

OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Spring
2010

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

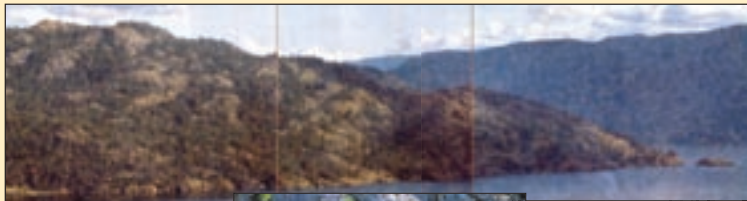
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45th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

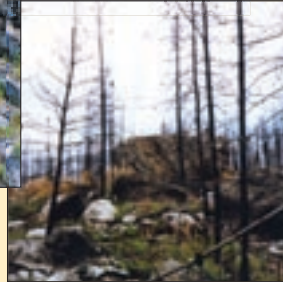
presenting

"New Life in Okanagan Mountain Park"

A Record of Growth and Change



BEFORE THE DISASTER



AFTER THE DISASTER

**A Slide Show by
Harold Baumbrough of Naramata
'naturalist extraordinaire'**

Since the Okanagan Mountain Park fire in 2003, Harold has made numerous trips into an area he knew well. He had made an unique record of the land healing itself as new life emerges.

CENTRE STAGE THEATRE
Rosedale Road, Summerland
March 12 • 7pm

ALL WELCOME Refreshments NO CHARGE Donations Welcome

Editorial

Okanagan Mountain Park is the feature of our 45th Annual General Meeting. It was an early success of this society, the first Provincial Park in the Okanagan Similkameen. The Park has so much to offer – hiking trails, wild life visions of all sorts and gorgeous vistas. Harold Baumborough's slides and talk shows his enthusiasm for his neighbour, Okanagan Mountain Park.

Much has been written about the lack of support – budget and staff of BC's wonderful parks. Perhaps, we hope, some of the much talked about Olympics Legacy will be directed towards improving the conditions of protected areas and the people who manage them.

Parks are valuable. They generate growth. They generate funds. They preserve natural life and resources, they encourage healthy activity. They are living classrooms for all and can promote love of the land among children. Parks deserve our unqualified support.

We must agree with resolutions of the Outdoor Recreation Council regarding Off Road Vehicle use our trails and in natural areas. The first steps of long requested legislation regarding licensing and regulations for ORVs is a good beginning. We hope that the government will move quickly to introduce the legislation.

As with all volunteer organizations, the OSPS is happy to have new Directors. We could use more. Any offers?

We thank all our members for their continued support, and hope they will encourage others to join us.

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

BCs Provincial Parks could be the Best Place on Earth for Outdoor Recreation – but...!

BY THE OUTDOOR RECREATION REPORT – EDITORIAL – FALL 2009

They could be – but these days they are falling a long way short. With the grinding reduction in an already inadequate operating budget for BC Parks over a number of years, there has been a steady decline in the standards of BC Parks' infrastructure and services. For a long time this deterioration was not especially noticeable and it was possible to argue that no real harm was being done, but their steadily worsening state is now becoming obvious to visitors from overseas as well as BC residents. We believe that the BC Government is failing to provide BC Parks with the resources it needs for the trails, bridges and buildings which are such an integral part of this potentially world class system.

Since our parks are one of BCs greatest resources for our health as well as the greatest draw for our visitors and therefore vital fro the economy, we think that short-changing them is very short sighted. Our

parks and protected areas are also likely to be our most enduring legacy and the foundation for sustainability in the Province, which makes us doubly responsible for preserving them.

At ORC's AGM in June the member organizations present passed the following Resolution: Be it resolved that the Outdoor Recreation Council urge the Provincial Government to ensure that the Olympic legacies include an adequately maintained BC Parks system, including infrastructure and services.

It is questionable whether initiatives of this type can do anything to support BC Parks primary mandate of conservation and recreation, including the goal of maintaining their ecological integrity.

