



# Newsletter FALL 2018

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## Salute to the Sockeye

**ADAMS RIVER, BC** *Sockeye salmon swimming upstream on the Adams River to spawn. While there is still a large group of spawners on the Adams this year other rivers that were susceptible to floods have reported a diminished run.*

The ritual of sockeye salmon returning to the waters of the Adams River has been occurring since glaciers of the Ice Age carved out the present geography of British Columbia. Every four years since then, the quiet waters of the Adams River, 460 kilometres inland from the Pacific Ocean, become the scene of a natural miracle.

While sockeye salmon return to the Adams River every year, the migration that occurs every fourth year (the dominant year of the cycle) dwarfs all others. This dominant sockeye run has been welcomed by the local Indigenous people for thousands of years. Fisheries and Oceans Canada joined in celebrating this incredible natural event in the 1970's with the "Salute to the Sockeye," which draws tens of thousands of visitors from around the world to the T'sutswe'w Provincial Park (formerly Roderick Haig-Brown Park).

The story begins with the spawning. Clothed in the crimson garb that sockeye acquire in the last months of their lives, male and female fish pair and spawn along the length of the river—each female laying up to 4,000 eggs. After spawning the salmon die. But even as their carcasses float away, the cycle of rebirth begins.

Not all eggs are successfully fertilized and some are dislodged from the gravel to be devoured by rainbow trout and other predators. Those eggs that are fertilized spend the winter in the river bed, sheltered from predators and ice by a thin layer of gravel, gaining in size and nourished by their yolk sacs.

In the late winter, the eggs hatch into alevin, but the young fish stay in the gravel and continue growing. They emerge from the gravel

*Continued on page 3...*

## Editorial

As we move through our second consecutive 'Summer of the Fires' we are bound to search for a cause. One of the prime suspects is of course human caused climate change. There is no problem in finding compelling, credible evidence to prove this line of reasoning and direct our wrath toward macro-politics and the head-in-the-sand attitudes that many, especially in North America, cling to. Greater, more violent weather and climate events, the melting of our polar icecaps, and sea level rise can all be attributed to our climate warming and our paralysis around addressing the problem.

However, there are other, much more localized factors which have contributed to our Spring and Summer situations. Like the larger issue of climate change these are predominantly human caused and solvable with the appropriate political and societal will. Drought, floods, fires and disease are all the outcomes that we have recently experienced. Some will suggest that these events are the new normal and others will argue that they do not have to be.

Prior to beginning the discussion, we must bear in mind that the environment and ecosystem of the Okanagan Similkameen, like all ecosystems, is dependent on a great number of interdependent cycles, such as the water cycle, the growth cycle and the food cycle. These cycles have historically interacted to provide us with the environment, and the

*Continued on next page...*

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resources that we have come to expect in the region. A small alteration in how these cycles operate is within the realm of normal, major changes are not.

The story begins with the study of hydrology. In order for our lakes and rivers to remain at historical levels and temperatures there must be a constant draining of, and renewal of, water. These waters come from precipitation and while some of the rain and snow fall directly into the lake, creek or river, most is in the form of run-off from our elevated ground such as the local mountain ranges. In fact most is the result of snow that has fallen and accumulated over the colder fall and winter months. Historically as the temperatures gradually rose in the Spring the snow-pack, as the collected snow is called, slowly melted. The speed of the melt, protected by vegetation, varied within an acceptable range from year to year.

Unfortunately with the loss of vegetation cover the snowpack melt is sped up. There is evidence that with a full forest the snow remains on the mountains longer. When an area is logged it will melt faster than areas that are still forested. When large areas are clear cut the accumulated snow simply drains away. This typically causes two problems. One is that the trees and other vegetation that have survive around the perimeters of the logged off area become water stressed. Water stressing weakens trees and makes them susceptible to diseases and pest infestations. Ultimately the clear cut has affected and 'taken' more of the timber than that that has been actually logged.

