

OSPS NEWSLETTER

OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN PARKS SOCIETY

Summer
2012

P.O. Box 787, Summerland, B.C. V0H 1Z0
Phone: 250-494-8996 • Email: anglerem@telus.net

47th AGM of The South Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society

The South Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society held its 47th Annual General Meeting on Friday, April 13 at Summerland's Centre Stage Theatre. The Society conducted a business meeting that was followed up with a wonderful series of speakers about local Ecological Reserves. About sixty members and guests attended the meeting.

The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was the lively and humorous Erick Thompson. He was joined on stage by the Planning Section Head for B.C. Parks in the Okanagan, Mr. Keith Baric, who presented an illustrated, informative and riveting overview of the history, mandates and locations of the Ecological Reserves, both locally and in the province in general. Baric, who has a master degree in natural resource planning from U.B.C., also presented a trio of sample studies, complete with photos and data, to aide with the audiences' understanding. He was very obliging, took audience questions and was a true proponent for using the reserves in a manner that benefits the community in general.

Following Baric three of the Reserve Wardens spoke knowledgably about their own positions and the Ecological Reserves that they were assigned to. Speaking about the natural wonders of Mahoney Lake Ecological Reserve, where she has been the Warden since 2000, was Eva Durance. Durance was ably assisted by, her co-warden, Kathryn McCourt. The wardens detailed the shrinkage of the lake, human and animal visitors and the scientific data that has been collected there.

Laurie Rockwell, a long time resident of Summerland and warden of the Trout Creek

Ecological Reserve presented next. He spoke about the calm, and to a degree spiritual, nature of the reserve. He also discussed biological studies conducted by a graduate student utilizing data and observations regarding leaves from the reserve. Rockwell invited the public to visit the Trout Creek Ecological Reserve, located south of the Summerland Golf Course, but admonished the audience to keep to the trails and do no damage while there.

Completing the evening of presentations was Warden Don Guild who organized the speakers for the event. Guild, also a director of O.S.P.S., is in charge of Big White and Browne Lake Ecological Reserves. He spoke about the need for conservation, study and public education as well as the good relationship that he has had with the adjacent ski resort at Big White and how they have assisted him. Excellent pictures and maps assisted Guild in his presentation.

Along with the acclimation of all members nominated for director, a report on the activities of the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society during 2011 was presented as part of the business meeting. During this presentation director Bill Johnson delivered a tribute, to the recently departed president of the society, Harold King. Other important activities reported during this eventful 2011 included:

March 2011 -Sponsored Meadow Lark Festival and granted permission to use OSPS Logo; Copies of the MOT Cycling Policy Guides distributed to various cycle clubs,

continued on next page...

EDITORIAL

You are probably very familiar with the way in which our parks, large and small, are celebrated and used for positive images by local, provincial and national governments in our country. It seems that anniversaries, new openings and expansions of parks always come complete with press opportunities, laudatory statements and self congratulations on the part of the government in power at the time. Lets face it, parks are feel good, positive images. They are often depicted as precious jewels in a system responsive to social, environmental or animal welfare concerns.

So this begs the question, when are parks not the precious jewels in the jurisdiction's crown as they are often depicted? It would appear that the answer to this question is that they are not valued in this manner when it suits a government not to do so. Over the past year examples of this devaluation have abounded. In the South Okanagan the regional district chose to conduct a trail inventory using inaccurate maps and a focus group with unbalanced interests. The proponents of motorized vehicles on the forests trails greatly outnumbered the folks with interest in maintaining the walking, equestrian and cycling designation for some trails including the local sections of the nation wide Trans Canada Trail.

The current provincial government has turned its back on vital participation that would allow a study for the proposed South Okanagan National Park to go ahead. This decision was explained, or justified, using some very loose and fast sleight of hand with information on community support of the

continued on next page...

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

...AGM continued from front page

including one in Alberta, and highway maintenance organizations

March 2011 AGM B.C. -Documentary filmmaker Jeff Turner introduced his 50-minute film The Bear Man of Kamchatka , and answered many questions from the audience after the screening. Newsletter and AGM presented information on the HBC and Brigade Heritage trail upgrades occurring in the Cascade and Fraser areas.

April 2011 -Organized a tour to Twin Lakes/ White Lake area re; the Nature Trust's request for funds to purchase property; \$10 000.00 donated to Trust.

