

# Wild Lands Advocate



The Alberta Wilderness Association Journal

April 2003 • Vol. 11, No. 2

<http://AlbertaWilderness.ca>

[awa@shaw.ca](mailto:awa@shaw.ca)

## NEW BILL ON PUBLIC GRAZING LEASES OFFERS MIXED MENU

By Andy Marshall



After at least three decades of heated debate, the province's new rules for access to Alberta's 5.3 million acres of public, leased grazing land have given all parties with a direct interest in the land plenty to chew on.

While many – including most rancher/farmer leaseholders, the oil and gas industry and some hunters – believe they can digest the changes, the Alberta Wilderness Association and some conservationists are having a harder time swallowing the approach outlined in Bill 16 and expected to become law this summer.

"The legislation is a balanced approach to access to public land leased for grazing," says Marilyn McKinley, a spokesperson for Sustainable Resource Development Minister Mike Cardinal. "The legislation recognizes that over the years, farmers and ranchers with leases have provided excellent stewardship for these lands. At the same time, it recognizes that other Albertans – such as hikers, hunters and anglers – want access to these leased lands."

Alberta Beef Producers past president Greg Conn is confident the new legislation "lays the groundwork for better communication between leaseholders and recreational users." Alberta Fish and Game Association past president Rod Dyck believes the proposed system "will work better" than the current situation.

But some conservationists point to a failure in the legislation to address other potential uses or priorities for the public lands in question, the vast majority of which are devoted to cattle grazing. Bill 16 will exacerbate conflict between different interests, they say. Still having to "ask permission" to enter public land sticks in the craw of many.

Bill highlights include the following:

- Hikers, hunters and other recreational users will have to contact leaseholders for permission to enter leased land.

### INSIDE

Profile: Veteran Naturalist Dorothy Dickson.....	4
Consultation or Manipulation?.....	6
Sham Consultation Processes Endanger our Wilderness.....	6
<b>Alberta Wilderness Watch.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Milk River Dam Study Bypasses Established Planning.....	7
Water for Life Strategy.....	10
Twin River Heritage Rangeland.....	11
Milk River an Endangered River.....	12
Rumsey Ecological Reserve.....	13
Bighorn and Castle Get International Attention.....	15
North East Slopes Strategy.....	15
Naming of Parks After Politicians.....	16
Grande Cache Meeting for NES Strategy.....	17
Whaleback Update.....	17
Grande Cache Caribou Saga Continues.....	17
Dunvegan Weir Turned Down.....	18
Rough Fescue Grass Emblem.....	19
Conservation Best Option for Cardinal Divide.....	19
Developing FSC Boreal Standards.....	20
Trumpeter Swans Need Your Help.....	21
Canada and the Buffalo.....	22
Great Sand Hills Under Threat .....	23
<b>Association News .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Wilderness Celebration Spring.....	24
Mural Competition.....	25
Letters to the Editor.....	25
Open House Program .....	27
Wilderness Awareness Month.....	28



G. Houston



- Leaseholders will be required to allow access unless certain conditions exist. Those conditions include the presence of cattle on the leased lands or a possible fire hazard.
- Leaseholders may restrict all motorized access.
- To promote better contact between leaseholders and the public, a Web site will be set up containing leaseholder contact information. Searches to find a contact for a parcel of land will be possible based only on a legal description.
- In case of disagreements, an appeal process has been set up
- Recreational users or leaseholders who abuse their rights could face fines of up to \$2,000.
- Oil and gas companies will now have the chance to appeal refusal of entry by leaseholders to a new dispute resolution process. Previously, there was no right of appeal. The final step under the new bill will be the ability to apply to the Surface Rights Board for a right-of-entry order.

Acknowledging that the legislation may be a "step forward," AWA President Cliff Wallis says the ongoing preoccupation with access and control serves little purpose until Alberta has an overall public lands policy that sets out what public lands are best used for and what the wider public wants from them.

By facilitating oil and gas exploration on public lands, he adds, the government has set up a new "pecking order" of control over public leased lands. Where previously the ranching leaseholder was first in line, resource companies have taken top spot.

"Still at the bottom of the heap are the environmentalists and the recreationalists. We would like to see wildlife and the environment come first so we aren't creating endangered species and we aren't negatively impacting ungulates and other wildlife because they might be affecting grazing."

Assertions by Premier Ralph Klein that nothing should stand in the way of oil and gas development are insulting to ranchers, the environment and the broader public, Wallis says. And although he agrees that leaseholders generally have managed public lands quite well, he is worried some will abuse the control they still have over them and will be able to deny access for no good reason.

"The more that laws like this are passed, the more entrenched among leaseholders is the notion that the land is theirs and that they have the right to refuse access. The 'reasonable grounds' for refusal are not well enough defined," Wallis says. "We will continue to push for a public lands policy."

Hyland Armstrong, a rancher with two grazing leases in the Elkwater area of southeastern Alberta and an AWA director with strong environmental interests, takes a similar tack, suggesting that public lands have values beyond grazing that must be taken

equally into account. These values include recreation, oil and gas, watershed management, landscape enjoyment and wildlife management. At present, these differing values predictably lead to conflict.

The true solution to the long-standing and emotional dilemma of establishing public policy for public lands will only occur when a focus is placed on the land itself and what it can tolerate, rather than on the rights of any segment of society, he states.

Efforts are being made in the United States, through such groups as the Society for Range Management, to establish quantifiable guidelines for the maximum use of public land, from grazing to hiking and oil and gas activities. For example, they include carrying capacity guidelines for the number of cattle that should be run on a particular piece of land to maintain its health, Armstrong points out. What about a similar carrying capacity for hiking and other activities?

"To manage this land requires a partnership. The public are part of this partnership – I can't say I want to lock my gates to hikers and the oil and gas industry," Armstrong explains. "We have to sit down and find guidelines. Bill 16 will do the exact opposite."

By that, he means various users will continue to be obsessed with their rights, rather than devising better ways to preserve the land, much of it the finest landscape and sustaining the most productive wildlife populations in the province.

That theme is picked up by environmental activist and AWA

member Dorothy Dickson. She is unhappy with an AWA press release issued after Bill 16 was announced referring to a "fundamental right" to access. "I think we must always stipulate a right to 'appropriate use' only," Dickson says. "Ecosystem protection comes before our self-given 'rights.'"

She adds that the definition of "reasonable access" or, as she would prefer, "appropriate use," must be set by an accountable government, not "at the gate."

Alberta has 6,200 farm development or grazing leases, according to Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD) figures. Because some leases have multiple clients holding a lease, the whole system involves about 8,500 ranchers, with an average lease of 850 acres. About 5.5 per cent of the 97 million acres of public land in Alberta is under agricultural lease. This

would be roughly 3.25 per cent of the total provincial land mass and is an area larger than the Banff, Jasper and Waterton national parks combined.

The highest concentration of leases is in southern Alberta, with the next highest in northeastern Alberta, ASRD says. All but one per cent of the leases are in the "white" zone. Total annual revenue from grazing fees is \$3.5 million or 66 cents an acre. The department notes the new law will not affect grazing permits, licences and head tax permits.

*We would like to see wildlife and the environment come first so we aren't creating endangered species and we aren't negatively impacting ungulates and other wildlife because they might be affecting grazing."*  
*Cliff Wallis*



"The bottom line is that we all have to get along, and Bill 16 is a good start," says the Beef Producers' Conn, a rancher near Innisfail with two grazing leases. Asking for permission to enter land "might be a hard pill to swallow, but people need to get over that."

Leaseholders, in turn, will have to post information about their leased land on the Web site and respond to requests for access. Even though some ranchers may find that a nuisance, "they can't have it both ways."

If a dispute occurs – and clashes in the past have been rare, according to Conn – then the local Public Lands Division staff will try and mediate. If this is unsuccessful, Local Settlement Officers (LSO – likely Public Lands district managers) will hear disputes. Later regulations for Bill 16 will outline a further provision for appealing an LSO decision.

Conn is confident that cooperation will prevail. On his own leased land, for example, some hunters return year after year. "They become like eyes and ears for me." If someone enters the property without permission and causes a disturbance, he can ask them to leave. If that fails, he would call a peace officer and write down descriptions and vehicle licence-plate numbers. But "the vast majority are very responsible," he says.

He rejects the idea that anyone has an absolute right to enter leased lands. He compares the land to a provincial building, which might be termed public, but to which entry is limited. "These are provincial lands under disposition for grazing, they have to be restricted, just like provincial parks are sometimes restricted."

He also downplays assertions that ranchers get a good deal on their leased land and that the ability to acquire leases is restricted to only those in the know. "Having a lease is not the windfall some people think it is. That's why some leased land will remain on the market for years before it is sold," he says. Leased land is on the market every day and could easily be acquired by interested parties.

Armstrong, too, says the value of leased land is close to what he pays for privately-owned land. He also pays Municipal District taxes on it as if it were his own. "Some people think it's cheap, but it's not."

Conn and other ranchers make a point that they believe is not sufficiently taken into account regarding their stewardship of the land. They are accountable to regular inspections by range managers, for example. Bill 16 will clarify further the accountability of leaseholders to manage the lands properly. And maintaining wildlife habitat is becoming a greater factor in their strategies, says Armstrong.

"Sure, we should take into account managing the whole native ecosystem," agrees Bill Newton, president of the Western Stockgrowers Association and a rancher with a lease near Fort Macleod. "The fact that these are primarily native grasslands means

they are suited to ungulate grazing," he explains. "Certainly, we've replaced the buffalo with the cow or horse, but the ones in my area, at least, are managed in a manner that suits the entire wildlife ecosystem, if we manage for healthy grasslands, we are managing for a diverse ecosystem."

Without the grazing-lease system, notes Conn, there would be overwhelming pressure for acreages, roads and other development. "There would be a mess."

Author/naturalist/rancher Charlie Russell agrees. He helped form the Southern Alberta Land Trust Society with ranchers from the Longview area as a private conservancy initiative. Many are leaseholders, says Russell, and feel unappreciated for what they have

achieved over the years, protecting public lands against incursions from the energy industry or residential development. "The future for grizzly lies in that country more than in the national parks," he says.

At the same time, protecting land in a remote region is much easier than in a corridor near a huge urban sprawl, such as exists along Highway 22 south of Calgary, he points out. "Ranchers can't do this by themselves. They need a sympathetic response (from groups like the AWA) to protect land from subdivision and oil and gas."

Among the people interviewed, there is unanimous approval that Bill 16 allows for leaseholders to restrict Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs). "We've never liked the idea of quads and dirt bikes tearing up a piece of land," says the Fish and Game's Dyck. He doesn't feel ranchers will abuse the ability to refuse access if cattle are on the leased land. "We don't want someone chased by a bull," he adds. The fact that

recreational users will have to "do their homework" and contact leaseholders and that leaseholders will then have to respond improves the situation for both parties, he says.

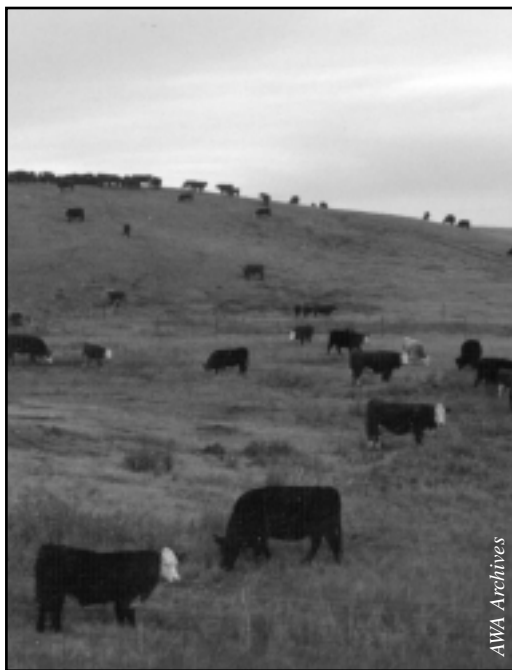
A strong voice of dissent comes from Bob Scammell, an outdoors writer, a retired lawyer and a former president of the Fish and Game.

"The public accessing its own land will now have to go through an incredibly involved process," he says. "The government has abrogated all its responsibilities."

He is particularly incensed with the system of surface damages compensation paid directly to leaseholders by oil and gas companies. Information provided by the Landman's Association suggest between \$50 million and \$80 million could be paid out to leaseholders each year, he says.

A second part of Bill 16, not yet completed, is intended to deal with the surface rights and the whole land fee issue, says ASRD. But Scammell is skeptical anything will be done to change the current system. The compensation should be paid to the government, which, in turn, will pay the leaseholders, he says, but "I have lost all faith in public land management. They've given away all this money."

ASRD would not provide figures on its estimates of surface



damage compensation. "The government doesn't have the slightest idea how much they've given away," says Scammell.

Wallis doesn't consider it such a boondoggle. In the meantime, he is prepared to support proposals for longer leases for those who manage their land well. But the issue of stewardship is more than producing copious quantities of grass to feed cattle, he says. If, however, it means protecting predators and a full range of wildlife species on these lands, "then I think the results are a very mixed bag." And when he contacts a rancher to enter leased land, "he better have a bloody good reason to deny me access."