The second problem that arises from the swift snow-melt that results from unsustainable logging practices is the change in the amount and the timing of the yearly run off. When the snow melts quickly the water, often following gouges and ditches made during the logging process, runs in great quantities into the creeks and streams that feed our lakes and rivers. Rather than moderate amounts of runoff making its way to the valley bottoms in a longer amount of time, there are large amounts of water running over a much condensed period of time. The combined effect of numerous creeks and streams, each roiling at capacity, entering the lakes and

ivers is flood. We have seen evidence of flooding over the past couple of years with Okanagan Lake and Osoyoos Lake and the river system attached to them.

Interestingly over the past few years logging of this type has been increasing, not only far up in the hills but also in local drinking-water sheds such as Peachland. The pressure on wildlife, for instance ungulates and their predators, has been moving them closer to human habitation. Of course timber harvesters have also built roads into much of their habitat. These roads are often used by people in the pursuit of a variety of forms of 'recreation', some of them are relatively compatible while others are quite destructive to the habitat and the flora and fauna that dwell there. The presence of large amounts of humans does nothing to comfort wildlife whether they are riding bicycles, hiking or snowmobiling.

We have all seen the trees that have been swept down the creeks during the flooding season. However there are many more trees that are drowned or in some way injured. The grasses and weeds are also being grown in this season, aided by not just the typical spring rains but also by a rise in the water table. They grow lush and tall during this time. But, alas, the floods eventually dissipate and the water source begins to recede so that what

remains are tall vegetation that is drying out. Grasses of the Okanagan Similkameen have always dried out but they have not always grown as lushly as they have over the past couple of years.

Along with stressed, diseased trees these grasses and weeds provide perfect fuel for wildfires. And although wildfires themselves cannot be blamed in general on the disruption of the cycles (some would claim that they are part of the cycle) the danger that they pose to people and homes is certainly the result of human habitat expanding into the hinterlands. The weather patterns, such as winds and thunderstorms, contribute to this process but so too does the state of our forests with dried out patches of dead, dying and/or diseased timber that are the result of human activity.

So while it is not blameless not everything that is occurring in our region is the result of climate change and human caused global warming. We have to actively protect our environment too. To help place this issue into perspective, have a look at some of the topics that crop up in our Notes From The Past section, where have we been and where are we headed to? Our flood drought fire cycle will hopefully be solved by the time that it makes it to this section eight years from now, otherwise it is the new normal.



Jess Hilton-McPherson, Fisheries lab tech, and her team conduct a Bio sample of Sockeye and Kokanee in the Penticton channel. Under the auspices of the Okanagan Nation Alliance, who sponsor the reestablishment of salmon in the Okanagan River system, this team collects dead, or exhausted fish that have already spawned, to test for DNA, the sex ratio, origin (hatchery or wild & ocean or local) and signs of hybridization. The channel is not the only waterway in the Okanagan supporting fish. Deep Creek is an important Kokanee spawning stream. These waterways must be protected in order to protect these historic fish stocks.



## *Salute to the Sockeye continued*

in the spring as fry, measuring about 2.5 cm in length. Young sockeye spend their first year in lakes-and the first destination of Adams River sockeye is nearby Shuswap Lake. Three out of four salmon fry will be eaten by predators before they leave the lake. The survivors have grown into smolts, about 7.5 to 10 cm long. These small fish now begin a 460 km journey downstream to the mouth of the Fraser River and beyond into the salt water of the Pacific Ocean. The hearty survivors, now sleek and silver coloured, will continue to feed and grow, reaching an average weight of three kilograms.

Once they have reached maturity a genetic signal from within tells the fish that the time has come to begin the journey home. As the sockeye swim back toward their spawning grounds, they must dodge commercial, recreational and Indigenous fisheries. However, one last obstacle remains. The Fraser River. Returning salmon face a punishing upstream journey in the face of opposing currents and rapids. Swimming at an average rate of 29 km per day, the fish take about 18 days to cover the distance from the mouth of the Fraser to their spawning grounds. Arriving battered and torn from their trek, their skin has also taken on the deep red colour characteristic of spawning sockeye.

At this point, the sockeye undergo another striking transformation as internal physical changes condition them for the final act. Their heads turn a deep green, the males develop humped backs and hooked snouts, and the bellies of the females swell with thousands of eggs.

Back at last in the waters they left as fry, the sockeye-two adult survivors for every 4,000 eggs deposited four years ago-are ready to complete the cycle.

