

# Wild Lands Advocate



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## LOGGING CONFLICT RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT ALBERTA'S LAND POLICIES

Andy Marshall



A successful court battle against logging on an ecotourist operation west of Calgary has incited renewed debate on the province's consultation practices, its land management and its multiple-use approach to resource extraction.

Although the court case hinges specifically on the inadequacies of the consultation process between Alberta Sustainable Resources

Development (SRD) and the 100-year-old Bar C Ranch and Cattle Company Ltd. over harvesting activities affecting its tourism and grazing operation, conservationists see the unprecedented action as an important impetus for reviewing government policies throughout Alberta.

"I'm absolutely delighted the judiciary reminded the Alberta government it cannot always do what it likes when it comes to natural resources management, whether it is water or forests, and that adequate and timely consultation has to be done," says Alberta Wilderness Association director Heinz Unger. He lives near the ranch in question on Forestry Trunk Road 940, about 60 kilometres west of Calgary.

"I would expect the government will have to change its approach, but I'm not certain of it – four years of dealing with this government as an ENGO [Environmental Non-Governmental Organization] has made me cynical," he says.

AWA has been pushing for a review of the province's public land-use policies for almost two decades. Based on the Bar C decision, "we have a good chance of successfully challenging the government on their consultation policy," adds Unger.

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Logging on Bar C leased lands



The decision may be helpful for protecting the rights of competing interests, including conservation needs, agrees Calgary lawyer Clint Docken, who represented the Bar C Ranch in the court case. “This is a significantly precedent-setting case. My concern is that the government is going to ignore it,” he says.

Monique Ross, a research associate specializing in forestry issues for the Canadian Institute of Resources Law, believes the Bar C case “is an illustration of a larger conflict being played out across the province.” It involves the various users of the land, particularly the logging industry, the oilpatch and ranchers. But, she adds, “underlying that is the health of the land and whether the land can sustain all these kinds of uses.”

The University of Calgary-based Institute has published two recent papers on what it considers the “outmoded paradigm” of multiple-use, promoted by the Alberta government (and many other jurisdictions across North America) to exploit maximum economic benefit from natural resources. “Unless you have a good land-use planning exercise – which we don’t – you can’t make sense of all these multiple allocations,” Ross says.

For her, the crux is this: “The basis for land-use planning and allocation has to be grounded in the health of the ecosystem.”

Despite the province’s protestations to the contrary, conservationists believe Alberta falls far short of this standard. For example, although an SRD planning manual refers to the desirability of “ecosystem-based management” for logging in forest reserves, formal agreements on harvesting are still based on so-called sustainable yield concepts.

This now widely discredited approach seeks to ensure a continuous supply of timber but does not include maintaining biodiversity or ecological processes as management objectives, according to an AWA position paper.

For the government and SRD, however, broadening discussion on the Bar C court ruling into this realm is unwarranted and unjustifiable. “The judge’s comments were focused specifically around the consultation issue [between SRD and the Bar C Ranch],” says Anna Kauffman, a spokeswoman for SRD Minister Mike Cardinal. “He recognized this area is a zone for multiple use, and different uses can and do occur simultaneously. He wasn’t disputing the fact we have this public land base we have to manage for a number of different users, and that sometimes this is a challenge, and the government is faced with making some difficult decisions.”

Court of Queen’s Bench Justice Sal LoVecchio granted a temporary injunction against further logging by four quota

holders in the South Ghost area of the Spray Lake Sawmill Forestry Management Agreement (FMA). The injunction was based on the failure by SRD to give Bar C the opportunity for direct input, particularly after it had promised to do so.

Bar C argued that its viability as an ecotourism centre and a cattle ranch were seriously compromised by the extensive logging on more than 900 acres of leased land within its 7,000-acre operation.

But in a surprise move in mid-March, SRD abruptly cancelled this year’s harvest on the site, calling the decision “operational” and not related to the court action. “Nobody’s thrown in the towel, no permits have been rescinded, nothing’s changed,” SRD area manager Rick Blackwood was quoted as saying. “This was an operational decision in terms of dealing with spring break-up.”

In another twist in this unusual story, the court indicated that all costs for this case – which, according to a second Bar C lawyer, Noble Shanks, could top \$300,000 – would fall to the Crown. That matter was still being argued at the time of writing this article.



Logging on Bar C leased lands

Kauffman won’t comment on how severe an indictment of the department’s practices the case has been. “I’m not 100 per cent sure what the judge’s comments were around consultation, other than he had some concerns. That’s why our legal counsel is reviewing the written decision very carefully.”

It is also too early, she adds, to speculate on the implications for future harvesting. But because the judge “didn’t appear to have concerns with the fact that timber harvesting is an approved use,” Kauffman does not see any need for a broader review of public lands policy.

Despite the department’s formal adherence to sustainable yield policies, Kauffman says ecosystem values remain important for any type of land management. “Some areas are more sensitive than others, so they may be more of a consideration in some areas than others,” she says. “We have practices in place to address ecosystem and other environmental concerns.”

Alberta Forest Products Association spokesman Parker Hogan also believes the Bar C action has only a narrow scope. “The crux of the argument has little to do with timber harvesting,” he says. “This is about a very specific contract between SRD and the owners of Bar C for consultation.”

Asked about possible fallout from the case, Hogan says the industry has made “a significant commitment to public involvement and to public accountability.” The public advisory



committees (PACs) set up for all FMAs are working well. “We are quite comfortable we are involving the public in making decisions about their resource.” If any other lessons arise from the case, “our members will review that and see if they will implement them in the work they’re already doing.”

On the question of multiple use, Hogan says his industry is discussing with other industry representatives, through the Alberta Chamber of Resources, ways to mitigate the impact on the land base. “It’s recognized this is something we need to move forward on.” He also expects further discussion on ecosystem values.

Unger notes that the public advisory committee for the Spray Lake FMA, covering 4,000 sq km in Kananaskis, comprises mostly “rather compliant ... individuals.” More significant, he says, is the need for wider, more public consultation to occur before the FMAs are signed.

Bar C manager Lawrence Cowan has a highly skeptical view of the consultation process and charges that SRD has “out-and-out lied” in its dealings with him. He has documented those charges in a letter to Premier Ralph Klein. Examples include the following:

- SRD insists that the harvest was granted to the four sawmill owners partially to eliminate dwarf mistletoe, a parasite afflicting pine trees. Yet many of the cutting blocks have been exclusively white spruce, a species targeted for retention in an original logging plan. Dwarf mistletoe is significant in just two of the blocks identified, Cowan says.
- SRD agreed that only up to 20 per cent of the harvest could be sold. Yet two of the companies admitted under oath that they were selling 100 per cent of the timber harvested from the leased lands to Sunpine, “and this isn’t even Sunpine’s forest district.” Cowan calls this a blatant perversion of the system.
- Also, despite consultation, the loggers left open access roads and destroyed fences, threatening Cowan’s cattle during the crucial calving season. “As it stands now, I have no faith in SRD.”

Kauffman’s response: “We’ve been quite open about how timber harvesting in the area works.”

Looking at the broader issues, Cowan says SRD does not use all the available science to determine the best uses for public

land. Watershed protection, for example, has a low priority. “The watershed for Calgary is being depleted at one per cent a year,” he says. “This is a startling fact. We know the system is under stress. Yet environmental concerns and watershed issues have no weight with SRD.”

A prime reason for SRD’s lack of action, Cowan believes, is the shortage of qualified people to be aware of local conditions. He says ranchers, too, have to be more conscious of their cattle’s impact on the land, particularly in watershed areas. “We don’t necessarily have the support of other local ranchers ... but there are ways of doing that.”

Hugh Pepper, a councillor for the Municipal District of Bighorn in which Bar C falls, sees a fundamental weakness in the consultation process in the way the government has ceded to the private logging companies the actual responsibility for organizing meetings with the public. “I find this extremely awkward. ... It’s more like a public relations gesture. It’s not

the normal type of enfranchisement we expect.”

In relation to that, the Sustainable Forest Management Network states in a recent paper: “The government does not provide clear guidelines for public involvement and leaves considerable responsibility with the industry. As a result, the extent and effectiveness of public participation varies widely.”

Pepper, meanwhile, calls the multi-use concept a redundancy. If the natural environment is to survive, “the only valid paradigm is ecosystem-based planning.” As a member of the Ghost Waiparous Access Management Plan committee, he and others in the region are facing the daunting task of trying to set limits on the swarms of off-highway vehicles also wreaking havoc on the terrain there.

Unger hopes, too, that any review of multi-use policies would reach the conclusion that uncontrolled OHV use “is not compatible with the main purpose of the forest reserves.”

Conservationists calling for a review of multiple-use policies have an unlikely ally in the Calgary Herald. However, the paper’s anti-science rationale for such a review may astonish them and would even likely embarrass some proponents of further industrial development that the Herald supports.

“The growing power of environmental lobbies has made inroads into the practice of multiple use,” warns a recent editorial. “Taken to extremes, preservationism can do more harm to a landscape than good.” It goes on to say: “Public land managers are obliged to balance industry with apparently incompatible



*Previous clearcutting in the Ghost area*



uses, not to mention complex and sometimes foggy considerations such as biodiversity and ecosystem health.”

In the meantime, conservationists like former AWA director Ian Urquhart, a University of Alberta political science professor and co-author of the book *The Last Great Forest*, continue their struggle on behalf of the province’s natural areas. Since the late 1970s, the assumption has been that the non-protected areas will be allocated for timber, says Urquhart, who is working to preserve some of the northern Alberta boreal forest against industrial intrusion. “In Alberta we don’t have land-use planning. We have planning exercises that are erected around how we’ve already decided how the land is going to be used.”

Urquhart notes, though, that some timber companies are becoming more conscientious about biodiversity values. The reason, he explains, is the growing insistence by consumers for timber to meet Forest Stewardship Council or other certification standards. While conservation groups have given up on trying to influence government policies, “market pressure is seen as a more effective route.”

With the judge in the Bar C case making the significant conclusion that he doubts that “the process utilized by SRD in controversial cases such as this could withstand a challenge on procedural fairness, “ the fallout will likely prompt debate for some time. 🍁

## BAR C RULING STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

AWA News Release, March 22, 2004

In a landmark decision on March 5, a judge ruled that Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) must “give those who are affected a chance to have direct input” in land use decisions, particularly when the Department specifically says it will. Alberta Wilderness Association is pleased with the decision and its emphasis on the importance of public consultation. AWA has been at the forefront in promoting effective public consultation for environmental issues in the province.

“Effective public consultation is simply good policy,” says Heinz Unger, an AWA director who has been following the Bar C case closely. “It brings forth valuable information about public values and concerns and results in better proposals and project designs. Most importantly, it helps identify potential problems, impacts and alternatives before decisions are made.”

The Bar C Ranch and Cattle Company Ltd. won an injunction restraining several small quota holders within the South Ghost area of the Spray Lake FMA from conducting further logging operations on its leased lands. The case turned largely on a letter received by the Bar C from Craig Quintilio, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Lands and Forests Division of SRD.

Mr. Quintilio wrote that although there had already been a number of occasions for Bar C to provide input into the logging operations on its leased lands, Bar C would have another opportunity for input once the detailed block plans had been designed. The letter established an independent right for Bar C to be heard beyond the normal

process that was already in place, yet they were not given that opportunity. Bar C was told by the SRD area manager, who was unaware of the letter, that if Bar C wanted a copy of the final plans, they could apply for them under the *Freedom of Information Act*.