Our public lands are a treasure held in trust for Albertans by our elected government. This came about through the foresight of earlier Albertans who saw fit to refrain from settlement of lands that were not suitable for agriculture. The ownership, administration and management of these lands passed from federal to provincial control on Oct. 1, 1930.

*The issue of public access to public land is complex and has been simmering for well over 30 years. A comprehensive chronology on this issue can be found on our Web site under Issues/Wilderness and Protected Areas. See also articles by Bob Scammell in the Calgary Herald, April 3 and 10, 2003.*

---

## VETERAN NATURALIST KEEPS UP ZEST FOR ACTIVISM

By Andy Marshall

Dorothy Dickson's husband, David, recently had to remind Alberta's irrepressible naturalist she'd reached the three-quarter century mark. "Cripes, I forgot my own birthday," she laughs, lust for life and good humour still twinkling from clear eyes.

At 75, Dorothy has lost little of the zest that has kept her at the forefront of Alberta's environmental and conservation movement since she first arrived in Calgary almost 35 years ago. "Ty Lund (former Alberta Environment Minister) called me a trouble-maker," she says, those eyes still twinkling. But that hasn't stopped her constant cajoling, questioning and challenging on behalf of the natural habitat she has come to love so dearly.

"I've become more pragmatic as I get older ... I've learned to bite my tongue," she concedes. "I don't like that, but otherwise you don't get anything done." However, whether it's fighting to preserve the Rumsey Ecological Reserve in the parkland region in east-central Alberta or the Bighorn Wildland area in the west, Dorothy is still prepared to talk about her "line-in-the-sand" approach: "I'm a bit of a terrier when I get my teeth into something," she says with well-toned understatement.

Her voice reveals her 30 years in England, where she grew up and later became a physical education teacher, a wife and a mother of two children before the family's departure for Canada in 1963.

Although she's quite short and trim – she has lost 15 pounds through a low-fat diet in the past four years – Dorothy is not someone you'd ignore easily. Perhaps it was the sports and athletics she was so keen on as a young girl, or the drama and singing that she performed with gusto for much of her life in England and in Canada, that give her that animated, authoritative demeanour.

Dorothy has long marched – or more likely skipped and danced – to her own drumbeat. With her Irish-born husband, she has an email address with a Celtic word meaning "place on the hill where the sun shines." It aptly describes the converted farmhouse and three-acre parcel they have shared with their horses at Kneehill Valley, about 23 kilometres southeast of Innisfail, since 1985.

For the light Dorothy has directed into dozens of organizations, from the Alberta Wilderness Association to the Calgary Eco Centre, from the Canadian Nature Federation to the Red Deer River Naturalists, she has, in her special way, also been an appreciated patch of sunshine

on the hill of conservationist struggles. And even though she and David, who last year celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, are, with some regret, about to move into a Red Deer condominium to be closer to the urban services people are likely to require as they grow older, her passion to remain involved is far from setting.

"It's a very hard decision to move," she says. But using an expression she's heard from other environmentalists in other practical contexts, she and David are "applying the precautionary principle."

With fewer chores to worry about, Dorothy believes she will have even more time to pursue her passions. Check her diary. This month, for example, she's giving a talk on the importance of biodiversity to a group in Stettler. It's one more step on the trail of speaking and teaching she has followed with such enthusiasm since becoming a physical education teacher in England as a young woman.

Throughout her life in Canada, Dorothy has placed a high value on education and presentations to school classes. Only a couple of years after her arrival in Calgary in 1968, she built on the efforts of young people and helped found the Eco Centre to launch an important trend in urban environmental activism for recycling. Along with three other founders, she was able through the Eco Centre to propose and have accepted changes in Alberta's science and social studies curricula to promote better awareness of our water, air, earth and wildlife among young people. In 1980, she received an Alberta Achievement Award for her work in environmental education.

For this coming fall, Dorothy has committed to teaching Shakespearean staging techniques and music to high school students in Lacombe, confirming her belief in drama as a highly effective teaching tool and her love of young people. Originating early in her career, this



N. Douglas



belief found expression through the branch of the Canadian Child and Youth Drama Association that she helped start at Dalhousie University soon after the family's arrival in Halifax in 1963.

Dorothy has taken leadership roles in numerous boards and committees, small and large. She has also sat on several provincial advisory boards, adding her insistent voice to the formulation of government positions, including the Eastern Slopes Policy. She estimates at least 40 per cent of her "environmental time" in the last 30 years has been spent working on parks policies and planning, including being on the Banff-Bow Valley Study Steering Committee. Among many other activities she has kept up since moving from Calgary is her work as a volunteer steward for the Innisfail Natural Area.

A testament to her ability to mix with ease with a wide range of people has been the warm acceptance granted her by the farming community around Kneehill where she lives, despite jaundiced views about environmental activism. In fact, many farming families have sought her advice on water or oil exploration issues. Through a local association, she has been able to pass on information about birds and wildlife.

Born in Sidney, Australia, Dorothy developed an affinity for her natural surroundings at an early age. The middle child of her British-born father, who was working as an accountant for the company building the Sidney Harbour Bridge, she recalls talking to the banana tree in their back garden. The family moved back to England when she was five, and the trip back included a dramatic journey through the dust storms of the Canadian prairies in the early 1930s.

Another influential memory is that of her teenage wanderings during the summer months across the Yorkshire Moors in northern England. While they enjoyed visiting the countryside and her mother took delight in birds and flowers, Dorothy says she was the only one who pursued a scientific interest in natural history. "I knew the birds and flowers by name." She also remembers her parents encouraging volunteerism.

As so many immigrants are when they come to Calgary, she was immediately struck by the magnificence of the mountain and prairie landscape. And, like other newcomers of that era, she soon saw the threats from industrial encroachment and apathy that pushed her into a life of activism.

While stimulating, that life can be wearying and discouraging, too. Dorothy even admits to having lost her natural joie de vivre. She remembers sleepless nights and the cloud of stress hanging over her during a particularly busy time in the 1980s.

She has advice for others in the same boat: "Whenever I think I



*Dorothy Dickson leading a hike in Rumsey*

haven't time to complete tasks, but I've got to do them anyway, otherwise they won't get done, then I know I've gone over the top," she says.

David, her loving companion of 51 years, has also been a source of strength. Since the moment they met, they have shared a joy in the outdoors. In the 1980s, they developed a passion for the Arctic after several visits there.

Today, she still credits him for helping prepare her for the cut and thrust of environmental activism and for her meticulously careful approach to issues. "He is known for his meticulous research. His way of thinking challenged me always to get my facts right," she says of David, a specialist in embryology research throughout his career in Canada.

Dorothy has written many articles and contributed text for five books by photographer George Brybicin and the upcoming book on the Bighorn Wildland by AWA. Although she's reluctant to talk about them, she has received several prestigious awards, including the Douglas H. Pimlott Award and Honorary Life Membership in the Canadian Nature Federation. In 1999 Alberta Environment gave her an Alberta Volunteer Stewards Award, and last year she accepted an Honorary Life Membership in the Federation of Alberta Naturalists.

Her experiences and view of the world have helped inform a particular approach to environmental issues. Her battles against environmental degradation are based on concern not so much for the impact on humans, but on all creatures and plants.

"I am a naturalist and come at issues from the point of view of the species," she explains. "This is not sentimentalism, but a moral standpoint. The main reason for protecting other species is that they have as much right on earth as we do."

While the view is still strong, particularly in this part of the world, that God put humankind on earth for stewardship of creation, Dorothy would rather avoid these concepts. God or creation are not part of her lexicon. Instead, she puts it this way: "I cannot share the belief that other species are on earth for humans to use as we wish." That's not to say humans should not fully savour the richness of the diversity of life around them. "I still get a vast amount of pleasure from nature," she says. "I feel sorry for environmentalists who are not naturalists."

She is still able to hike for quite long distances and will sit for hours in a natural area. This is undoubtedly a reason for her longevity and still active engagement with the world around her. "You will lose your drive if you don't get out there and just enjoy it," she adds simply.

*"I am a naturalist and come at issues from the point of view of the species. This is not sentimentalism, but a moral standpoint. The main reason for protecting other species is that they have as much right on earth as we do."*



## CONSULTATION OR MANIPULATION?

Dr. Ken Nichol

*Following our article on the state of public consultation was this weekly report from the Legislature, November 6, 2002 by the leader of the Alberta Liberals.*



The Klein government often brags about its "consultation" with the public on major issues.

In theory, public consultation leads to better government policy and better government decisions. Unfortunately, this government's "consultation" process is flawed and insincere.

On Tuesday, Environment Minister Lorne Taylor finally "consulted" with two world-renowned Alberta scientists on the issue of global warming. Ralph Klein skipped the meeting.

Minister Taylor was finally shamed into "consulting" with the scientists after 67 of them wrote to the Premier urging him to consider the overwhelming scientific evidence on the risks of global warming. But don't expect the government to suddenly start admitting that their plan to increase emissions is bad for the environment. We've seen the sad results of this kind of consultation before.

### "CONSULTING" DOESN'T MEAN LISTENING

Last summer the Official Opposition obtained a copy of a forestry report done for the government by seven scientists. It showed that Alberta's forestry sector is at serious risk unless a science-based approach is adopted to predict forest growth.

The government had promised to release the report for public comment, but a year later it was still on a shelf. Months after we leaked the document to the media, a sanitized version was quietly released without fanfare.

One of the statements removed from the final report was this: "This report was finalized without review by any of the major stakeholders."

It remains to be seen whether or not the government will actually act on any of the recommendations that they tried so hard to suppress.

### HERITAGE FUND SURVEY A SHAM

Another recent example of the government's insincere consultation process is the survey being conducted on the Heritage Trust Fund. Albertans are being asked a series of misleading questions through an Internet survey and a mail-in survey.

The problem is two-fold. First of all, the questions are misleading. For example, the first question is really a trick question that leads Albertans to believe that if they want the fund to be saved for the future, they should strongly agree with the question. However, weasel words like "primarily" give lots of wiggle room if the government decides to create secondary purposes for the fund.

Secondly, the method of gathering the information is unscientific and unreliable. It's well known that Internet surveys are open to abuse, and people can answer the survey many times over. Ditto for mail-in surveys.

If the government were really serious about incorporating Albertans' views into government policy and decisions, it would actually heed the advice of scientists on environmental issues, and it would ensure that all surveys of the public were scientifically conducted.

## SHAM CONSULTATION PROCESSES ENDANGER OUR WILDERNESS

By Val Allen, Crowsnest Environmental Action Society

Many Albertans have an affinity for beautiful, wild places. We rely on our government to take measures and create laws that will protect our wilderness, lakes, parks and animals. We know that responsible stewardship is key to our own well-being.

However, the government that we have so entrusted has failed us. Heedless of public sentiment and ruthless in their quest to exploit our resources, government forges ahead with no sense of accountability.

Alberta's poor environment record is becoming an international disgrace and a great concern to environment groups. Many disillusioned groups are ready to abandon the sham consultation processes as not being worth their time or effort.

Alberta's conservation groups, including the Crowsnest Environmental Action Society and Alberta Wilderness Association, have identified numerous cases of disregard for public input. Some examples are as follows:

- The abandonment of recommendations on the Water Act
- Failure of the government to implement the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy, even after it was accepted by industry representatives
- The refusal by the province to heed consensus proposals under the Special Places process
- Detrimental changes to the management plan for the Bighorn Wildland recreation area

At the municipal level, this same disregard for public input was displayed in the Crowsnest Development Planning process. The public's attempt to protect the internationally significant Yellowstone-to-Yukon wildlife corridors through the Crowsnest Pass was circumvented by the municipal council.

Now our fragile ecosystem, being bombarded with unrestrained resource extraction, unregulated motorized recreation and wanton development, is beginning to fail. If action is not taken soon to stop this relentless onslaught, the intrinsic values that draw people to this naturally beautiful area will be lost.

If you care about saving what remains of our wilderness in Alberta, don't blindly trust that the government is managing it wisely – let them know that you will not quietly stand by and allow wholesale destruction of the special places you hold most dear. Write your Premier and Sustainable Resources Minister today.

The Hon. Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta,  
#307, 10800 – 97 Ave., Edmonton T5K 2B6  
Email: premier@gov.ab.ca; Ph: 780-427-1349; Fax: 780-427-1349

The Hon. Mike Cardinal, Minister of Sustainable Resources,  
#420, 10800-97 Ave. Edmonton T5K 2B6  
Email: mcardinal@assembly.ab.ca; Ph: 780-415-4815; Fax: 780-415-4818

*(from CEAS Newsletter, March 2003, reprinted with permission)*



# ALBERTA WILDERNESS WATCH

## DAM STUDY BYPASSES ESTABLISHED WATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING

By Shirley Bray, WLA Editor



For the second time in two years, Alberta Environment, under the direction of Lorne Taylor, has bypassed established water management planning in this province to cater to the requests of two small local groups for dams. In 2001, at the request of local landowners in Taylor's riding in southeastern Alberta, a prefeasibility study was conducted for the Meridian Dam on the South Saskatchewan River at a cost of \$100,000, not including public meetings, which were not planned for until the public demanded them. In 2003, a prefeasibility study for a dam on the Milk River has been commissioned at the request of the Milk River Basin Water Management Committee (MRBWMC), a local committee that represents four municipalities and three water co-ops. The committee appears to have no formal set-up, at least that one of its member could tell us. Only a small effort at soliciting public input has been made.

