



Newsletter SPRING 2015

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

Phone: 250-494-8996 • Email: anglerem@telus.net

Editorial

This spring the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society begins its fiftieth year as an energetic and effective Society. As you will notice, our Spring Newsletter contains information on our historic past as an organization. In keeping with this history theme this spring may be the ideal time to participate in a hike or a walk and note some of the history that is explained on some of the trails.

There are a number of trails in our area that now boast informative signs and sites on the historic aspect of the locale. For example those interested in a vigorous multiday adventure may wish to hike the historic Hudson's Bay trail through the Cascade Mountains. There are a number of Kiosks and signs that make note of relevant history. Blazes made by the early traders can still be observed by keen eyed 'tourists' in some locations. As well there are culturally modified trees and other artifacts remaining from the travelers of the first nations who used parts of the trail in prehistory.

There are also signs on portions of the KVR/ TransCanada trail in the Penticton Summerland area. Plaques celebrating history accompany those on local wildlife on the portion of the trail leaving the Fenwick kiosk in Summerland. The beautiful path overlooking Okanagan Lake between Vancouver Hill and Naramata also has historic markers for the traveler's information.

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

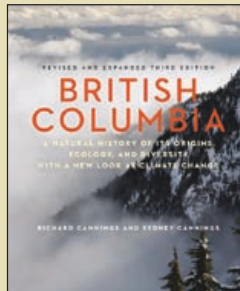
50th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the **OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY**

British Columbia: a Natural History

with special guest presenter

Richard Cannings

British Columbia is a large, diverse province and the natural history of British Columbia is correspondingly immense. This talk is an introduction to the ecosystems of the province, offering a few intriguing, in-depth stories about life in those ecosystems. Based on the book *British Columbia: A Natural History* newly published in a revised 3rd edition.



AGENDA

✓ Election of Directors

✓ Financial Report

✓ Summary of Activities & Involvement

“Beginning Our 50th Year”

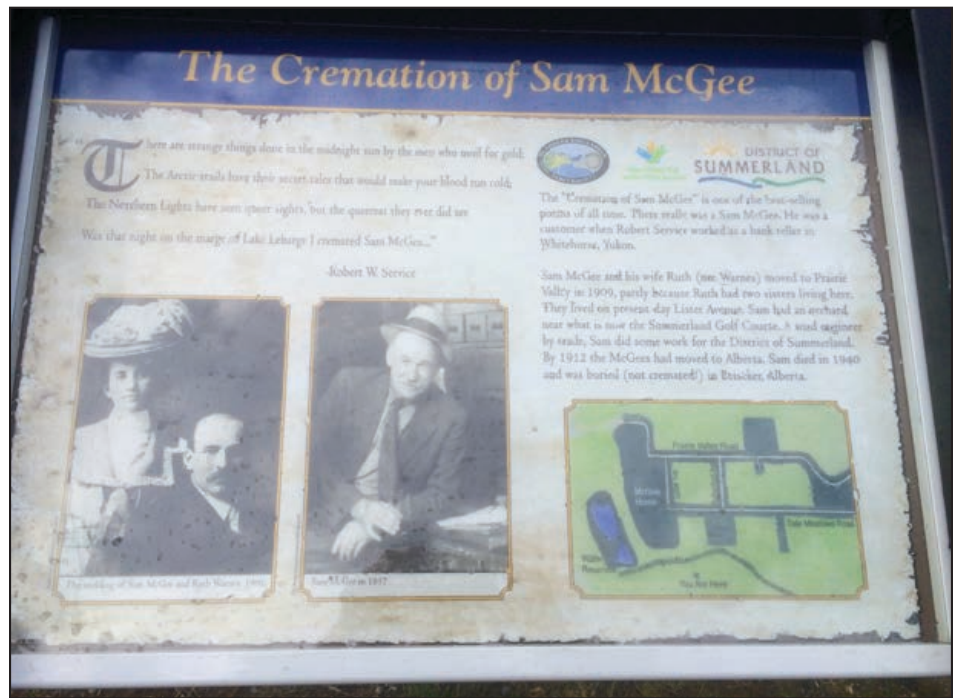
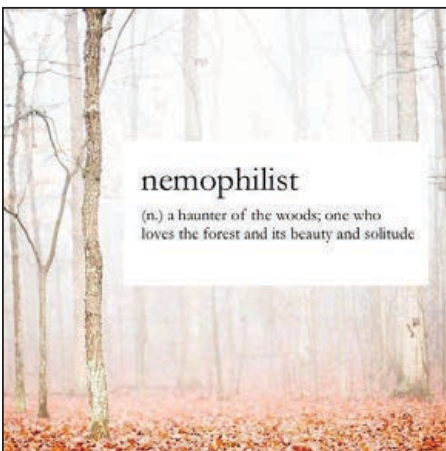
CENTRE STAGE THEATRE
in the Summerland Secondary School on Main St.
Friday, April 17, 2015 • 7pm