The judge noted that “the right to have an opportunity to make representation is part of the rules of procedural fairness.” The judge felt that Mr. Quintilio should have been more diligent in making good on his promise to Bar C. “That SRD would convey to the citizens of the Province that they are to have input into decisions which affect them is not only noteworthy but should be encouraged. If the decision had already been made, the letter of Mr. Quintilio to Bar C was a very hollow undertaking. Quite simply, the letter had no impact on the process followed and no action was taken as a result of it.”

According to Clint Docken of Docken and Company, who represented Bar C, “Counsel for Bar C is of the view that the case is significant for a number of reasons. First, it suggests that meaningful consultation is a prerequisite to logging. Secondly, this is the first case in an Alberta court where not only one but four injunctions have been granted against logging.”

Research shows that if consultation efforts are conducted in earlier stages of policy-making or planning, where the objectives and goals of what *ought* to be done are decided, consultative processes can be very effective at informing policy or planning directions. 🍁



# ALBERTA WILDERNESS WATCH

## RESORT REFUSAL A WIN FOR BIGHORN WILDLAND

Lara Smandych, AWA Conservation Biologist



The Municipal Planning Commission (MPC) of Clearwater County refused the development permit application for the development of the Abraham Glacier Spa and Resort near the Bighorn Wildland. The March 24 decision supports maintaining the wilderness character of the Bighorn Wildland, an area for which AWA is seeking legislated protection. Development of the resort would have placed unacceptable pressure on the Wildland through increased access and inappropriate use.

Among the reasons for refusing the application were the unsuitability of the site chosen for the resort and the fact that the applicant had not undertaken the necessary studies on the proposed sites.

“The County made the right decision because it did not allow a development to go ahead that has great potential to damage the area. We support their decision,” says Alan Ernst, owner of Aurum Lodge.

Norman McCallum, band administrator of the Big Horn Reserve, was pleased with the County’s decision to refuse the development permit: “Wisdom prevailed on behalf of Clearwater County and others in attendance. The First Nations people were not consulted on the project and there are many outstanding issues to be resolved for the First Nations people. ... There are many outstanding issues for the people of Alberta and Canada that were not addressed.”

In 2002 proponent 1006335 Alberta Inc. (Alberta Inc) proposed to construct the Abraham Glacier Wellness Resort, a full-service, self-contained health spa and resort. The resort was proposed for the Whitegoat Lakes Development Node located along the David Thompson highway (Hwy 11) west of Nordegg and near the Bighorn Wildland. The 260-acre development would have included a main lodge and more than 100 self-contained cabins. Other amenities such as restaurants, conference and banquet facilities, a cosmetic surgery clinic, pharmacy, and health spas would have been on-site. The resort would have included 200 staff, accommodated approximately 800 people, and attracted more than 200,000 visitors per year.

Although this sounds like a good opportunity for economic development in the area, think again. In no way did this development complement the wilderness characteristics of the Abraham Lakes area. The scale of the project was too large, the potential cumulative impacts from the resort were not appropriate for this area, and the development did not adequately comply with the requirements outlined for the

Whitegoat Development Node planning documentation. A facility such as this would be more appropriate if constructed in one of the surrounding gateway communities such as Nordegg, Caroline or Rocky Mountain House.

The area proposed for the resort development lies on the bank of Abraham Lake and adjacent to the Cline River. This area is considered ecologically significant as it contains zones of prime protection and critical wildlife habitat (major wildlife movement corridor), and supports provincially identified Environmentally Significant Areas. The Node area is located near the Siffleur and White Goat Wilderness areas, the Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve and the Bighorn Wildland.



Abraham Lake

The resort has been the source of much controversy, particularly over the issue of environmental protection and suitability. In June 2003 the Environmental Manager determined that Alberta Inc’s proposed resort did not require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Lorne Taylor, Minister of Alberta Environment, agreed. Following this decision, groups such as AWA and Alberta League for Environmentally Responsible Tourism (ALERT) continued to push the government to perform an EIA.

Given the ecological significance and relatively pristine nature of the proposed resort site, an EIA report would have provided the vital environmental information required to assess and evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the development on the area before the resort proceeded. Unfortunately, no EIA was deemed necessary.

Other stakeholders, including the Stoney Nation, sent letters of concerns regarding the resort to the Premier, the Ministers of the Environment and Sustainable Development, and the MLA for the area. The Stoney Tribal Council strongly



opposed the resort development. Some of the reasons behind their objection included the lack of meaningful consultation provided to the Stoney Nation; the disturbance of the Stoney Nation's culture and areas of historic significance; outstanding Bighorn-Stoney land claims; the large size of the resort and its negative impact on the traditional lands, water systems (sewage/disposal) and environment; and the lack of respect and consultation for the Stoney Nation's concerns for an EIA report.

AWA supports low-impact tourism development that does

not compromise the ecological integrity of wilderness. Large-scale tourism developments are not compatible with wilderness values and experience. These developments only serve to impede the wilderness character that people come to see and experience. We are now waiting to see if the proponent will appeal the County's decision. 🍁

*Note: On April 7, the proponent appealed the MPC decision. See our website for the latest details and action alert.*

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## BURMIS MAGNETITE MINE DECISION EXPECTED SOON

David McIntyre

“Those of us waiting for a government decision that addresses the proposed magnetite mine have entered a long and quiet period sandwiched between chaotic and frantic moments of hyperactivity – a trademark of most government processes. I have worked – communicating with media representatives, writing news stories for the media and seeking other forms of public awareness of the proposed mine – during the recent months to deliver an honest vision of the Livingstone landscape and the threat the mine presents to this same landscape and to the public, both local and distant.

It's my understanding that we can expect the Government of Alberta (via Alberta Environment) to make its defining decision on the proposed magnetite mine within the next few weeks (probably late March/early April). That decision and our perception of its value and impact on our lives will determine our subsequent plan and/or need for continued formal involvement. The government's range of possible positions extends from stopping the proposed project to sanctioning it subject to variables and/or prescribed conditions (possibly *including* conditions that the government representatives know *cannot* be met).

Logic supported by an overwhelming wealth of relevant and diverse resource data suggests that the proposed project cannot be permitted to proceed. The government's precise position, however, is unknown. And political logic, if there is such a thing, would suggest that if the government elects to stop the project they will attempt to derail the proposal with the smallest possible pebble, thus making it more than obvious that they support mining and mineral leases while, most unfortunately, being unable to sanction this *particular*

project, a proposal that has already cost the residents of Alberta an estimated \$500,000 in bureaucratic “shuffling.”

I have tried for more than two months to discuss this same matter (the government's cumbersome and ineffective review process, and the proposed mine itself) with Livingstone-Macleod MLA Dave Coutts. He has proven to be unavailable throughout this period of time. Due to my failure in securing any defining feedback from Mr. Coutts, I suggest that any concerned citizen call his office (1-800-565-0962) *and request that he return your call.* Regardless of your ability to reach him, a litany of concerned citizens, all asking for his involvement and his personal investment of time, will ensure that he recognizes a tide of public sentiment.

Alberta Environment has supplied us with copies of all the magnetite-related correspondence they received from the public.

There are approximately 100 letters

opposing the proposed mine and 25 in favour. The letters themselves reveal a much more profound anti-mine image: those opposing the project are detailed, individual expressions of indisputable facts and related concerns. Contrasting with this image, almost every single letter supporting the project was little more than a brief, recopied regurgitation of selected sentences, such as “It [the mine] should be approved without delay.”

Even the most jaded reviewers of this correspondence can see that the letters supporting the project are little more than shallow expressions of desire and/or hope, some of it obviously motivated by greed and/or blind faith. On the other hand, the letters written in opposition to the project contain, quantitatively and qualitatively, an absolute wealth of solid resource information and well-articulated rationale for



*Looking northwest across the northern reaches of the proposed strip mine toward Centre Peak, highest point on the Livingstone Range*

D. McIntyre



concern. These letters (those you wrote) have foundation and depth. They demonstrate strength, perception and intensity. They're winners!

While rumours of the proposed mine and its potential to alter life as we know it have clouded our lives since late November, I have been overwhelmed by our profound sense of community and commitment to the landscape. We're like the wind – unrelenting, even in the face of adversity. It is abundantly clear that we, individually and collectively, love

and cherish the area that represents the greater Livingstone and its grasslands, forests, streams and wildlife. It's also clear that we will fight to protect our chosen lifestyles and surroundings. 🍁

*(David McIntyre is a writer who lives in the Crowsnest Pass area. He is vice-president of Friends of the Livingstone Association. This article was excerpted from a letter to Friends of the Livingstone Association, March 2004.)*

## Application for Burmis Magnetite Mine Withdrawn

**Micrex Development Corporation has withdrawn its application for the Burmis magnetite mine from Alberta Environment. In a news release on April 5, the company said it will submit a revised proposal in the future. The company gave no reason for the withdrawal.**

## CHEVIOT MINE DECISION APPEALED

Shirley Bray, WLA Editor



In mid-March, Fording Canadian Coal Trust announced that the Elk Valley Coal Partnership will proceed with the development of the Cheviot Creek pit at its Cardinal River Operations located near Hinton, Alberta. The decision is a disappointment to conservationists who were encouraged by last year's announcement that

Fording had shelved plans for the Cheviot mine, citing lack of adequate demand for coking coal. However, the decision to open the mine will not go unchallenged.

The proposed mine, which would be located on the site of the abandoned coal-mining community of Mountain Park, next to Jasper National Park, is home to numerous species of rare and threatened plants and animals and is also prime grizzly habitat.

"There is no question that the Cheviot mine will be going in the most important and most productive grizzly bear habitat in the area," Kevin Van Tighem, ecosystems planning manager for Jasper National Park, told the *Edmonton Journal* recently.

Since mining ended at Mountain Park in 1950, the area has undergone significant ecological recovery. It has also become an important historical and recreational resource along the mountain front. AWA has opposed the mine since its proposal in 1996, acting as part of a coalition of provincial and national environmental groups. The coalition successfully delayed Cheviot until, as the coalition predicted, the declining coal market made the mine clearly uneconomical.



*Mountain Park mine workings, unreclaimed pit, circa 1949, in the same area as the Cheviot mine*

AWA would like to see the area protected as an addition to Whitehorse Wildland Park and the Cardinal Natural Area. Cheviot, like the Whaleback, highlights the need for the adoption of a regulatory regime that recognizes and manages buffer zones or "no industrial development" zones that will offer genuine protection to adjacent protected areas.

At least two conditions have made the development of the Cheviot mine more attractive at this time. A tight supply of metallurgical coal, also called "coking coal" and used for smelting iron, plus a booming steelmaking industry have allowed suppliers to negotiate a 20



per cent price increase. (Apparently exporters threatened to divert exports to China if a settlement with Japan at the higher levels was not reached quickly.)

In addition, major rail delays due to weather-related problems through B.C. have hampered Elk Valley's ability to get coal to port earlier this winter, cutting into their profits. Elk Valley primarily uses the Canadian Pacific Railway in the south, but coal from the Cheviot mine could be shipped using the Canadian National Railway. Elk Valley Coal is the world's second largest exporter of metallurgical coal.