The study violates the principles set out by the *Water Act* and the *Framework for Water Management Planning*, both of which require specific processes to be set up, all relevant stakeholders involved and public consultation. In this case, the study was kept quiet until AWA found out about it in January.

Yet during 2002 the MRBWMC lobbied and met with the Environment Minister, consultants were hired, and the committee and the Minister also had meetings with federal and Montana State officials about the project. The study will cost about a quarter million dollars of taxpayer money. Further details of this recent history of the MRBWMC activities can be found on our Web site as part of the history of the Milk River Ridge area.

In the draft *Water for Life Strategy* that just came out, it says under Recommended Actions: "Investigate and evaluate water reservoirs and dams during the appropriate phases of watershed planning initiatives." Would this prefeasibility study fall into

that definition? Were the proper planning to be followed as set out in the *Water Act*, the planning for the Milk River Basin as a whole would be done first. All relevant problems and a wide range of solutions (not just two) would be considered. It might be the case that once this planning was done, this particular prefeasibility study might not even be relevant.

Dennis Magowan of Alberta Environment actually told us that no development on the Milk River would proceed until the basin planning had been done. So how has a small local group, once again, managed to get the Minister to bypass proper water management planning and secure such a large sum of taxpayer money for a study that is completely out of context? Especially after all the issues raised for the Meridian Dam?



Milk River Dam Public Meeting, Lethbridge 3/17/03

Two public input meetings were held in mid-March in Lethbridge and Milk River. I attended the meeting in Lethbridge, and it was noted that there was a clear dichotomy between those who see the river as an ecosystem and those who see it as simply a conveyor for water. Dennis Magowan told the participants that public consultation was crucial to the prefeasibility study already underway. "Frankly, we need your help," he said. However, clearly public input was not so crucial that Alberta Environment held meetings in more than the two communities, both attended by a strong contingent of proponents of the study and of dams and diversions. Meetings should also have been held in Calgary and Medicine Hat at the very least.

At the Lethbridge meeting, Cheryl Bradley of the Southern Alberta Environmental Group (SAEG) was one of several people who made a number of excellent points. The following is from the SAEG submission to the consultants:

"The study is inconsistent with the direction for water management planning set out in the *Water Act* (1996) and in the *Framework for Water Management Planning* (2001). The revised *Water Act* (1996) (section 7) requires the Minister establish a framework for water management planning which must include a strategy for protection of the aquatic environment and may include other matters such as water management



principles, boundaries within which water management planning is to be carried out, criteria for the order in which water management plans are developed, an outline of processes for defining water management plans, integration of water management planning with land and other resources, and water conservation objectives.

"*The Framework for Water Management Planning* (2001) defines a vision and principles for water management as well as roles, responsibilities and outcomes of the planning process. In addition, the Framework provides a strategy for the protection of the aquatic environment.

"The Milk River Basin preliminary feasibility study, both in process to date and as defined in the *Request for Proposal*, appears to be inconsistent with the *Framework*. According to the *Framework* (4.1 and 4.2) a water management planning process should include full stakeholder participation at the outset to identify issues which will be addressed and to define a Terms of Reference for the planning process. The Terms of Reference for a planning process would include:

- an overview of current conditions and initial description of issues
- geographic description of the planning area
- intended objectives,
- roles, responsibilities and accountability of those who will be involved
- potential linkages with Regional Strategies
- proposed public consultation process
- a work plan
- information requirements, and
- a proposed schedule.

"We have not seen any of the above matters defined for the Milk River basin. According to the *Request for Proposal* (2.0 *Hydrology and Water Supply*) the consultant is to assess 'how the project fits into the water management of the entire Milk River Basin.' Obviously Alberta Environment considers the 'preliminary feasibility study' to be a component of water management planning. Has the Minister or Director responsible for water management for the Milk River basin deliberately decided to proceed with this study outside of the direction for water management planning provided by the *Act* and *Framework*? If this is the case, it is setting a dangerous precedent which contravenes clear directions set out in recent legislation and policy and reflected in public opinion.

"Some more specific points regarding inconsistency with current legislation and policy follow.

- We are not aware of studies to determine the quantity and quality of water that should be in rivers in the Milk River basin to protect the aquatic environment. Presumably, based on our experience with the South Saskatchewan River Basin planning process, instream flow needs assessments should be undertaken which consider fish and other aquatic life, riparian vegetation, recreation and channel maintenance. In SSRB planning, a strategy for

protection of the aquatic environment, including water conservation objectives, will be defined **prior to** consideration of storage options.

- The stated objectives of the *Milk River Basin – Preliminary Feasibility Study: Request for Proposal* (1.0 *Introduction*) are to examine 1) the feasibility of building a dam and water supply project on the Milk River and 2) the feasibility of off-stream storage alternatives in the Milk River Basin. These objectives are very narrow and assume that on-stream or off-stream storage are the only alternatives to addressing water management issues in the basin. The issues themselves are not defined. It is as if Alberta Environment has decided the solution is dams and diversions without having defined the problems. Confusion over issues is exacerbated when one is told in the letter of invitation for this public meeting that 'the study was deemed necessary because the town of Coutts and Milk River have experienced water intake problems due to the low flows of the river' and yet the *Request for Proposal* in section 6.4 *Water Uses* directs the consultant to assess the benefits of proposed structures in terms of irrigation development, hydroelectric power generation, flood control and recreational benefits. As an aside, the section states that any other potential benefits such as municipal and industrial uses should be identified.

"The *Feasibility Study* was developed and a contract issued to an engineering firm without public knowledge and without a public consultation process being defined. According to *The Framework* (Section 4.3) public consultation process needs to be clearly identified in the Terms of Reference of a water management plan and must include the objective of public consultation, a description of previous consultation outcomes, a list of key individuals and groups, a description of how public involvement fits into the planning process and a communication strategy. None of this has been provided with respect to the Milk River basin study.

"Through *Water for Life* the province is developing a comprehensive strategy that will identify short-, medium- and long-term plans to effectively manage the quantity and quality of the province's water systems and supply. Key messages from an extensive public consultation process begun in November 2001 are:

- Emphasis on education and public involvement in watershed planning
- Emphasis on watershed approach
- Define quality and quantity required by the natural system and allocate to this need
- Ensure safe drinking water
- Improve water conservation practices
- Prevent pollution and contamination of water
- Long term supply and demand forecast and improved risk management approach
- Assure FITFIE security and improve allocation criteria to account for future needs





- Government ultimately accountable and increased staff and skills are essential

"The *Milk River Basin-Preliminary Feasibility Study Request for Proposal* does not address any of the above matters, except perhaps water supply. By undertaking a study focused on storage options the Department appears to have fallen back into the old approach of only managing supply. Hopefully we have learned from mistakes in water management in the South Saskatchewan River Basin, which have resulted in excessive allocation, a disconnect between land use and water management planning, and harm to the aquatic environment including water quality problems."

Members of the communities affected by the Milk River and representatives of the MRBWMC spoke with emotion at the meetings about the drought and lack of water from 1999-2001. In 2002 there was extensive spring flooding that they had no way of capturing. They wanted a secure steady supply of water for domestic use, which no one was interested in denying them. However, they also wanted water for irrigation. Is irrigation really the best use for scarce water in a semi-arid environment that is becoming drier? As one participant asked, why would the community want to base its economy on its scarcest resource? Another noted that ecologically sustainable ranching was low input and could be profitable through dry years. There are other options that are not being considered in this study. Irrigated agriculture must be studied carefully to determine if it is truly profitable. Irrigation is generally subsidized by taxpayers.

In a letter to the editor of the Lethbridge Herald about items discussed at the public meeting, Cheryl Bradley wrote, "It was noted that the reasons for considering dams and diversions in the Milk River basin are unclear. Invitation letters to the public meeting state 'The study was deemed necessary because the towns of Coutts and Milk River have experienced water intake problems due to the low flows....' The consultant, however, is directed to assess the benefits of proposed structures in terms of irrigation development, hydroelectric power generation, flood control and recreational benefits. Participants at the Lethbridge meeting did not dispute that communities in the Milk River Basin should be provided a safe and secure supply of water for domestic purposes, but suggested there may be less costly options for accomplishing this including constructing larger storage tanks, implementing conservation measures, hauling water in times of need, delivering water through a regional pipeline network, drilling new water wells and building a low weir above the town's intake pipe. The proposed feasibility study does not contemplate these options."



*Pronghorn Antelope*

C. Wallis

Proponents of the dam argued that a dry river would be detrimental to the ecosystem and the fish and that a dam would capture the large spring flow of water and allow a continual release through the rest of the season. Further, the dam would capture the silt in the reservoir and the fish could have nice clean water downstream. This argument shows a clear lack of understanding of the functioning of the natural ecosystem. The Milk River has been through many weather cycles and has a cycle of flow through the year. The fish and the cottonwoods have adapted and survived these cycles. The riparian cottonwood forests require the spring flooding and siltation for renewal, and some of the fish require muddy waters and a free migration route. If the proponents of this argument were really concerned about the habitat, they would be much more interested in seeing proper basin planning done with all stakeholders. But this is not the case.

The cost-benefit portion of the study is being done by Marv Anderson and Jim Barlshen. The former did the previous analysis for the Milk River dam. Apparently he likes to include secondary benefits to make the benefit-cost ratio look better, even though experts say these should not be included. The latter was a strong proponent of the Oldman River dam. So this cost-benefit analysis will bear close scrutiny because it is not being done by clearly objective parties.

The cost-benefit analysis, as described in the *Request for Proposal*, is inadequate and simplistic. Under costs are dam and reservoir, land acquisition, road and utilities relocation, environmental assessment and mitigation. Under benefits are irrigation development, hydroelectric power generation, flood control and recreational benefits. Note that the analysis does not include the benefit of supply of domestic water or the cost of the many required regulatory reviews.

Cheryl Bradley spoke of concerns about the cost-benefit analysis both at the meeting and in her letter to the editor: "Participants ... had questions and suggestions about the analysis of costs and benefits proposed for the project. Key examples follow.

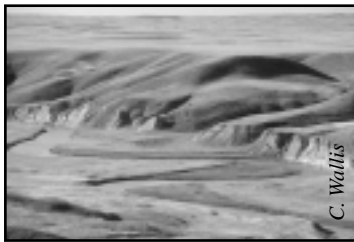
- 1) Projected benefits from reservoir recreation need to be weighed against loss of recreation opportunities on a free flowing river in an outstanding natural landscape. Ascribing recreation benefits to proposed water developments in Alberta has become a standard method for skewing cost-benefit analysis in favour of dam construction without clear data about recreation use of existing reservoirs and long-term benefits to nearby communities.
- 2) Environmental impacts on the aquatic environment and riparian areas from reservoir flooding and altered flows



downstream will require mitigation. A lesson from the Oldman River Dam is that environmental mitigation can cost several million dollars and yet not begin to deal with full compensation for loss of fish, wildlife and natural habitats.

3) Irrigation development may displace sustainable use of native grasslands for livestock grazing and will involve substantial local costs for irrigation equipment, pumping, labour and machinery. These costs need to be considered. If there is an expectation of public investment in building water storage structures and delivery systems, the analysis also must weigh any benefits from more crop production in southern Alberta against other public investments we forgo that may be of greater benefit."

Stewart Rood of the University of Lethbridge said that a true cost-benefit analysis would take a broader social perspective and ask if spending the hundreds of millions of taxpayer money on this dam or the diversions was really the best use of this money for Albertans as a whole. Another participant asked how the consultants would put a value on things that don't have a commercial value, such as the loss of native grassland for future generations. Apparently these things will be simply tabulated and the cost-benefit analysis will not be a true analysis. One participant asked: "Who receives the benefits and who pays the costs? If they aren't the same, I want to know why."



Milk RiverRidge

Bill McMillan of Equus Consulting, who hosted the meeting, assured us that the study would not provide recommendations, nor would it be policy; it was only to create an information database so that we all had the same base of information to work from. However, Dennis Magowan said that Alberta Environment would study the report and recommend whether Cabinet should move forward with the study or not. It was not clear whether the public would see the study before that recommendation or not.



Ferruginous Hawk

Milk River residents argued "something must be done." Well, let's start with a rational approach, follow established principles for water management planning and do the proper basin planning first. The Milk River belongs to all Albertans, and so does the Twin River Heritage Rangeland. River ecosystems are natural treasures and deserve our most rigorous foresight and deepest consideration of the best use for the greatest good. There has already been too much going

on behind the scenes out of public view on this project. Alberta needs to be innovative and truly long term in its solutions to water management, not simply follow the conventional routes of dams and large diversions. We can start by following our own law – the *Water Act*.

Our Web site has an updated and more extensive chronology and list of facts about the dam and the area. We have received a fine addition of the some of the documents produced by the PFRA study of the dam in 1986 from Garry Bucharski of Alberta Environment. Although comments to the consultants were due by March 31, please continue to send your comments to Premier Ralph Klein: The Hon. Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta, Room 307 Legislature Building, 10800 -- 97th Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B7.