In the shallow gravel beds of the river, males and females pair off as they search for a nesting area. The renewal of this species is not a peaceful process. The male, his teeth now grown to fangs in an enlarged jaw, fights off other contenders. The female digs a nest (called a 'redd') by lying on her side and fanning her

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*The Salmon play an important role in the life-cycle of our forests. Decaying bodies fertilize the forests and provide food for scavengers.*



*While the Sockeye run on the Adams River is full scale, some of the interior lake runs of Kokanee, such as at Deep Creek off of Okanagan Lake, appear to be down. Is this a trend?*

tail sideways to move gravel after which she deposits some of her eggs. The male fertilizes the eggs with a release of milt and the female then covers the eggs with gravel. Pairs of fish then swim upstream to repeat the process. The female will guard her redd for as long as possible, until exhausted and dies.

Eagles, ospreys and other birds swoop down to pick up the dead fish that litter the shal-

lows. At night, mink, coyote and bears hunt along the river to get their share. The remains of carcasses left in the forests decay and provide crucial nutrients to the ecosystem. By mid-November, the river returns to its former tranquility and awaits spring and the emergence of a new generation of Adams River sockeye.

*Fisheries and Oceans Canada*





### Fall of 2010

At the end of June, Orville Dyer (BC MoE) and Mike Miller (consulting botanist), conducted a Rare Plant Survey on Oliver Mountain. There is currently a proposal to make this mountain a protected Area. The survey recorded three new locations for three red-listed plants on the site. The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society sponsored the plant survey and will be also sponsoring work to be done on snakes and invertebrates to be done at the same site in the fall of 2010. The two surveys will be used as part of the research for a report from the B.C. Ministry of the Environment documenting the plant and wildlife 'values' of the Oliver Mountain area. Your contributions have assisted with this valuable work that assists with the sustainability and conservation of our natural region.

The input of the society has been sought with regard to bicycle and roller-blade paths with the construction of new highways. Our 'expertise' in and commitment to such paths have led to the consultation with regard to the highway work south of Oliver. In the future, safe non-motorized pathway links could be joined to form a continuous route from Summerland south to Osoyoos. Your will endeavor to continue to be one of the leading forces behind such a vision. A little further to the north, in Summerland, the OSPS has helped to ensure that the historical aspects of a couple of parks will be explained and celebrated through informational signage. The 19th century Fur Brigade Trail will be advertised, recalled and explained to locals and tourists alike through the use of researched and documented information and vignettes on the sturdy signs. The society is proud to have assisted with getting the project off to a start and hope for many more agencies to take part so that the history of our region can be appreciated along with the natural flora and fauna.

### SPECIAL THANKS

We are of course always grateful to the contributors to the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society. Sometimes these contributors are members and sometimes they are not. This fall we would like to recognize the contribution to the society from Aurora Print Solutions Penticton, the printers of this newsletter. The society acknowledges the layout, printing and administrative services that Aurora has provided to us at discounted rates. They have not just had a business relationship with us but truly they have assisted in bringing the message of conservation, protection and sustainability to our quest to provide parks for our grandchildren's grandchildren in the southern interior of British Columbia.

### Okanagan water study envisions more dry years ahead, but report's authors aren't ringing any alarm bells yet

Summer water shortages likely to occur decades from now underscore the need for present-day conservation programs and infrastructure improvements, say the authors of a new study. Flows in Mission Creek during the summer are forecast to be down 20 per cent by 2040, and down nearly

50 percent by 2070, the Okanagan Basin Water Board says. "The water, when we need it the most, won't be there," OBWB executive director Anna Warwick Sears said Friday at a press conference to publicize a water supply and demand study that's been three years in the making

### Life – Excerpts from an article on the Value of the Economics of Wildlife Watching

The greatest threat to wildlife across North America for the past century has been, and continues to be, the loss of habitat. Forests have been clear-cut, prairies have been ploughed under, grasslands have been over-grazed, wetlands have been filled, rivers and creeks diverted or channelized and cities and suburbs have expanded endlessly. Virtually everywhere in North America from the middle latitudes of Canada to south of the Mexican border, the story seems to be the same – the only good land is developed land. So often it seems that "raw land" has no apparent value to society. Developers and their proponents on city councils argue that "development" will bring prosperity, jobs and an increased tax base that will benefit virtually everyone.