Elk Valley Coal expects to obtain the remaining approvals shortly from the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board and Alberta Environment to develop the Cheviot Creek pit, which will be started later this year. According to a company news release, mining activities will begin at Mountain Park once the mining license approval is received. The existing work force of 120 employees at Cardinal River Operations will complete mining existing pits and will progressively shift to work on developing the infrastructure for the new mining area. These activities will include the construction of a private coal haul road and power line, both of which have received the necessary regulatory approvals and permits.

In 2002 the company sought amendments to its Cheviot Mine permit and the environmental approval to construct a ten-kilometre private coal-hauling road to the mine. Alberta Environment issued approvals for the road in 2003. The haul-road, which will run from north of Cadomin nearly to the Cardinal Divide along the McLeod River, will transport coal from the Cheviot Creek Pit to the Luscar mine for processing. The headwaters of the McLeod River is a provincially significant area.

The private road meets a county public road, which is being upgraded, to create a 22 km route between the two mine sites. The road will be heavily used, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by huge coal-transport vehicles. The construction of the haul-road started before the March announcement of the mine.

The approvals for the haul-road are being appealed by Ben Gadd, a natural history guide and long-time AWA member who

lives in Jasper and takes clients to Cadomin Cave and the Cardinal Divide area.

"I think it's a shame that this valley will be gutted by this haul-road," said Gadd. "Grizzly bears coming out of Jasper National Park will be run over so this company can dig up a little bit of coal for a short period of time before the market goes bad again. It's another case of big corporations sacrificing the environment for short-term gain."

Gadd believes that the company is not playing by the rules. It did not notify him, a stakeholder, before announcing plans to start the Cheviot Creek pit or starting construction of the haul-road. It also did not do mitigation for grizzlies as specified in existing government permits.

In 2002 requests by environmental groups and individuals for an environmental impact assessment and hearing into the new proposal were turned down by the federal and provincial governments. This ruling is being appealed by Gadd, the only member of the conservation-group coalition to retain legal standing in the matter. This is because he has a business interest in the area. With help from environmental lawyer Jenny Klimek, Gadd will appear before the Alberta Environmental Appeals Board on April 26.

"How strange it is," says Gadd, "that the government has no time for groups such as the AWA, CPAWS and the Sierra Club, all of whom have the best interests of the area in mind, but one person who makes a little money up there every summer gets the benefit of a hearing. This shows how biased the Alberta regulatory agencies are."

Members of the group have also made an ethical appeal to Ontario teachers, whose enormous Teachers Pension Fund has a stake in the Fording Coal Trust, to reconsider their investment in a coal mine that poses a threat to Jasper National Park. However, the pension fund also invests in Ritalin, shopping malls and tobacco. Thus far there has been no response.

The Alberta Environmental Appeal Board hearing is open to the public. It will take place on April 26 at 8:30 a.m. at the EUB office in Edmonton: #306, 1011 - 109 St. 

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## MOTORIZED VEHICLES NOT WELCOME IN WHALEBACK

A very unwelcome and disturbing precedent has been set up with the assent to a new bill that proposes changes to protected areas: legislation to allow recreational motorized access in the newly protected areas of the Whaleback. The *Black Creek Heritage Rangeland Trails Act* proposes a modification to Heritage Rangeland legislation that would allow OHV and highway vehicle access, which is banned under current legislation.

Alberta Wilderness Association is opposed to any recreational motorized access in protected areas. The Whaleback is a rare and valuable area of Montane habitat that

should be at the forefront of our protected areas network. It is crucial that some parts of the province are set aside where recreational motorized access is not allowed. This is what our protected areas are for, and their management plans should reflect this. AWA is also concerned that this legislation is proceeding when the management plan for the Black Creek Heritage Rangeland has not been finalized.

In May 1999, the Government of Alberta announced the protection of two areas within the Whaleback area of southern Alberta: the 20,778 ha Bob Creek Wildland and the 7,760 ha Black Creek Heritage Rangeland. The Whaleback represents



the most extensive, least disturbed and least fragmented Montane landscape in Alberta. It is extremely important for animals such as grizzly bear, wolverine and lynx and is one of the most crucial wintering areas in the province for elk and moose.

The draft management plan for the two protected areas states: "The primary goal of the Wildland and the Heritage Rangeland is as follows: To preserve the natural heritage ... of the two protected areas in perpetuity. Other provincial protected areas' program goals ... are of secondary importance with respect to the protected areas. The heritage appreciation and outdoor recreation goals may be met, but only to the extent that their attainment does not conflict with or impinge on the preservation goal."

In direct opposition to this, the plan then proposes that

OHV trails be opened up in the Wildland. To provide access to these trails, it would also require new motorized trails in the adjacent Heritage Rangeland, despite the fact that Heritage Rangeland legislation expressly forbids motorized access. The new Act aims to make an exception for this area.

OHVs are known to fragment wildlife habitat and cause disturbance to animals such as grizzly bears, as well as increase air and water pollution and cause soil and stream bank erosion. Less than nine per cent of provincial crown land is set aside for non-motorized access.

The Act was rushed through with unseemly haste without adequate opportunity for public input. The Bill passed through first reading on February 18 and third reading on March 2, and received Royal Assent on March 11. 🍁



Whaleback

G. Newton

## MILK RIVER DAM NOT ECONOMICALLY VIABLE

Shirley Bray, WLA Editor

An October 2003 draft of the Preliminary Feasibility Study for the Milk River dam shows a low benefit/cost ratio, indicating that the dam is not economically feasible. Benefit/cost ratios are even lower for the off-stream storage options. The October draft was circulated to a variety of government departments for review and comment. It was then sent back to the consultant for revision. The final report was completed in December 2003 and is being reviewed by the Minister and Deputy Ministers in Alberta Environment. It will be made public in late spring.

In the October 2003 draft, construction costs were calculated to be between \$106 M and \$123 M for the Forks Site alternatives with a benefit/cost ratio of 0.53 to 0.54. Construction costs for off-stream sites varied from \$35.9 M to \$64.6 M with benefit/cost ratios from 0.27 to 0.37. For a project to be economically viable the benefit/cost ratio should be greater than 1. There is a rumour that the target ratio for the on-stream site is 0.85. It will be interesting to see if such a large revision has been made in the final report.

The possibility of a dam on the Milk River has surfaced several times, especially when southern Alberta has experienced a severe drought. It has been driven by the need for a reliable supply of water for local communities, but also to enhance the potential for future development, particularly for irrigation, in the region, even though irrigation is not a recommended practice for a region with growing aridity.

In the previous 1986 study the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) identified a preferred site for the dam known as the Forks Site for on-stream storage and evaluated three alternative reservoir levels. The current study reassesses and updates the 1986 PFRA designs for the three alternatives at the Forks Site and identifies

environmental and historical resources concerns, and evaluates the various costs and benefits. It also assesses the feasibility of four off-stream storage sites, including Shanks Lake, Lonely Valley, Verdigris Lake and MacDonald Creek. 🍁



The confluence of the north and south Milk Rivers will be flooded if a dam is built.

S. Bray



# SUSPENSE OVER JUDICIAL REVIEW

James Tweedie



December 18, 2003 was the final day in Court for the Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition's (CCWC) case for the judicial review of Alberta Environment's decision not to require Castle Mountain Resort Inc. to prepare an environmental impact assessment. We still await Madame Justice Kenny's judgment on this matter.

In our related appeal to the Environmental Appeal Board (EAB) over the removal of the 88-housing-unit limit to the CMR Sewage Lagoon Approval, the CCWC is awaiting a ruling from the Board as to whether the Board will accept the CCWC as a "directly affected party." Owing to this matter being part of CMR's isolated island of private development in the midst of public land, the challenge of obtaining "directly affected status" is considerable.

The director responsible for issuing the Amendment to the Sewage Lagoon Approval did not consider the CCWC to be affected, despite our stewardship of the West Castle River Wetlands Ecological Reserve under the Parks and Protected Areas Volunteer Stewardship Program. The EAB, by contrast, did not summarily dismiss the case, as Alberta Justice, acting for the director, Alberta Environment, would have had them do, and the CCWC has been able to present its arguments as to why the case should be heard.

Needless to say, CMR Inc. has claimed that this appeal is "frivolous and vexatious" and is demanding costs to be awarded against the CCWC for bringing the case forward. The CCWC foresaw this situation when we made our presentation to the Municipal Council's Public Hearing on CMR's Area Structure Plan in July 2002. CMR's present position appears to confirm what the CCWC stated to Council at that time, namely that "area residents can be quite confident that CMR Inc. will use all legal means at its disposal to limit further public scrutiny or interventions on its activities as we move forward from here."

There has been an interesting sidebar to the present appeal as a result of some in-depth research into the land transactions relating to the original location of the lagoon. It appears that a

substantial part of CMR's Sewage Lagoon was annexed out of the West Castle River Wetlands Ecological Reserve (WCWER), which was designated by Order-in-Council in August 1998, around the same time that CMR and Alberta Public Lands Division were settling on the location of the lagoon.

It appears that the land in question, part of the lands that the Westcastle Development Authority held as "option lands," was still being considered as "public lands" at the time the Order-in-Council for the WCWER was made. The designation was described by reference to the 1402-metre contour elevation, and took into account the fact that the "Development Plan" provided to the government by the WDA, as a precondition for the sale of the "option lands," explicitly stated that all lands to the east of the road running through the valley would not be developed in the short term.

This has been confirmed by a source in the Alberta Legislative Council, who also confirmed that no interventions were submitted to him in the 60-day waiting period prior to the final designation in August 1998, and suggested to the CCWC that Alberta Sustainable Resource Department, Public Lands Division, "seem to have erred in allowing these lands to be annexed from the WCWER." That the lands were subsequently sold to CMR in 1999 is not in dispute but clearly raises questions about the process that allowed the construction of the Sewage Lagoon on these lands. ❁



Castle Mountain Ski Resort

## CCWC SEEKS STANDING BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENTAL APPEAL BOARD

In response to the CCWC's initial submission in this appeal, the EAB "wishes to receive evidence from each of the individual members of the CCWC with respect to their directly affected status. In particular, the Board would like to receive evidence from each of the individuals as to whether they are personally affected by the Amending Approval, how they will be harmed or impaired by the project, and whether the project will harm the natural resources that the appellants use or their use of the natural resources."

The overall project, of which this approval is a key part, is the expansion of the CMR residential townsite in the Westcastle Valley.

Individuals are asked to contact James Tweedie at (403) 628-2422, or [tweedie@telusplanet.net](mailto:tweedie@telusplanet.net), by the end of April, in order to coordinate the Coalition's request for Standing.



# THE CASE FOR USING SAVED WATER TO SAVE RIVERS:

## Appeal of Irrigation District Water Licence Amendment

Cheryl Bradley



On October 31, 2003 Alberta Environment granted an amendment to a water licence which will allow an irrigation district in southern Alberta to use water for purposes other than irrigation to the long-term detriment of the aquatic environment. The St. Mary River Irrigation District (SMRID) can now allocate 12,000 acre feet of water, the amount “saved” through publicly funded irrigation efficiency improvements, for other uses such as commercial, industrial, municipal and recreation

The water allocated to SMRID comes from the stressed southern tributaries of the Oldman River – the St. Mary, Belly and Waterton Rivers. Below the irrigation dams and diversions these rivers flow at regulated minimum flows, which are just 10 per cent of mean flows, most of the time. The aquatic environment has been assessed as heavily impacted and degraded. Fish and cottonwoods are in decline and water quality is adversely affected.