How can we brag about the glories of Garibaldi Park when half the toilets in the



*Cultus Lake Provincial Park, October 2009.
Photo by Larri Woodrow.*

incredibly beautiful and popular Garibaldi Lake campsites were shut this past summer, as a result of which campers were defecating around their campsites instead.

This unhealthy situation continues with little or no supervision by park rangers because the ranger complement for the area has been scaled down to just two rangers at Garibaldi Lake for a park which receives 10,000 visitors a year, including many tourists from all over the world. In fact the rangers' hut in Garibaldi was not even opened in 2009!

Keeping our park system in good shape should be a no-brainer and it would cost a fraction of what it willcost to put a new roof on BC Place!

West Bench Property Donated for Park

BY KRISTI PATTON – WESTERN NEWS STAFF – NOVEMBER 2009

Walter Bonin enjoyed watching his family grow up and make memories on his West Bench property, now he wants everyone to be able to do the same.

A 3.4 hectare portion of his property in West Bench was donated to the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen to be used as park land.

“It's a beautiful view property and if the right things happen there, it will be a

beautiful park for all to enjoy,” said Bonin, who has owned the land since the late 50s. “We really enjoyed living up here and I'm pleased to be able to offer it as long as it is designated parkland so everyone will be able to enjoy it forever.”

The RDOS directors voted unanimously to accept the donation of land from 320 Newton Drive. The property is described as wedge-shaped with a deep gully overlooking Okanagan Lake right along the Kettle Valley Railroad trail.

Bonin said he would like to one day see a baseball diamond on the plot of land that he said is close to a sewer hookup and possibly could have a secondary road down to the highway.

“My whole family thought it would be a good idea to do this and it was a good place for it,” said Bonin, who co-owns the land with his children. “We wanted to give something back.”

Outdoor Recreation Council of BC

The term “Shared Use Trails” has suddenly become a significant definition in the context of the Federal trails funding program because a commitment to “demonstrate shared use” of any trail for which funding is sought will be one of the key criteria for eligibility, according to the COHVDC document I circulated earlier this week.

JEREMY MCCALL
– EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The BC Recreation Trails Strategy Committee is considering recommending a system of parallel trails where one trail would be motorized and the other would be non-motorized but there would be no mixed use permitted on a motorized trail. This would be OK if there was sufficient space for parallel trails and lots of money to build them but usually that is not the case. There are plenty of examples across Canada where shared use trails (both motorized and non-motorized) work well. There are a number of motorized shared use trails in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. In most cases it is the local community that decides what trail uses will be permitted. My research has found that the majority of residents in many rural communities wish to have motorized shared use trails.

TERRY NORMAN – DIRECTOR

RE: Shared-use/multi-use trails (These two terms are interchangeable)

The NTC is completely dominated by the motorized lobby. Its members have made it clear that their goal is to access as many trails as possible. They use the term shared-use as a way to access existing trails. An example is the Trans Canada Trail that is defined as a multi-use trail catering to specified trail users. The ATV and dirt bike riders interpret this as an invitation for them to use the trail. The term is being used to get a foothold on all kinds of trails that were never declared or intended for motorized recreational use.

It is only in exceptional circumstances that motorized can be mixed with non-motorized users on a single track trail. We would need to turn that majority of our trails into utility roads for these two categories of uses to be compatible. Even at that there would be a need to grade the trail several times in any given season. I think we can all agree that we have enough utility roads to serve this purpose. These two sets of users must almost always use separate trails because they are, in fact, incompatible; that is, the motorize user employs these trails to the detriment of non-motorize users. Apart from the huge impact motorize users have on a physical trail the two sets of users do not share the same values. Non-motorize trail users take to trails to get away from

what vehicles bring to a trail. Simply put, single track trails are not suitable to mix these two categories of users. They need to be on separate trails. There are exceptional circumstances such as pinch points where the trails need to come together, or other factors such as trails that hardly have any users in remote areas.