ALL WELCOME Refreshments NO CHARGE Donations Welcome

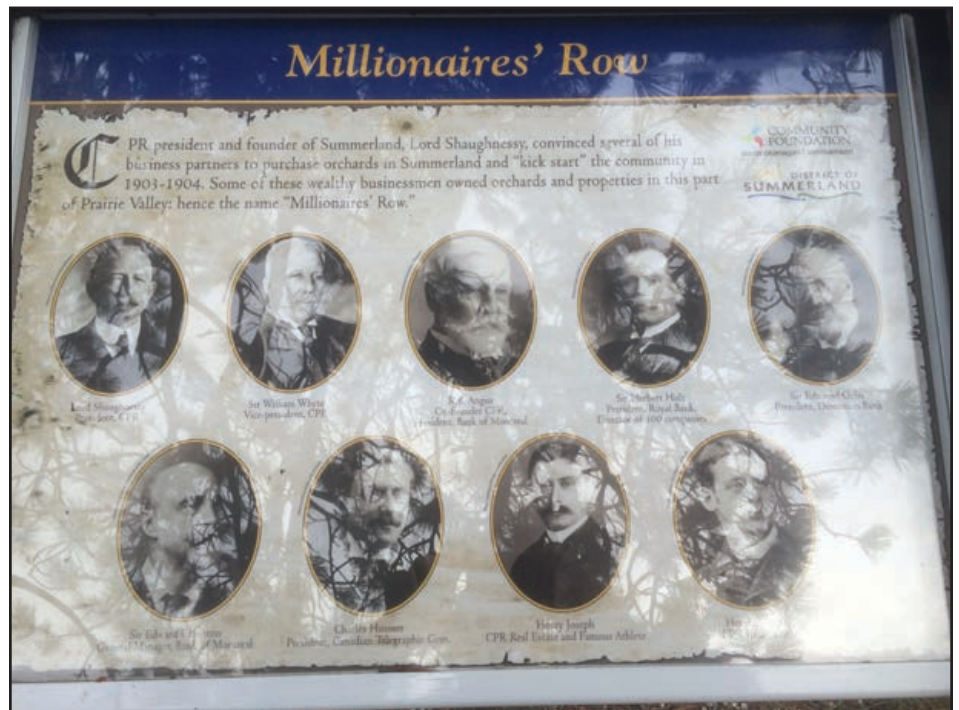
The rich history of our region does not get depicted by accident but through the cooperation of many groups, including the OSPS that have sponsored a number of these signs. Local historians, such as Summerland's former mayor, David Gregory and Princeton's Kelly Cook, have put time and effort into researching and organizing these projects.

Unfortunately there has been some vandalism. Some of it in the form of tagging or other opportunity based marking. However there has also been some targeted defacement in the form of adhesive decals. On one sign, next to an historic trail in the Okanagan, a mass produced decal that implored the reader to "Don't hike, bike" and was complete with graphics of motorcycles, was found on more than one occasion. This sort of treatment is not only vandalism of expensive signs but also offensive to the people that do walk or hike these trails. We ask all users of our parks, trails and protected spaces to respect nature, other users and the efforts to sustain these valuable historic locations.