In November 2002 Alberta Environment closed the southern tributaries to further allocations because of their stressed state. At the same time, Phase One of the South Saskatchewan River Basin Plan enabled government-approved transfers of water allocations to accommodate increasing demand for non-irrigation use of water with conservation holdbacks to benefit the aquatic environment, up to 10 per cent of the volume transferred.

The October 2003 amendment to the SMRID licence is contrary to the intent of the basin plan in that it avoids government-approved transfers and denies opportunities to use conservation holdbacks to restore river health. The amendment also ensures that other uses will occur only within the boundaries of the district. The Irrigation District maintains control over the water and gets revenue in perpetuity through capital charges and delivery charges.

The Southern Alberta Environmental Group (SAEG), based in Lethbridge, with support from Trout Unlimited Canada, is appealing Alberta Environment’s decision to amend the licence. There are two key challenges in the appeal.

One is challenging the precedent which denies opportunities to restore health to rivers in the Bow and Oldman River basins. Most reaches of these rivers and their tributaries already are assessed as moderately to heavily impacted from massive diversion. Over three-quarters of the diverted volume is for irrigation agriculture. Large irrigation districts cannot be allowed to write off our rivers.

The other is challenging the precedent of allowing a private irrigation board to make decisions about how water, a scarce public resource, will be allocated. Irrigation district boards are comprised of irrigation farmers, who are not accountable to the public interest in reallocating water to benefit a growing urban population and changing economy in

southern Alberta, let alone to the public interest in restoring rivers to health which was clearly expressed in the Water for Life Strategy.

With such large public investment in irrigation infrastructure efficiency improvements and such large public interest in having healthy rivers, it seems reasonable to suggest that saved water be used to save the rivers.

The Notice of Appeal was filed with the Alberta Environmental Appeals



St. Mary River

Board on November 24, 2003. The Board denied a request for mediation. The Southern Alberta Environmental Group (SAEG), with assistance from Trout Unlimited Canada, is preparing for a preliminary meeting before the Alberta Environmental Appeals Board (the Board) in Lethbridge on March 31, 2004. Legal counsel has been retained. At the preliminary meeting, parties to the appeal will make arguments regarding SAEG’s status as “directly affected.” If the Board determines that SAEG has standing, the matter will proceed to a hearing.

Donations to assist with the appeal are requested and can be sent to SAEG, Box 383, Lethbridge AB, T1J 3Y7. Cheques should be made out to Trout Unlimited Canada, River Health Fund. Charitable tax receipts will be issued. More background information on this matter and on water management in the southern tributaries of the Oldman River can be obtained by contacting Cheryl Bradley at [cebradley@shaw.ca](mailto:cebradley@shaw.ca). 🍁



# THE "FIRESMART / FORESTWISE" PROGRAM IN JASPER: NO STARS

Ben Gadd

Parks Canada trots out the catch-phrase "ecological integrity" a lot these days. Jasper National Park's FireSmart/ForestWise program is supposed to be partly about restoring ecological integrity in the woods around Jasper. But FireSmart/ForestWise is showing itself to be almost entirely about preventing a forest fire from doing to us what last summer's fire did to Kelowna, ecological integrity be damned. After many years of failing to deal with the fire danger around here, Parks Canada is in crisis mode, scurrying to protect the town. The method being used is anything but ecological, and it certainly lacks integrity. Nor am I confident that it will work.



I'm all in favor of restoring ecological integrity. The forest surrounding Jasper is unnaturally dense and continuous because we humans have fought forest fires here for too long. The area's ecological integrity, defined in the Canada National Parks Act as "a condition that is determined to be characteristic of its natural region and likely to persist," has been degraded. This forest is not likely to persist; it's likely to burn up. Fire is the means by which such an ecosystem resets itself, and the place is a tinderbox.

The valley-floor ecosystems of the Rockies have been sustained by fire and decomposition for at least ten thousand years. We shouldn't be messing with that. In a national park, natural processes are supposed to take their course.

However, Parks Canada is not permitting nature to take its course in the Athabasca and Miette river valleys around the town of Jasper. That's understandable; Jasper would almost certainly go up in flames. (My favourite park superintendent, Rory Flanagan, now long dead, used to say of Jasper, "There's nothing about this goddamn town that one good forest fire wouldn't cure.") I live here, so I hope that Rory's tongue-in-cheek comment doesn't become reality. Yet I'm convinced that Parks Canada, short on money and in a hurry, is taking the wrong approach to protecting the community.

Parks Canada is thinning the forest around Jasper by cutting live trees and picking up dead wood on the ground. Removing wood, living or dead, deprives an ecosystem of the cellulose the wood contains and reduces the food and shelter a normal forest offers to its complement of plants and

animals. Removing wood is completely unnatural. Normally, a tree rots. Even if it burns, there's plenty of wood left to rot. And fire releases nutrients to the ecosystem, especially nitrogen-essential for plant growth-plus a lot of carbon in the form of charcoal. When a place is logged, though, all this is carted off, lost to the forest organisms that need it. What Parks Canada is engaged in cannot honestly be termed anything else than logging.

Still, when queried, most Jasper residents support the thinning. The thinned zone will have a nice, pleasing, well-kept - and very unnatural - look. Supposedly, the thinned zone will keep a fire on the ground from getting up into the trees and taking off. Supposedly, hot embers flung across the town's western fire guard from a blaze raging on the other side won't set the thinned forest alight. But if that should happen, firefighters supported by water-dumping helicopters and water bombers will be able to snuff any burning trees out. Again, supposedly.

I'm worried that this may not work. What if too few firefighters, helicopters and water bombers are available? A summer with one big fire is usually a summer with a lot of big fires. In such circumstances there is only so much equipment, manpower and material to go

around.

Further, there is evidence that forest thinning does not reliably stop major fires. The woods above the home of friends on Okaview Road in Kelowna, the worst-hit part of the city, were naturally thin, with little undergrowth, and the fire roared right through them.

To keep the Big One from burning into Jasper, I think we need a much wider fire guard around the town. The enormous blazes of 2003 in Alberta and British Columbia easily jumped



*Skidder and steel-flanged felling machine used during the thinning operation in Jasper National Park during March 2004. Steel treads with flanges caused soil disturbance.*



fire guards over a hundred metres across. Firefighters were forcibly reminded that it takes an incombustible zone two kilometres wide to hold a huge, wind-driven fire in hot weather.

We had that kind of fire only two valleys away from Jasper last summer. It could just as easily have developed directly upwind of the town. So why hasn't Parks Canada opted for the safety of a really wide, burned-off fire guard? I can think of several reasons.

One: burned areas look ugly, and this is a tourist town. A two-kilometre swath of blackened trees surrounding Jasper would not be acceptable to town businesses, which have a lot of pull in Ottawa.

Two: the controlled burns required to produce such a fire guard are scary to contemplate. Controlled burns have a way of becoming uncontrolled burns. Thus, governments now call such fires "prescribed burns" instead of "controlled burns." The wildfire just mentioned, which raced through 28,000 ha of the park, began as a prescribed burn that got away because the park failed to extinguish it when it was small, despite the fact that the fire danger was building. That error wound up costing the government millions spent trying to keep the fire from heading out of the park toward the town of Hinton. Fortunately the wind didn't shift in that direction.

Three: the smoke would be heavy, and after the summer of 2003, all Jasper residents are heartily sick of smoke.

Four: Parks Canada is terribly underfunded and wants to recover its costs wherever it can. By cutting trees instead of burning them, it can sell the logs.

*Say what? Selling the trees in a national park?* Yes. That's exactly what Parks Canada is doing. And to me, that's against everything that national parks stand for. It's resource extraction, something that the original National Parks Act of 1930 was supposed to end for keeps. It has gone on anyway, here and there in the system, due to grandfathering and mistakes in parks such as Wood Buffalo, where logging ended only after a court case was launched by

the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

Is it legal for Parks Canada to be selling timber from Jasper National Park? Incredibly, it probably is. The new Canada National Parks Act of 2000 explicitly permits "renewable resource harvesting" in certain parks, and it does not ban it outright anywhere.

Thus I fear that selling logs to offset forest-thinning expenses is the upper end of a very slippery slope. Grossly underfunded, Parks Canada may just continue cutting, under one pretext or another, to raise money for park operations

generally. Or, more likely, the logging contractor and the mill to which the logs are sent will buy enough political influence to keep the wood flowing.

There is much talk in park circles of restoring the Athabasca and Miette valleys to the way they looked in photographs taken in the 1920s. Many of the trees in those photos are small, having grown for only a few decades after a huge forest fire burned the valleys in 1889. Areas of valley-bottom old growth that survived that fire are few. I'm not against recovering the patchy, uneven-aged character of a forest that experiences natural fire. It's important to do that. What I'm against is the strong possibility that Parks Canada will try to regain that 1920s look by logging.

If logging is to occur in a national park, especially in a World Heritage Site such as Jasper, one would think that the cutting and tree removal would be done very carefully so as not to damage the forest floor. One would expect Parks Canada to use a crew of skilled chainsaw-operators and watch 'em like hawks. However, the contractor the park has hired is using felling

machines and skidders of the kind used for clear-cutting. The damage is accruing.

In the Sleepy Hollow area just south of town, which is underlain by an interesting and little-understood landform that has become a natural rock garden over thousands of years, a steel-tracked felling machine has been rolling right over beautiful lichen-covered boulders, breaking and crushing



*Lichen-covered boulder broken by steel treads on a felling machine. Tree-cutting should have been done by chainsaw only. Even rubber treads would have damaged the lichens and torn up the uneven ground.*



*Ground damage from skidder operating on thawing soil. Skidding should have been done by horses with appropriate shoes.*



them. This is permanent damage, and it shouldn't be happening. When three of us from the Jasper Environmental Association walked into the office of the park's chief ecologist to tell him about it on March 18, he had no idea that it was going on.

How could this machine be allowed to operate in such a sensitive place? Did the environmental impact study that preceded the work fail to recognize the danger? Is anyone watching what the contractor is doing out there? Or is the park prepared to sacrifice the Sleepy Hollow area for the sake of cost-cutting and expediency? What will happen elsewhere?

A couple of years ago, when FireSmart/ForestWise was under consideration, I proposed that the town could be protected from wildfire by using prescribed fire safely, no logging required. Sure, it would be smoky. Yes, the local business owners would hate it. But ecologically and politically it would be the right thing to do.

The heart of my proposal was to burn a sufficiently wide fireguard around the town starting in winter, at low temperatures and with snow-covered ground if need be, when the burning could be precisely controlled. This kind of prescribed burning is being used in the United States for the same reason, but Parks Canada seems to be unfamiliar with it.

Since submitting that proposal I have realized that a burned fire guard, ugly as it would be, needn't begin in people's back yards. To the west, for example, the continuous burned swath could be located some distance away from town, leaving an intervening green zone about two kilometres wide. This zone could be broken by intentionally burned gaps and natural wetlands, leaving it in blocks too discontinuous to support a town-threatening blaze if a fire started within it.

As is now the recommended practice in the U.S. national forests, trees growing too close to homes ought to be cut and the woods thinned back somewhat. But most of the green zone could be allowed to continue aging. Normal ecological succession would see the short-lived lodgepole pines in the green zone die - many of them are already near the end of their life spans - leaving the forest dominated by long-lived spruce, aspen and Douglas fir. (Contrary to common belief, aspen groves are the oldest growth around.)