To use the term shared-use to include all trail users as criteria for a shared-use trail, now that we have powered vehicles wanting to use trails, can allow for the legitimizing of mixing of motorized and non-motorized uses on a trail as a viable trail project. Once a trail is open to motorize use it is no longer a trail that the vast majority of other users will want to use. It defaults to a motorized trail.

Applying the term shared-use without qualification by the NTC can have real negative implications for the non-motorized trail users.

Our goal must be to give quality experiences for all trail users and this cannot be done on the same trail when it comes to motorized and motorized trail users. We can wish it to be so but we must to face this reality.

LÉON LEBRUN – VICE-PRESIDENT
– SOUTHWEST REGIONAL DIRECTOR
TRAILS BC

ATVs on the Kettle Valley Railway

I am replying to Jim Cooperman’s article in the November-December 2009 issue of the Watershed Sentinel regarding unregulated ATV use in BC.

At the end of June 2009, I cycled the Kettle Valley Railway from Midway to Hope. I found that for the most part the section from Midway to Beavertown was fine and I

encountered no ATV traffic. However from Summerland to Brookmere it was a different story. The section from Summerland to Princeton had vehicle traffic on it from trucks to ATVs but the predominant traffic was ATV, and their thick treads roughened the surface of the rail bed. The worst section through was from Tulameen to Brookmere, with Tulameen being ATV central. In Tulameen, ATVs were being ridden up and down streets of the town with no regard to traffic regulations, to the extent that I wondered what the RCMP in Princeton ever

did. The rail bed going north to Brookmere was dominated by ATVs and I was being constantly passed by them. There was real damage to the rail bed leaving Brookmere going toward Hope so that I really had a difficult time riding in sections.

I am in full support of the regulations of ATV traffic in BC.

Rick Raynsford, West Vancouver, BC – Watershed Sentinel – Jan-Feb 2010

Work Begins on Trail Network

BY KRISTI PATTON – WESTERN NEWS STAFF – JULY 2009

Improvements to the Kettle Valley Rail Trail as part of a larger Spirit of 2010 Trail project are underway.

The Regional Districts of Okanagan-Similkameen, Central and Kootenay Boundary are working together to restore areas of the heritage trail network, known as the Spirit of 2010 Trail, which extends 800 kilometres. The project is being funded by \$600,000 obtained by the Regional District of Central Kootenay from the Community Development Trust's Job Opportunities Program announced in April. It will employ 24 displaced forestry workers, which is the crux of the program.

"This is one of the largest funding applications awarded because it affects so many communities that have been hit hard by

the loss of the jobs in the forestry," said Blair Baldwin, Spirit of 2010 Trail project manager. "When we made the presentation because it covered 800 kilometres of rail trail for the Spirit of 2010 Trail... and the fact there is a quite extensive list of communities involved is why it was so well received."

The work will be taking place around the communities of Penticton, Princeton, Salmo, Nelson, Castlegar, Grand Forks, Greenwood, Midway and Rock Creek. As construction work starts, the trails will be experiencing temporary delays and/or closures and crews will be placing signs up to ensure users are aware of ongoing work.

On the Kettle Valley Rail Trail between Naramata and Penticton, shade shelters

will be built while between Summerland and Princeton, parts of the trail will be resurfaced and rock fall cleared.

"The list of projects was developed in concert with the local trail stewardship groups, so we talked to groups like the Naramata Woodwackers earlier this spring to identify a list of projects that would be best suited. Shelters are being built so cyclists and pedestrians to provide shade under the hot sun or in-climate weather. It provides a respite for users of the Spirit of 2010 Trail as they move along it," said Baldwin.

Work will also be done on the KVR Trail between Princeton and Brodie to rehabilitate bank erosion, clear rocks and repair trestles. On the Great Northern Rail Trail between Nelson and Salmo several of the remaining trestles will be decked and railed this summer.

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

BY ROBERT HANDFIELD – NATURE WISE – PENTICTON WESTERN NEWS – NOVEMBER 11, 2009

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 economic 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.