Lets all take note of our past and endeavor to work together to make it accessible to new generations. We at OSPS feel that we are on the right track to do this. With continued public and member support we can not only celebrate our important past and the parks and wildlife that were part of it but also to make the Okanagan Similkameen trails and wilderness sustainable well into a great future.



This sign commemorates a connection between the real Sam McGee, who Robert Service based his character on for the poem, *The Cremation of Sam McGee*, and Summerland.



This plaque remembers some of the millionaire business men who built the KV Railroad and purchased land in the area.

Steve Cannings Honoured

The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society will be honoring one of its pioneers and founding members, Mr. Steve Cannings, at the fiftieth AGM on April 17 @ 7:00 in Summerland. Steve Cannings was born on March 22, 1914 in Penticton, B.C., where he attended school prior to graduation. Steve married Jean Munn of Summerland in 1943.

Steve was active in the formation of the South Okanagan Naturalists Club (SONC), the Okanagan-Similkameen Parks Society (OSPS), the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists (FBCN), and the Canadian Nature Federation. His signature appears on the OSPS original application for status as a B.C. society. His work with the other members of OSPS resulted in the establishment of Cathedral Provincial Park, Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park and Vaseux-Bighorn National Wildlife Area. Steve worked tirelessly for 15 years with Doug Fraser of Osoyoos to establish the Haynes Lease Ecological Reserve at the north end of Osoyoos Lake, still the only significant piece of antelope brush habitat protected in Canada.

After participating in his first Christmas Bird Count in Summerland in 1950, Steve then organized the first modern Penticton Christmas Bird Count in 1958. The South Okanagan Naturalists Club grew out of this event, and Steve was its first president when it formed in 1962. Steve and Jean were presented with the Elton Anderson Award for outstanding contributions to the FBCN.

After high school graduation Steve left the Okanagan Valley and attended Vancouver Technical School and studied aircraft design at Curtiss-Wright Technical Institute of Aeronautics in California. In 1936 Steve joined Fleet Aircraft Ltd. in Fort Erie, Ontario to work as a draughtsman and production planner. In World War II, he joined the RCAF, first in radar and later as a flight engineer on Lancaster bombers. While training for air crew in Canada, Steve married Jean.

In 1947 Steve and Jean returned to their beloved Okanagan when he accepted a position at the Agricultural Research Station in Summerland. This began a very happy career of 27 years, first as a technician with the Plant Pathology Lab, then as a photographer for the station.

A well-known nature photographer, Steve's pictures were published in many magazines, and in books published by the National Audubon Society and Reader's Digest. He presented countless slide shows locally on natural history subjects and for several years he produced nature movies for the CBC television show "Klahanie".

We at the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society are proud of our pioneers and the early environmentalists that began our society and have continued it for fifty years. We recognize Steve Canning as a hard working visionary to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude to. We remember him fondly.



The majestic eagle surveys its domain from a Pine bough. The wary rattler warns the passerby that it is near. The OSPS has worked for half a century to protect such creatures and other wildlife in the web of life that exists in the Okanagan Similkameen. Join us to help this work endure. Photo Credit: Donna Graham



Bioagents Available for Release in the Okanagan-Similkameen

Invasive plants or weeds cause serious economic and environmental problems in the Okanagan-Similkameen. They aggressively out-compete desirable vegetation thereby reducing range and cropland productivity, recreational enjoyment and habitat value. Established infestations are difficult to control and often persist for many years, costing landowners time and money.

Chemical and physical control measures can effectively reduce invasive plant infestations in many situations. However, these options can also be impractical, labour intensive and costly. When infestations are large and dense or occur in sensitive habitats, biological control is often the only suitable option for long-term, effective control.

WHAT IS BIOLOGICAL CONTROL?

