned in 1967. The process has been the OSPS's longest and most expensive parks proposal (in terms of funding and energy expended) to date.

"Old Pack Trails in the Cascade Wilderness"

booklets were produced by Harley Hatfield and Bob Harris with artwork by Randy Manuel. They are authentic in their sketches, locations and excerpts from Royal Engineer journals and remain a popular item in tourist information booths today with more than 13,000 copies to date.

In recent years the OSPS has provided financial support and encouragement to trail 'enabler and historian' Kelley Cook of Princeton – who continues to do a remarkable job of restoring historic trails in the North Cascades, improving campsites and providing signage for visitors to enjoy, and encouraging the use of the historic trails in their wilderness surroundings.

Over many years OSPS directors Juergen Hansen, Joe Klein, Clive Johnson and OSPS chair Harold King participated in meetings with government and industry representatives on the Okanagan-Shuswap Land, Resources and Management Plan. They were all familiar with much of the LRMP area so were well able to discuss each section as it came forward.

By 2000, they had achieved new protected areas for conservation and recreation; detailed guidelines to manage values for protection and use while still protecting fragile ecosystems; guidance for commercial and non-commercial use of Crown land and resources; policy advice for government; and an annual review and monitoring process involving local groups and stakeholders.

The OSPS has provided funds to the Summerland section of the Trail Canada Trail (TCT), which is responsible for 61.5 km (38 miles) of trail (along the abandoned Kettle Valley Railway rail bed) from Penticton to 1.5 km (one mile) east of Osprey Lake. Regulation of ATV traffic on trails has been an OSPS concern for more than 30 years. The OSPS has presented the Outdoor Recreation Council with guidelines for licensing and training, and for establishing areas and routes for non-motorized use. It continues to pressure the B.C. government to license recreational vehicles and keep them off the TCT.

The OSPS has also financed signs for the Okanagan Brigade Trail in Summerland and for the waterfront natural area in Lower Town, Summerland.

The society also donates funds to groups such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Nature Trust of B.C. for local land purchases and the annual Meadowlark Festival in Penticton.

Most recently the OSPS contributed funds in support of a trail along Okanagan Lake and to the Friends of the South Slope for trail improvements in Okanagan Mountain Park. It continues to support the creation of a national park in the South Okanagan-Similkameen.

For information visit:  
[okanagansimilkameenparkssociety.ca](http://okanagansimilkameenparkssociety.ca)

# Wild Times In Deep Water

BY JOE FOY

*Watershed Sentinel – September-October 2013*

**W**e are made of water. About 70% of you is just plain water. Think of that. You are a body of living, breathing, thinking, acting – water.

This explains a lot. No wonder I am so drawn to quiet rainforest fringed waterfalls, emerald pools and love the sound a small creek makes as it trickles over mossy logs and stones. I am related to water in all its forms. I love to drink water, swim in water, wash in water, and just look at, listen to, and feel – water.

And so, when I was invited to attend the eighth annual Paddle for the Peace River this summer – you know I just had to go.

If you like water, BC is a mighty good place to call home. The road trip up to the Peace River Valley travels alongside lots of wild water ways – some big like the Fraser and Thompson rivers and some small like the Rocky Mountain lakes and creeks you pass on the way to Fort St John.

The Paddle for the Peace event is put on by local First Nations, farmers and conservationists to help build support for protecting the

Peace River Valley against the proposed Site C Dam. If built, the dam would flood over 100 kilometres of valley bottom, including over 6,000 hectares of farmland. The WAC Bennett Dam, located upstream, has backed up a massive reservoir that has leached mercury into its fish populations – nobody in the valley wants to see that kind of water damage repeated with another damn dam. We spent the day in canoes on the great river, followed by good food and powerful words. People hereabouts are determined to save their piece of the Peace.

Site C Dam is not the only threat to this region's water. The natural gas industry has recently turned to the process of hydraulic fracturing, known as "fracking", to squeeze the last gasp of gas out of the north country. Millions of litres of fresh water are routinely mixed with a toxic brew of chemicals, then injected deep down into the ground to free the most hard to get at gas.

After the water comes back up it is stored in massive foul smelling holding ponds. The size, extent and impact of these fracking operations on the landscape and water is astounding. You have to see it – and smell it – to believe that anyone would be allowed to do this much damage to water in this day and

age. Courageous people all over this region are resisting the growing gas empire and its pipes and toxic ponds. They fear what will happen to local waters if Liquefied Natural Gas shipments to Asia ever become reality and the hunger for more fracked gas grows to a frenzy.