Certainly we know from experience that many people come to the Okanagan to watch wildlife, primarily birds, and these people come not only from BC but from across Canada, the USA and abroad and they spend money here on lodging, food, fuel, etc. Of course if we want them to continue coming, we have to ensure that there is suitable habitat for the birds. So when communities are considering what to do with their "empty land" they should consider that wildlife watching is a significant contributor to eco-



## NOTES FROM THE PAST

conomic activity. Of course, the generation of economic benefits is not the only reason (and probably not even the main reason) for ensuring that we don't develop the entire Okanagan Valley. But many times it seems the politicians don't want to hear about the intrinsic value of open spaces, so conservationists have to resort to trying to show the economic value of wildlife habitat is under threat in your area, consider raising the issue of the economics of wildlife watching.

ROBERT HANDFIELD – NATURE WISE  
*Penticton Western News – November 11, 2009*

### Public Opinion Survey shows South Okanagan Similkameen residents in favour of establishing a National Park

Gwen Barlee of The Wilderness Committee (FORMERLY Western Canada Wilderness Committee), was in Penticton June 3 coordinating a tour, for local and provincial media, of the pro-

posed South Okanagan – Lower Similkameen National Park. WC announced the results of a telephone poll of 405 residents in the South Okanagan and Similkameen on establishing a national park. 63% of those polled were in favour of the park while 26% were opposed. A further breakdown indicated 7% of those polled were very opposed, while 42% were very in favour of the park. Watch for further media coverage of the poll results and media tour.

*South Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Society*

## Development Patience Urged as National Park Develops

BY JOE FRIES – PENTICTON HERALD  
*Friday, September 21, 2018*

It will take more than a decade to get a South Okanagan-Similkameen national park into full operation, local politicians heard Thursday.

"I really want to explain that this is a long and detailed process," Parks Canada project manager Sarah Boyle told the board of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

Boyle, who started full time in August, said she's currently working with the three participating governments – federal, provincial and Okanagan Nation Alliance – to propose boundaries for the park that will be revealed during a 90-day public consultation period beginning in November.

The next target after that is to sign a three-way memorandum of understanding in August 2019.

Following that agreement will come up to two years of negotiation required for the parties to formally recognize the park in legislation.

"That then starts a 12-year period of park establishment, and that's really the ramping-up phase," explained Boyle.

"You have staff that are hired, you have your gateways, you start getting your details of the visitor offer – the areas that you want to target, the areas you don't want to target – and then after that 12-year period you get into parks operation."

In response to questions from directors, Boyle shot down a series of common concerns about the project.

- On the risk of wildfire spreading from the park to nearby communities, she said Parks Canada works with neighbours to reduce the risk of interface fires, is "a leader in prescribed fires," and in some places maintains its own fire crews and equipment.

- She flatly denied Parks Canada would expropriate private property, instead explaining the agency only has the power to obtain land on a willing buyer-willing seller basis.

- Existing grazing leases within parks boundaries will be grandfathered, Boyle said.

- On the subject of Penticton-based HNZ Helicopters' continued use of the park area for training, she explained the company is currently renewing its permission from the B.C. government and Parks Canada is letting the process play out.

- Finally, asked if the park would ever be expanded, Boyle couldn't rule it out, but said doing so would be "very difficult."

Area B (Cawston) Director George Bush said he's concerned Parks Canada will effectively reduce the supply of available agricultural land and become 'the biggest realtor-developer' in the region.

"The other concerns is the local government is kind of being left out in the consultation," Bush continued. "that's where I would like to be included. It's part of my area."

Boyle pledged local governments will be included during the public consultation and that she will appear before the RDOS board again in December.

Other directors expressed support for the park, which has proceeded in fits and starts for at least 15 years.

"It's a no-brainer. We should do it," said Area D (Okanagan Falls/Kaleden) Director Tom Siddon.

"This discussion has gone on and on, and it's time to get off the pot – and I'm pleased that the current leadership in Ottawa and in Victoria is ready to do that."

