



A WILD LANDS ADVOCATE

THE ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION JOURNAL



Fireweed and Crowfoot Mountain PHOTO: © D. LOBAY

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COVER PHOTO

Derald Lobay describes his stunning cover photo in these words: "Surrounding Bow Lake in Banff National Park are extensive tracts of willows. Mingled with these willows are immense clusters of fireweed. Waiting for the rising sun to completely illuminate the east face of Crowfoot Mountain, all I had to do was to wait for a lull in the wind in order to capture the flowers without any wind blur. More of Derald's photos may be found in his gallery on the Images Alberta Camera Club website www.imagesalberta.ca

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White-breasted nuthatch PHOTO: S. COULSON

GET OUT THERE!

Spring is over and I am eager to put the June issue of the *Wild Lands Advocate* – AWA’s recreation-focused issue – to bed. This spring, like most seasons for environmentalists, was filled with applause and frowns. On a positive note, AWA succeeded, yet again, in delivering a very successful Climb and Run for Wilderness on April 17th. The event raised nearly \$120,000 for wilderness conservation. But, just over one week later, in the Gulf of Mexico, the Deepwater Horizon tragedy began. Eleven workers died and tens of millions of litres of oil erupted into the Gulf after the Deepwater Horizon platform exploded and sank. Although Alberta is a continent away from this tragedy this ecological disaster should remind us just how important it is for government to regulate industry appropriately.

Disasters aside – the tone of our stories here focuses more optimistically on the intrinsic value of wilderness recreation. Tom Maccagno, who I had the privilege to meet more years ago now than both of us may like to admit to, offers you a thoughtful exploration of Alberta’s Lakeland region. He has loved this region for his entire life and, if you read his words, you will share that affection. Steve Patten takes you to the land of eagles on Alberta’s peaks. What drives people to go to those altitudes? – Steve offers you one answer.

I adapted the title for this editorial from Paul Sutherland’s piece “Thoughts About Being.” Getting out there into nature is absolutely vital. If some of us are not prepared to do that then our chances of realizing more protected spaces arguably shrink.

Who belongs in nature? That is a provocative question underlying this issue’s focus on recreation. This spring saw AWA, supported by a grant from Mountain Equipment Co-op, propose to introduce new immigrants to Alberta to several of the province’s outstanding natural areas. New Canadians represent an important potential source of political support for AWA’s work and this initiative is AWA’s first pro-active step to bring more new Canadians into the pro-wilderness tent. Dr. Ross Wein, president of the Alberta Abilities Lodges Society, urges us in his article to see the disabled as another important constituency we should be courting. The story about Ross Watson, the blind mountain climber who reached the summit of Mount Logan, demonstrates that if society will give more opportunities to the disabled great accomplishments are possible.

This issue introduces a new addition to the departments’ section – advice on “gear.” Jennifer Douglas offers a few suggestions about types of outdoor equipment you might want to consider tossing into your backpack before you venture out into Alberta’s wild spaces this summer. As well, three members of the Images Alberta Camera Club offer their thoughts about capturing some of nature’s beauty this year with your camera.

May the next several months bless you with good weather, good companions, and some truly remarkable recreational experiences!

- Ian Urquhart, Editor



LAKELAND: A LIFELONG ODYSSEY IN A LAND OF WONDER

By Tom Maccagno

Touchwood Lake

*Resplendent
 Many hues
 Shades of green
 Marching
 Boldly
 To the
 Water's Edge,
 Speckled with
 Silvery birch,
 Balsam Fragrantly
 Wafting
 In the air,
 Summer breeze,
 Dancing over
 Sparkling waters
 Soaring upward
 Towards
 Shadow bedecked
 Distant hills,
 Silent sentinels
 Of passing
 Seasons,
 Changing
 And Changeless,
 Offering
 A Clue,
 My love,
 Of infinity.*

- Tom Maccagno (Tom's poem first appeared in the June 2002 edition of *Wild Lands Advocate*.)



The rare white adder's mouth orchid PHOTO: T. MACCAGNO

Nature has endowed, sprinkled the Lac La Biche Country with incomparable lakes. Make your dreams come true, come off the beaten path. See Lac La Biche, Beaver Lake and Touchwood Lake in their primitive solitude and silent grandeur. You will say "incredible, marvelous, bewildering, astounding."