Biocontrol reunites invasive plants with their natural enemies, predominantly insects and plant diseases, in an attempt to suppress weed infestations to a more environmentally and economically acceptable level. **Biological control will not eradicate weed infestations.**

Most of the Okanagan-Similkameen's invasive plants were first introduced to North America from regions of Europe and Asia. In their native range, natural enemies keep invasive plants in balance with their surrounding environment. Some of these enemies are so specialized that they depend exclusively on their host plant or group of closely related plants for survival & reproductive success.

Finding potential biological control agent begins by studying these natural enemies. When a candidate bioagent is identified it is tested for host specificity to the target weed as well as potential for damage to closely related native plants and agricultural crops. This research requires years of evaluation and testing and many stages of approval before the agent is ready for release. While these pre-release studies are costly, they are justified expenditures when considering the potential control benefits obtained, specifically in terms of cost savings from increased crop yields and reduced needs for other control methods, as well as the undetermined benefits to previously displaced native plants

and wildlife.

How of Biological Control Agents Reduce the Impact of Invasive Plants?

- Destroys vital plant tissues and functions
- Increase stress on weeds thereby reducing their competitive ability
- Reduces seed production

Successful biological control is generally achieved by using a variety of agents that attack different parts of the weed throughout its lifecycle.

Be Patient. Biological control is a gradual process. It may take several years for bioagents to build to an adequate number to provide effective control. You can assist this process by restricting herbicide use and not mowing in areas close to the release site. When insects increase in number and the host weed infestation becomes less abundant, bioagents search for other stands of their host weed. This natural dispersal yields a long-term, self-sustaining method of control.



Hound's-tongue (Cynoglossum officinale) – Mogulones crucifer is the first biological control agent approved for hound's-

tongue control in Canada. These root-mining weevils are oval-shaped and blackish brown with a distinctive white cross marked at the centre top of the wing covers. Young weevils and larvae weaken hound's-tongue by feeding primarily on the root, but they have also been observed to attack other parts of the plant. These bioagents are extremely fast acting, often attacking hound's-tongue so aggressively that they eat themselves out of house and home.



St John's-wort (Hypericum perforatum) – Adult Chrysolina beetles feed on flower buds and terminal leaves of

St. John's-wort during the summer, while the larvae feed nocturnally on shoot tips and new leaves in the spring. Adults are a distinctive metallic bronze-, blue, green- or

purple-colour. Feeding reduces foliage lowers food reserves. This bioagent is considered highly effective.

Diffuse and spotted knapweed (Centaurea diffusa and Centaurea biebersteinii) – Twelve bioagents have been released in BC. This brochure highlights some of the most effective species.

Larinus minutus and L. obtusus adults feed on young knapweed leaves and flowers during the spring/early summer and their larvae consume the entire contents of the flower head in which they were laid. When established these brownish-grey weevils will significantly damage knapweed plants and reduce seed-output.



Cyphocleonus achates is a large, mottled grey-brown weevil that feeds on knapweed foliage throughout its 10-week lifespan in the summer. The larval, or overwintering stage, provides the most damage as it tunnels through and feeds on roots reserves until pupation the following spring. 2 pictures



Sphenoptera jugoslavica is a dark copper to black, elongated beetle that emerges in July. The larvae have an enlarged head and a long thin body. Larvae cause gall-like swelling in the roots near the crown, stunting knapweed growth and reducing flower production.



Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) – Galerucella calmaricensis and G. pusilla beetles are reddish-brown with black markings. Adults emerge in May and feed on shoot tips and young foliage. Larvae develop



during late spring/summer, feeding initially on leaf and flower buds and then on all parts of the plant. After pupae develop into adults, they will again feed on foliage prior to hibernation. Galerucella will often completely defoliate plants to the point where they are incapable of blooming.

Dalmatian toadflax

(*Linaria dalmatica*) – *Mecinus janthinus* directly weakens Dalmatian toadflax by attacking the centre



of the shoot, yielding plants with stunted growth, reduced flowering wilted shoots. This black weevil feeds on the external foliage in May and produces larvae from June to July. Larvae hatch within a week and feed from within the plant, damaging growth tissues. You can confirm the presence of *Mecinus* by looking for 'shot holes' through the leaves and pin pricks on the stems.