# National Park Facts Program

## DID YOU KNOW PROGRAM ROLLED OUT...

The public consultation by Parks Canada on the South Okanagan Similkameen National Park Reserve will start in November 2018. There has been a great amount of discussions on the creation of the National Park, but there seems to be some inaccurate use of statistics and figures that have caused confusion amongst interested residents and non-residents.

Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society has gathered seven basic facts surrounding the creation of National Park Reserve so that we can discuss and agree or disagree on the creation of a National Park based on accurate information. These will be appearing in local media over the next few months. They will appear as articles and as letters to the editor.

The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society (O.S.P.S.) has chosen to take on this role in order to clarify some issues and spark discussion. This role is within the mandate of the O.S.P.S. as the O.S.P.S. works to acquire and preserve parklands for the health, recreation, education and natural enjoyment of the public, to seek preservation of habitat for wildlife, and to protect natural biotic areas for scientific study. Formed in 1966, the O.S.P.S. has successfully established Cathedral Lakes Park, Conkle Lake Park and Okanagan Mountain Park. In addition, the O.S.P.S. has helped to preserve historical trails such as Hudson's Bay Fur Brigade trail, the Kettle Valley Railroad and more. The O.S.P.S. supports and works with other naturalists and conservationists, and all levels of government in its endeavors. The O.S.P.S. is registered as a charitable organization in Canada.

Look for the facts about the National Park.



# Caution in areas burned by wildfires

## B.C. GOVT. NEWS

The 2018 wildfire season has been one of the most challenging in British Columbia's history, and some areas of the province have sustained considerable damage.

Hunters, recreationalists and anyone else heading into the backcountry should use caution when travelling in areas affected by wildfires, since there may be safety hazards present. These hazards could include:

- danger trees (fire-damaged trees that have become unstable and could fall over without warning)
- ash pits, which may be hard to detect and can remain hot long after the flames have died down
- unstable soils and terrain
- increased potential for landslides or rock falls
- damaged trails or irregular trail surfaces
- increased water runoff, which could lead to flooding or debris flows
- damaged fencing, which could allow livestock to enter roadways

In areas that have been severely burned, post-wildfire risks may last for two years or more. However, the increased risk of floods or debris flows in severely burned areas may persist much longer.

Every year, post-wildfire hazard assessments are completed on significant wildfires to identify potential threats to public safety, buildings or infrastructure. Risk mitigation and rehabilitation planning are already underway in some areas.

The BC Wildfire Service reminds members of the public that they also need to use extreme caution in regions where fires are still burning. Wildfires are active worksites where fire suppression efforts may be ongoing.

People can expect to see smoldering ground fires and smoke within the perimeters of existing wildfires over the coming weeks.

This is common with large wildfires and may continue for some time. If smoke is rising from well within a fire's perimeter and the area is surrounded by black, burned material, this is typically not a concern. However, smoke rising from green, unburned fuel or from outside a fire's perimeter should be reported immediately.

To report a wildfire, unattended campfire or open burning violation, call \*5555 on a cellphone or 1 800 663-5555 toll-free. For the latest information on current wildfire activity, burning restrictions, road closures and air quality advisories, visit: [www.bcwildfire.ca](http://www.bcwildfire.ca)

You can also follow the latest wildfire news:

- On Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BCGovFireInfo>
- On Facebook: <http://facebook.com/BCForestFireInfo>

## QUICK FACTS:

- Area restriction orders are still in effect for Crown land in the vicinity of some active wildfires, to help protect public safety and avoid interference with fire-fighting activities.
- A list of areas affected by area restriction orders is available online: [www.gov.bc.ca/wildfirebans](http://www.gov.bc.ca/wildfirebans)
- Even if an area restriction order has been rescinded, officials engaged in fire control (including firefighters) have the authority under the Wildfire Act and its regulations to order anyone to leave the area.