May 2011 - A bronze plaque (bearing Irving and Doreen Adams's names) is to be affixed to a rock for positioning in the Adams's bird sanctuary in Peach Orchard. OSPS agreed to pay to affix the plaque to the rock. , OSPS became a member of the BC Lake Stewardship Society, OSPS joined the Similkameen Trails Society.

June 2011- Grasslands tour for OSPS directors re: National Park

August 2011 – Operated a booth at the Rock Creek Fair; discussion on water and the use of it

in the Boundary Country was of great interest.

October 2011 – Sponsored the signage for the HBC Brigade Trail in Summerland's linear park (in Garnett Valley near Priest's Camp); director attended the community celebration of the trail (a great walking or hiking excursion)

November 2011 – Newsletters in Summer and Fall addressed the issue of trail use by motorized vehicles, Fall newsletter included an article from Marilyn Hansen of the Trans-Canada Trail Society (Summerland)

December 2011 -sent a letter to Mayor Janice Perrino (Summerland) expressing support for the completion of a non-motorized path from Trout Creek to Lower Town, and a letter to the RDOS expressing support for the entire project.; director attended an Open House on the proposed Shinish Creek Wind Project outside Summerland; - director noted the increase in extensive timber-pile burning on Crown land behind Summerland and release of carbon into atmosphere; two directors assigned to serve on the South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park Network – Citizens' Committee., RDOS director Allan Patton contacted re; need for OSPS representation on the RDOS Trails Management Committee (a director attended meeting).

...Editorial continued from front page

project. Likewise the provincial government has been discussing the change in definition for Protected Areas, a designation that has always allowed for the future consideration and security of important lands not fully converted to parks. It appears that now the protection may not extend to the timber, habitat or water security in these areas.

Of course at the national level the government is restructuring everything from the fishing industry to environmental protection through the revision of regulation processes and requirements. Fewer staff, and less regulation and enforcement, could result in all sorts of unforeseen complications. Its not just crude oil pipelines and coastal tankers that endanger our lands. Consider the outcome of the Fish Lake / Taseko Mining dispute if there was no impartial oversight. If processes fail there where else is endangered?

It seems that the mantra of the economy and jobs drives this disregard for conservation processes that have been established in the past. But the quick fix, short-term manner of these decisions endangers the economy and job prospects that could be developed through incorporating the true value of our lands and resources into the planning. For example in the South Okanagan a goodly amount of money has gone into upgrading the Trans-Canada Trail to accommodate bicycles. A good trail network is being envisioned and developed for the north-south corridor along the side of the lakes. These resources in our beautiful communities will bring riders and in the long run be much more sustainable than allowing a free-for-all to occur.

Likewise at the more senior levels, governments need to take care of lands, protect our resources for everyone and think long term. The world is shifting and we currently have a set of resources that much of the rest of the planet does not have. For the sake of ourselves, our children and generations not yet born we all must value our parks and wilderness as jewels worth protecting and preserving. It will be the government that does this, and ceases attacking what has already been established, that can truly celebrate the parks at a press conference.



Act's repeal could end 'most' reviews

NINETY-NINE PER CENT OF ASSESSMENTS ARE FOR PROJECTS WITH LITTLE RISK, MINISTER SAYS

BY MIKE DE SOUZA *Vancouver Sun, Saturday, June 16, 2012*

OTTAWA – Up to 5,000 federal environmental assessments of economic projects are conducted every year under existing laws, but the Harper government's proposal to repeal the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act could eliminate "most" of those reviews, Environment Minister Peter Kent says.

Kent also said he didn't know how provincial governments would be able to match Canada's national standards under proposed rules that would allow them to substitute for federal assessments with their own reviews.

"Under the current act, approximately 4,000-5,000 EAs [environmental assessments] are conducted by federal authorities every year, 99 per cent of which are for small projects with little or not risk to the environment," he said in a statement in response to questions raised by Liberal environment critic Kristy Duncan. It was tabled in Parliament before it began a marathon voting session earlier this week on the budget legislation, which wrapped up late Thursday.

He indicated a newly proposed 2012 Canadian Environmental Assessment Act would "focus federal environmental assessment(s) on projects with the most potential for significant adverse environmental effects."

As a result "most of these [thousands of projects] would no longer require a federal EA."