*We are planning a hike to the confluence of the north and south forks of the Milk River in the Twin River Heritage Rangeland on Sunday, May 25, 2003. The hike will be held jointly with the Lethbrdige naturalist Society and be led by Cheryl Bradley. This is the May species count weekend for Lethbrdige and area so we will keep a tally of birds and flowers.*

## WATER FOR LIFE STRATEGY DRAFT AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT

Alberta Environment is looking for feedback on the recommendations in the draft *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*. Comments are due by May 31, 2003 and further details can be found on the Web site: <http://www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/html/discussion.asp>

AWA's position is that we should be following the recommendations in the Water Act and the Framework for Water Management Planning (both available on the Web), which support doing planning at the river basin level first. Overall, Albertans have shown through the public process of Water for Life that they are eminently sensible and very concerned about their water.



# ECOLOGICAL VALUE OF THE TWIN RIVER HERITAGE RANGELAND RECOGNIZED FOR YEARS

*In their submission, the Southern Alberta Environmental Group noted that the Twin River Heritage Rangeland had long been regarded as an ecologically special and sensitive area.*

The Twin River Heritage Rangeland (47,000 acres or 19,000 ha) was established by Order in Council in 2001. Protective designation of the Twin River Heritage Rangeland was recommended by a Local Committee in a report dated August 1998 to the Minister of Environmental Protection, the Honourable Ty Lund. The Local Committee recognized preservation of environmental quality and biological diversity as the primary concern which could be achieved while allowing continuation of domestic livestock grazing. The Local Committee recommended that no new roads be constructed and that industrial developments be prohibited. Their recommendations were accepted by the Minister in November 1999 and implemented in May 2001 through designation of the area as an Order-in-Council Natural Area by Community Development, the agency currently responsible for the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act*.

According to the Special Places Web page, "Natural Areas protect special and sensitive natural landscapes of local and regional significance while providing opportunities for education, natural appreciation and low-intensity recreation. Facilities are limited to staging areas, trails and signs." "Local committee recommendations on permitted uses and management objectives guide the protected areas class that is selected for each site designated." The Local Committee did not recommend dam construction as a permitted use in the Twin River Heritage Rangeland, even though then Minister of Public Works, Hon. Ty Lund, reminded them of a proposed Milk River reservoir through a letter discussed at a meeting on June 17, 1998.

This Heritage Rangeland designation reaffirmed two previous protective notations which recognized the sensitivity of the area and demonstrated government intent to protect its significant environmental features. According to LSAS, in 1983, Public Lands placed a protective notation on 3,661 acres of public lands indicating there was an erosion hazard and there should be no agricultural dispositions. In 1993, Fish and Wildlife placed a protective notation on 27,112 acres for a Special Fish and Wildlife Management Area.

According to LSAS, a conservation notation for a potential dam and reservoir area was placed on 129 acres in SW 27-2-18-W4 in 1985 by the Department of Environment. It appears the notation did not include the lands which would be flooded as the reservoir area would far exceed 129 acres. The conservation notation was not removed at the time the Order-in-Council (O/C) Natural Area was established. Was this an error? Reservoir inundation impacts would be prohibited under the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act*. Although the O/C states that "surface dispositions existing at the date of site establishment will be honoured," surely a notation on LSAS is

not considered a "disposition." Disposition is defined under the *Public Lands Act* as "a conveyance, assurance, sale, lease, licence, permit, contract or agreement made, entered into or issued."

Twin River Heritage Rangeland is the only representative of the Grassland Natural Region – Mixedgrass Subregion listed on the Government of Alberta Special Places Web page. It is one of six large blocks of grasslands left on the glaciated plains of North America and considered as internationally significant (Alberta Wilderness Association, 2003). Level 1 Natural History Themes represented in the Twin River Heritage Rangeland include 9,100 ha of protected slope and 1,300 ha of floor/stream – about half of the area. These are habitats that would be most directly affected by a reservoir and dam in SW 27-2-18-W4 – the heart of the Heritage Rangeland. Valley slopes and floor are key habitat for several at-risk species known to occur in the Heritage Rangeland. These habitats include

- nesting sites for ferruginous hawks (COSEWIC species of special concern), golden eagles and prairie falcons,
- dens for yellow-bellied marmot,
- wetlands for leopard frog (COSEWIC species of special concern),
- aquatic habitat for St. Mary sculpin, stonecat, brassy minnow and sauger, and
- sites of rare plant populations including prickly milk vetch (*Astragalus kentrophyta*), tufted hymenopappus (*Hymenopappus filifolius*) and creeping whitlow grass (*Draba reptans*).



Foothills Fescue

C. Wallis



# MILK RIVER RECOMMENDED IN "ENDANGERED RIVERS" PROGRAM

By Nigel Douglas, AWA Outreach Coordinator



For the second year, BC-based environmental group Earthwild International is working with communities and conservation groups across Canada to create a list of Canada's most endangered rivers. In 2003, WildCanada.net will work with Earthwild to develop online education and outreach programs for the most endangered river in each of Canada's 13 provinces and territories.

Alberta Wilderness Association has nominated the Milk River as the ideal river to represent Alberta in the Endangered Rivers program. Rising in western Montana, the Milk River meanders through 160 km of southern Alberta, then loops back into the United States, eventually flowing into the Gulf of Mexico, the only Canadian river to do so.

The Milk River has been in the news a lot recently (see *Wild Lands Advocate*, February 2003) with a prefeasibility study being carried out on a major dam that would severely impact the recently protected Twin Rivers Heritage Rangeland, and indeed the entire river ecosystem, but this is by no means the only threat that the river is facing. The Milk River passes entirely through the Grassland Region of Alberta (including the Foothills Fescue, Mixedgrass and Dry Mixedgrass Subregions). The Grassland Region is severely under-represented in Alberta's protected areas network, with less than two per cent having any form of protection.

Over the years, Alberta's grasslands have been profoundly altered by roadways, towns and cities, cultivation, livestock grazing, energy development, mining, irrigation and off-highway vehicle use. This direct loss and fragmentation has changed species' distributions and numbers and transformed entire landscapes and the natural ecological processes of the grasslands. It is considered one of the most endangered natural habitats in North America.

The Milk River is also likely to come under increasing pressure in the coming years as the climate in southern Alberta becomes warmer and drier. The river has virtually run dry several times during the last two decades, and this situation is only likely to get worse in the future.

AWA is campaigning against the proposed Milk River dam, while at the same time working toward increased protection of natural grassland ecosystems alongside the river. As the climate in southern Alberta becomes drier, it is more important to look at how we can change the way we use water to maximize efficiency than it is to try to cling to our old outdated and water-wasteful practices.



*Milk River*



*A Climb for Wilderness Mural Design by Louissette Bos*



# LOOKING FOR ANSWERS IN THE RUMSEY ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

By Dorothy Dickson



In the two years since I last wrote about the Rumsey Ecological Reserve (RER), I cannot honestly say that the work of the Management Committee has picked up much speed, but at least we are all facing in the same direction now and going about our business in a more orderly manner.

Our slow progress is partly due to the lack of personnel, financing and time, which is the chronic situation for the three government members of the Committee. Another reason is that the grazing leaseholders and the Public Lands representative have been reluctant to accept what the rest of us see as the necessity of keeping accurate records to enable us to plan ahead.

They prefer to rely on their knowledge and experience to make on-the-spot decisions about the grazing regime. Those decisions may be good ones and we all understand that they need some flexibility to deviate from any plan because of changing conditions, such as drought, but unless their actions are recorded and the results evaluated, if things do go wrong, we have no way of understanding why.

In fact, we need the answers to a number of "whys" about Rumsey to enable us to fulfill the objective to "maintain a mosaic of grasslands, wetlands, shrublands and woodlands in order to sustain ecological diversity within the RER." The rolling "knob and kettle" topography has saved the Rumsey Block from the cultivation that surrounds it.

The Terms of Reference given to the Management Planning Team in 1992 stated that the lease at the north end, which had been used by the Usher family since 1917, was chosen as the representative Reserve for non-sand plain Aspen Parkland because it was in better condition than the leases further south. It was strongly suggested that this was due to the excellent management practices used by the Ushers, especially winter grazing, which would make sense, as the rough fescue evolved with winter grazing by bison. However, we have no data to back up that assumption because the lessees kept no written record of their grazing regime. The reason for the better range condition could be that they just grazed fewer cattle per hectare than the other ranchers.

In 1994, when the latest range condition assessments were done for the Block, the RER lease again carried more fescue in "excellent condition" than any other lease but again, although some had records of the numbers of cattle (officially measured in animal units per month – AUMs), there were no records of grazing rotations or seasonal use that would help to answer "why?".

When we were writing the Management Plan for the Reserve, we

were very conscious of these questions and the need to have provable answers in order to carry out our mandate of using cattle grazing as an imperfect but available "tool" to replace the bison and help maintain the conditions needed for a healthy fescue ecology.

We listed what we considered to be the most important information gaps (p. 50) and added an Appendix (p. 59) that describes a Detailed Implementation Plan, making clear who was responsible for what. Most of the listed tasks were to devise and implement monitoring systems for each of the main, interacting components of the parkland ecosystem.

The Plan was finally completed in 1998.

The next year our best laid plans were thrown totally awry when the Ushers "sold" the lease to the neighbouring Stewarts, who got permission from Public Lands to change to summer grazing only. The Management Committee did not become aware of what had happened until the following summer.

With pressure from AWA and the Red Deer River Naturalists, a Committee Meeting was finally convened in April 2001, followed by an on-site workshop in June. Things started to look more promising – but little actually happened.

We have since had meetings in June 2002 and February 2003 at which we went over each member's responsibilities and what, if anything, had been done about our monitoring tasks. There was some progress to report at this year's meeting.

Felix Gebbink of Public Lands has started monitoring a large, but until now neglected, no-grazing area and has set up some small exclusion zones. In the summer, grazing

management expert Barry Adams will be coming to help assist in setting up transects and test plots to monitor the effects of various grazing intensities. The Stewarts have agreed to keep records of their grazing rotations, and we have a pasture map on which they will be plotted.

Felix is also keeping track of the increasing invasion of smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), a non-native grass introduced for cultivated pasture in Alberta and which used to be allowed in gas-well reclamation seed mixes. Ed Karpuk, a soils specialist in Red Deer, was monitoring 200-metre transects for the brome for us last fall, using ortho-photo mapping techniques. Public Lands has set up plots outside the Reserve to test eradication methods. We have also discussed means of controlling the mass of Canada thistle in and around a quarter section that was left as an ungrazed benchmark site. Any suggestions would be welcome!

Last summer we authorized the mowing of 40 acres where the brush was encroaching and the fescue was very old and thick. It really needs to be burned, but the mowing worked quite well and the lessees got some usable hay off, although they said it was rather rough on their machinery. Efforts to monitor and seek ways to control the brush



Rumsey



encroachment onto the grasslands will continue. It is one of those difficult situations where you have to try to decide what would be "natural" if man had not already interfered with the ecosystem by removing the natural controls of bison and fire.

Lorne Fitch ( of the Cows and Fish program) came in 2001 to teach us how to monitor the health of the numerous sloughs and the impacts of cattle on them, but there has not been much follow-up on this yet, partly because nearly all the sloughs dried out last year. The leaseholders had to pipe water 1.2 km and move tanks on flatbeds to water the cattle. At our February meeting, the Committee was told that they had put in two new wells (there were only two on the whole Reserve) and several dugouts in the hope of capturing spring run-off. Public Lands gave them permission to do so.

Ron Bjorge of Fish and Wildlife has for years been faithfully monitoring the numbers and trends of ungulates in the Reserve and their impact on the vegetation. In 2001 he reported on 58 browse transects. Aspen usage was 40 to 55 per cent and willow was about 80 per cent. He considers this quite high, and some browsed aspen is dying back.

Estimates from aerial surveys were 20 ungulates per square mile, comprised of 4 or 5 moose, 4 or 5 mule deer and 20 whitetail deer. On 55 transects checked in 2002 he again noted high death of aspen – which raises another of our "whys." Ron told us there are still sharp-tailed grouse dancing grounds in use in the Block but no recent surveys have been done for other breeding birds, including our "rarities": Baird's sparrow, sharp-tailed sparrow and upland sandpiper.

The Stewarts told us that each fall, hunters are massed on the Reserve boundaries. Last year they found where someone had set up a hide and killed a moose in the Reserve. This is a problem that did not arise when there were people and cattle there all winter and it will now be harder to prevent.

Since the Management Plan was completed, there has been no representative from Parks and Protected Areas on the Committee in spite of my repeated requests. I'm glad to say Wayne Pedrini joined us in 2002 and I am grateful to ADM John Kristensen for his help in this matter.

Wayne's "tasks" are monitoring public use, signage and providing educational material. In February he told us he had been able to provide some much-needed new boundary signs, but his budget would not allow him to do more. Our Plan does provide for a small parking area (outside the Reserve) and signs with a map and regulations plus brochures and a visitor sign-in station for monitoring purposes.