Heading back south I stopped in at Williams Lake where the federal Environmental Assessment hearings for the New Prosperity Mine were just getting started. The Tsilhqot'in Nation and their supporters put on a very moving event calling for the open pit mine plans to be dropped so that the Nation's fish bearing waters could be protected from the dangers of toxic mine pollution.

I came away from my road trip understanding that water is under extreme threat from industry in our province and that many people are working very hard to defend their local water bodies. Let's all support them.

We are in deep water indeed – it's time to get to safety.

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



*A storm is brewing over Okanagan Lake*



*Okanagan River near Oliver*



# Hard Surfacing Part of KVR Trail Begins

BY JOHN MOORHOUSE

*Penticton Herald – September 30, 2013*

**N**aramata – Work begins on hard-surfacing the KVR trail above Naramata this week.

However, the controversial question of whether to continue allowing vehicle access to the popular route remains unresolved for now.

The provincial government has awarded a \$160,000 contract to MacKinley-Clark Paving Ltd. of Penticton to lay a blended aggregate surface onto a 5.8 kilometre section of the KVR from Arawana Road north to the Little Tunnel.

Company spokesman Graham McCredie said following completion of site grading and other preparations, work on applying the aggregate material should begin Tuesday starting at the Little Tunnel and heading south.

Public access to the KVR will be restricted during the construction period, which should be completed by the end of this week.

McCredie said the aggregate is identical to the hard surface material laid down over the

past couple of years from Arawana Road to Vancouver Place in Penticton. There will be no major upgrade to a large dip in the trail between Arawana and Smethurst Road.

“It’s going to remain the same. They want it to be a trail – it’s not a highway,” he said. “We’re going to fix that dip a little bit, but there will still be a dip.”

Signs advising the public of the temporary trail closures have already been posted.

However, no decision has yet been made regarding any possible bid to prevent motorized traffic from using the portion of the KVR from Naramata through to Glenfir, north of the community.

John Hawkings, the provincial trails manager, said the government is still looking at options regarding future vehicle access along that section of the route.

“We are basically undertaking a traffic engineering study on the portion of the KVR from Glenfir to Little Tunnel to determine what options are available before a decision is made on any motorized restrictions,” he said.

“Once we have all the information on what the options may be, and some considerations

around safety and user-conflict, then a final decision will be made.”

Hawkings said the province opted to proceed with the upgrade now, since the money is available in this year’s budget.

The issue of vehicle access along the KVR spawned a rather stormy public meeting in Naramata in September of 2012. A group calling itself Keep Our KVR Accessible To All (KOKATA) was formed and launched a petition campaign in a bid to preserve vehicle access.

Hawkings said he hopes after further consultation with KOKATA, regional district officials and other stakeholders, an agreeable solution can be found within the next few months.

Karla Kozakevich, Naramata’s director on the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen board, said it’s hoped that following completion of the hard-surfacing project, motorists will voluntarily opt to access the scenic Little Tunnel from the north via Glenfir rather than from Smethurst Road to the south.

No possible barricades blocking vehicle access will be erected until after a final decision is made.



*Trout Creek as it enters the flume to the Summerland Reservoir and Water Treatment Station*



*A valve for water regulation on the Okanagan River which supplies water for irrigation purposes*

JUNE 11, 2006

### National Park is a Gift to Future Generations

In all the pros and cons regarding the national park reserve proposal for the South Okanagan-Similkameen, one seldom-stated point is that this is a park for the future. Contrary to vociferous anti-park statements from some members of the older generation, things ain't gonna change a whole lot in our active lifetimes - unfortunately, to some.

The acquisition of the core of the park and the beginnings of management through Parks Canada rather than the present melange will likely be the only major part of this long process in the next decade or two; the creation of an ecologically viable and economically significant park will be a work in progress over many years. To me, this greatly affects, or should affect, people's attitudes to the proposed park.