But Kent said an exact number of projects that would be excluded from reviews would be hard to estimate since it depends on a 'project list' that would be created through regulations that he would draft at a later date without requiring additional legislation in Parliament.

The sweeping changes to Canada's environmental review process are among hundreds

of pages of legislation the federal government hopes to adopt in Parliament this month in support of its 2012 budget.

The changes also propose dramatic shifts in existing laws protecting fisheries, species at risk as well as limiting the freedom of stakeholders who want to participate in environmental reviews of projects, while giving new powers and resources to the Canada Revenue Agency to investigate environmental groups and other charities.

Proposed budgetary measures for the next year would also cut millions of dollars in funding for scientific research and monitoring of air pollution, water pollution, wildlife and Canada's oceans.

Duncan, a scientist who represents a Toronto-area riding, said the changes to existing laws and cuts, including emerging details such as the elimination of a smokestack pollution research monitoring team at Environment Canada in favour of using outside sources such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, suggest the government is on the wrong path.

"It's deeply concerning that the government does not understand the consequences of its actions, that it hasn't thought through the ramifications of essentially gutting the department or they don't care about the health and safety of Canadians," said Duncan in an interview.

"It's ludicrous that the government would outsource the safeguards that protect Canadians to another country."

But Kent said a federal oversight would "still" continue since a federal authority would still have to make decisions in relation to reviews of projects that it is involved with.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

With reference to the Spring edition of OSPS newsletter and the article on power project impacts, WKNA share your concerns and have made a number of submissions regarding the technical aspects of the Glacier – Howser project. Attached (Glacier-Howser Project Techn.pdf) for your information is a copy of a summary document outlining the principal concerns, over above the environmental aspects. Before environmental analysis it is necessary to have a viable technical project particularly evaluating risk factors and the integration of the generation/transmission project into the overall grid system which has not apparently been done in the Glacier-Howser case.

The Ventego Creek project would appear to have similar problems. It is of concern that none of the senior officers are experienced in electrical aspects of the project.

To date we have had no response to our questions from either AXOR or the government.

BRENT HANCOCK

Past President

West Kootenay Naturalist Association

Remembering Bill Barlee

We note with regret the death of N.L. Bill Barlee, a tireless collector of B.C. history and historic memorabilia. He was an M.L.A. for the South Okanagan, a Minister of Tourism and promoter and reviver of early B.C. settlements, mainly mining towns. Hedly in the Similkameen, Sandon in the Slocan and the lengthy and exciting B.C. Stage Coach story were some of the highlights brought to light by Barlee.

Through his Canada West magazine, and the TV. series Gold Miners and Ghost Towns broadcast on a local T.V. station, Barlee reached a wide audience. His enthusiasm for B.C.'s colourful past was infectious. As a result much greater attention began to be paid to heritage buildings, trails and old mine sites. Of course Bill also promoted natural areas as he encouraged interest and pride in B.C., its history, its treasures, and its beauty.

**Comparison between the potential South Okanagan-Similkameen National Park
and the existing Southern Okanagan Grasslands Protected Areas (February 14, 2012 FINAL)**