The larvae of the *Calophasia lunula* moth are a pearl colour with five distinctive yellow stripes along the back and sides.



Adults are pale to dark brown with a white crescent marking on the central portion of the wing. Larvae feed on Dalmatian toadflax leaves during the summer, chewing from the outside edge inwards, which also weakens plants by damaging growth tissues.

Tansy Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) – Hope for the Future: Although tansy ragwort is primarily thought of as a coastal species, the largest provincial infestation occurs at Okanagan Mountain located northeast of Penticton. To date, biological control has not been successful in comparison to the coast. The most effective agent – *Longitarsus jacobaeae* – is a fall breeder along Vancouver's coastline, which does not bode well for the higher elevation sites in the Okanagan. However, scientists have discovered a higher elevation Swiss strain of this beetle that breeds during the summer months. Testing has shown this strain to be a suitable bioagent for release in the Okanagan. A release of this insect is anticipated to occur in 2010 and 2011 in the Okanagan Mountain area. The area will be closely monitored.



The Okanagan Fur Brigade Trail was partially located in what is now a linear park on the West side of Okanagan Lake.



This is the current Board of Directors for the OSPS (Missing Bill Johnston and John Bremmer). Election for new directors takes place at our April 17 AGM at Centre Stage in Summerland.

Barrier-free wilderness

Bonnar Dowler made it happen at Agur Lake Camp



Bonnar Dowler at Agur Lake Camp near Summerland. The camp is designed for children with special needs and their families.

Forty years ago, Bonnar Dowler vowed to build a camp for children with special needs and their families. The Penticton man made the promise while his own terminally ill son was a patient at BC Children's Hospital. Mark Wayne Dowler died on December 19, 1974 at the age of six months.

"I remember seeing all those children in hospital and thinking how much it would mean to them and their families to spend time in nature," Bonnar recalls.

Following Mark's death, he turned his attention to providing for his wife and another son, Michael. Over the years, he worked as

a welder and later as an auctioneer. Time passed but Bonnar did not forget his vow.

In 2002, he officially introduced the idea of a children's camp to the Summerland Kiwanis Club.

"I had been talking about the possibility but had never made a definite proposal," says Bonnar, a long time member of Kiwanis.

A year later he placed a postage stamp-sized ad in the Penticton Herald asking for a donation of land. Florence McArthur of the Penticton Indian Band saw the ad and phoned Bonnar to say Robin Agur of Summerland might be able to help.

Bonnar recalls the day he and Robin visited the future site of the camp 15 km west of Summerland. "At the far end of the lake was a herd of wild horses. The stallions were rearing and challenging each other. It was like in a movie."

In July 2007, three years after the incorporation of the Agur Lake Camp Society, a 99-year lease on Agur family land was signed.

In the summer of 2013 the camp welcomed its first overnight campers. They enjoyed the two barrier-free cabins built in cooperation with Okanagan College, trails designed to accommodate wheelchairs, a portable dock, and a pavilion and fire pit. A third cabin is nearing completion. "I hope we'll eventually need at least 10 cabins," says Bonnar.

Over the years the camp project has been generously supported by the provincial government, local businesses, individuals and organizations, and a host of hands-on volunteers who readily roll up their sleeves to tackle whatever task is at hand.

"There have been a handful of people who were solid and made the camp happen. Beth and Maarten Bontin, Dave and Linda Morgenstern and Brad Hope come to mind immediately," says Bonnar.

Among his memories Bonnar places near the top the receipt of an anonymous donation of \$1,000 with a note saying "we were in a similar situation to you." Reflecting on his journey, Bonnar says, "I was driven. Unbelievably driven."



This sticker was offensively placed on a history sign next to a favorite hiking trail in the Okanagan. Trails and trail users need to be respected. These signs are intended for the enjoyment of all and are expensive.