In this way, at least part of the beautiful and rare montane forest ecosystem bordering the town could be protected and maintained without logging it or otherwise altering it unnaturally. The extensive trail network that already exists there would continue to take residents and visitors through lovely old-growth stands not subjected to mechanical thinning and brush control, which have to be done repeatedly once thinning starts.

In the event of a green-zone fire hot enough to get through the thinned zone at the edge of town, homes there could be further protected by an organized plan to apply "Barricade Gel," a flame retardant shown to be very effective in saving buildings from forest fires. Building regulations should

require new construction and re-roofing/re-siding jobs along the town boundary to incorporate fireproof materials.

What if my suggestion about prescribed burning in winter had been tried and proved workable? By now Parks Canada could be well on the way to completing the project. The forest wouldn't be experiencing the industrial-type logging damage we are seeing now. Timber sales might have been avoided and everyone in town would certainly feel a lot safer with the main result: a truly effective fire guard.

However, park staff in Jasper have dismissed my ideas as impractical and worthless.

It's true that I am not an expert in the field of prescribed burning. But this is not rocket science, and there is plenty of material on the Web to show that winter burning is a viable option. I feel much as conservationists did when the multinational logging companies were laughing off our condemnation of clear-cut logging, claiming that we had no idea what we were talking about. Time has shown otherwise.

Truly, Parks Canada should have investigated prescribed burning in winter as an ecologically and politically responsible way to prevent catastrophic fire and restore habitat in the Athabasca and Miette valleys. At the very least, a pilot project should have been run. Why not? I know the real reason. There is no cost-recovery in prescribed burning. No logs are produced for sale.

What a sorry reason for out-of-hand rejection! But that's the way Parks Canada behaves these days. This is an agency that can't do its job properly, an agency making bad choices because it doesn't have the funds to make good ones. Decisions are based on the penny-wise and pound-foolish economics that afflict our times. For us in Jasper, the result may be a brutalized forest and a town still vulnerable to wildfire. ❁

*(Ben Gadd is a well-known writer and conservationist. A long-time Jasper resident, he has been the AWA's ear-to-the-ground in the area for many years. He and Jill Seaton are members of the Jasper Environmental Association. Visit the JEA's new website at [www.jasperenvironmental.org](http://www.jasperenvironmental.org).)*



Goose

© J. Treloar



# BURROWING OWLS NOT WELCOME IN WINTER HOME

One of the places Canada's prairie burrowing owl migrates to during the winter is a wastewater treatment field site for the City of Lubbock in Texas. However, Lubbock is unhappy with the population of black-tailed prairie dogs on the Lubbock Land Application Site (LLAS). This site has one of the largest remaining prairie dog colonies on the Southern Plains. Abandoning their prairie dog management plan, the City of Lubbock decided to exterminate the rodents with the use of a highly toxic gas, Phostoxin, which is put into burrows where it forms phosphine gas and kills everything inside (mammals, birds, insects, reptiles), including burrowing owls.

There is a general resentment by city (and LLAS) managers toward the prairie dogs and burrowing owls using this site. The City thinks the animals are eating too much of the nitrate-absorbing vegetation, although there is no evidence that implicates the prairie dogs in elevated nitrate levels.

Just recently, the city biologist has agreed to temporarily stop the poisoning because of the presence of so many owls. Since city managers are worried about being fined \$50,000 for each bird they kill, they are waiting for the owls to leave. However, some of the owls live there year-round. Texas PEER, PETA, the Humane Society, Llano Escatado Audubon Society (LEAS), Citizens for Prairie Dogs and others are working together, exploring any viable angles for effective action.

"Based on informal surveys taken over the last six years, LEAS can state that there are hundreds of burrowing owls on the LLAS site during the breeding season," said LEAS President Anthony Floyd about burrowing owl utilization of the 600 acres of the LLAS. "Breeding birds start arriving in February and breeding pairs and their families are on the site through late September. This has been the largest colony of burrowing owls that LEAS was aware of until recent efforts by the City of Lubbock to exterminate prairie dogs reduced the number of breeding sites for these owls.

"The LLAS is the single site we recommend to visiting birders (in the winter) who wish to see burrowing owls. Any reputable biologist using standard survey techniques would find burrowing owls on the LLAS – any time of the year. Indeed, the Lubbock Convention and Visitor's Bureau recently put an advertisement in the April 2004 issue of *Birder's World* magazine extolling the birdwatching opportunities of Lubbock, beginning with burrowing owls!

"There is absolutely no way that burrows can be poisoned from February through September without killing and/or displacing pairs or families of burrowing owls and violating the Migratory Bird Species Act. Poisoning from October through January will kill or displace fewer owls, but will undoubtedly kill a large number of non-target species, including the protected Texas horned lizard and, possibly, protected raptors that eat dead prairie dogs."

Lubbock City Councillor Frank Morrison recently responded to an e-mail from a concerned LEAS member saying, "First, this is not some natural habitat. We use these fields for applying our effluent water. 'Birding' is not an appealing idea. Second, there aren't a 'few hundred.' There are several thousand. They are destroying the natural and established habitat. Third, I wouldn't expect someone from the Hill Country to understand, but, prairie dogs and their partners, the burrowing owls, exist in plague numbers out here. They are devastating to native lands and farmland alike ... but thanks for caring."



*Burrowing Owl*

The black-tailed prairie dog population has already been significantly reduced. The City has not conducted formal counts, nor have they encouraged formal counts, but there has been at least a 40 to 60 per cent reduction of usable habitat due to ploughing of the land.

The City of Lubbock sought out LEAS and several other wildlife organizations to help them develop a prairie dog management plan. The prairie dog management plan hammered out in 2002 with the City, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Llano Estacado Audubon Society allowed for the control of prairie dogs under pivots only if they had exhausted the measures outlined in the plan.

Although there is much political pressure urging the City to halt the extermination, there doesn't appear to be any obvious legal recourse. However, one creative approach is for a Canadian environmental agency, such as Environment Canada, to file a complaint with the Commission for Environmental Cooperation alleging that the U.S. is not properly enforcing its environmental laws, which Canada has a legal stake in because of NAFTA. 🍁

For a complete history of this situation, and to take action, visit the LEAS website at [www.leas.bizland.com/prairiedog.htm](http://www.leas.bizland.com/prairiedog.htm).



# PALLISER'S COUNTRY: A NEW WAY OF PROTECTING OUR GRASSLAND

Rob Gardner



Standing on the south boundary of Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, you can gaze across the broad sweep of grassland stretching to the Sweetgrass Hills about 140 km southwest. Turn to the southeast, and the grass stretches into Saskatchewan just as far, but with no hills to backstop the view.

The prairie adventurer with a (very!) full canteen could travel on native grassland from Climax, SK, to Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park, a distance of 250 km, while crossing only six roads.

Prairie residents take vast expanses for granted, but perhaps our mountain friends could think of it this way: Palliser's Country's eight largest roadless areas are each the size of Kakwa Wildlands Park (250 sq.mi.). Overall, the area is larger than Banff National Park, but has perhaps 2% of Banff's population.

This grassland is no golf course! The rolling prairie suddenly plunges over sandstone cliffs into the Milk River Canyon where dryland species such as yucca, cactus and rock wren are found. At the other extreme, the fescue grassland gives way to a narrow band of lodgepole pine, white spruce and orchids in the Cypress Hills. Along the way, wetlands and sand hills add their variety.

The local bird checklist, with its 307 species, documents the wide range of habitats. Of these, about a dozen are considered "species at risk". Their presence here, when they are no longer found in most of their former territory, reflects the generally good condition of the grassland. Nevertheless, the serious decline in population of migratory birds is cause for concern.

The first response of many conservationists is to cry out for more parks. In fact, the Special Places Program attracted many nominations in the region. With only the smallest of exceptions, these suggestions were rejected by local residents.

Speaking in general terms, the ranchers were less concerned with the conservation aspects of the proposals than with the potential recreational use of their land and the loss of control over land management.

In fact, it seems that wilderness proponents have quite a bit in common with ranchers. Many people in both groups believe that the use of motorized vehicles degrades the environment, and the extraction of coal, oil and gas provide

only short-term benefits while reducing the long-term sustainability of the region.

Palliser's Country Grassland Heritage Region builds on this common ground by encouraging both natural and cultural heritage. But what exactly is a heritage region? The Heritage Canada Foundation states that a heritage region "links education, conservation and entrepreneurship using cultural and natural resources. New opportunities for local employment are an anticipated benefit."

Initial responses have been positive. Ranchers have indicated that while they favour wildlife conservation, that type of management has expenses attached. Several new agricultural programs are aimed at providing compensation for these actions. It is hoped that national conservation organizations will also provide financial incentives for conservation.

At the same time, the ranching traditions will be celebrated. Visitors will have increased opportunities to experience the ranching lifestyle in existing protected areas, or in managed situations. Several forms of interpretation are being looked into that would reinforce the history of the region.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Palliser's Country

will be improved communication between the various stakeholders, and the growing realization that we have more in common than we thought. When all parties are pulling in the same direction, everyone will benefit.

The role of the Cypress Hills is being reassessed in

light of the new perspective brought by the heritage region concept. Long described as an island of forest in the sea of grass, the park may be more accurately described as a core protected area in a broader, privately managed landscape. This and other existing parks, although they are not large, seem to have sufficient grassland to accommodate the current demand for this type of recreation.

Alberta Wilderness Association could play an important role in the heritage region. AWA was founded on similar principles, and still has many ranchers as members. Formal support would demonstrate that the environmental community is open to new ideas regarding the conservation of our landscape.

Those people wanting more information can contact the author by telephone at (403) 527-2052, or review the web site at [eidnet.org/local/grassland](http://eidnet.org/local/grassland). 🌿



Map of Palliser's Country



# PAINTER TAKES BOLD APPROACH IN ART AND LIFE

Andy Marshall

So many traditional paintings of the Canadian Rockies are static, pretty, almost sentimental. But painter Jacqueline Treloar says, “I don’t want pretty. I want pristine starkness.” With the bold, dramatic brush strokes of her recent watercolour series on Chester Lake and other Kananaskis views, she’s been true to her word.

Reproductions in this edition of the *Advocate* do limited justice to Treloar’s powerful, textured works, vibrant with primary colours. They also represent just a fraction of the subjects and art forms this prolific artist has tackled in a rich and varied career that’s taken her throughout the western world – to London, New York, Paris, Como in Italy, Toronto and Palermo in Sicily.

“I’ve never done anything like this before. These are my first true landscapes,” she says from her crowded, two-room apartment overlooking the Bow River in Calgary’s Sunnyside district.

It was an Alberta Wilderness Association guided hike that took Treloar into the Kananaskis in the fall and inspired the paintings. “I thought I would be out of my mind not to get out there and see this stuff,” she says. Her voice reflects back humour and informality, a throaty chuckle frequently interspersing her words.

Since coming to Calgary last June, she has also painted a series on the Atlas Mine near Drumheller, abandoned mine trucks and a local rodeo. “When I work, I work hard,” she says.

She wants to do some more landscapes before she moves back to Toronto this summer. With that in mind, she’s taken up cross-country skiing and snowshoeing for the first time in her life. She started skating a couple of months ago. “I’m 56, for crying out loud.”

Her connection to Calgary is her English-born parents who emigrated to Canada when Jacqueline was 10. Born in Penzance, Cornwall, she moved with her family to London when she was small.