	The potential SOS National Park (long term projections)	The existing SOS Grasslands Protected Areas (these are leased to individuals for grazing)
GDP: additional Provincial revenue	• \$37.1 million per year (see note #1)	• very little
Labour Revenue: additional government revenue	• \$25.62 million per year (see note #1)	• very little
Tax Revenue: \$ additional government revenue	• \$3.4 million per year (see note #1)	• very little • individuals pay the province for grazing rights
Visitor Spending	• \$49 million per year (see note #2)	• no visitor spending
Jobs - in park management, such as Rangers, Wardens	• 20 - 25 new, permanent full time jobs (see note #1)	• 1 full time employee per 20 Provincial Parks
Jobs - spin-off jobs such as hotel staff, servers, guides	• 571.6 new, permanent full time jobs (see note #1)	• very few
Value for local Businesses and Tourism industry	• National Parks are valuable to businesses, tourism, First Nations • Parks Canada provides support to business and tourism • Profile and promotion of region and national park is worldwide	• no value for business, tourism, of First Nation
Operational/Budget (2010)	• \$7 - 10 million per year (see note #1)	• grasslands protected areas have little budget
Collaboration with Business, Tourism, Municipalities, Regional District and Public	• Formal collaboration with business partners • Regional District/ Municipalities provide and context guidance • National Park complements the Regional Growth Strategy, and growth management goals of Similkameen Valley • Formal Public Advisory Committee	• no engagement with local planning or public • Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for region not meeting, unfunded, no staff are assigned • private land is being developed and subdivided; additional pressure due to new prison in Oliver
Fire prevention and fighting	• Fire prevention and fighting is well staffed and funded • Parks Canada works with local services to support and enhance fire fighting and management with significant funds and staff	• staff cover very large area; minimal funding for • ecosystem restoration which would reduce fire risk
Visitor Centre(s) and Nature Interpretation services	• Parks Canada works with tourism and First Nations to develop, fund, and support world-class visitor centre(s) & services	• no centre, no services
Watershed protection	• Watershed protection/restoration is high priority of National Parks	• watershed protection receives minimal attention
Species at Risk (57 occur in this area)	• Care and restoration of endangered species is required by federal legislation in a National Park. Well funded.	• care and restoration of endangered species is not part of provincial legislation, plan or budget
Government-to-Government Consultation and cooperative management	• Canada currently consulting Okanagan Nation Alliance, and the two key bands: Osoyoos and Lower Similkameen • Strong requirement for Government-to-Government consultation and partnership in National Park management	• Province of BC is not consulting with Okanagan Nation Alliance or any of the Bands • Province not discussing cooperative management with Okanagan Nation Alliance or any of Bands
Public Education, Community Organizations	• Strong, funded support to community groups • School programs encouraged, funded, staffed	• none
Recreational facilities/services	• World-class, well designed, maintained, staffed, funded	• no facilities or services are offered by the Province
History/Cultural interpretation	• Local culture (includes First Nations and ranching) is profiled, funded and staffed in Interpretation programs and Visitor Centres, educational material, school programs, etc. • Supported cultural/historical sites (eg. Grist Mill, Spotted Lake)	• none
Population Diversification (Amenity Migration)	• Young families move to be near a national park (economically critical as there large percentage of the population are retirees and these numbers are increasing) (see note #3)	• few, if any, people will move to region as a result of protected areas that are leased out for grazing
Helicopter Landing	• Not an issue because their landing is not in proposed park area • Parks Canada confirmed, in writing, that flight school activities would be allowed on completion of environmental assessment	• allowed upon completion of environmental assessment
Grazing	• Not usually allowed, Parks Canada is working with ranchers to develop mutually agreeable model	• grassland protected areas are tenured to private ranchers for cattle grazing
Recreational/Commercial Hunting	• Will be phased out over many years to recognize wishes of the hunting community • Aboriginal traditional activities would continue • There is very little hunting in the new park Concept Area	• allowed with permit in the small amount of the Protected Areas that are not leased to private landowners for cattle grazing
ATV Use	• Not permitted	• not permitted except on established roads
Taking care of neighbours outside Park boundaries	• Supports and works with neighbours (eg ranchers) - this is strong part National Park program	• not part of Provincial Park program
Legislation	• National Parks Act	• no legislative protection, they are OIC's that can be changed by Cabinet with no public process/input • Land & Resource Management Plan (LRMP) not legislated • protected areas are legislated by various Acts • less secure protection of lands

Note #1: Revenue/tax figures are based on average \$ per existing National park in British Columbia, *Economic Impacts of National Parks*. The Outspan Group, April 2011. Table 17, page 23 shows the amounts generated by BC's existing 7 National parks: Glacier, Gulf Islands, Gwaii Haanas, Kootenay, Mt. Revelstoke, Yoho, Pacific Rim. This includes impacts at the local Field Unit level, as well as the Western Canada Service Centre in Vancouver. Baseline data is from fiscal year 2008-09.

Note #2: Table 2, page 9 shows parks Canada spending on existing 7 National Parks in BC: Glacier, Gulf Islands, Gwaii Haanas, Kootenay, Mt. Revelstoke, Yoho, Pacific Rim

Note #3: Amenity Migration in the Similkameen Valley, BC, Canada, Glorioso, Moss Associates February

FEBRUARY 6, 2012

Lower Similkameen Indian Band

517 – 7th Avenue, Box 100
Keremeos, B.C. VOX 1N0
Phone: 250-499-5528
Fax: 250-499-5538

Okanagan Nation Alliance

106 – 3500 Carrington Road
Westbank, B.C. V4T 3C1
Phone: 250-707-0095
Fax: 250-707-0166

Okanagan Nation Commits To Exploring Partnership With Parks Canada

Okanagan Nation Territory: Representatives of the Okanagan Nation (Syilx) were among the first to respond to the possibility of a national park reserve in the South Okanagan and Similkameen region about a decade ago. The Syilx, original caretakers of the land, see the importance of protecting the land in balance with sustainable growth. A future protected area was envisioned as a potential tool to help support responsible development, and protect ecological and cultural integrity for future generations.