Richard Cannings

Naturalist, educator and speaker will present at the April 17 AGM

Summerland, B.C. – Well-known naturalist and author Richard (Dick) Cannings will be the guest speaker following the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society's annual general meeting on April 17 at 7 pm. Based on his award-winning book *British Columbia: A Natural History* newly published in a revised 3rd edition, Cannings's presentation will include intriguing, in-depth stories about life in our province's diverse ecosystems.

Cannings has written a number of books, including *British Columbia: A Natural History* and *The BC Roadside Naturalist* with Sydney Cannings, *Birdfinding in British Columbia* with Russell Cannings; *The Rockies: a Natural History*, *Birds of Southwestern British Columbia*, and *An Enchantment of Birds*. *British Columbia: A Natural History* won several awards, including the Bill Duthie Booksellers Choice Award for best book published in British Columbia, the Canadian Science Writers' Book Award and the Lieutenant Governor's Silver Medal for best book on the history of British Columbia.

Dick has produced regular radio items on natural history themes for CBC and taught continuing education courses on birding and nature. He has also led about 50 natural history tours to destinations around the world including Asia, Africa, South America and Australia. When he is not birding, he plays fiddle in a local Scottish country dance band.

Cannings was born and raised in the south Okanagan in a family keenly interested in natural history. This interest in birds, bugs and plants led him to a university education in zoology, including a BSc degree from the University of British Columbia and a MSc from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Six summers as a Park Naturalist during these years gave him a broad knowledge of the ecology of British Columbia. Following his student years Dick served for 15 years as Curator of the Cowan Vertebrate Museum at the University of British Columbia during which his knowledge of nature was deepened.

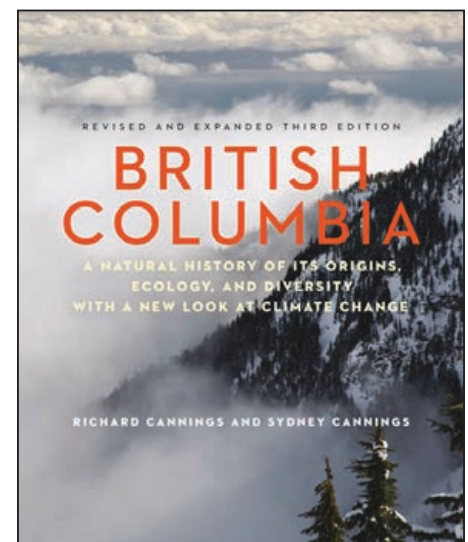
Dick moved back to the Okanagan Valley in 1995 with his wife Margaret and children Russell and Julia. He works half-time for

Bird Studies Canada, coordinating Canadian Christmas Bird Counts, the eBird program and the British Columbia Owl Survey. Dick still teaches a field ecology course for UBC most years, held in such diverse places as Costa Rica, Ecuador, Arizona and the Yukon. He also does consulting work, primarily on impacts to species at risk in the Okanagan Valley.

Cannings has served on various boards and committees, including 8 years as co-chair for birds on the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, 11 years on the British Columbia Environmental Appeal Board and 5 years on the British Columbia Forest Appeals Commission. He was a founding director of the Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Alliance and is also a member of the board of the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Over the years, the Cannings family has contributed greatly to the public's knowledge of our natural history. Our society is therefore particularly pleased that Dick will be our guest speaker as we celebrate our 50th AGM.

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Centre Stage Theatre in the Summerland Secondary School on Main Street. Enter off of Rosedale Avenue. Admission is free; donations are welcome. For more information call Mary @ 250-494-8343 or visit okanagansimilkameenparkssociety.ca.



Dick and his brother Sydney Cannings have revised and updated their masterful book B.C. A Natural History. In it they address our current dilemma with climate changes.

Let Hydro develop energy plan

Independent power producers may soon run dams and turbines in B.C. rivers and local governments may have no ability to regulate or restrict construction of these facilities under the B.C. government's Bill 30.