However, the Stewarts say that the very few visitors they see on the Reserve are there to enjoy the nature and pose no problem. People are more inclined to drive into the Rumsey Natural Area along the Poco Road than walk in the RER. No one has ever asked for educational material. We therefore decided that entrance signs were not a priority for protection of the Reserve and we would not proceed with them at present. The Management Committee is going to the Reserve for on-site inspections on July 2, 2003.

Reading through what I have just written, it struck me that this is

the first time I have been able to give you some facts and figures of work actually in progress, instead of only anxieties and pious hopes!

From now on I expect that more consistent monitoring programs will keep records of grazing use and ecological health up to date, especially now that other SRD staff with more monitoring experience are becoming involved. Perhaps we will start to be able to answer some of our "whys."

Apart from needing the data for future planning, it is urgent that we have some idea whether the grassland ecology can be kept in "excellent condition" under a summer grazing regime before the lease is up for renewal. The drought of the last two years is taking its toll in Rumsey as elsewhere and the number of AUMs allowed has already been reduced. Perhaps the ecology of the Reserve would be more sustainable without any cattle grazing at all.

As the representative Ecological Reserve for the Parkland ecoregion, the transition zone between the southern prairie and northern forests, Rumsey will become particularly important as a benchmark to measure what effects climate change is having on the landscape and the species it supports. If, as predicted, species of flora and fauna move their ranges further north or die out and are replaced by others, the monitoring of transition zones where some species are currently at or near their north or south range limits will be particularly informative.

I first became fascinated with the Rumsey Parkland when Cheryl Bradley took us there in the mid-seventies. In the eighties, I took part in the Round Tables planning the Regionally Integrated Decision for the whole Rumsey Block. From 1992-98, I represented AWA and RDRN on the RER Management Planning Team and decided I should stay on as a member of the Management Committee for one year to help get the monitoring and other programs started.

But they didn't start and I could not just walk away from the problems that arose from the changes of leaseholder and grazing regime, exacerbated by a breakdown in communication between Public Lands and the rest of the Committee. Sometimes when, as too often happens, you are the only committee member who is completely independent of government control, you have to be the one who puts pressure on to try to remedy a bad situation!

In the spring of 2001, I went to visit Dylan and Colleen Biggs (whom many of you will remember from the early days of AWA). They breed Angus cattle for organic beef on carefully nurtured native rangeland near Coronation. They were interested to hear about Rumsey. In February this year, I invited Dylan to our Committee meeting, in which he took a lively part. It was very obvious that, with his energy, environmental knowledge and experience with record-keeping, monitoring, etc. on his own land, he would be of much more help to the RER at this stage than I can be. So I shall soon hand over my responsibilities to the very capable Mr. Biggs and wish him luck.

But of course, guests are always welcome at Committee meetings and, as Wayne Pedrini said, they will need someone to provide continuity, so .....



Rumsey

C. Wallis



## INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION FOR THE BIGHORN AND THE CASTLE

By Tamaini Snaith, AWA Conservation Biologist



Finally, protection efforts for the Bighorn and Castle have attracted significant international attention. The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an American ENGO with hundreds of thousands of members worldwide.

NRDC have named the Castle – Bighorn as a BioGem and have committed to working for its protection.

This month we had the pleasure of meeting with one of NRDC's senior attorneys to work on strategic directions for our efforts to protect these areas.

The involvement of the NRDC demonstrates that people throughout North America and the world have an interest in the survival of the wilderness and wildlife of Alberta's Eastern Slopes. We are looking forward to working with the NRDC on these issues.

The NRDC has a history of effective market action campaigns. These efforts can put pressure on the oil and gas industry and could affect Alberta's tourism revenues if the government doesn't take appropriate action to protect the area. People from all over the world come to Alberta to enjoy our beautiful mountains and a true wilderness experience. Albertans will only enjoy the benefits of this industry as long as the wilderness persists. If industrial encroachment and inappropriate recreation continue to affect the Bighorn, it will lose its wilderness value. Once lost, ecological integrity cannot easily be regained.



*Job Lake, Bighorn Wildland*

## NORTHERN EAST SLOPES STRATEGY WON'T PROTECT WILDERNESS AND WATERSHEDS

By Tamaini Snaith, AWA Conservation Biologist

The Alberta government has just released its draft recommendations for Integrated Management of the Northern East Slopes.

AWA believes that integrated resource management and sustainable development are necessary. However, we do not believe that the current plan will achieve these goals.

Although this plan claims to provide "clear, long-term direction for managing resource activities on crown land," in practice it seems to be little more than a summary of long-known land-use conflicts and desirable objectives. The plan does little to clarify the process by which land-use conflicts will be reconciled and by which land uses will be prioritized. In essence, this integrated planning effort lacks integration at the most basic level: that of values and goals.

Land-use issues have been separated into major themes. Goals and strategic directions have been set for each of these themes. However, there is no consideration given to the inherent incompatibility of these goals. Without detailed commitments to prioritization of activities, the plan boils down to little more than the multiple use status quo. For example, the plan clearly states that wilderness, grizzly bear, caribou and water quality are threatened by industrial activities, and it sets a strategic direction for maintaining these values. However, there is also an economic theme, where strategic directions include increasing economic activity in a variety of industrial sectors. These strategies are clearly incompatible; which will take precedence in decision-making and land - use allocation? An integration of the themes to create overall vision that prioritizes values is required.

The plan outlines a number of desirable outcomes with respect to wilderness and biodiversity protection but makes no commitment to achieving these goals and does not address the issue of economic activities that are incompatible with these goals. There is no real commitment in this document to environmental and watershed protection. It is well documented that Alberta's protected areas network is insufficient to protect biodiversity over time and that more protected areas are required if we are to meet this goal. However, in the current plan, all lands, with the exception of currently designated protected areas, are considered available to industry. There is no consideration given to the need for additional



*Access road to Caw Ridge, northern east slopes.*





Access road to Caw Ridge, northern east slopes.

## NES STRATEGY ELICITS STRONG COMMENTS

Although the goals of the Northern East Slopes Strategy include wilderness conservation, the plan doesn't address fundamental protection that is needed. It is a major failing of the plan that the loss of wilderness and lack of protected areas are not identified as issues. We see more of the same – how to accommodate ever-increasing use and not how to set aside large blocks free of industrial and motorized activity. The government hasn't even met the minimal science targets for protecting the Foothills but continues to pursue ways to develop it further. There is no balance in this plan. Processes will continue to ignore input of environmental groups in favour of extractive economic activity. This is a recipe for failure and will continue to repeat the mistakes of the past. We don't need more study. We need more ACTION to limit industrial development, to establish new large protected areas and to get serious about cumulative effects that we know are already beyond thresholds. This has to be one of the worst strategies I have seen in my 30-year history of dealing with these issues.

*Cliff Wallis, AWA President*

protected lands. We believe that the goals of maintaining wilderness; biodiversity; wildlife; water, soil and air quality; outdoor recreation opportunities; and economically viable tourism opportunities are unattainable under this plan.

Although the plan addresses cumulative effects assessment and management in some detail, it does not recommend any specific acceptable limits to development effects and does not outline management actions that will be taken in the event that these acceptable limits are exceeded.

Lastly, we fear that this initiative will join the long line of Alberta government policies that are unenforceable and unfulfilled. Without strong legislation controlling land use in Alberta, industrial development will continue to threaten our wilderness and environmental values.

## WHY ARE OUR PARKS BEING NAMED AFTER POLITICIANS?

The following letter was sent to Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Community Development regarding the naming of one of the new parks in Kananaskis after a living person – Don Getty.

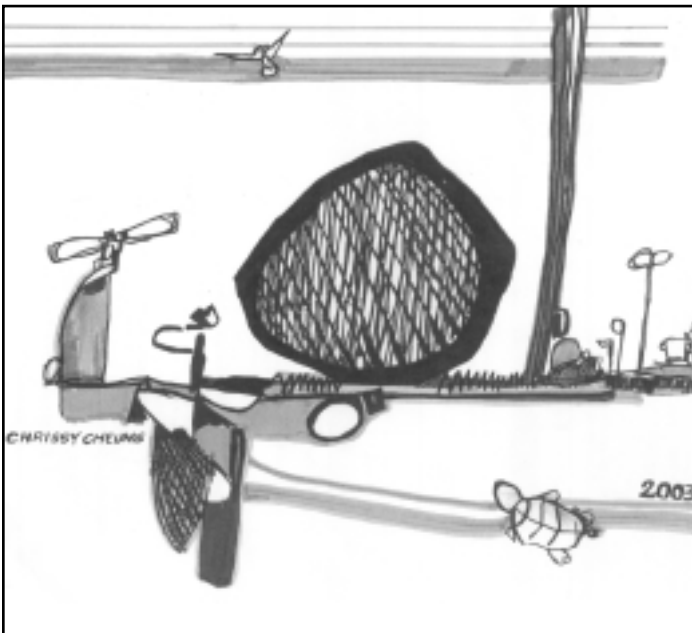
*Dear Mr. Zwozdesky:*

*Thank you very much for your letter of December 4. Don Getty may well be a real Alberta hero, but even if this is true I remain totally opposed to the naming of any provincial or federal park after any living individual. At the very least, you should have asked for the opinion of the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, the naming authority in Alberta.*

*Why weren't the names of a distinctive species of animal or plant, or a physical feature in the area considered? The new park provides an ecological connectivity between Ghost River Wilderness, Banff National Park, Bow Valley Wildland, Yamnuska Natural Area, and ... Don Getty Park. Are Albertans really anxious to see their province's beautiful natural areas named after politicians?*

*It is most unfortunate what you have done. Over the years Alberta has been a leader in establishing correct naming procedures by its specialists. Parks Canada, in order to avoid any suggestion of political favoritism, does not allow the naming of federal parks after individuals. Once again, I urge you, and all your future successors who are given cabinet responsibility for naming provincial parks, to make it standard practice to consult with the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation about future park names. I do not understand your resistance to this.*

*Yours truly,  
Donald Smith  
Professor of History, University of Calgary*



A Climb for Wilderness Mural Design by C. Cheung





## GRANDE CACHE MEETING DISAPPOINTMENT FOR WILDERNESS CONSERVATION

By Darcy Handy

I attended the meeting for the North East Slopes advisory group in Grande Cache recently. I wish I could report positively on what I heard. This group is trying to coordinate extensive land use with wilderness conservation, and this is an impossibility. The group does not state how they will increase forest use for industrial development, yet they state that they will protect areas for species at risk. Unfortunately, this is what I expected to hear.

User groups want to "protect" the caribou and species at risk, but still want have unlimited industrial development in the area. This will be what causes the demise of the woodland caribou. Our present government only wants to continue economic development and does not want to do anything substantial to protect the environment.

Unfortunately, economic development and environmental protection are at opposite ends of the spectrum. We know where our government stands. The recommendations set down by this group are actually similar to guidelines set forth by the West Central Caribou Standing Committee. These guidelines were set up to minimize the cumulative effect in critical time frames to the environment and also to the caribou. Unfortunately, the government no longer follows these guidelines – they say they are only guidelines, so I really doubt any suggestions put forth by this group will be followed, as it seems nothing should hold up or impede industrial development.

Maybe I am being pessimistic, but I have seen things go downhill quickly here in the Grande Cache area (from an environmental standpoint – loss of habitat in the caribou range), and have only heard the government make excuses for this. Unfortunately, the government does not take seriously habitat loss and the loss of the woodland caribou.

The guidelines for industrial development and "progress" need to have more teeth and to be properly enforced if the damage to the environment is expected to decrease. I am afraid that under our present government and mindset, the only remaining wilderness in the province will be in the parks and protected areas. Everything else will have a major economic stamp on it and will definitely be impacted. Only our environment will suffer. And this is a great shame.

## WHALEBACK UPDATE

Since early last year, we have been confronted once again with a pending well-site development on the fringes of the whaleback. Polar Resources proposes to drill for sour gas on private land immediately adjacent to the Bob Creek Wildland (aka Whaleback). The EUB has scheduled a pre-hearing for April 16th. At this point we can expect that a hearing will be set for sometime this summer.

## GRAND CACHE CARIBOU SAGA CONTINUES

*The following letter was sent to Mike Cardinal, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development, Dec. 2002 by Grande Cache resident Darcy Handy. This letter continues the story of Darcy's efforts to have changes made in the management of critical woodland caribou habitat. A government internal audit of all industrial access approvals into the woodland caribou range since 1996 has apparently been delayed by a lack of resources. Mike Cardinal ordered the audit in 2002 after receiving a number of letters from Alberta trappers concerned about the dramatic increase in industrial development in key caribou habitat. The first major step in the audit, providing a legal description of core caribou habitat, has apparently been completed.*

Dear Mr. Cardinal:

As you are well aware, I have been corresponding numerous times with you in the past regarding caribou management in west central Alberta. In your letter dated October 3, 2001, you state: "Approvals for industrial land use are expected to be consistent with guidelines for industrial land use developed by the West Central Caribou Standing Committee." You also agree that "one of the critical issues with caribou conservation is road access." You further state that "land use guidelines place the highest priority on developing only temporary access by use of frozen ground, narrow routes without road beds, grading or gravelling." I completely agree with these statements and was pleased to see that you were on side with caribou conservation.