## Learn More:

A "Landslide and Flooding Risks Due to Wildfires" brochure describes how wildfire activity may increase the risk of landslides and flooding, lists warning signs that people should watch for and advises what they should do in an emergency. The brochure is available online: <http://ow.ly/WKGJ30INvX4>



## OUR READERS ON

# Fires, Drought, & Forestry

Watershed Sentinel, September/October 2018

### Thou Shalt Not Criticize

**A**s all these voracious fires devour the BC forest and our carbon footprint begins to dwarf that of the Alberta tar sands, British Columbians need to consider their own significant culpability in contributing to global heating. Just as in Alberta, where “thou shalt not criticize, nor recognize tar sands contribution to the global climate change emergency,” here in BC, “thou shalt not criticize, nor recognize the significant and direct responsibility of voracious industrial logging to rampant, cataclysmic forest fires.”

Clearcutting the provincial forest on a massive scale, big logging strips off canopy shading, utterly desiccating the former forest floor and surrounding edge forest. The clearcutting allows for wind egress, accelerating ground fires into the edge forest, and from there, laddering fire right up into the fringe canopy. Clearcutting desiccates the land, and accelerates the spread of fire... and in the national gnashing of teeth over the BC forest fire emergency, I challenge anyone to show me any significant discussion on the direct culpability of Big Industrial Logging to this ongoing climatic disaster.

(Personal disclosure: I admit that I am not a

scientist under the employ of BC's corporate logging industry – such as every single RPF (Registered Professional Forester) in the province – so WTF would I know about logging and its relationship to massive forest fires ...?)

INGMAR LEE, DENY ISLAND, BC

### Deadfall and Devastation

**I** have been living in BC for 55 years. I grew up in commercial fishing up north and today live near Vancouver. My comment is that we need to clean up the dead fall in the forest today, or it will all burn. We have a place near Princeton BC and we have noticed a huge devastation in our forests. We try to gout with chain saws and clean up every year, but honestly it's out of control. Let us know how we may tackle this before it's too late and we turn into Arizona.

MIKE WICHMANN, PRINCETON, BC

### Industry's Veils and Obstacles

**S**ome little known facts about things forest. There is to date no standard for a watershed assessment. Insane as it seems, the forest industry has managed to maintain veils and obstacles to keep their operations at a smooth, free gallop. Any assessments done are considered proprietary information and you cannot just have it, even though they are in your watershed, trashing your backyard and eating our commons, the forest. One 'RPF' (timber merchant) told us they calculated ten years to restore the hydrological cycle in a clearcut. Once a Forest Stewardship Plan (really? What a play of words) has

been approved, there is NOTHING that can stop it, excepting infractions on First nations values or if the Province has not fulfilled its duty to consult. If this depresses you, so it should, because we are going to all have to pipe up together. The planet is cooking. No more denying it.

ANGIE HERLIHY, GRAND FORKS, BC

### When the Sleeper Awakes

**N**ews from family in Holland is that farmers there are now forbidden to irrigate their crops, because of high temperatures and drought. Although Holland is to a great extent built on water, underground water levels must be sustained to prevent the wooden poles that support building from drying and shrinking. While salt water was tried to maintain the necessary level for building, it was found to be harmful to crops. Now the choice is to save the buildings, have drinking water, but kill the crops!

I don't suppose Europeans expected things to get so bad so fast. North Americans should take seriously the effects of climate change, as complacency has already brought us to increasingly high temperatures, droughts, and forest fires. Surely, we will pay heed and protect farming areas from the site C dam and locally, do everything possible to ensure protection of our aquifers, not only from contaminants, but from overuse. With eyes on Vancouver Island's Cassidy aquifers by proposed developments, such as Sandstone, Timberwest, Island Timberlands, and the Nanaimo Airport, how will the aquifers withstand so much additional need for water?

Is it only crises that will move us to take action? While I prefer to think positively, remember that when the sleeper awakes it already is too late.

LAVONNE GARNETT, NANAIMO, BC



*Many of the trees on the periphery of clear cut operations are susceptible to disease and pests that cause damage to the tree.*

# Clean, Healthy Lakes Vital for Salmon

*Editor's note: This is the second in a five-part series running all week that will conclude with some interesting suggestions for Skaha Lake Park with an eye to improving the aquatic habitat there.*

**I**t seemed essential at this point in my research into Salmon in Skaha Lake to read the Fisheries Act, especially to review changes made in 2012. This information brings us to 2017.