The four South Okanagan Bands (Lower Similkameen, Osoyoos, Upper Similkameen, and Penticton) with the full support of the Okanagan Nation alliance chiefs Executive Council are now engaging their communities and seeking a common vision for a Syilx/Parks Canada protected area. For the past year, the bands have been engaged in collaborative discussions with Parks Canada seeking shared understanding and mutual benefit. Current discussions are centred on

Txasqin (Kobau, Chopaka, Kilpoola) and the Vaseux Lake area.

“At this point in time, the Okanagan Nation Alliance strongly urges both the Governments of Canada and British Columbia to revisit their premature and hasty decision to abandon the South Okanagan Park proposal until full consultations have taken place with the First Nations of the South Okanagan and Similkameen valleys,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip.

Chief Robert Edward, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, states “Our rights as Syilx people come with responsibilities and obligation to the natural world, just as they always have. Our work with parks Canada may provide future partnership and will assist us in determining what will be the best direction for taking care of our lands. The health of our land, community and future generations is of utmost importance. The lands of our ancestors are an issue always worthy of continued discussions.

The Okanagan Nation and Parks Canada have found common interests and concerns, including water, biodiversity, and species at risk, and integrating economic opportunities such as ecotourism with ecological health. “We are optimistic that solutions can be found”, said Chief Edward, adding, “We have come a long way from our position of opposition in 2008”. The status quo ‘business as usual’ does not provide the Syilx people or local communities with control or certainty over future development within the South Okanagan. We are exploring all available options including the possibility of establishment of a National Park Reserve.

For more information contact:

Chief Robert Edward, Lower Similkameen Indian Band: 250-499-5528

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Chair, Okanagan Nation Alliance cell: 250-490-5314

Have You Got A Minute?

Hello out there eager members of the O.S. Parks Society. We need your assistance. The board is inviting an interested member to join us to take minutes at the monthly meetings starting in September of 2012. Our current ‘minute taker’ has moved on to other society tasks and we need to ensure that the business of the society continues to be recorded and reported.

Should you be interested please contact the society by email at anglerem@telus.net or by phoning Ian Graham (Chair) @ 250 – 494-7617.

“Wild at Heart” conservation exhibit at Penticton Museum

“Wild at Heart” documents the history of conservation over the last century, including the changes to natural habitat, lands placed under conservation, and changes to species distribution. The exhibit profiles the people, places and events that have contributed to conservation. Sponsored by the South Okanagan Naturalist Club; Nature Conservancy Canada; South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program; En’owkin Centre; and Penticton Museum. Runs until August 31st.

ONGOING RESTORATION OF THE HISTORIC TRAILS IN THE NORTHERN CASCADES

Barely visible is the Dewdney Trail that winds its way along Snass Creek in the Cascade Recreation Area of Manning Park. This historic route requires major brushing and windfall removal that will be done by a variety of groups throughout the summer and fall of 2012. There is over 50 kilometers of the original trail remaining today thanks to the past efforts of OSPS. The western trailhead is at the Cascade parking



area off of Highway # 3 in Manning Park and the eastern trailhead is at Forty-seven Mile Creek on the Whipsaw Forest Service Road close to Princeton, B.C.

Three volunteers from the Hope Mountain Centre descend on the Hudson’s Bay Brigade Trail that passes by the scenic Palmer’s Pond. Hope Mountain Centre and the Back



Country Horsemen of BC have been instrumental in the restoration of the trail which this year will include the construction of three backcountry campsites along the 53 kilometer route. Check out “trails” on www.hopemountain.org for more details.

In February 2012 the Parks Society topped up The Nature Trust of BC’s Twin Lakes property with a gift of \$10,000.