After stopovers in rural Saskatchewan and other remote parts of Canada, the family ended up in Calgary where her father worked in the oil patch. For 16-year-old Jacqueline, six months attending Queen Elizabeth High School and acquiring her high school diploma were all she wanted from Calgary before seeking other adventures.

So about 40 years ago, she headed for England where she studied art and finished her bachelor’s degree in textiles from the Central School of London. A travelling scholarship in 1970 was a life-changing experience, taking her throughout

Europe and to North America.

Treloar landed up in Como, Lombardy, Italy, where she worked as a textile designer from 1972 to 1984, much of the time operating her own company. Her clients included the great fashion houses of Europe and the U.S. “You’re painting every day,” she explains. “But the result is then printed and ends up on items such as scarves.”

The world recession of the early 1980s, plus the rising influence of the Japanese and Chinese designers, sparked the collapse of the Como market. “It was heartbreaking,” Treloar recalls. “I didn’t go bankrupt, but I had to walk away from it.”

More adventure beckoned in Toronto where, backed by several Ontario Arts Council scholarships, she pursued her passion as well as teaching part-time. From 1987 to 2000, she says in an artist statement, “I began building large, painted and layered fabric panels, most of which were exhibited publicly and several of which won important awards.”

Her experiences and knowledge of Italy informed much of her fabric and fibre-arts painting, done in oils, watercolours or acrylic. Subject matter included the circus, theatre, dance, Italian Baroque sculptural figures, Romanesque churches, public monuments and archival artifacts.

One huge-scale piece, “The Great Pavement,” made from nylon and net panels, measures more than 700 square feet. Part of a Gallery of Mississauga, Ontario exhibit for more than a year, it now remains wrapped in a box in her apartment awaiting another unfurling. “You have to pull off something like that once in your life. ... I’m determined to get that darned thing hung,” she laughs.

In 2000, restless with the sameness of the Toronto routine, Treloar returned to Italy – this time to Sicily where she spent three years painting and learning a “much bolder and stronger use of watercolours.”

The upheavals during her life have taken an economic toll, she acknowledges, but “I’ve enriched my own life a millionfold.”

The majority of her works are in private collections all over the world. Earnings have ranged from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

Returning to Calgary after a long absence has been a pleasant interlude. But, surveying the downtown, she can only say: “Calgary planners have a lot to answer for.”

Her interest in conservation extends from the natural environment to buildings. She’s concerned about the loss of historic buildings in Calgary: “People here and in Italy should



Jacqueline Treloar



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ALIENS AMONG US

*"We're anti-Kyoto but we've never been anti-climate change and there's a big difference."*

– Lorne Taylor, *Edmonton Journal*, March 29, 2004

Dear Editor:

What's really behind the amazingly virulent opposition exhibited by Lorne Taylor, Ralph Klein and their ilk to even the minimal control of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions? And – as frequently asked by people who care about our environment – where do the Tories get these guys? Rumours abound of a secret biotech facility deep in rural Alberta that pumps out ecological illiterates – the most outrageous of which go on to masquerade as "Ministers of the Environment." Under the KleinCo. regime, selfishness and greed have been enshrined as the province's twin official religions, but the Tories' hysterical hostility toward Kyoto suggests the real answer involves a frightening conspiracy whose origins are literally "out of this world."

The key breakthrough in terms of my understanding all this came from an unlikely source – Hollywood. In the 1996 cult classic science fiction film *The Arrival*, Charlie Sheen stars as an astronomer who discovers that aliens are living on Earth and have built a series of huge "power

plants" around the globe. The true purpose of these plants is to spew out vast amounts of GHGs in order to drastically raise Earth's temperature to match that of the aliens' home planet. (Sound familiar? How about Alberta's GHG-gushing power stations and oil sands plants?)

Sci-fi fans are familiar with the concept of "terraforming a planet" to make it more Earthlike. Well, the Tories' determination to prevent any reduction of GHG emissions stems from a desire to "Toryform" Earth into a replica of their own, distant "hot-house" world.

Think back to the many mind-boggling Tory statements concerning Kyoto and global warming – pretty other-worldly stuff if you ask me. How likely is it that any sentient beings, native to planet Earth, would deliberately jeopardize their own species' prospect for survival by ignoring global climate change?

The BIG question of course is how do we rid ourselves of these alien invaders? It gives a whole new meaning to the name of the radical American environmental group Earth First! Clearly the aliens' sophisticated mind-control techniques have completely befuddled Alberta's voters and media. Fellow Earthlings, forget about "E.T. CALL HOME," our slogan must be "L.T. GO HOME" (wherever that may be).

Pity there's no section on "Xenomorph Repatriation" in the Yellow Pages. Ever notice how hard it is to order a *bona fide* alien abduction when you need one? Okay, I know you think my theory is farfetched but ask yourself, is it really any crazier than the Tories' incredibly short-sighted,

be taking better care of their treasures. ... They need to wake up and assess what they have which is special."

Her support for AWA's efforts prompted her to paint a mural at the Calgary Tower as part of the Climb for Wilderness fundraising efforts. She also participated as one of the judges.

Treloar is preparing to head back to Toronto this summer where she will teach part-time and continue her painting. She says her next pieces will be based on seven Italian madrigals by sixteenth-century composer Giaches de Wert. "I've become a pro at moving," she jokes. "I'm high energy, and thank God for it."

Another aspect of her art is her voracious reading. While in Calgary, she's also been taking Italian lessons at the University of Calgary to build on the informal speaking fluency she learned on the streets of Italy.

In Toronto, she looks forward to being nearer her sister, younger by 20 years and a professional musician. "I tend to not be too much in touch with reality sometimes," she says, that ripple of laughter emerging again. "She's the person who keeps me grounded."

For a further taste of the richness of her work, see her website at [www.jatreloar.com](http://www.jatreloar.com). Until June, she also welcomes phone inquiries at (403) 670-8818. 🍁



Riverbed

© J. Treloar



environmentally destructive policies? (See what I mean?) The truth IS out there – WAY out there.

- **Richard G. Thomas**

## **PARKS TAKES ISSUE WITH HIGHWAY TWINING ARTICLE**

Dear Editor:

I am writing to “set the record straight” regarding the continued improvements to the TransCanada Highway (TCH) in Banff National Park (see your article re: TCH, Wild Lands Advocate, February 2004).

Wildlife protection mitigations on the TCH were not an afterthought. TCH twinning construction began in 1979 with wildlife crossing structures an integral part of the design. All were planned before and constructed at the time of highway upgrade, not afterwards.

The crossing structures have been exceptionally successful. Elk/vehicle collisions have declined 96 per cent. Independent researchers recorded 52,283 wildlife crossings, coyote-size and larger, through the 23 structures, between November 1996 and November 2003. This includes 138 crossings by grizzly bears (including females) and 3,381 wolf crossings – the typically wary species. Every species of animal normally present in the Bow River Valley in Banff National Park have been recorded across the structures. With 24,424 elk passages, it doesn't seem very likely they perceive their habitat to be adversely fragmented.

Because of our work, the TransCanada Highway in Banff National Park is considered a world leader in the wildlife aspect of roadway ecology. Transportation and wildlife managers come from around the world to examine these works and learn about our successes, failures and uncertainties.

The goals for planning TCH IIB are the same as before: improve traveller safety, reduce wildlife/vehicle collisions and improve habitat connectivity, and improve the level of transportation service on the roadway. The present terms of reference for the environmental assessment of the TCH upgrade emphasize the importance of the priority to maintain or restore ecological integrity as we advance with planning the TCH twinning project. This subject is paramount – not lost as you state.

- **Bruce F. Leeson**

Senior Environmental Assessment Scientist  
Western Canada Service Centre  
Parks Canada Agency

### **The author replies:**

Representatives from a large cross-section of environmental groups have been working together to ensure that mitigation for wildlife is a fundamental part of any highway construction project in Banff National Park. Budgets

attributed to the twinning of the TransCanada Highway have been acknowledged to be insufficient to pay for the project in its entirety. The groups say that, if there is not enough money to twin the highway with adequate wildlife mitigation measures, then there is not enough money to continue with the project period. Mitigation is not an optional luxury, and it is encouraging that the new Parks Canada plan for the highway twinning (announced on April 7) appears to accept this.

Wildlife crossing structures on existing sections of the highway have been described as ‘extremely successful’. If the only definition of success is a reduction in direct wildlife mortality, then this is probably true. But what about wildlife connectivity? Twinning and fencing the highway meant fewer animals killed on the highway, but what about the effects on wildlife populations caused by fragmented habitat?

Presumably wildlife movement across the highway was considerably higher before the highway was twinned and fenced, although the lack of baseline data means that we don't know for sure. Is this ‘extremely successful’? Apparently 138 grizzly bears have been recorded using the crossing structures, but the great majority of these are males; females remain extremely cautious about using these structures, so we still have problems of divided grizzly populations.

Parks Canada may have been a ‘world leader’ when the original crossing structures were built, but now they may be lagging behind. Initial plans for the twinning project seemed to be aiming at ‘more of the same’, but the revised plans appear to be considerably more ambitious, with a total of 18 structures, including six 60-metre-wide primary underpasses, one 60-metre animal bridge, two 18-metre secondary underpasses and nine tertiary underpasses being proposed. The funding for these measures has not yet been approved, however, and there is still the risk that these essential mitigation measures will be seen as ‘expendable’ during any future cost-reduction studies.

Wildlife mitigation measures are now being seriously discussed as a key element of the twinning project, in large part due to the environmental organizations, who have kept on top of this project right from the beginning. Initial project goals were to ‘reduce wildlife-traffic conflicts thereby bring about environmental improvements’ (which could certainly be achieved without twinning the highway!), but little mention was made of wildlife connectivity until environmental groups argued for it. So far it seems that environmental groups are being listened to seriously during this process. This communication can only be to the benefit of the project as a whole, and the human and wildlife users of the area in particular.

Jim Pissot of Defenders of Wildlife and Dave Poulton of Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) are representing environmental groups (including AWA) on the Stakeholders Advisory Commission for the project.

- **Nigel Douglas**



# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## DEFENDING WILD ALBERTA MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

Richard Secord, AWA President



AWA is dedicated to conservation and the completion of a network of protected areas, including wilderness lands and waters, throughout Alberta. Through the coordination of its grassroots work and with the help of its great staff and volunteers, AWA has been advancing the establishment of protected areas since 1965. It has also been pushing for better public policy for the conservation, management and ecologically sustainable use of all public lands, waters and wildlife in Alberta. Virtually all of Alberta's waters, all of its wildlife and 73 per cent of its land are public. AWA's work is becoming more and more important. AWA needs you, more than ever, to encourage our governments to show leadership in protecting the places that endangered plants and animals need to survive.

A British study released on March 18, 2004 showed that butterfly species in recent decades have declined by 71 per cent, bird species by 54 per cent, and plant species by 28 per cent. Scientists say the study is further proof that we are in the midst of an extinction crisis akin to the one that killed the dinosaurs 63 million years ago. The current crisis is caused primarily by human activity that is destroying the places that endangered plants and animals need to survive.