The act contains concerns regarding invasive species in fresh water, their biggest concern being docks and boats stored in the water long term. The document has 200 pages and includes about 20 statements which shows protection of the fish related to Indigenous people.

This brought me back to salmon and the lifespan of the salmon which starts at the hatchery on the Penticton reserve.

The roe is obtained by milking the salmon as they pass between Osoyoos and Oliver. I understand that only two out of every 10 can be relieved of their roe and the rest just go on their natural course.

The roe is then brought to the lab to start the process of roe to fry. When the appropriate time arrives and the water temperatures of their breeding tanks and creek are the same, they can be released via a tube into the channel to start their lifecycle in the wild.

My understanding is they will go to the shallows of Skaha Lake and as they mature they



*A Sockeye breaches as it makes its way up stream on the Adams River. Will this soon be a thing that we weave tales around to 'explain about the olden-days' to our grandchildren.*

move into deeper waters. They will stay in Skaha Lake for about one year; therefore, the lake has become a nursery.

They will eventually travel over waterways, making their way to the Pacific Ocean. Their instincts will take them to Alaska where they will mature and produce roe and travel back to the Okanagan to spawn.

This journey is a very treacherous event as they are feed for whales, bears, dogs, birds, especially the eagle and humans. For many of these species, salmon is the critical food to get them through hibernation. For this reason, the \$15-million hatchery on the Penticton reserve releases 5.2 million fry each year.

Salmon need help if stocks are to be maintained – and lots of help if they are to increase.

Clean, healthy lakes are essential for salmon,

and invasive species threaten that.

Mussel excrement, for example, fertilizes the milfoil in lakes causing rapid growth. They destroy the food web and ecosystem that supports other fish, killing them off. A mussel invasion will spoil beaches with thousands of mussel shells that are sharp on the feet and generate a horrible stench.

Lakefront property owners and beach front hotels and restaurants would see a massive effect on the value of their land, a drop in tourism and recreation attraction.

In the next part of the series, I will explore mussels, not the good kind.

*Peter Osborne is a resident of Penticton with a passion for the city. – June 26, 2018*

**R**ecently Director Graham and his wife Donna made a visit to the Adam's River Sockeye celebration. While not strictly within our region the spawning that

was occurring is of importance as an example of what 'could' occur with our own Kokanee spawning creeks and thus a model to pay attention to. It is also an important resource

for all British Columbians. As a result the Adam's River material is included here for your pleasure and information.



# Parks are Common Currency

By Brian Horejsi – Common Ground  
July 19, 2018

July 21 is Parks Day across Canada. I urge you to give some thought to the places we call parks, to the benefits they deliver, and to the “idea” of park: Why we like them, why we need them, and why we need more and more well-protected parks.

Imagine, “something” that can be shared by, and is “owned” by, every citizen, rich or poor, employed or not, rural or urban, for you today, and for generations to come. Parks Day should be a day to celebrate.

As society has grown and the value of natural areas has evolved, Parks are now largely associated, at least in the minds of Canadians, with landscapes that protect land, water and wildlife and still allow vast numbers of people (a seriously problematic and threatening situation) to mentally and physically decompress in a place that is not like the rest of the world, or at least not the everyday world people have to survive in.

Over a century ago, parks, and as time passed and other lands were added to the public list of national assets, these lands were labelled the “commons.” It was a troublesome label for the political and economically powerful; it

spoke of common bonds, common thought, and common actions. Since then the world’s “privateers” have been busy attempting to weaken and neutralize this greatest of all democratic concepts.

We live in a world of strange disparity; citizens who own the public common ground often have a strangely detached relationship with it, yet those organizations and corporations who do not (yet) own parks are acutely aware of the value, the uniqueness, and the inherent appeal these lands hold; they know that they can reap huge financial benefits by exploiting and controlling the allure of parks to virtually every segment of society.

Garrett Hardin describes it well in his book, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” in which he addresses the orchestrated disconnect between the citizens of a country and their land.

By virtue of our citizenship, we are all entitled to “our piece” of the commons, of public lands, including parks. We cannot divide national parks into 34 million parcels, but we are entitled to our “piece” by exercising our equal right to influence the purpose for, and manner in which those lands are established and managed.