Terrain at Twin Lakes, critical habitat for many bird, bat, amphibian and snake species at risk. Image courtesy Don Guild



DESERT

Osoyoos Area, British Columbia . *Canadian Wildlife March & April 2012*

Life in the desert isn’t easy. It’s even harder when that habitat is vanishing, just as Canada’s only desert ecosystem is doing. Located in the only desert ecosystem in the southwest corner of B.C.’s Okanagan Valley, the Osoyoos desert region is characterized by arid, sandy hard-packed ground and talus slopes dotted with drought-resistant grasses, shrubs and cacti. But more than 60 per cent of this habitat has been destroyed. Only nine per cent of what remains is considered undisturbed. The

main threat is urban and agricultural development, which has left the more than 100 rare plants and 300 animals found now here else in Canada in jeopardy. The most threatened include western rattlesnakes, nighthawks and the Behr’s hairstreak butterfly. In 1991, a group of locals formed the Osoyoos Desert Society, an organization dedicated to preserving and restoring this habitat. But its own strategic plan concedes the current rate of local development will eradicate Canada’s only desert within 30 years.

PHOTO ON FACING PAGE:

Feeling the Heat

The desert habitat found in the Osoyoos area of B.C.’s Okanagan Valley is threatened by urban and agricultural development. The only ecosystem of its kind in the country, it’s home to hundreds of rare Canadian species.

B.C. Nixed National Park Despite 2-to-1 Public Support

Published Monday, May. 14
2012, 9:50 PM EDT

Last updated Tuesday, May. 15
2012, 6:31 AM EDT

MARK HUME - THE GLOBE AND MAIL

When British Columbia rejected a new national park in the South Okanagan earlier this year, the government cited a lack of public support for a proposal that would have protected “one of the driest, hottest and most threatened ecosystems in Canada.

The decision was made even though the government had in its possession a study that showed twice as many local residents in support of the park as opposed.

But B.C. Environment Minister Terry Lake defended the decision Monday, saying he felt the level of support wasn't enough to justify such a dramatic shift in land use.

“It is all in how you look at that data,” he said, acknowledging the government had poll results showing about 39 per cent of respondents slightly or strongly supported the proposed park, while only about 19 per cent were slightly or strongly opposed. The remaining roughly 41 per cent said they neither supported nor opposed the proposal, didn't know, or needed more information before deciding.

Mr. Lake said 39-per-cent support isn't enough to justify establishing a national park

in a region where logging, ranching, hunting and other activities would be impacted.

“So, the way I look at it is ... if you are going to make a huge change to the land base, that's going to affect peoples' livelihoods ... then I think there should be more than tepid local support,” said Mr. Lake.

“I know there's a lot of people outside the area that think it's a great idea and I completely understand that ... I support the principle, but I think it's critical to have local support that is more than the level we are seeing here, otherwise it divides communities,” he said.

Bob Peart, a member of the Elders Council for Parks in B.C., said he was surprised the government justified its rejection of the national park proposal on the basis of the public-opinion results.

“If two to one isn't strong enough support, what would be?” asks Mr. Peart.

He said he thinks Mr. Lake and other Liberal members are more worried about upsetting ranchers and hunters than in what the majority of the people in the South Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys want.

The proposal had been under study for nearly a decade when Mr. Lake suddenly pulled the plug in January, ending a federal-provincial process that seemed on track to establish a park reserve in time to mark Parks Canada's 100th anniversary in 2011.

At the time, Mr. Lake said the decision was made because a joint federal-provincial feasibility study “recognized there was a large contingent of people opposed to the initiative.”

That feasibility study, completed early in 2011, was never released, but a copy obtained by The Globe and Mail shows a random mail survey drew 777 responses and “indicated that overall, supporters outnumbered opposition by approximately 2:1.”

There were also several open houses that drew 1,800 people and that helped Parks Canada modify its proposal, changing proposed borders in an attempt to diminish conflicts with resource users.

“Feedback has generally been positive, however, there continues to be some local opposition, primarily from sportsman groups and motorized recreation users,” states the feasibility study.

The report states the park would have a positive economic impact on the small towns nearby, but some logging and mining rights would be curtailed and cattle grazing would have to be stopped in some areas.

It called for the establishment of a national park reserve and said the federal, provincial and first nation governments could then begin working on putting all the pieces in place to make it a full national park, covering about 300 square kilometres.

When Mr. Lake rejected the proposal, Parks Canada posted a notice on its website saying it couldn't proceed without provincial government support.