So, what is the younger people's vision? Are teenagers and people in their 20s and 30s aware of the vulnerable and degraded ecological state of these valleys' few remaining wild areas? Are they interested in being able to visit and take their children to peaceful natural areas where birds and other creatures live untroubled by human intrusion? Do they want to live where natural areas attract tourists just by their presence (which they do)? From responses at displays on the park, the answer to the latter two is overwhelmingly 'Yes'. Or do they want a valley where housing, agriculture, roads and industrial development cover all but the few, inevitable overused and degraded, fragments of provincial parks and private conservation lands? Do they want their heritage to be a once-unique natural area known for its human inhabitants' negligence in protecting a national treasure? Surveys such as the one carried out recently through the former Okanagan University College argue strongly for a 'No' answer to these questions.

Many, if not most, non-native people here came to avoid mass urbanization elsewhere; they may not all appreciate the details of protecting the large, connected areas and variety of habitats wildlife need, but they say that more land should be protected. The national park reserve is our last, best opportunity for what the overwhelming majority of people say they want: viable wildlands with healthy wildlife populations protected for their own sake and for people's enjoyment and economic benefit. The LRMP Table members on the conservation side did a great job under the terms of that process; however, and especially with climate change, a more centralized and strongly eco-centred management of larger protected areas is critical if the relatively common as well as rare and endangered species are to survive.

EVA DURANCE, PENTICTON  
*Western News*

### Idea Blowing in the Wind

BY JOHN MOORHOUSE

*Southern Exposure- Friday, October 11, 2013*

A pair of proposed wind farms west of Summerland have gained regional district support, but not without a few strings attached.

Vancouver-based Zero Emissions Energy Developments (ZED) wants to develop two wind farms, dubbed Summerland and Shinish Creek, along a ridge of Crown land south east of Osprey Lake.

Plans call for 14 wind turbines with a combined capacity of 30 megawatts (15mw each).

The company is seeking a provincial government license to occupy almost 1,400 hectares for up to 10 years.

The license area includes an access corridor

via a forestry road from Osprey Lake, plus a transmission line corridor linking it to the main BC Hydro transmission line which crosses the Princeton-Summerland Road.

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen directors Thursday voiced general support for the two projects. However, they also directed RDOS staff to amend general zoning regulations to address height, low-frequency noise, watershed and other environmental implications from wind farms.

Current resources area zoning regulations for Area F (including part of the area west of Summerland) restrict structures to a maximum height of eight metre. Each turbine could be up to 145 metres high to the tip of the 50 metre blades.

The amended regulations will be considered by the regional district's planning and development committee at a later date.

Tom Siddon, RDOS director for Area D (Okanagan Falls/Kaleden), predicted the

wind farms will grow substantially in the future, pointing to the rapid increase in wind power in Oregon and California.

"Wind power is inevitable," he said.

"We could be opening the door to a much bigger project."

Michael Brydon, RDOS director of Area F (West Bench-Okanagan Lake West), said he wholeheartedly supports the project.

"This potential site is well-logged, well-roaded and in the middle of nowhere," Brydon said.

"This is hardly a pristine forest."

Summerland director Bruce Hallquist noted the wind farm issue has not even been discussed by Summerland council and therefore feels it is not a significant concern.

The final decision on the wind farm application is up to the provincial government.



FALL 2006

### Why Can't Lodges be Built Just Outside Parks?

**T**he problem is that once you begin constructing lodges and cabins and the various facilities needed to support them, you no longer have a wilderness park. Paving the West Coast Trail and creating little lodges along the way would make it more accessible. It would also destroy it. But the best policy would be to recognize the importance of preservation and the responsibility to keep parks whole.

That doesn't mean that parks have to be exclusively for the fit and able-bodied. If greater access is the goal - and if there is consumer demand - then development could be encouraged just outside parks, in communities that would be glad of the economic activities and additional tax base. Instead of plunking a lodge down inside a park, services could be provided just outside the park boundaries and steps taken to improve access for visitors. If developers want a shot at operating a true wilderness lodge, there are thousands of square kilometres of Crown and private land available outside parks. Negotiate a lease and build away.

Fintry Provincial Park just off Westside Road is one of the parks that could see lodge development.

NOVEMBER 29, 2006

**Y**esterday the British Columbia government acknowledged they have accepted a proposal from a private developer to build a fly-in fishing lodge in picturesque Maxhamish Lake Provincial Park. The 27,000 hectare park, located 125 kilometres north of Fort Nelson, is known for its tremendous fishing opportunities including lake whitefish, walleye and northern pike.