This lightning rod, this equalizer, this common share, is a concept that does not sit well with powerful special interests, like corpora-

tions, the arrogant wealthy who desire luxury homes in parks, Indigenous people who think parks should preferentially accommodate their religious culture, and even city councils.

I took this opportunity to write Catherine McKenna, federal environment minister responsible for national parks, suggesting she mark parks day by announcing public hearings regarding the official designation and establishment, and size, and particularly, management direction, for the South Okanagan national park; and make sure the park was subject to entirely professional public service management (it can be done), and protect against Indigenous religious-cultural intrusion into park management. The culture I want to see reflected is Canada’s national park culture.

I asked the local municipal government what was on the agenda for Parks Day and I was disappointed to hear mostly “silence” is not an expected attribute, but every city should be thumping its collective chest about its parks.

An impressive announcement would have been a decision to naturalize all of Skaha Lake Park. That would be a celebration!

Dr. Brian L. Horejsi is a wildlife and forest ecologist. He writes about environmental affairs, public resource management and governance and their entrenched legal and social bias.



*Getting ready for the cold weather ahead. The life of our deserts change in the fall months.*

*Located in the area under discussion for a National Park, a snake holes up in a ‘den’. The flora and fauna in the South Okanagan are ubiquitous and require protection.*

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

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## Young People Needed

As is evident in the excerpt from J.P. Squire's September 22, 2018 column in the Okanagan Weekend, Making Tracks, young people are interested and ready to do their part in conservationism and other forms of environmentalism. This is very good news for our parks and protected areas as the median age for many current volunteers continues to rise. It is imperative that young people become involved but they must be allowed to do so in a manner that they choose.

It may be that they are interested in local issues but it also appears that they are very interested in national and international affairs of the environment as well. This of course makes a lot of sense as they are the ones that will be inheriting a planet that is quickly changing and responding to humanity's recent neglect. Storms, rising oceans, fires and other large-scale disasters do not occur on just a local level but are interconnected across continents and hemispheres.

Of course, we always have to be aware of the old axiom, 'Think Globally and Act Locally'. If we can all do a little bit for the areas of the Okanagan Similkameen then we will have a rather large impact on the province as a whole. Aside from the benefits to our region that we will accrue we will also be a role model for other areas. Our young people

need to be part of these movements and take the action that they deem appropriate. Recent actions such as the 'Stop the Swap' agricultural protest and the Salmonid Enhancement projects along Okanagan River have both involved young people.

The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society is an historic society dating back over fifty years. Over this time it has evolved and been active in many issues of importance to our region and its environment. Members and directors have come and gone as their interests dictated. However, we, like other groups, have found as of late that our membership is aging and there is a dearth of young people becoming members. While the society takes on large projects, such as working for the establishment of parks and protected areas (see Vaseux Lake Park, Okanagan Mountain Park, and the current work on a national park) it is always open to projects and issues that members have specific interests in.

If you, or anyone that you know, feels that they are young (or young at heart) and wish to become involved with the OSPS please direct them our way. Have a look at the society's mission and outline elsewhere in this edition. Talk to young people about the need to be involved and the opportunities that the OSPS holds for them (or you).

## Making Tracks - The Okanagan Weekend

T.P. SQUIRE - SEPTEMBER 22, 2018

Black Mountain/ sntsk'il'neten Regional Park won't be open until next year but student volunteers from three Central Okanagan schools started working on trail-building project this week.

During the next six weeks, students from Mount Boucherie and Rutland Secondary schools and Dr. Knox Middle School are hauling, spreading and packing gravel along the first 800 metres of the parks' first trail. Construction of the approximately 1.9-kilometre loop trail should be completed and the trail should be completed and the trail open during 2019.

Mountain/ sntsk'il'neten society successfully applied for two grants totaling more than \$15,800 to help fund this trail construction project.

The regional district and Westbank First Nation co-manage the 640-hectare regional park. It is home to at least nine endangered or threatened species and ecological communities including grassland, open ponderosa pine and grassland savanna.

The property also has significance to the sylix/Okanagan people for its wide variety of animals, plants and medicines along with resources for tool making found in the area.