SUBJECT: HAROLD KING MEMORIAM PROJECT IN PARKS

Hi Don:

Great to speak with you this morning. As mentioned, I believe a fitting project that we could honor Harold King with would be to dedicate an interpretive wetland trail that is currently located at Haynes Point Provincial Park.

This trail (which is partially boardwalk and has an elevated viewing platform) is located near the entrance to the park (see attached map outlining its location). We could install a park bench (with inset plaque) along the trail as well. I was thinking that at the trailhead, a small sign with a picture of Harold along with a description of his tireless work in park establishment and stewardship would also be part of the trail dedication.

We do have some wetland restoration activi-

ties ongoing in Haynes Point and I am sure Harold would appreciate our efforts at removing non-native vegetation (e.g., Russian Olive and Elm trees) to restore the wetland to its natural state. The current interpretive trail is a focal point of the park and receives thousands of visitors every year. The park itself is one of the most highly sought after camping locations in the entire Okanagan, if not the Southern Interior. This would be a great venue to inform visitors on the invaluable work that Harold accomplished for the protected area system.

At this time, we are seeking partnership with, and endorsement of, the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society on this dedication initiative. We were also hoping, if you feel this is a suitable project, that his surviving family be contacted in the near future to ensure this would be a fitting tribute to Harold and

something they would support.

Look forward to hearing from you.

The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society Executive has unanimously endorsed partnering with BC Parks on the trail and bench project in memorium to Harold King in Haynes Point Provincial Park. We would like to thank you and all of the parks staff in the South Okanagan for thinking of such an initiative; Harold was a leading light in the environmental/naturalist community and will be deeply missed. Please let us know how we can be of financial and/or volunteer assistance to make this fitting memorial a reality.

Regards,
Don Guild
OSPS Director, on behalf of the Executive



Plaque Unveiling at the Adam's Bird Sanctuary in Summerland
TOP LEFT: Sheila White, longtime Secretary with the OSPS. TOP RIGHT: Brian Adams, family member and project coordinator. OSPS donated to have the plaque mounted. The sanctuary is on Peach Orchard Road Summerland, across from the municipal campsite.



Heads Up - Coming Activity

The Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society will be hosting a video contest, complete with what have been described as 'Awesome prizes'. The contest will be especially relevant to some of our younger members and readers. It will involve the parks, nature and the environment. This contest is slated to be engaged in come January of 2013. The rules, criteria and other information will be announced next fall. Look for all of the information in future newsletters and on our website.



Parks: The Prescription for Good Mental Health

Over the past number of years neuroscientists have largely come to the conclusion that to study the brain is also to study the remainder of the body and the various systems that are part of both. The concept of the brain/body, and how it relates to its environment, is widely regarded as a useful entity to study. Whether in health, education or sociology the premise is that there is interdependence within the entire being which must be recognized and addressed for beneficial results to be accrued.

There is bountiful evidence of physical benefits being bestowed on groups and/or individuals using our parks and their facilities for bodily fitness. In the Okanagan Similkameen alone there are linear ecological reserves, parks and protected areas, sports fields, children's playgrounds, watercraft facilities, rock climbing venues and all levels of walking, hiking, skiing and biking trails that our citizens utilize to develop and maintain their physical fitness. These various locations and destinations are worth the effort to expand and maintain of only for their great usefulness in keeping at least some of our population physically fitter than they might otherwise be and encouraging our young to develop a culture of lifelong recreation whatever their specific choices may be.

However with the understanding that the brain and the body coexist in a symbiotic state it is easy to see that parks, with their 'nature' and challenges, may in fact be instrumental in addressing mental health and fitness requirements. It is important to understand that mental health and mental illness are not usually regarded as two sides to a coin but rather as a continuum. The individual's

spot on that continuum varies according to the stresses that occur in time and space. While it is true that genetics play a role in a persons mental health it is also correct that the environment can determine whether or not and to what degree the genetic possibilities are expressed. Of course when we speak about parks we are addressing environments.

As with other areas of health, prevention is an incredibly important component. Having a place where one can observe and interact with nature, be physically exerted or learn in an enjoyable manner is a wonderful way to counter the influence of life's stresses and ensure balance. Regardless of the particular genera of park and the group or individuals that one shares the activities with, parks provide that change away from everyday pressures that the brain/ body of the 21st Century citizen is bombarded with. While not the complete prescription for mental health parks and the activities that they facilitate can be an important component.