Apparently, there are about 500 current water licenses or applications by private, independent power producers across the province, promoted as clean and green run-of-river power sources.

They need oversight as, apparently, some include diverting rivers, building power lines through parks and excluding First Nations and communities in decisions. Will they pay royalties for diverting rivers? What happens to the environment? Who "owns" these rivers now and who sets electricity rates when their contracts expire? Does B.C. have an electricity crisis, or is it that B.C. Hydro is not allowed to generate new power for us? Might the Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement between Canada and the U.S. enhanced inter-jurisdictional trade in energy case a need for more energy production (see www.citizensforpublicpower.ca).

B.C. Hydro should be our utility source, ensuring public ownership of our rivers. A two-year moratorium on water licenses to private developers would provide time for full examination of any possible private power projects.

S.H. FITZPATRICK, KELOWNA
Feb. 2, 2008

Naturalists giving up plenty for park

Dear Editor,

Several people have asked what the naturalists are giving up to make a national park reserve in the South Okanagan. My answer to those people is I feel I would be giving up the following:

1. The problem of explaining to visitors why there are a lot of invasive weeds near roads.
2. Explaining why there are ATV tracks in riparian areas, where there are ATV tracks going straight up hills in what was pristine area, and why the trails are getting deeper every year.

3. Answering why there are no burrowing owls, jack rabbits and many other critters which used to inhabit this area.

4. Explaining why the reeds and other riparian plants all trampled into the mud around lakes, preventing many species from using the riparian areas.

5. Answer why the grass in some areas is grazed right down to the bare soil so that invasive weeds can take over.

We may be giving up some free access that we currently have, just the same as those opposed. The restrictions that Parks Canada puts on the area are the same for all — whoever said naturalists are not hunters and vice versa. And while I know naturalists who hunt, most of us buy our meat at the grocery store, and are therefore supporting our ranchers. Unfortunately, I may have to give up supplementing my Old Age Pension income because I won't have the chance to pick up empty beer cans left by hunters and bush parties.

We will all have to give up something to ensure the protection of this area, but the benefits of these losses will be a huge gain for us and future generations by picking

The early history of Penticton and the Lakeview Cemetary is the subject of this sign.



NOTES FROM THE PAST

up the latest update of the National Park Reserve Feasibility Study in our local tourist bureaus and/or by contacting National parks at 1-877-490-2238 or by email at sols@pc.gc.ca.

HARRY NIELSEN, OSOYOOS
Penticton Herald - Feb. 22, 2008

Limit Growth To Our Water Carrying Limits

In his May 19 editorial, Think ahead, protect options, Editor Tom Wilson, acknowledged that the Okanagan Partnership organization has research from UBC professors that indicate there won't be enough clean water to sustain Kelowna's population by 2050.

Despite this, Wilson states the typical pro-growth position that we shouldn't politically limit growth and we won't because we have the ability to vastly improve sustainability without pulling up drawbridges.

If the city can't sustain water to 2050, how is

it going to ensure water is sustained beyond 2050 for future generations?

Unfortunately, in accommodating growth, Kelowna City Hall's strategies of reducing household and yard water use, and it's so-called smart growth high rise densification are futile short term band-aids.

Indeed, whatever water saved is consumed by increasing population, leaving a net water deficit. The reality is, clean water supplies are finite, where-as growth increases exponentially. This means, the faster the growth, the greater depletion, pollution and drought.

Logically, the way to sustain water to 2050 and beyond for future generations, is to limit growth to the carrying capacity of tipping point of water. We face two main choices. Carry on with chasing endless growth and blindly speeding along using conservation Band-Aids believing all is well, until we collide with nature's barrier of carrying capacity. When carrying capacity is exceeded, supreme nature, restores its equilibrium of balance by lifting its deadly drawbridges of depletion and drought to terminate the growth plague and to paralyse Kelowna.

Or, we can voluntarily slow growth, by lifting our drawbridges just enough to limit growth to ensure it doesn't exceed the barrier of nature's carrying capacity, in perpetuity.