Longtime Penticton resident leaves hundreds of thousands of dollars to more than 25 charitable organizations

BY PENTICTON HERALD STAFF – NOVEMBER 23, 2009

The late Harold Hoey's support of his community continues through his generous bequests to a number of charitable organizations.



Hoey, a Penticton resident for more than 60 years, died August 29, 2009. Harold Hoey was a long time member of the OSPS and we were included in the long list of recipients named in his will.

The \$5,000.00 we will be receiving will help to support OSPS activities for the future. The Directors are most grateful for his last gift to us.

CONSERVATION

Minister Tours Bluffs

BY SCOTT TRUDEAU – PENTICTON HERALD – DECEMBER 2009

BC Environment Minister Barry Penner toured the Skaha Bluffs Wednesday and was fortunate to see some of the wildlife that roams the area.

Penner said he is familiar with the renowned climbing area that attracts thousands of outdoor adventurers to the city, noting that before he and his wife were married, she used to scale the bluffs with one of her friends.

He introduced legislation that contains plans for one new Class A park, one new ecological reserve and nine new conservancies around the province.

Once finalized, Skaha bluffs Provincial Park will cover 179 hectares of Crown land, offering protection for the climbing area and wildlife habitat.

The access road off Smythe Drive leads to

a paved parking lot that was completed in late summer. It has space for 187 vehicles, and trails lead to the cliff area a short distance away.

Barbara Pryce is program manager for the Okanagan for The Nature Conservancy, which bought an adjoining 304 hectare parcel in 2008 in partnership with The Land Conservancy and Mountain Equipment Co-op. In acquiring the land, the Nature Conservancy will be able to secure the biodiversity values on the land and ensure access to the bluffs.

“It’s widely known that the Skaha Bluffs is a very desirable climbing destination”, said Pryce, pointing out it’s also home to many wildlife species, such as bighorn sheep.

It was during a short hike that Penner and Penticton MLA Bill Barisoff captured a first-hand view of four bighorns (three rams and one ewe) about 25 metres off

Renowned climbing area south of Penticton on its way to becoming Provincial Park...

the path.

Within minutes, the four had made a beeline for one of the rock faces. Within a couple more minutes, they had scaled to the top, where they looked down at the provincial politicians.

Penner said future plans for the Crown portion include the establishment of a nature walk leading to 10 hike-in campsites that could be used by tourist or climbers accessing the bluffs.

“This new area is not only great for climbers, but it also makes it accessible for families as well,” said the minister.

Once the Crown land is officially designated as a provincial park, consultations will occur among the landowners and First Nations on the larger parcel in order for the area to eventually become a park that will cover close to 500 hectares.

OKANAGAN FALLS

District Supports Plans for Lakefront Walking Trail

BY JOHN MOORHOUSE – PENTICTON HERALD – DECEMBER 2009

Plans for a new lakefront walking path in Okanagan Falls have gained support from the regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

The regional district will prepare a work plan to develop the pathway along the Skaha Lake shoreline from the north end of Main Street to the Okanagan River Channel. At Lion’s Park, the path would connect with the existing KVR walkway.

Bill Schwarz, RDOS director for Area D (Okanagan Falls-Kaleden), said the official community plan has identified a possible walking route through the area since the late 1970s, but nothing has been done until now.

A recent shoreline study reiterated that goal, supported by the OK Falls recreation committee.

The three-metre wide boardwalk would

extend for about half a kilometre from Lions Park in the west, through Kenyon Park and Christie Memorial Park to the Main Street boat launch. There are also three privately owned properties along the proposed trail route.

“It will depend on acquiring the private land at the right price, but, once that’s done, that would create what we feel is a fabulous trail network through the community”, he said.

Trail Receives Upgrades

BY JOHN ARENDT
– SUMMERLAND REVIEW

With some help from a number of partners, the Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society has been able to provide some upgrade work this year.

Geoff Solly, a trail society volunteer, said four bridges across Trout Creek were rebuilt and renovated and a five kilometre portion of the trail west of Faulder was resurfaced this year.

The total cost is close to \$1 million, but the funding came from a number of sources.