In a recent article from the *Globe and Mail* (Mar. 26, 2004, A17), David Schindler, Karen Kraft Sloan and Rick Smith state that reversing the extinction trend will require a serious commitment from many sectors, but it cannot be done without government leadership. The *Globe and Mail* article notes that in British Columbia, the provincial government recently authorized wildlife officials to shoot a protected species, the golden eagle, in an effort to supposedly save the endangered Vancouver Island marmot. The scientists on the marmot recovery team, who are trying to save the marmot, were not even made aware of the golden eagle killings. The *Globe and Mail* article notes that the primary threat for the marmot is not the eagle, but industrial activity in the marmot's habitat. Similarly, while the B.C. government admits that clear-cutting is leading to the

extinction of the spotted owl, it has steadfastly refused to do anything about it.

In the 1800s there were 6,000 grizzly bears in Alberta. In 2004 there are approximately 500 grizzly bears on provincial land and 185 in the National Parks. Only an estimated 250 to 350 grizzly bears in Alberta are considered to be mature breeding individuals. This compares with a recommended minimum of 1,000 to maintain a stable, healthy grizzly bear population. In the fall of 2002, the Alberta government's Endangered Species Subcommittee recommended that the grizzly should be designated a Threatened Species. The Alberta government has refused to act upon this recommendation. The Alberta government issued 101 grizzly hunting licences in 2003.

The federal government's efforts to protect species have not been much better. After a long campaign by environmental groups, scientists and backbench MPs, the



Grizzly bear

federal government finally passed the Species at Risk Act (SARA) in 2002. The law was supposed to come into effect last June, but the Feds delayed implementation for an extra year.

Once SARA comes into force, it states that the places where a species feeds and rears its young will be protected. Feeding areas were specifically added to the law by MPs when the legislation was being passed, a move strongly resisted by government bureaucrats at the time. The *Globe and Mail* article notes that in a discussion paper

released in March 2004, bureaucrats have now decided they will refuse to protect feeding areas, despite the plain wording of the legislation.

SARA's protections for the habitat of endangered plants and animals apply only to species fortunate enough to find themselves on the five per cent of Canada within federal jurisdiction – primarily in national parks and defence lands. But animals that roam widely, like grizzlies, do not know when they are stepping outside of federal lands, and as soon as they do, the federal protections are no longer automatic.

SARA does allow the federal government to step in when provincial laws are not adequately safeguarding a species, which should be good news for B.C.'s spotted owl. The owl is the most endangered bird in Canada, having declined by 67



per cent between 1992 and 2002. Just 14 adult owls were recorded last year in B.C., the only province where it is found. B.C. has no endangered species law, and the province is ignoring the advice of its own government scientists, who have recommended protecting the owl's habitat.

The *Globe and Mail* article notes that it is hard to think of a more compelling case for federal intervention than the spotted owl. Yet Minister David Anderson has indicated that he does not want to use his authority to protect species. In response to a request to intervene to save the spotted owl in March 2004, he stated, "I don't think we want to test the Act for its muscle."

The fact remains that without the protection of its habitat, the spotted owl will be gone forever, as will hundreds of other species, each of which uniquely contributes to the global

ecosystem. They will join the Labrador duck, Dawson's caribou, and dozens of other species that we have already lost.

The federal and provincial governments need to be held accountable for their failure to act to save species that are threatened and on the brink of extinction. Federal and provincial governments need to be encouraged to flex their muscles (or in some cases to find some muscle!).

Write a personal letter and/or letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Make a phone call to your local MLA, MP and key government officials encouraging them to

preserve the wild places that endangered plants and animals need to survive. Volunteer to be a wilderness steward. AWA offers you many opportunities to volunteer, learn and participate in defending Wild Alberta. Take action now to help reverse the extinction crisis that we are in. 🍁



*AWA Bighorn Wildland stewardship field trip*

## STUMP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT FUNDRAISER

### St. Mary's Environmental Action Group (EAG)

Early in January of this year, the students of St. Mary's High School Environmental Action Group came up with an interesting approach to fundraising. These students wanted to do something other than sell chocolate bars door-to-door or organize a bottle drive.

Instead, they came up with Stump for the Environment. Starting at the first bell in the morning, (8:20 a.m.), seven students climbed onto tree stumps that had been donated by a local company, Arbor Care.

From the wee hours of the morning until 3:30 p.m., they stood perched in various positions from their personal tree stump. Surveying the competition, the one question that was on all

their minds was who would be the last stump stander.

These students are not your average tree huggers! At the end of the school day and nearly seven continuous hours of standing, none of the students had left their stump and the club had raised over \$600.

The club decided beforehand that all of the money raised should go to the Alberta Wilderness Association to further promote their work in wilderness preservation. The club is now working on other fundraisers but Stump for the Environment may be difficult to top. 🍁



*Students from St. Mary's Environmental Action Group "Stump for the Environment"*



# PHOTOGRAPHIC AND HISTORIC DONATIONS ENHANCE RESOURCE CENTRE

Every year donations from various individuals come to the Alberta Wilderness Resource Centre. Some are small piles of files packed with useful information. Others are great collections on specific issues that an individual has worked hard on and represent a solid historic record. Many individuals have donated photographs over the years and have allowed AWA to use these wonderful images in our educational materials. Below are some of the people who have made recent donations to the Resource Centre.

## Dr. Herbert Kariel

Herb Kariel made a wonderful donation of beautiful photographs. The thousand or so slides, many of them taken from the peaks of mountains Herb has scaled over the past several decades, unearths a new-found treasure. The slides will enrich the archives, provide excellent illustrations for the *Advocate*, and serve as a useful educational resource.

Herb collected these images over a jam-packed lifetime as a mountain climber, school teacher, geography professor, speaker, researcher, writer, consultant, photographer, naturalist, and, most emphatically, world traveller. He taught at the University of Calgary for many years in the geography department. His research topics include social and economic consequences of tourism, noise in rural and recreational environments, news in the media, the diffusion of innovation, mountain huts and, of course, national parks and other protected areas.

Throughout his life a consistent theme has been his love of the outdoors and his love of climbing. His climbing skills were honed in the Pacific Northwest and later in the Rockies through the Alpine Club of Canada, in which he was a highly active member. Recognition from the club includes the Silver Rope in 1980 for mountaineering leadership and the Distinguished Service Award in 1988.

In addition to his many other activities, Herb currently sits on AWA's Board of Directors.



*Herb Kariel on one of his mountain climbing adventures*

## Alan Ernst and Bill McLean

Alan Ernst and Bill McLean made donations of beautiful photographs for the *Bighorn Wildland* book that was published last year by AWA. Their photographs and an additional collection of slides from the Ernsts are now part of AWA's Image Bank. Alan runs Aurum Lodge in the Bighorn with his wife Madeleine. Bill is a teacher at the Bighorn Reserve School.

## Dr. William A. Fuller

Bill Fuller has been and remains a tireless activist for the environment. He has donated important documents to the Resource Centre from some of the issues he has worked on over the years, including bison in Wood Buffalo National Park, the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy, the Northern River Basins Study and the Peace-Athabasca Delta. Bill retired as professor emeritus, University of Alberta to Athabasca where he helped form Friends of the Athabasca Environmental Association in 1988 to help protect the river and the forests from pulp mills and logging. His interest in bison goes back to his doctoral work and continues today with a recent article on bison in *Canadian Field Naturalist*. Among his many current activities, Bill is an occasional contributor to *Wild Lands Advocate* and last year received an Alberta Wilderness Defenders Award at AWA's Annual Lecture in November. 🍁



*Bill Fuller giving an acceptance speech for this Alberta Wilderness Defenders Award in 2003*



# READER'S CORNER

## SCIENCE IN CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT - NECESSARY BUT NOT SUFFICIENT

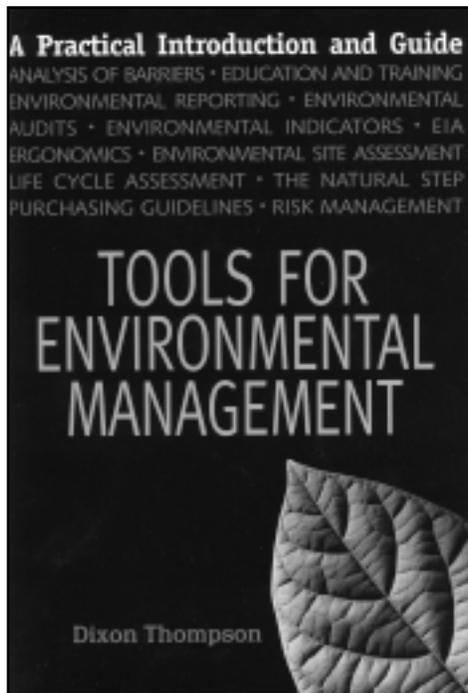
Dr. Michael Quinn, Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary



I have vivid memories of my first personal meeting with two Alberta cabinet ministers. I was working for World Wildlife Fund Canada and the Endangered Spaces campaign had just been launched. Monte Hummel, president of WWF, had arranged for a meeting between a small group of WWF staff and Hon. Ralph Klein (Minister of Environment) and Dr. Stephen West (Minister of Recreation, Parks and Tourism). I was a little younger, a little more idealistic and very excited about the opportunity to explain the simple facts of completing a representative system of protected areas for Alberta and Canada. I was fully armed with a newly minted masters degree, statistics, figures, data and the latest theories on island biogeography and gap analysis. All that was needed, I believed, was to set the record straight. Once the ministers heard the science, they would be enlightened and would have no choice but to adopt our strategy.

Needless to say, most of my arsenal was never launched in that meeting, and I was swiftly given a clinic in politics by two powerful ministers and a savvy leader of a national environmental organization. From that day forward it has become increasingly clear to me that science is absolutely essential to good ecological planning and management, but not sufficient to effect the changes required to achieve a more sustainable future.

A new book edited by Dixon Thompson is a valuable compendium of environmental management tools that helps bridge the gaps between science, policy and management. *Tools for Environmental*



*Management: A Practical Introduction and Guide* is published by New Society Press (<http://www.newsociety.com/bookid/3776>) and is available in hardcover for \$54.95. Although this is a title that might not initially attract the attention of the ENGO community, there is a wealth of practical information between the covers that is of direct relevance to conservation and ecological management.

The text is comprised of a comprehensive introduction to environmental management followed by 22 chapters by subject experts, each outlining a different environmental management tool. The book is thorough, timely and, although it reflects the international experience of the authors, it is refreshingly Canadian. Each tool is described in terms of its definition, history, legal requirements or standards, and how it is applied. The chapters are rich with practical examples and sources of additional information.

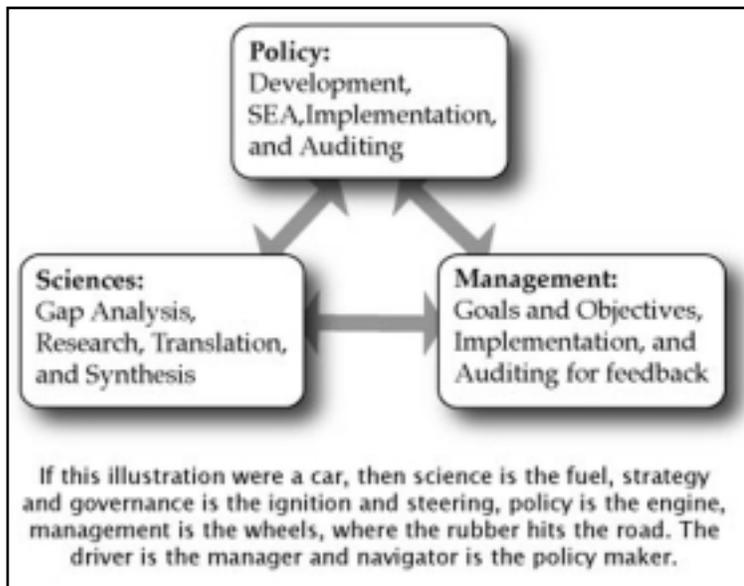
Some of the environmental management tools addressed by the text include strategic environmental management, risk management, life cycle assessment, purchasing guidelines, impact assessment, ecosystem management and the natural step. The writing style throughout the book is accessible and will appeal to students, practitioners and anyone interested in the latest thinking in environmental management.