Mr. Cardinal, since this time, during my numerous travels in the caribou zone of the Grande Cache area, I can assure you this is NOT happening.

Strong examples are evident in the Cabin Creek/Berland River areas west of Highway 40 adjacent to Willmore Wilderness Park. Here Devon Canada and Suncor have drilled numerous wells, all of which are being serviced by high-grade permanent roads. With my discussions with these companies, it is apparent these roads will remain permanently, with further road systems and wells planned, as well as extensive pipeline systems.

When these roads were planned, I was under the impression that the roads were to be temporary frozen ground access only and the wells monitored remotely. Obviously by your letter, you concur with this view.

I am also concerned [about] similar development with permanent access up the Huckleberry Tower Road and the Ghost mainline by Husky Canada and CNRL (formerly Rio-Alta). The bottom line is this problem is widespread throughout the entire caribou zone that you said was important to protect.

Why, a year later, is the problem getting worse instead of better? Why do I see no improvements as per your letter from 14 months ago? You stated it was your highest priority, yet nothing has been done. How come?

Of major concern to me in your October 2001 letter was that "department staff are currently completing a review of access approvals issued on the west central caribou ranges since 1996," but the results of these cannot be released because of confidential business information.

Mr. Cardinal, I am not interested in the actual companies or the confidential business information. What I am concerned with is the lack of departmental action in reference to this five-year "audit." What I



would like to see is the guidelines being followed because in my experience they are not. This is unacceptable, because according to your letter, they should be. How come?

I would like to see the general results of this "audit" that shows how often these guidelines have not been enforced. It is my perception that in the Grande Cache area these land use guidelines are rarely, if ever, followed for the protection of the threatened woodland caribou. I would like to be shown this is not the case.

In addition, I am concerned [about] the lack of environmental respect many of the seismic programs exhibit. For example, LFD approved a 3D seismic program by Solid State Geophysical in the area north and east of Willmore Wilderness park. This program was done in non-frozen ground conditions of early fall and the company was permitted to use bombi-drills which necessitated new cutlines for access. Due to a wet fall over typically wet terrain, many of the traditional access routes they used are now impassable until freeze up. This could have been prevented if the program had been all heli-portable, rather than ground access. This also would have greatly reduced the added habitat loss in the caribou zone.

As you have stated, "habitat is the essential requirement for maintenance of caribou." You have also stated that a recovery plan is being implemented and that your direction "is for industrial activity approved prior to or following recovery plan implementation to be consistent with the recovery of caribou to a state where the populations of the species are not at risk." These statements are inconsistent with the actions of your department. Where is the caribou recovery plan that addresses these issues? You are saying these things should be done; yet they are not. Where is the accountability?

The caribou need your help before it is too late. I look forward to (1) seeing a caribou recovery plan in place; (2) seeing the guidelines being consistently enforced with the protection of the caribou in mind, rather than industrial development; and (3) most importantly, seeing the results of the five-year "audit" regarding land use guidelines in the caribou zone.

## DUNVEGAN WEIR TURNED DOWN BY EUB/NRCB

The Alberta Energy and Utilities Board and the Natural Resource Conservation Board have denied an application by Glacier Power Ltd. for a proposed weir and hydroelectric plant on the Peace River upstream of the Dunvegan Bridge north of Grande Prairie.

A March 25 news release states that "the Panel determined that significant uncertainty remains concerning the potential benefits and costs of the project. In its findings, the Panel noted that while each of the potential negative economic, social and environmental effects of the project, if they were to occur, are substantive on their own, their cumulative effect clearly outweighs the social and economic benefits of the project to the local community, as well as to Albertans in general. The Panel was also not convinced that there were reasonable opportunities to offset or mitigate these potential negative effects."

Some of the potential economic and social costs were increased flooding in the Town of Peace River; impacts on the Shaftsbury Crossing; reduced use of the ice bridge and possibly the ferry; and increased safety risks to boaters on the River, due to the hydraulics of the weir, and to vehicles using the Dunvegan Bridge, due to increased winter fog and ice and impacts on fish populations.

"This project proposed the damming of a waterway of national environmental significance, an important fishery and recreational river, and a project that may further impact the Peace-Athabasca Delta in Wood Buffalo National park," said Cliff Wallis, AWA president. "The decision to reject this project is certainly appropriate."

The Peace River is the most diverse and productive river valley in the Parkland of Canada. It is a nationally significant waterway that supplies water to the Peace Athabasca Delta, the largest inland freshwater delta in the world. This project has potential to interfere with future efforts to enable flooding of the delta, a process that has been already seriously affected by the Bennett Dam on the Peace River in B.C.

The river supports several species of migratory and resident fish – the passage of fish both upstream and downstream are of concern. The south-facing slopes of the river valley support the last remaining habitat for prairie and parkland vegetation that has virtually all been destroyed by agricultural development in the Peace River district and throughout Alberta. Those south-facing slopes will be subject to increased slumping and invasion by weeds as a result of this project. Several other sites along the Peace River are being considered for weirs, the determination on this project will set a precedent for this kind of development along the Peace.



Caribou



Peace River



## ROUGH FESCUE NAMED AS ALBERTA'S GRASS EMBLEM

Alberta has a new provincial emblem – rough fescue, a native prairie grass. The search for a provincial grass emblem was started in 1999 by the Prairie Conservation Forum, of which AWA is a member. The Forum sponsored a process to select a grass and rough fescue garnered the majority of votes. June grass and blue grama came in second and third, respectively. Albertans provided many reasons why rough fescue would be an excellent choice for a symbol of native prairie. Forum members approached Don Tannas, MLA Highwood, to sponsor a private member's bill, Bill 201, Emblems of Alberta Amendment Act 2003 to officially designate rough fescue as the provincial grass emblem. Many MLAs spoke eloquently for this grass and the Bill was passed on March 24, 2003.

To read more about rough fescue, see the Prairie Conservation Forum Web site <http://www.albertapcf.ab.ca/> and Alberta Hansard [www.assembly.ab.ca/pro/han-sim.asp](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/pro/han-sim.asp).

*"The grass known botanically as Festuca scabrella and popularly known as 'rough fescue' is hereby adopted as the grass emblem of Alberta." – Bill 201, Emblems of Alberta (Grass Emblem) Amendment Act, 2003*



*Rough Fescue at Milk River Ridge*

## CONSERVATION BEST ECONOMIC OPTION IN CARDINAL DIVIDE-CHEVIOT MINE AREA

Calgary-based Fording Canadian Coal Trust is closing its Luscar mine near Hinton and putting its Cheviot project on hold indefinitely due to poor market conditions for coal. These follow the closing of Luscar's Obed mine last week and the Gregg River mine in 2000. This leaves a window of opportunity to seriously examine more sustainable economic alternatives based on conservation of the ecological values of the area.

AWA has maintained for years that a much better alternative to building a mine at Cheviot is to protect the area for its wilderness values and long-term, sustainable economic potential. An Alberta Government study found that the economic potential of protected landscapes is comparable to that of the forestry and agriculture industries and can provide as many jobs as resource extraction industries. As well, healthy wilderness areas provide services, like water purification, that would be very expensive to reproduce.

"The economic advantages of protecting wilderness are truly sustainable. The future of Hinton's economy requires smart decisions which involve ecosystem protection," said Cliff Wallis, AWA president. "Now that the Cheviot mine has been put on indefinite hold, the Cardinal Divide area should be protected immediately, not only for its immense wilderness value, but also to protect the economic future of the area."

In an economy that's uncertain at best, coal is becoming a risky strategy because alternatives are often cheaper and definitely cleaner. Coal is not a stable economic venture. And it's not just the economy at stake. The environmental impact of coal mining is huge, particularly in sensitive and internationally important ecosystems like the Cardinal Divide.

"AWA doesn't want to see any community go into economic ruin. We have to get away from the resource extraction mentality we have in Alberta. That will only lead to economic ruin in the long run," said Tamaini Snaith, AWA conservation biologist. "People want to live in communities that have a beautiful environment and a stable economy. Economic success up and down the Eastern Slopes is becoming diversified and no longer relies on single industry extractive resources."



*A Climb for Wilderness Mural Design by Karen McCarthy*



# CRITICAL TIME AHEAD FOR DEVELOPING CREDIBLE FSC BOREAL STANDARDS

By Philip Clement, AWA Conservation Biologist

FSC (forest Stewardship Council) Alberta Regional Committee has started into the nitty gritty of developing thresholds for FSC standards in Canada's Boreal forest. Developing these standards will depend upon a combination of science and negotiations.

Over the past two months FSC Canada (Boreal Coordinating Committee) created two Working Groups to explore the key issues contained within Principles 3, 6, and 9. Principle 3 states: "The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected." Principle 6 states: "Forest Management shall conserve biodiversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest. Principle 9 states: "Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes which define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach." As one might expect, the interpretations of these principles vary among individuals.

Perhaps the priority outstanding issues, which must be resolved before FSC certification can move ahead, surround "informed consent" by Aboriginal groups. Principle/Indicator 3.1.3 states: "The applicant recognizes and respects the legal and customary rights of Indigenous Peoples over their lands, territories, and resources." To demonstrate this, the draft standards require that "The Indigenous People(s) formally indicate, clearly, unambiguously and normally in writing, that their legal and customary rights over the lands, territories and resources have been recognized and respected." Further, the Aboriginal Advisory Council to FSC, which drafted this principle, states that failure to meet 3.1.3 will result in a "major failure of principle 3." The forest industry had serious concerns with this wording and felt that it gave the Indigenous People a veto power over becoming FSC certified.

Principle 6 discussions focused on two main issues. First was the amount of contiguous core forest habitat that should be left in the forest management unit. Large cores consist primarily of mature and old forest. Forest industry representatives felt that the proportion of the management unit in large areas of core should be "guided by the outcome of the pre-industrial forest condition analysis." Other groups agreed with the forest industry with the condition that the proportion of large core areas does not fall below 20% of the forest management unit.

The second issue was the amount of residual structure retained in harvest operations. Forest industry representatives wanted to leave an average of 5% of the volume across the forest, not falling below 1% in any cut block. The environmental

chamber felt that the percentage retained is to be an average of 25% by volume across the forest, not falling below 5% in any cut block. Maintaining large core forests and residual stand structure is essential to maintaining a diversity of habitat types for forest dependent species.

Other outstanding issues were: overlapping tenure between oil and gas, Forest Management Agreement holders, and quota holders; slash pile burning; area of riparian buffers; scarification; cutting down snags; and plantation forests.

The next FSC Alberta Regional Committee where these issues will be discussed will be held in May. In addition, FSC Canada is holding a forum with representatives from the regional committees in late May to further discuss, and ideally resolve, these difficult issues.

At a recent conference on certification in Vancouver, FSC was presented as the only credible forest certification system. A report by Greenpeace and others called, "On the Ground" supports this view. With consumers demanding that their purchases of wood and other forest products do not contribute to forest destruction, FSC has an opportunity to reassure consumers that they are buying socially and environmentally responsible products.

FSC encourages the interested people to become involved in the standard setting process. All FSC documents are posted on the website, [www.fsccanada.org](http://www.fsccanada.org).



*A Climb for Wilderness Mural Design by Langevin Jr High School*



# ALBERTA'S TRUMPETER SWAN NEEDS YOUR HELP

By Marian White

The Alberta government recently reaffirmed that the trumpeter swan, which breeds in and migrates through Alberta, remains a Threatened Species here. Accordingly, it has mandated a team to develop a trumpeter recovery plan within twelve months. Meanwhile, the trumpeter's wintering grounds in western Greater Yellowstone remain a bottleneck that could lead to a population crash. Your help is needed in both regards if this swan is to continue its journey back from near extinction.

## BACKGROUND

The trumpeter, the world's largest and rarest swan, is native only to North America. Commercial slaughter by the Hudson's Bay Company drove them to near extinction such that a 1933 summer survey could find only 66 anywhere – only 10 breeding pairs. These were all in Yellowstone National Park and westward on nearby remote mountain lakes, where they remained year-round. Then in 1946, a summer survey at Grande Prairie, Alberta revealed another 100 – a flock we now know migrates south to overwinter with the others in Greater Yellowstone. Together, the sedentary Americans (now 13 per cent) and migratory Canadians (87 per cent) comprised the remnant Rocky Mountain Population (RMP). To save both trumpeter and tundra swans, all swan hunting was outlawed about 86 years ago in Canada and the U.S. But hunting of the look-alike and now numerous tundra has crept back into Utah (1962), Nevada (1969) and Montana (1970).