The federal government, through Western Economic Diversification Canada, provided half the money while the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen supplied 30 per cent.

Another five per cent came from the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society, with the balance from the Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society.

Stockwell Day, Member of Parliament for Okanagan-Coquihalla, said the federal government's contribution is important for the area's economy.

"Our government, through Canada's economic Action Plan, is taking steps to reduce the effects of the economic slowdown," he said. "This section of the Trans Canada Trail is an important part of our community. It brings us together as families, friends and neighbours to learn new skills, exchange ideas, get fit and healthy and have fun".

Dan Ashton, chair of the regional district, said the work was needed.

"The corridor was extensively degraded and I applaud our local volunteers, Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society, who have dedicated years of work and energy to ensure the 2010 Trans Canada Trail remains as a world-class legacy for our residents and visitors," he said.

Gateway Not Just Another Road – Witnessing a so-called "Done Deal" from the Fraser River

BY BEN WEST – WATERSHED SENTINEL – JAN – FEB 2010

This is not just like any other road-building project. The Gateway Project is a federal plan to expand trade with the Asia Pacific region. It's a project of significant interest to every sector of big business and level of government. The plan is to expand our 'trade capacity' by expanding the port and building new freeways and other infrastructure to service that trade. Gateway infrastructure will facilitate building a new pipeline to export bitumen extracted from the tar sands to

Asia, opening up new coal mines, increasing raw log exports and supporting further expansion of the tar sands.

It's a fundamentally irresponsible plan, both locally and in terms of our role internationally. It's a plan largely about profiting off selling dirty energy sources that cause global warming to some of the world's worst polluters. Many activists call this project the "Gateway to Global Warming."

Citizens from both sides of the Fraser are rising up to fight against climate change and the waste of billions in tax dollars represented and inherent in the Gateway Project. They are fighting for community health and safety, the protection of endangered species, invaluable farmland and of course Burns Bog. Your help is needed no matter where you live or how you want to get involved. Please visit www.gatewayucks.org or contact me at ben@wildnesscommittee.org

The Great Dissolving

BY DOUG GEORGE
WATERSHED SENTINEL
JAN – FEB 2010

Ocean acidification is changing the chemistry of the seas. Enough CO2 may have already entered the ocean to cause hundreds of years of

damage to millions of years' worth of evolutionary progression.

A shift in the pH balance of seawater is under way, and it threatens shell-building creatures, corals, fisheries such as salmon, oysters, mussels, and sea urchins, and entire marine ecosystems.

Ultimately, cutting CO2 emissions is the only way to slow down ocean acidification. But the process has already begun, and the oceans may be unrecognizable by the end

of the century. The geologic record shows that the ocean ecosystem took five million years to fully adjust to new levels of acidity. That vast time scale is intimidating and almost paralyzing. Hopefully, the creativity that led us to this brink will give us an opportunity to change our ways.

Doug George is an oceanographer and freelance science journalist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. He currently works for the Ocean Protection Council.

Trail Talk From The Summerland Trans Canada Trail

FEBRUARY 2010

The Summerland TCT Society had a productive 2009, thanks in part to the generosity of the OSPS. Here are some accomplishments: We finished our fourth and last bridge on the trail east of Osprey Lake. Now there are two more biffies along the trail, and we have six picnic tables and two kiosks ready to be set in place as soon as weather permits. Our plan is to place more history, geological, and flora information in these kiosks to make the trail more interesting.

Weed clearing and brushing were done along the trail.

Thanks to the OSPS donation of \$5,000 and money from private donors, we were able to leverage a further \$80,000 to finish 5 km. of trail over a difficult sandy area west of Faulder. The money from the Parks Society was pivotal! We couldn't have proceeded without it. There are still two more km. to fix along this sandy stretch toward Crump, where there is now a picnic ground and campsite along the trail.

About 150 tourists and townspeople enjoyed a 5.5 km. hike along the TCT to Faulder with a return KVR train ride and delicious buffet in October. There'll be a repeat of this in 2010.