One method is to simply have moratoriums or quotas on building permits tied to vital water supplies.

In conclusion, endless uncontrolled growth is one of the main causes of water shortages, pollution and drought. Therefore, survival depends on controlling and limiting growth. So, the obvious question is, why is Kelowna City Hall and Okanagan Partnership malingering in properly putting the brakes on growth today to prevent disastrous drought being here before 2050 or after?

ROBERT CICHOCKI, KELOWNA
– OSPS MEMBER
Okanagan – June 23, 2007



This piece of the past is located at a lookout over Okanagan Lake and just off of the KVR / TransCanada Trail in Penticton.

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

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Donation: _____ (Income Tax Deductible) I wish to receive the OSPS newsletter by email



Making the Dream Happen

BY MARY TRAINER, *OSPS director*

Imagine being able to walk or cycle safely along Okanagan Lake from Summerland to Penticton. Imagine the sensational views, fresh lakeside breezes and no motorized vehicles. It's a scenario that's turning into reality this spring as work begins on Phase One of the Summerland-to-Penticton portion of the Trail of the Okanagans, a potential world-class recreational pathway for the B.C. southern interior.

Sometime this spring, a 1.3-kilometre paved lakeside trail alongside Highway 97 in Summerland between Lakeshore Drive on the north and Summerland RV Park on the south will open for public enjoyment.

The pathway, to be constructed by the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, will be a minimum of two metres wide and wheelchair accessible. A continuous concrete barrier will separate the trail from the shoulder of the highway. Future enhancements could include interpretive signs, benches and shade trees.

There are plenty of recreation and health benefits as well. Certainly, the pathway will provide new opportunities for cyclists and walkers to 'share the road' more equitably in our car-dominant culture. The level pathway may invite more people to get active, and the sheer beauty of the landscape can't help but melt away stress.

Trail users will be able to get an intimate look at the intriguing silt bluffs to the west, and views of Naramata to the east. According to naturalist Dick Cannings, you can expect to spot Red-tailed Hawks and Bald Eagles soaring over the silt bluffs any time of year. In late fall, winter and early spring, water birds such as American Coots (favourite food of the eagles), Common Loons, Horned Grebes and Buffleheads would be on the lake.

The dream of a valley-long trail originated with Summerland resident Don Gemmell, whose superb experience cycling around Lake Constance in Europe provided the impetus for similar opportunities in the Okanagan Valley. He presented his vision to fellow Rotarians, who enthusiastically supported the project and committed \$10,000 to get it off the ground.

In 2013, a group of trail enthusiasts and representatives from the Summerland Rotary Club, local governments and tourist offices met to further champion the pathway. The energy and interest at that meeting provided the momentum to form a society, and the Trail of the Okanagans Committee was born, chaired by Connie Denesiuk.

Since then, support has continued to build in Summerland, Penticton and the central Okanagan. Our society jumped on board and contributed \$5,000 to the Rotary Club's project fund. The District of Summerland allocated \$20,000 for a pathway design concept. Then, in 2014, the necessary funding to complete Phase

One was announced with \$80,000 from the District of Summerland and \$420,000 from the Province of British Columbia.

Phase Two involves extending the pathway through Trout Creek to Sun-Oka Provincial Park and along the lake to Penticton. Funding and exact routing have yet to be determined.

Major portions of a north-south trail are already completed between Penticton and Osoyoos.

Eventually, the Trail of the Okanagans could connect communities from Sicamous to the border. The completed 'spine,' with links to other trails, such as the KVR and Trans Canada Trail, is expected to generate considerable economic benefits. Sports tourism is a key economic driver in the South Okanagan/Similkameen, and the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association has recognized the increased popularity of cycling in its promotional strategies.

With additional support from communities up and down the valley, the completed Trail of the Okanagans will be a popular tourist destination and a terrific asset for residents.

Look for details about the official opening of Phase One in early summer. For information about the pathway, visit the Trail of the Okanagans Facebook page.