## THE BREEDING GROUNDS TODAY

Hunting bans and habitat protection (and U.S. winter feeding until 1992) are now bearing fruit and Alberta swans have expanded northwest into the Yukon, NWT and northeastern B.C. The latest five-year survey, in September 2000, counted 2,546 Canadian RMP all told – nearly 1,000 (40 per cent) of them in Alberta – of which the core Grande Prairie flock numbers just over 600. This flock is also expanding southeast. A pair in a flock reintroduced into Elk Island National Park successfully bred and fledged young in 1998 – the first in over 100 years there. Also, small pioneer flocks are forming elsewhere in Alberta (see map). But all is not well. Residential and oil-and-gas development,

logging, agribusiness, and recreation continue to destroy, disturb or threaten swan habitat. As for migration habitat around Calgary, housing is encroaching on Cochrane Lake, illegal pheasant hunting disturbs trumpeters on Frank Lake, and the City's plan to dredge Glenmore Reservoir would destroy habitat there. Fortunately, the Alberta government reaffirmed in August 2001 that the trumpeter is a Threatened Species under our Wildlife Act,



*Trumpeter Swans: two Grande Prairie non-breeding adults  
|run across lake ice to take off*

so it is legally required to put in place a trumpeter recovery plan. It will hold the first of four Recovery Team meetings in Grande Prairie in late April and intends to produce the plan within 12 months. So. Now is the time to have your say.

## THE WINTERING GROUNDS SITUATION

Meanwhile, the tiny, ice-free haven in Greater Yellowstone that saved the swans from extinction is totally inadequate for today's RMP numbers; hence trumpeters have spread to nearby lakes and streams. But these freeze in severe winters, or dry up, as in the current long drought, forcing overcrowding on remaining open water and potential death from disease or starvation. Thus the RMP is predicted to crash again.

To avert disaster, the RMP must rediscover and re-establish safe migration routes to more extensive and milder winter habitat further south, especially to the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Utah. But they cannot do so without encountering tundra hunters – especially at Bear River itself. Regrettably, in October 2000, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service introduced a three-year "experimental" tundra hunt (a fraud in that no sound science was conducted) that allowed a limited take of southward-bound trumpeters without penalty.<sup>1</sup> Public pressure reduced the allowable take, the hunt season, and the area hunted. The Service has no credible data from the "experiment" but estimates 11 trumpeters were killed in each of five previous seasons. These are precisely the birds that could have restarted the southerly migration.

Well, the three-year "experimental" hunt ended in January, and we don't want a new "experiment" to start this October. So, your help is needed (see sidebar).



*Author Marian White with Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge sign.*



**TRUMPETERS – HARBINGERS OF SPRING. ENJOY!**

Finally, with joy in my heart, I learned on March 29 that the first trumpeters had arrived in southern Alberta on migration north to their breeding grounds. In early April, we shall see them again just west of Calgary, and on Glenmore Reservoir and Frank Lake. Let's keep them coming.

- 1 See White's article in *Wild Lands Advocate*, June 2000.
- 2 Later, a remnant Pacific Population was found in Alaska, and managers started an Interior Population from scratch to the east. In February 2003, Pacific Coast, RMP and Interior Trumpeters combined totalled around 25,000.

*(Marian White is a member of The Trumpeter Swan Society and presented a paper on Alberta trumpeter habitat to the society's 19th Biennial Conference, Richmond, BC, in February 2003. She will be involved with the Recovery Team.)*



*Wieso Marsh: Oil or gas well drilled on a pad right out into the La Glace Trumpeter breeding marsh, NE of Grand Prairie.*



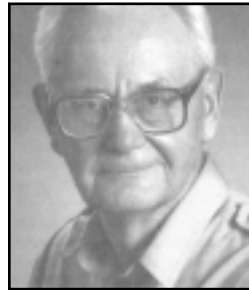
**Alberta's Trumpeter Swan Flocks, 2000**

Source: Norton & Beyersbergen – 2000 Survey of Trumpeters in AB, Sask, Man, NWT

**CANADA AND THE "BUFFALO," BISON BISON: A TALE OF TWO HERDS**

By William A. Fuller

*The following is the abstract from a paper Bill Fuller wrote recently on the history of bison in Alberta from 1912 to 1925. It was published in 2002 in Canadian Field Naturalist 116(1): 141-159.*



From 1907 to 1912 the Canadian government purchased and imported more than 700 plains bison, *Bison bison*, from Michel Pablo in Montana. A new national park, with an area of 159 square miles was established near Wainwright, Alberta to accommodate them. It has generally been acknowledged that Buffalo National Park played an important role in saving the plains bison from extinction.

This paper makes use of a packet of government files that were saved from destruction during the early 1940s. The files deal mainly with events from 1912 to 1925, including the first appearance of bovine tuberculosis, and later the prevalence of tuberculosis in the herd. They also contain notes from the meetings of senior civil servants that led to the decision to transfer diseased plains bison to Wood Buffalo National Park, as well as summaries of submissions of those opposed to the transfer. One option, to slaughter the entire herd and start over with disease-free stock, was rejected by well-meaning members of the public.

When the Buffalo National Park was turned over to the military in 1940, 17,000 bison had been slaughtered as a result of annual culling. Ironically, had a total slaughter been carried out in 1923, fewer than 7,000 would have been killed. In addition, it is probable that we would have pure wood bison and no tuberculosis in Wood Buffalo National Park.

In 1963, 18 disease-free bison, derived from a group of animals that showed some of the characteristics of wood bison, were released in the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary. That herd now numbers about 2,600 individuals. As in 1923, we again have two herds, one with a high prevalence of tuberculosis and a second that is disease-free.

In 1990 an Environment Panel recommended total depopulation of Wood Buffalo National Park and restocking with disease-free animals. As in 1923 the recommendation to slaughter and restock met opposition on several fronts, and so far no action has been taken. Must we repeat the serious error made in 1923?



*J. Geary*



# PROTECTION FOR GREAT SAND HILLS BEING ERODED BY OIL AND GAS INTERESTS

By Shirley Bray, WLA Editor



The oil and gas industry and the Saskatchewan government want to open protected environmentally sensitive areas of the Great Sand Hills (GSH) to drilling. The Great Sand Hills, one of Saskatchewan's ecological treasures, lie just across the southeastern border of Alberta, north of the Cypress Hills and south of the South Saskatchewan River.

They are connected to the environmentally sensitive Middle Sand Hills and the National Wildlife Area in Suffield in Alberta. It is AWA's opinion that the whole sand hills region is currently overdeveloped.

During the 1990s the GSH Planning Commission, composed of four rural municipalities, created a zoning scheme for the area. Most of the GSH was zoned "environmentally sensitive," with more than half of the area protected from drilling activity (ES1 zone). The rest (ES2) may have drilling only under strict environmental regulations.

In 2001 the Rural Municipality of Piapot resigned from the Commission and applied for a bylaw change to rezone ES1 lands to ES2 and ES2 lands to Agricultural to allow Anadarko to drill shallow gas wells in the area. The Government of Saskatchewan turned down the application. Instead, a GSH Review Committee was set up to conduct a one-year review of the land use strategy in the GSH. Opportunities for public participation appear to have been minimized.

Most people favouring conservation, including local ranchers, oppose rezoning. Decisions on development should be based on a cumulative impact assessment of all forms of development. Oil and gas activity has a large negative impact on this fragile area, which is very prone to wind and water erosion. The flagrant use of water by this industry is also of great concern in this semi-arid area.

The Great Sand Hills, a fragile area of about 1900 sq km, consists of sand dune grasslands (50 per cent of the area), active sand dunes (2 per cent), pebble plains, low hills, saline flats and aspen and cottonwood patches. This is the largest complex of open dunes in Canada, next to the Athabasca Sand Dunes in northern Saskatchewan. It is the largest native prairie in the province and one of the six largest remnant grasslands on the glaciated Great Plains of North America.

The Hills are home to many species, including those considered internationally to be rare, threatened and endangered, such as ferruginous hawk, burrowing owl, Great Plains toad, and Ord's kangaroo rat. It is also home to mule deer, sharp-tailed grouse and pronghorn antelope, which feed on the ubiquitous sagebrush.

AWA is encouraging Anadarko to take a public stand against rezoning of the GSH area and is seeking a cooperative solution to ensure the protection of the GSH continues and is strengthened. AWA has worked in successful cooperation with



*Middle Sand Hills*

Ventus and Navigo Energy in the Hay-Zama Lakes area of northern Alberta to phase out oil and gas development in this protected area. Write to Anadarko and others on the list below and tell them that you would like to see stronger protection for the GSH and that you do not want environmentally sensitive lands in the GSH to be rezoned to allow oil and gas activity.

Write to:

- Anadarko Canada Corporation,  
1500, 425 – 1st Street SW, Calgary, AB T2P 4V4  
President Bob Daniels (since August 2001) is responsible for the exploration and development efforts of the company's holdings in western Canada.
- GSH Review Committee, c/o Sask Environment,  
350 Cheadle St. W, Swift Current, SK S9H 4G3
- Premier Lorne Calvert, Room 226, Legislative Building,  
Regina, SK S4S 0B3, Fax: 306-787-8500

For more information see the Middle Sand Hills under Issues on our Web site: [www.AlbertaWilderness.ca](http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca)



*A Climb for Wilderness Mural Design by The Kearls.*



# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## WILDERNESS CELEBRATION SPRING 2003

Elegance, enthusiasm and excitement marked the first annual Spring Wilderness Celebration held in Edmonton on March 8. The event took place at the charming Glencoe Club on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River. The mood was lively and relaxed as guests wined and dined on luscious appetizers and a superb dinner served by Club staff.

Throughout the evening guests were entertained with music and song. The band Down To The Wood entertained sated guests after dinner. Ben Gadd delivered a witty discussion of conservation during dessert. Bidding on live and silent auction items was fun and competitive with an excellent assortment of interesting and unique items to choose from.

AWA would like to thank host Richard Secord, the organizing committee, auctioneer Colin Spencer, the Glencoe Club, AWA staff and volunteers who made this evening such a wonderful success.



*The organizing committee (left to right): Gail Docken, Carol Secord, Conchetta Carbonaro, Christy Sarafinchin, cindy Chiasson (missing: Freda Jackson, Judy anne Wilson)*



*Guests enjoy a superb dinner.*



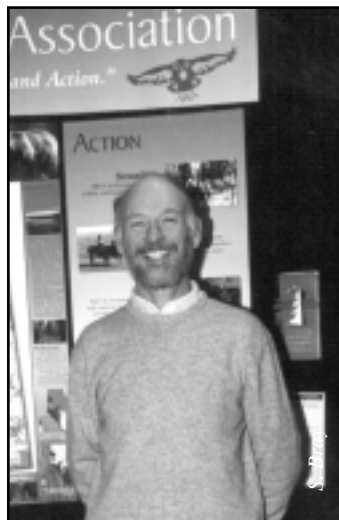
*Guests place their bids in the silent auction.*



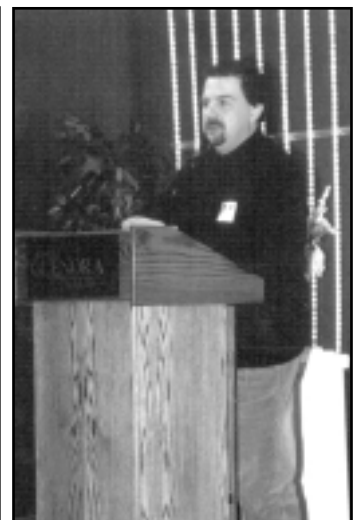
*Down To The Wood band entertains.*



*Christyann Olson (AWA Executive Director, centre) and young volunteers.*



*Ben Gadd*



*Auctioneer, Colin Spencer*





## CLIMB FOR WILDERNESS MURAL COMPETITION 2003

Toting crates of paints, brushes, water containers and paint clothes, enthusiastic teams of all ages and interests ranged themselves on 23 landings up the Calgary Tower stairwell to create wonderful vibrant wilderness murals. There were four categories of winners and the winning murals can be viewed at [www.climbforwilderness.ca](http://www.climbforwilderness.ca). All these beautiful murals can be seen as you climb the Calgary Tower on April 19, 2003. AWA would like to thank all the participants, judges and volunteers in our Climb for Wilderness Mural Competition.

This issue features some of the artwork submitted by participants that formed the basis for their mural.



*Climb for Wilderness mural design.*

*All photos by N. Douglas*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*The following letters continue the debate about trapping that began with our article in December 2002.*

### A TRAPPER RESPONDS

I would like to take a moment to respond to Jonathan Wright's letter pertaining to "an essay on fur trapping." I do not have a problem with Mr. Wright expressing his opinion; this is, after all, what makes us free. I have an opinion also and would ask that readers keep their minds open to all sides of an issue.

Mr. Wright takes exception that the modern fur trade is equated with native tradition. Natives bartered among themselves long before European settlement. Once trappers developed a commercial market, many natives became fur traders. Today, fur harvesting is an important part of native culture and livelihood. In addition, the byproducts of the harvest (meat) are still used in many communities.

Mr. Wright is concerned with the removal of 150 to 200 high order carnivores (lynx) from a trapping area, a quote he attributed to a trapper. Your readers should be informed that the lynx harvest is managed on a quota basis per trapping area. In addition, before a lynx pelt is sold, each pelt must be registered. This information provides provincial biologists with the information necessary to set trapping area quotas the following year. Their numbers mirror the hare cycle and they cannot be stockpiled. When the hare population crashes, so do the lynx. Death comes by way of starvation, disease and cannibalism.

To have a quota of 200 lynx, the individual trapper would have to be trapping an area of about 33 townships, which is over 1,000 sq. miles, and such large traplines are not granted to one individual. In Alberta there are about 150,000 sq. miles of registered trapline area and last year 1,667 lynx were taken. The point is that lynx numbers are managed based on sound wildlife principles, and numbers are allotted to trappers by the provincial government.