Please help us complete more trail! We do need private donations! For fifty dollars, you can add a name to our donors' board. For \$200, you can add a plaque for any occasion, in honour of a wedding, birthday, or death. Checks can be sent to our treasurer: **Geoff Solly, 6803 Nixon Rd., Summerland, BC, V0H-1Z9**

Thanks again, OSPS!

ACTION NEEDED!

Last year the federal government gave



money for trails. That was good, and we received some. But **two thirds of the trail money was given for motorized trails.** This was **not fair nor good** since we are supposed to reduce our waistlines and CO2 emissions along with increasing our own fitness. **Please write Finance Minister James Flaherty about this and MP Stockwell Day, too.** It's important to tell them that you agree with spending some federal money for trails, but that the money should be for non-motorized trails. Unfortunately, the motorized lobby is strongly underpinned by the dirt bike, snowmobile, and

all-terrain vehicle manufacturers. **Please write now before the budget comes out in March.** Here are the addresses you'll need: e-mail addresses: DayS@parl.gc.ca Stockwell Day is president of the Treasury Board. His constituency office in Penticton is 202-301 Main St., Penticton, BC, V2A 5B7. Minister of Finance Jim Flaherty's e-mail is: FlahJ@parl.gc.ca His address is House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6 for both,

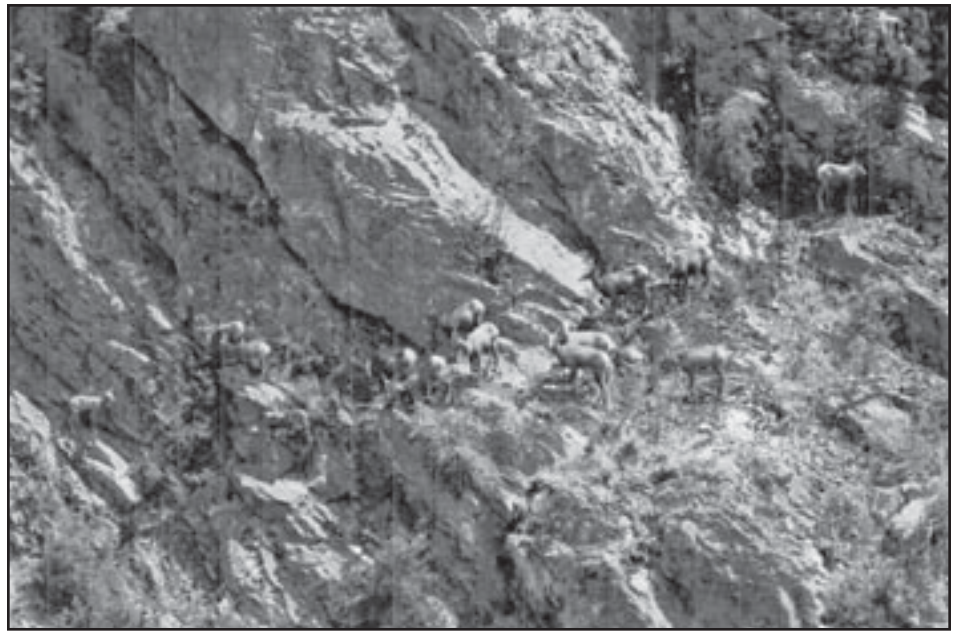
Submitted by Marilyn Hansen, pres., Summerland Trans Canada Trail Society

The Bighorn Transplant in Okanagan Mountain Park

BY KEITH J. BARIC

Regional Planner, Environmental Stewardship and Protected Areas Divisions – Ministry of Environment – Okanagan Region

In 1999 the south Okanagan bighorns numbered at least 450. However, during the winter of 1999/2000, a pneumonia epidemic killed about 70% of these animals. The Recovery Plan recommended expanding the bighorn range in the Okanagan by establishing healthy new sub-populations in suitable but unoccupied habitat. Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park was one potential area that was made suitable for bighorns by the fire of 2003. In January 2007, 34 bighorns were captured by drop net near Keremeos, BC and released near Wildhorse Canyon in Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park. An additional transplant occurred on January 17, 2009, when 15



California bighorn sheep were captured near Kamloops BC and released on the southern boundary of the park.