In the first chapter, Thompson makes it clear that “environmental management” is somewhat of a misnomer, because “environmental management is not about managing the environment, it is about managing the activities of corporations, institutions, and individuals that affect the environment” (p. 1). In other words, this book is not a discussion of manipulating resources, but it is about developing systems that anticipate and avoid or solve environmental and resource conservation problems by

- setting goals and objectives through a strategic planning process;
- identifying and organizing the people with skills and knowledge, technologies, finances, and other resources needed;
- identifying and assessing various options for reaching the goals;
- assessing risks and setting priorities;
- implementing the selected set of options;
- auditing and monitoring performance for necessary adjustments through feedback; and
- using the set of tools as needed.



Thompson stresses the importance of integrating the right science into the policy and management process. He and the other authors in the book challenge us to develop more integrated and interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving. The following diagram shows the connections and inter-relations between policy, science and management.



A chapter that I contributed to the book focuses on ecosystem-based management (EBM), which I define as “an approach to guiding human activity using collaborative, interdisciplinary, and adaptive methods with the long-term goal of sustaining desired future conditions of ecologically bounded areas that, in turn, support healthy, sustainable communities.” EBM differs from conventional approaches to resource management due to the focus on

- 1) working within ecological boundaries rather than political or jurisdictional boundaries,
- 2) emphasis on sustaining ecosystems – e.g., more emphasis on what is left behind than what is taken out,
- 3) commitment to adaptive management and a precautionary approach in the face of uncertainty, and
- 4) the recognition that humans are a part of ecosystems.

*Tools for Environmental Management* is a welcome addition to the environmental literature and a testament to the international leadership and expertise developed by Dixon Thompson over his 30 years at the University of Calgary. 🍁

(Dr. Dixon Thompson generously donated a copy of *Tools for Environmental Management to the Alberta Wilderness Resource Centre.*)

## LAND ADVOCATE



A new advocate is on the scene providing news and support for Canadians living with oil and gas production. *Land Advocate* is a newsletter that editor Andrew Nikiforuk describes as “a democratic voice for landowners and the land.” *Land Advocate* promises to give its readers “the best and most informed perspective on

what’s right and what’s wrong in the oil patch” for the more than 100,000 farmers, ranchers and landowners in western Canada.

Prompted by the unprecedented pace of petroleum development, the newsletter will give landowners an opportunity to talk and share their stories. “The *Land Advocate* aims to ... promote greater fairness, restraint and accountability in the patch” and “to help bring landowners together so their voices can be more clearly heard and acted on.” While government and industry routinely ask, “What can we get away with on the land?” The Advocate poses a different question: “What does nature require of us here?”

Check out the website (<http://www.landadvocate.org>) or share your story by sending an e-mail to [news@landadvocate.org](mailto:news@landadvocate.org). The Board of Land Advocate includes Don Bester (Butte Action Committee), Gwen Johansson (Hudson Hope Landowners), Perry Nelson (Alberta Surface Rights Association) and David Schindler (University of Alberta). 🍁



Above Chester Lake

© J. Treloar



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: ANNE MOUAT

My name is Anne Mouat. I'm a qualified librarian from New Zealand, here in Calgary for twelve months, while my husband continues his advanced training at the Alberta Children's

Hospital. I have volunteered with Shirley Bray at the Resource Centre since September 2003. I am doing volunteer work here in Calgary as I do not currently have a work permit to work in Canada, and am also giving birth to our first baby in April.

I find volunteer work satisfying, and am very happy to be able to assist the environmental efforts of the AWA in my own small way. I am fascinated by the wildlife and the landscape in Alberta (they're so very different from New Zealand), and hope that AWA will be able to continue its fight to preserve them for a long time to come. 🍁



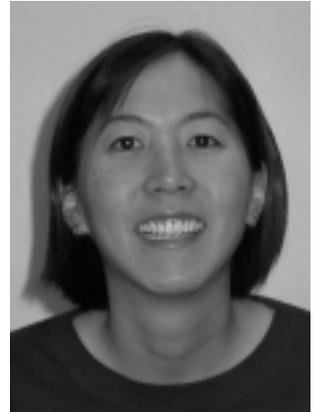
## CONTACT STAFF PROFILE: TRISHA NAKAGAWA

For the past eight months I have been employed by AWA as their Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Technician, as part of my practicum to complete my Bachelor of Applied GIS degree from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT). It was a joint venture between the two organizations – AWA providing a work placement position and SAIT providing the software and hardware for me to use.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with GIS, my job is to create maps that AWA can use to assist in their conservation efforts. GIS technology has provided AWA with the ability to formulate and visually represent their position, to communicate scientific principles more clearly and to share their vision with a larger audience.

There are several projects that I have been working on. Particularly, I have provided maps for AWA's Bighorn Recreation Use and Impact Monitoring project. Information that was collected in the field using GPS units was downloaded and integrated into various maps of the region. Data such as previously unknown (illegal) trails were added and systematic and random sites were identified. As well, over the last several months I have created various maps based on AWA's Areas of Concern. Area of Concern maps identifying environmentally significant areas and natural subregions are just some of the data displayed. Most recently, I completed a revision of AWA's Wild Alberta map which will be used in the next Wild Alberta brochure.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with everyone at the AWA office, in particular Lara Smandych, who has overseen all of the projects that I have worked on. It has been a huge learning experience for me and I will definitely miss working here. Thank you to everyone for a very memorable experience! 🍁



*Chester Lake Trail*

© J. Treloar



*Kananaskis Above Tree Line*

© J. Treloar



June 2004

## WILDERNESS AWARENESS MONTH

What is wilderness? Why should we conserve it? Why is Alberta's wilderness so important? Find out more as we explore our wilderness legacy throughout June, our Wilderness Awareness Month.

Hear the stories of our wilderness explorers past and present.  
Hike to favourite areas with keen guides.  
Take a guided bus tour to the spectacular badlands along the Red Deer River.  
Write and tell us your favorite wilderness story.

Watch our website for more details.

### OPEN HOUSE TALKS PROGRAM

#### CALGARY

Location: The Hillhurst Room,  
AWA, 455 – 12 St. NW  
Time: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
Cost: \$5.00 per person: \$1 for children  
Contact: (403) 283 2025 for reservations  
Pre-registration is advised for all talks.

Monday, May 3, 2004

**Wildflowers and Wildlife Photography**  
with Robert Berdan

Wildlife photographer Robert Berdan will be giving a presentation looking at some of the stunning images he has taken over the years and discussing the techniques and equipment he uses. See some of Robert's beautiful work at [www.scienceandart.ca](http://www.scienceandart.ca).



Hay Bales

© J. Treloar

### OPEN HOUSE HIKES PROGRAM

Saturday, June 5, 2004

**Whaleback**  
with Bob Blaxley

Saturday, June 12, 2004

**Whaleback**  
with Bob Blaxley

Saturday, June 19, 2004

**Twin River Heritage Rangeland**  
with Cheryl Bradley

Sunday, July 4, 2004

**Plateau Mountain, Kananaskis**  
with Vivian Pharis

Saturday, July 10, 2004

**Blue Hill Lookout**  
with Will Davies

Saturday, August 21, 2004

**Beehive Natural Area**  
with James Tweedie

Saturday, September 11, 2004

**Whaleback**  
with Bob Blaxley

Sunday, September 26, 2004

**Burstall Lakes, Kananaskis**  
with Vivian Pharis



## OTHER EVENTS

May 14 - 16, 2004

### PEOPLE AND THE PLANET: CHANGING VALUES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

A Conference for Activists, Academics,  
Leaders and Thinkers South Alberta  
Institute of Technology (SAIT) Calgary

Invited speakers include Maude Barlow,  
Naomi Klein, David Korten, Ken Wiwa,  
Ralph Torrie, Andrew Nikiforuk, Stuart  
Laidlaw, Elizabeth May, Jerry Mander,  
Steven Shrybman, Lois Gibbs, Lori  
Wallach and many more.

Information/Registration: 1-888-810-4204  
email: peopleandtheplanet@ca.inter.net



*Sky Above Tree Line*

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awa.wrc@shaw.ca  
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.

## JOIN OUR DISPLAY VOLUNTEERS THIS SUMMER

If you love talking about Alberta's wilderness, why not join our display volunteer team this summer? AWA works hard to raise awareness about the exceptional wilderness areas we are so privileged to enjoy in Alberta, and what we can all do to help protect these areas.

Our displays are fun and successful. AWA's display team travels to a range of interesting places — including farmers' markets, visitor centres and festivals — with an AWA display, talking to people about Alberta's wilderness, what they can do to help protect it, and what AWA is doing.

We always need extra volunteers who can help out to staff a display. Training is provided, and new volunteers are usually teamed up with experienced regulars.

Display venues that we have booked so far include the following:

Friday, April 23 to Saturday, April 24 -  
Outdoor Lifestyles Exhibition,  
Red Deer

Saturday, July 10 -  
Millarville Farmers' Market

Sunday, August 1 to Monday, August 2  
Canmore Folk Festival

Saturday, September 11 -  
Millarville Farmers' Market

Wednesday afternoons,  
June to September-  
Hillhurst/Sunnyside Farmers' Market,  
Calgary

If you would like to spend a couple of hours to help out at one of these venues, or if you would like to find out more, please contact  
Nigel Douglas,  
Outreach Coordinator at (403) 283 2025,  
awa@shaw.ca.



# SUPPORT ALBERTA WILDERNESS

*"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**

**Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA)** is dedicated to protecting wildlands, wildlife and wild waters throughout Alberta. Your valued contribution will assist with all areas of AWA's work. We offer the following categories for your donation. The Provincial Office of AWA hosts wall plaques recognizing donors in the "Associate" or greater category. Please give generously to the conservation work of 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 +
<input type="checkbox"/> Philanthropist	\$1000
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	



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).*

*AWA respects the privacy of members. Lists are not sold or traded in any manner. 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 awa@shaw.ca Website http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca*

**Thursday, April 29, 2004  
Wilderness Celebration Spring 2004**

**Celebrate Wild Alberta**

Join us for an evening of:

- Cocktails, conversation, fine gourmet hors d'oeuvres
- A fine Jazz ensemble
- Exciting live and silent auctions, unique raffles
- Other fun activities

**Date:** April 29, 2004

**Time:** 5:30 - 10:30 pm

**Location:** Provincial Museum of Alberta,  
Edmonton

**Tickets:** \$60.00

**Call:** 1-866-313-0713 toll free  
**or visit:** [www.AlbertaWilderness.ca](http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca)



**Moving?  
Please let us know!**

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:

  
**Alberta Wilderness Association**  
Box 6398, Station D  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E1  
[awa@shaw.ca](mailto:awa@shaw.ca)