Wolverine is also a concern to Mr. Wright. He speaks of a black market for these animals. I personally am not aware of this, but I have been around long enough not to dismiss it out of hand. If it is the case, it becomes an enforcement issue. The legal trapping of wolverine is also based on a quota and registration system. This number of animals is derived from the information gleaned from the registrations. It is interesting to note that last year 19 wolverine were taken by trappers with a value of approximately \$5,000. The total value of all furs in the province was over two million dollars. The wolverine collection is a small but still important aspect of our fur harvest.

Humane capture devices were an issue. Traps are tested and approval is required before they are used. By 2007, all traps in use will be required to meet an international trap standard. This standard was set and agreed to after considerable consultation with many countries that import Canada's fur.

Mr. Wright is correct when he states that these devices may capture animals, other than the intended target. This is where our trapper education program comes in. With many trap sets the approach and kill zone can be directed and will eliminate most accidental catches. This area is constantly evolving and trappers are working hard to ensure their catches are humane and catch the intended species.

He is correct when he states that no one but the trapper usually views the catch. Trappers have respect and do not want to take animals that are not



intended. I would quit hunting, fishing and trapping in a moment if I felt that I was not respectful of the furbearers, and most trappers feel this way. If Mr. Wright and others truly want to help, they might consider donating some funds to the Fur Institute of Canada to help with trap development.

I am certain that trappers are true conservationists. We are not preservationists and believe in the wise use of a renewable resource. We do get a little possessive of our traplines but realize we do not "own the land." Because we are so close to nature and witness habitat degradation and abuse, we sometimes come across this way. Be patient with us; we are working on this attitude.

The Alberta Wilderness Association and the Alberta Trappers Association have more in common than you might think. We are both stakeholders and want to see a healthy, viable ecosystem for all time. By working together and respecting each other's legal right to travel the land and enjoy nature's bounty, whether it is berry picking, fur trapping or just feeling alive, we will both be able to pass on our values to future generations.

## AN EX-TRAPPER RESPONDS TO A TRAPPER'S RESPONSE

Jim, the diplomatic tone of your letter truly impressed me. Bravo! A practice as distasteful as fur trapping needs diplomatic spokesmen.

I do not take exception to the fur trade being "equated" with native tradition. What I take exception to, and I think this was made clear in my essay, is the suggestion that the mass-killing of furbearers on modern traplines for maximum profit is the same tradition as the natives practiced before Europeans came along to exploit the situation – the indigenous wildlife and peoples both. Yes, fur harvesting today is an important part of the culture of some *native bands*, although the numbers of active native trappers are dropping as they opt for more lucrative work from amongst the largely distasteful choices we have forced upon them. Even the ones who do trap are participating more in our system than in theirs. To placate the public by saying, "Hey folks, we're only doing what the first nations did" is twisted.

Jim, I suggest you refer to National Energy Board Hearing Order GH-1-01, Volume 4, line 930. Here you will find an Alberta trapper's statement suggesting a catch of 150 to 200 lynx being the norm on his trapline in a good year. You will see that this is not something I fabricated to make a point. In contesting this, on the other hand, you are pointing out that your fellow trapper is either a) providing misleading information to the international community while in a formal public hearing situation, or b) in gross contravention of regulations. Neither situation is very flattering of trappers.

I have no doubt that trapping wolverine is important to trappers. My point is – and trappers should know this as well as anyone without waiting for some official to dictate to them – that killing a species that is already of provincial concern because it is so sparse on the landscape is inexcusable. The fact that you are still allowed to do so is all the proof required that trapping is *not* regulated by "sound wildlife principles," as you go on to suggest.

In fact, in this regard trapping is no different from the mass market-killing of any wildlife in this country, whether the killers are trappers or hunters or commercial fisherman. Sound wildlife principles take a distant backseat to politics. If enough people like yourself exert enough pressure on the "right" politician, chances are good you will be allowed to kill what you like, as long as it makes money. That's why I bother to write stuff like this when I'd rather be doing something less distasteful – in the hopes that some day we will *truly* be basing our conduct on sound wildlife principles! Not to mention getting in touch with our moral obligations to other living creatures, something our culture is a near-complete failure at.

I'd further like to point out that trapping primarily provides biologists with information not on what is out there in the bush, but rather on what was out there in the bush.

May I re-emphasize a very important point you seem to have overlooked. *I was a fur trapper*. I am intimately familiar with what trapping is about. I was out there as a fur-trapper "enjoying nature's bounty" – by killing it off and causing who knows what magnitude of suffering in the process. By eroding the very bounty I professed to be a lover of.

And while on the subject of the bounty of nature, I would like to point out that every time a trapper unnecessarily kills a wolverine, or a fisher or an otter, etc. (keeping in mind that all fur-trapping today is inherently unnecessary), I feel that you have personally ripped me, and every other world citizen who enjoys nature, off. Because by pursuing *your* model of enjoying nature's bounty, you rob all the rest of us of a percentage of our potential to do the same. You get to enjoy your however-many fisher you've killed, and the \$40 or so each of their deaths is worth to you. But those fisher are now dead. None of the rest of us will ever have the opportunity to enjoy them, or simply to enjoy knowing they are still out there, as I do. If you aren't thinking about issues like this, you should be. Thinking about how what you are doing is not only utterly unnecessary, it is a form of thievery – on a number of levels. You are, furthermore, robbing other living creatures of their potential to enjoy ... anything! *For what?* For absolutely nothing of any noteworthy relevance.

Trapping is an extraordinarily selfish pursuit. It is *not* about conservation, it is *not* about fair-chase – nature does these things very nicely without us. It is about capitalism-without-ethics. There is a name for capitalism without ethics, and the capitalists can tell you what that name is: greed. Greed is why most traplines are deserted as soon as fur prices fall. And yes, I *do* want to help. Not out of ignorance, but from my basis of profound knowledge, as an ex-trapper. I want very much to play my part in seeing that we evolve as a people to the point where fur trapping – in the same tradition as slavery and child-labour – is abolished.

Perhaps you *should* take up berry picking. Or photography... or nature education... or meat-hunting with a longbow... wildlife filmmaking... catch-and-release fishing... or conservation biology... environmental advocacy... or eco-tourism...



## OPEN HOUSE TALKS PROGRAM, SPRING 2003

### CALGARY

Location: The Hillhurst Room,  
AWA, 455 12 St NW, Calgary  
Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm  
Cost: \$5.00 per person; children free  
Contact: 403-283-2025 for reservations

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

**Bumblebees in Alberta** With Robin Owen

Come and find out more about these fascinating creatures and the complex social lives they lead. Dr. Robin Owen is a professor at Mount Royal College and at the University of Calgary, teaching introductory biology and statistics. He is a bee enthusiast with a particular interest in evolutionary genetics.

## OPEN HOUSE HIKES PROGRAM

### SUMMER 2003

Saturday, May 17, 2003

**Elk Island National Park** With Dr. Graham Griffiths

Sunday, May 25, 2003

**Twin River Heritage Rangeland** With Cheryl Bradley

Sunday, June 8, 2003

**Rumsey Natural Area** With Dorothy Dickson

Saturday, June 21, 2003

**The Whaleback** With Bob Blaxley

Saturday, June 28, 2003

**Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve** With Vivian Pharis

Saturday, July 12, 2003

**Cypress Hills** With Hyland Armstrong

Saturday, July 26, 2003

**Blue Hill Fire Lookout** (west of Sundre) With Will Davies

Saturday, August 23, 2003

**Beehive Natural Area** With James Tweedie

Saturday, September 6, 2003

**The Whaleback** With Bob Blaxley

Sunday, September 21

**Chester Lake, Kananaskis** With Vivian Pharis

All hikes are \$20.00, and pre-registration is required. For more details, check the Events page of the AWA Web site at [www.AlbertaWilderness.ca](http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca). To register for hikes, please call 403-283-2025.

## In Memoriam

*Joel Donald Sterkenburg of Beaverlodge passed away tragically at the young age of 18 years.*

*Joel will be forever missed and lovingly remembered by his mom, Tami, and his brothers Adam and Jared. Joel was an avid outdoorsman, enjoying sledding, hunting, biking and camping.*

*He had a true appreciation for nature. Joel's family has chosen to remember him through memorial donations to the Alberta Wilderness Association. We offer our sincere condolences in their time of sorrow.*

AWA recognizes the support received through the United Way of Calgary, Donor Choice Program. Each year donors choose to give to AWA through the United Way Donor Choice Program. AWA is very appreciative of the support received from these donors.

## OTHER EVENTS

June 19 – 22

**Gifts of the Grasslands**

Canadian Nature Federation 2003 AGM and Conference, Medicine Hat. [www.natureline.info](http://www.natureline.info)

The conference features an excellent lineup of speakers and prairie field trips. Keynote, banquet and plenary speakers are Wayne Lynch, John Acorn and Cliff Wallis, respectively.

April 25 – 26

**19th Annual New and Used Outdoor Recreation**

**Consignment Sale**, Olympic Oval, Calgary.

The Calgary Area Outdoor Council and the University of Calgary Outdoor Program Centre

Free Admission

Public Consignment

Friday 3 – 9 p.m.

Saturday 8 – 10 a.m.

Sale

Saturday Only 12 – 3 p.m.

Reclaim and Payment

Saturday Only 7 – 9 p.m.

Editorial Board:  
Shirley Bray, Ph.D.  
Peter Sherrington, Ph.D.  
Andy Marshall  
Joyce Hildebrand  
Graphic Designer:  
Ball Creative  
Printer:  
MRC Document Services

Web Host: [qbiz.ca](http://qbiz.ca)

Please direct questions  
and comments to:

Shirley Bray  
Phone: 270-2736  
Fax: 270-2743  
[awa.wrc@shaw.ca](mailto:awa.wrc@shaw.ca)  
[www.AlbertaWilderness.ca](http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca)

Editorial Disclaimer: The opinions expressed by the various authors in this publication are not necessarily those of the editors or the AWA. The editors reserve the right to edit, reject or withdraw articles submitted.



"Our quality of life, our health, and a healthy economy are totally dependent on Earth's biological diversity. We cannot replicate natural ecosystems. Protected areas are internationally recognized as the most efficient way to maintain biological diversity"

- Richard Thomas

**The Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA)** is dedicated to protecting wildlands, wildlife and wild waters throughout Alberta. Your valued contribution will assist with all areas of the AWA's work. We offer the following categories for your donation. The Provincial Office of the AWA hosts wall plaques recognizing donors in the "Associate" or greater category. Please give generously to the conservation work of the AWA.

**Alberta Wilderness and Wildlife Trust** - an endowment fund established with The Calgary Foundation to support the long-term sustainability of the Alberta Wilderness Association. For further details, please contact our Calgary office (403) 283-2025.

**Membership** - Lifetime AWA Membership  \$25 Single  \$30 Family

Alberta Wilderness Association	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilderness Circle	\$2500 - \$5000
<input type="checkbox"/> Philanthropist	\$1000
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

Alberta Wilderness Resource Centre	
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron - greater than \$1000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$1000
<input type="checkbox"/> Partner	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	\$100



Cheque  Visa  M/C Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (work): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**I wish to join the Monthly Donor Programme!**

I would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ monthly. Here is my credit card number OR my voided cheque for bank withdrawal. I understand that monthly donations are processed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month (minimum of \$5 per month).

*The AWA respects the privacy of members. Lists are not sold or traded in any manner. The AWA is a federally registered charity and functions through member and donor support. Tax-deductible donations may be made to the Association at: Box 6398 Station D, Calgary, AB T2P 2E1. Telephone (403) 283-2025 Fax (403) 270-2743 E-mail a.w.a@shaw.ca Website http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca*

## JUNE 2003 IS WILDERNESS AWARENESS MONTH

We invite you to celebrate Alberta's wilderness with some of our most renowned conservationists and biologists. Join us for an exciting month of activities, investigating some of the wilderness treasures which make Alberta such a spectacular place to live.

Wednesday June 4, 2003 –

**AWA Open House (455 12th Street NW, Calgary)**

2:00 – 8:00 pm

- Meet the staff of AWA, and come and see where 'it all happens'.
- Displays on a range of wilderness themes.
- Wilderness slide shows.
- And, of course, AWA mascot KC, the 'grizzly bear'.

Or why not take part in one of AWA's hikes, looking at a selection of Alberta's different Natural Regions.

Sunday May 25

**Twin River Heritage Rangeland** (Grassland Region)

with Cheryl Bradley

Sunday June 8

**Rumsey Natural Area** (Parkland Region)

With Dorothy Dickson

Saturday June 21

**Whaleback** (Montane Sub-region of the Rocky Mountain Region) With Bob Blaxley

Saturday June 28

**Plateau Mountain** (Alpine and Subalpine Sub- regions of the Rocky Mountain Region)

With Vivian Pharis

The AWA Outreach team will be touring visitor centres, fairs & farmers markets throughout the summer.



**The Alberta Wilderness Association**

Box 6398, Station D  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E1

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement

No. 485535 • ISSN# 1192 6287