GWEN BARLEE

*Western Canada Wilderness Committee*

AUGUST 18, 2006

### RDOS Opposes Crown Selloff

**R**DOS will participate in planning study looking into selling lands and watershed management around upper reservoir lakes. A provincial government proposal to sell Crown lands now being leased to cabin owners and other recreational users at some high elevation lakes in the Okanagan doesn't swim with regional district directors. The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen board agreed Thursday to participate in a planning study into the possible sale of Crown lands now being leased to private residents at upper reservoir lakes. However, many RDOS directors strongly opposed the idea of increased private development, which they fear could lead to environmental and other problems

around such lakes. Kevin Dickenson of the province's Integrated Land Management Bureau told the RDOS board the study in the South Okanagan will deal mainly with Headwaters Lake west of Summerland and Chute Lake above Naramata. Other lakes in the Central and North Okanagan are also being reviewed.

Discussions will focus on water quality, the level of lake reservoirs, the impact of septic disposal and other issues. Dickenson said while the process will continue until the middle of next year, there are no time constraints or pressure to get the lots sold. An earlier government study was temporarily abandoned in 2002. RDOS directors agreed to let regional district planning staff sit in on the meetings, but not without expressing strong reservations on the idea of these Crown lands being sold to the private sector. Summerland council has already voiced its objections to the sale of any Crown lots around Headwaters Lake. Coun. Lorraine Bennest said instead of considering the sale of the lots, the government should be looking to gradually reacquiring more public access by allowing the leases to expire over the next several years.

JOHN MOORHOUSE

*Penticton Herald*

### Why Value Wetlands?

Friday, October 25, 2013 – Capital News

**W**etlands are more than a haven for mosquitoes or a place to dump worn-out tires.

They have value in the biodiversity they offer, but they also provide economic returns such as in filtering runoff, alleviating flooding,

recharging underground aquifers, controlling erosion and managing stormwater.

They're home to such species at risk as painted turtles, great basin spadefoot toad, tiger salamander and yellow-breasted chat.

You're being asked in the coming weeks to list wetlands you know and describe how you value them as part of the Okanagan Wetlands Strategy. Capital News Reporter Judie Steeves researched the background on this project and how you can participate.



*The small protected pond Next to Gorman's mill in West Kelowna*

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## Helping Tradition and Species at Risk

PERCY N. HÉBERT

*Western News Staff – Wednesday, October 30, 2013 – Penticton Western News*

For Richard Armstrong and Michael Bezener, trying to undo the impact of development on a special piece of land, west of the Okanagan River channel is a matter of tradition and revival.

Armstrong, a traditional ecological knowledge keeper who works at the En'Owkin Centre, and Bezener, a conservation biologist with the En'Owkin centre, led a group of volunteers through the piece of land known as ECommunity Place.

Along the way Armstrong stopped to point out the invasive species such as creeping vines that choke the native plants.

Restoring the land is important to the traditional ways of the Okanagan Nation and to Armstrong.

"I was brought up by my elders to know the old ways to respect the land, and the prayers, protocols and ceremonies," Armstrong said.

"It's my life's work."

The piece of land represents a reasonably healthy example of riparian habitat and is home to about 20 species at risk, including the tiger salamander, spade-foot toad and great-basin gopher snake, and contains one of the last significant intact stands of black cottonwood trees in the South Okanagan valley, explained Bezener.

In addition to the cottonwood trees, one of the plants on the menu for the day was the wild rose, specifically rosehips, the fruit of the rose.

For millennia, aboriginal peoples have used rosehips to make tea in the winter, explained Armstrong.

"It's a very important berry in our culture," he said.

The rosehips are also key to the survival of a

small population of the endangered yellow-breasted chat.

There are about 50 pairs in B.C. and up to six breeding pairs on the ECommunity Place locate land where they nest almost exclusively in thickets of wild rose, said Bezener.

That is why the volunteers gathered with Armstrong and Bezener, to collect rosehips for later planting in the hopes of increasing the extent of wild rose habitat in the area.

At the same time, helping to recover the land, said Bezener, also helps the En'Owkin Centre fulfill its underlying mandate to recover, revitalize and perpetuate Okanagan language, culture, community and environment.

"So much of the language and culture comes from the land itself," Bezener said.

"So if we are going to fulfill our mandate, we need a land base from which to do that work."