Monitoring with helicopters tell us that there are at least 40 bighorns from the 2007 transplant (likely more) and the group of 15 released in January 2009 has grown to 18. The most recent monitoring flight

we counted 13 lambs so the population is doing very well. The bighorns seem to have made themselves quite at home in the park and have even been in contact with neighbouring populations at Penticton creek. Based on radio collar information, we know that males (rams) move between the park and Penticton Creek.

Okanagan Wapiti

BY JIM GINNS – NATURE WISE – PENTICTON WESTERN NEWS – FEBRUARY 10, 2010

Wapiti, often called elk, are members of the deer family, as are moose and caribou. Their closet relatives are European red deer. They were named elk several centuries ago by Europeans arriving in North America.

This large deer reminded them of the European elk. Applying common names gets confusing because the animal that Europeans call elk is the same species that North Americans call moose. Wapiti is the Shawnee name for them and roughly translates to “White rump”. Since wapiti are a type of deer, one would presume the males would be called bucks; not so, they are stags or bulls. The female wapiti is a hind, not a doe, and the young are calves, not fawns.

For most of the year the stags remain apart from the hinds and calves but in the autumn all heck break loose and it is called the rut. The stags begin bugling and try to assemble a harem of hinds for their use. Stags frantically run back and forth because some disgruntled hinds try to run off and other stags covet the hinds. Stags joust and injuries occur.

Wapiti are big animals compared to the “dainty” mule deer. At 750 pounds (340 kg.), stags are over twice the size of a mule deer buck. They have long legs. One winter’s evening I turned the car into a lane and surprised 20 or so stags. Though less than a car’s length away, we were not exactly eye-to-eye because sitting in my little car I was level with their bellies.

The herd of wapiti in the south Okanagan Valley summer in the mountains east of Penticton and Naramata. Most people aren’t aware of their existence. They winter from Okanagan Mountain Park south to Penticton landfill area. The wapiti are infrequently seen because they spend their days in the hills where they prefer forests with open areas. At night they troop down to lake level, presumably for water, when the creeks and ponds are frozen. This creates a traffic hazard on Naramata Road between dusk and dawn. Impacts with vehicles are probably second to hunting when it comes to mortality. Several winters ago the herd numbered about 200 but most sightings are of smaller groups.

Okanagan Mountain Park Increase - A Look Back

OSPS NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2000

LAND SWAP AND CASH

One of the privately owned waterfront properties surrounded by Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park has been bought as parkland.

The property is rocky and rises quickly from the beach, but shore-spawning kokanee return each year to that stretch of shore.

The complicated deal: the \$1.5 million

is the total value of the purchase, but it involved a combination of three parcels of Crown land on the West side and some cash.

\$70,000 back to the Crown.

108 acres known at Goat's Peak, located between Gorman Brothers Lumber mill and the Okanagan Connector interchange, between Highway 97 and Okanagan Lake.

25-acre property on Westlake Road, south of the West Kelowna Estates Firehall

The third parcel is 4.4 acres on Salloum Road in Westbank, adjacent to Powers Creek, in a spot that's been mined for gravel for the past 20 years.

However, it's in the Agricultural Land Reserve, so it'll also have to be held until an exemption from the ALR is achieved.

Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park

The bold profile of Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park is formed by an elbow of land jutting out from the eastern shore of Okanagan Lake, between Kelowna and Penticton. The park includes 10,462 hectares of carefully preserved backcountry wilderness and spectacular marine foreshore. It exemplifies the true Okanagan Basin landscape, and is the only large section of undeveloped shoreline left on Okanagan Lake. Its designation as a Class A park in 1973 is due in no small way to the efforts of Okanagan-Similkameen Parks Society

members. Through the Friends of Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park, this Society continues to actively support acquisition of remaining parcels of land still privately owned within the park boundaries.