Likewise parks, and what they can offer, can be for some people, a valuable asset in their recovery. One of the aspects of illnesses like anxiety and depression is that physical exertion and exercise can assist to minimize the very painful symptoms of the illness and make them at least bearable for the sufferer in the short term. More so, the weight gain that may accompany such illnesses, whether as the result of pharmaceuticals or otherwise, can be countered in the same manner.

Enjoyment of the outdoors, nature and the hobbies and activities conducted there is also a great boon for those with chronic or long-term disabilities due to mental illness. The

chance to relax, socialize and engage to the level that they feel comfortable is not something that is a regular occurrence for many people coping with mental illness. Having parks and programs available for these citizens should be a goal of our society. If even some of the suffering can be alleviated then parks will have done a great job.

With ever growing expenditures in all fields of health care and the costs of assisting those with disabilities it makes sense invest in parks. Both social and economic costs can be addressed to some degree through the fitness of the brain/bodies of our citizens. Parks can be a major, relatively inexpensive, contributor to such a strategy of prevention.

Our parks must preserve flora and fauna, contribute to cleaning our air, provide citizens with recreational areas and experiences and contribute in a host of different manners. We strive every day to protect and defend them. However one of the most important goals of our parks may be to contribute to the health of our brain/bodies and provide the citizens of our valleys, province and nation with places outside of the typical. A healthy body will contribute to a healthy mind and a healthy mind will wish to take part in the physical opportunities before it. Parks of all sorts, sizes, shapes and environments can provide a place for this. Whether you walk on a trail and commune with nature, mountain bike up steep hills and down 'goat paths', climb outcroppings or play slow-pitch on week day evenings you are engaged in mental health balancing. Continue on and increase your levels, share the message and get others involved.



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

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Postal Code: _____

Individual (\$10.00) _____ Family (\$15) _____ Organization (\$20) _____

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



FROM OUR ARCHIVES – CIRCA AUGUST 2004

Articles from our past newsletters and other publications are sometimes as relevant today as they were when they were published. For your information and enjoyment please consider the following:

A Vision for BC Parks

Vision and hard work have resulted in a park system that have helped make BC world famous. From the mighty Tatshenshini to Pinecone Burke, BC'S network of parks and protected areas is a proud public legacy. But if we are to maintain this legacy for our children we need to protect our public parks against cutbacks, privatization and industrial development. We must ensure that parks, which are enormous revenue generators, are adequately funded and staffed by the provincial government, and we must ensure that the BC Park Act remains inviolate — protecting our parks for the public good, not private gain. The BC provincial government appears to have missed the point as they continue to pursue an agenda of privatizing and commercializing our provincial parks. They have lost sight of what British Columbians think is the single most important aspect of our protected areas system: to set wilderness areas aside for the sole purpose of preserving natural areas.

BC Parks, Summer 2004

New Model for Parks

Government has put in place a new model for park, fish and wildlife recreation that will protect and expand recreation opportunities while maintaining conservation. Under this new model, our park facility operators are able to provide interpretive services where there is such a demand from park visitors. This year at least 16 British Columbia parks will provide interpretive programs — at no cost to the taxpayers. This fact is a testament to the success of our new model. A great deal of information on parks and wildlife is also available to the public through the ministry's website. I encourage everyone to visit www.bcparks.ca to learn more. Our government has made a commitment to revitalize the economy and get the province's finances in order. We've had to make some difficult decisions but I believe they are responsible ones. And with an expected surplus next year, British Columbians will again have choices about the types of investments we make with our tax dollars.

Bill Barisoff, MLA. Penticton-Okanagan Valley

Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection

July 14, 2004, Penticton Herald

Fire and Pine Beetles are No Excuse to Log Parks

In BC, we do not log our parks. What parks need is fire breaks to protect communities, and prescribed burning. **LOGGING IS NOT FIRE PREVENTION**

Several studies in the US have found that logged and roaded areas increase the intensity and rate of spread of wildfires because they leave fine fuels on the ground and open areas to the heat of the sun. A number of their huge interface fires burned ferociously through heavily logged areas. In addition tree plantations — once the trees grow to a certain age — are one of the most flammable fuels in the woods.

December 2003, Valhalla Wilderness Society