The cultural history of the park is fascinating. Indian pictographs can be found on canyon walls and outcrops, and old homesteads scattered over the rugged landscape remind us of early missionaries, fur traders, cattlemen and miners who attempted to settle here in the 1800s. Cattle still graze on the eastern boundary of the park.

A wide variety of ecosystems and microclimates are the result of the park's size and differing elevations. Semi-desert wilderness at lake level offsets lush, green forest in uplands areas. Wild Horse Canyon and Goode's Creek Canyon which cut deeply north and south through Okanagan Mountain, are home to mule deer, elk and black bears; even grizzly bears and cougars can be spotted from time to time. Ospreys build their massive nests in the taller trees of Norman, Baker and Divide Lakes.

The Highway Goats of Summerland

BY BRIAN HARRIS
– REGIONAL WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST,
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT,
OKANAGAN REGION

The mountain goats (those wild ungulates white shaggy white coats) that live on Goat Bluff along

Highway 97 north of Summerland are a bit of a mystery. A small number appeared on the bluff in the early 1980s. They were immediate celebrities and have generated high public interest ever since. The population is now 17 and they are commonly seen from the highway in all seasons but summer. Where they came from, through, is not known.

There is a population of mountain goats in Penticton Creek, but they would have had to walk through downtown Penticton to get to Goat Bluff, which seems unlikely. The

mountain goats of Okanagan Mountain Park would have to swim across Okanagan Lake, which seems equally unlikely. So, we suspect that these goats came from the Similkameen even though there is 40km of generally unsuitable habitat between Summerland and the mountain goats near Olalla.

After living near the highway for several generations, these animals are so used to traffic that they appear to have been unfazed by the construction activity as Highway 97 is widened.

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

Name: _____ Phone: _____

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New Rules Enhance BC's Back Country

PENTICTON WESTERN NEWS – NOVEMBER 2009

British Columbia's majestic wilderness has long proven to be an irresistible lure for outdoor enthusiasts the world over and a source of pride for this province's residents. And last week the provincial government announced new measures that will help ensure that wilderness is protected for generations to come.

Victoria has unveiled new registration and licensing guidelines for off-road vehicles, offering protection to both back-country enthusiasts and the province's environment.

The new rules, expected to be in place by November 2011, mean off-road vehicle riders using Crown land will require one-time

registration with a licence plate for their machines. These rules will allow conservation officers and law enforcement and disturbing wildlife. The rules will also offer some protection to the riders themselves, as they will allow police to better track stolen vehicles. The regulations also make helmets and lights at night mandatory, and require adult supervision for riders under 16 years of age.

Perhaps the most telling argument in support of the new regulations is the reaction they have received from off-road vehicle enthusiasts themselves. While a host of new regulations are usually met with resistance, this latest provincial initiative has been embraced by the very people who will have to follow the new rules.

In fact, Sylvain Gagnon, president of the Penticton ATV Club, called the regulations "long overdue." He said patrolling the vast amount of trails in the Okanagan provides a huge challenge for the small number of conservation officers responsible for the region. If anything, Gagnon would have liked to see even tougher guidelines, suggesting that riders should have to be 16 years of age before they can operate an ATV on their own.

While the province should consider strengthening these regulations even further, the announcement last week is a good first step in keeping BC's back country a place for everyone to enjoy.

KELOWNA: Minister says Rules for Off-Road Vehicles Generally Welcomed

BY J.P. SQUIRE – THE OKANAGAN SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 2009

Tourism, Sport and the Arts Minister Kevin Krueger was surprised by the reaction to his proposal to license and register off-road vehicles such as dirt-bikes, ATVs and snowmobiles.

"It was generally very, very positive," he said in an interview with the Okanagan

Sunday. "There were a few queries from people. Sometimes, people misunderstand what we're doing."

Virtually everyone wants the ability to identify those wrecking the environment, and chasing wildlife and livestock, he said.

The changes for licensing and registration won't require legislation, Krueger has learned.

"We can do it within existing legislation. It's underway already, and we'll be doing all of the steps that we announced as quickly as we can.