*Lac La Biche Journal, 14
September 1932*

Every child is born with what Rachel Carson described as a "sense of wonder." A child is not conscious of this and may lose this gift during adulthood if he or she does not consciously exercise this endowment. My parents instilled a love of the lakes and the woods (they are inseparable) at an early age. I have vivid memories of family outings to nearby Beaver Lake and on vast Lac La Biche with its inviting beaches. Although Beaver Lake was a mere 5 kilometres (3 miles) away this trip, on little more than a dirt trail, could be a real adventure and challenge if it rained. My sense of wonder was not only frequently aroused by these trips but in time it became an essential part of my being. How I remember the boat trips to Spruce Island and exploring it when my parents made camp and lit a campfire. I can hear and see in my mind the many distinct sounds and sights provided by these marvelous outings – the trilling

of Canada toads on a warm June day which announced the coming of summer, the maniacal cry of a red-necked grebe, the calls of a family of loons, pelicans gracefully skimming over the surface of the lake, the sparkling diamonds as a breeze rippled over the water, the spectacular dive of an osprey, and a stately blue heron standing near shore. Sometimes we also saw a beaver or bear or moose or deer from the boat. I learnt to identify the different species of ducks. Over 20 species of ducks can be seen on Lac La Biche. Memories and landscape became inextricably intertwined. Memories infused what the landscape was like and the landscapes gave rise to the precious lasting memories.

Lakeland is unique. It is the only lake-district in Alberta. Lakeland is in the Boreal Natural Region, one of the six natural regions in this province. The Boreal Natural Region has the greatest diversity of any of those seven regions,



The rare Indian pipe PHOTO: T. MACCAGNO

yet it is the least known but has the most exploitative activities. According to Chief Factor John Stuart, in a letter dated December 10, 1826, apparently Sir George Simpson recognized this diversity:

“From there [Fort Carlton] to Red Deer Lake [Lac La Biche] close to the ‘Big Athabasca, is, in vegetation in its singular force and nature, the rankest part of America, North of the Torrid Zone.’ These are the words, applied by Sir George Simpson himself, if I mistake not: a region of sulphur, waters, bituminous springs, warmest limestone beds, and full of life, animal and vegetable, the veriest garden of our North West.”

Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area were established in 1992. An area of 587.8 km² (227 square miles) was set aside for these areas. Some suggested at that time that this was a large area. It is not. Calgary and Edmonton each have larger footprints than the Park and Recreation Area. Lakeland is dwarfed and mostly surrounded by the Alberta-Pacific Forest Management Agreement Area (FMA), a tiny territory just approximately the size of New Brunswick.

With the passage of time I came to know and learn more and more about Lakeland Provincial Park and Provincial Recreation Area (hereafter referred to as Lakeland) with every outing. I still do. I have never seen Lakeland the same way twice. There was a time a lifetime ago when Lakeland was taken for granted and the fish were countless and considered inexhaustible. People who had a cabin

by a lake were regarded as idiosyncratic. Why did anyone need a small parcel of land when there was so much wondrous nature at your doorstep?

When I went away for my studies as well as early in my career I always kept my ties with the Lakeland region. This period in my life kindled an appreciation of Lakeland that is difficult to articulate. I believe it must be experienced. New ways to better acquaint myself with Lakeland came with new talents and skills, e.g. mountain biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, canoeing and snowmobiling. I remember pedaling on my mountain bike near the shore of Jackson Lake in early May and hearing the crystal-like tinkling of candle ice on Jackson Lake.

As strange as it may now seem, I do not recall paying any particular attention in my early years to the birdlife and wildflowers in Lakeland. They were just there. When my elder sons were old enough to accompany me on an excursion to reach some lake in Lakeland it seemed that half the fun was getting there. A parent who sees what his child sees for the first time is privileged. His own sense of wonder is reinforced. I can recall a starry evening by a lake pointing out the Big Dipper to one of my children, and hearing him exclaim, “Daddy, I can see the bowl!”

An outstanding attraction of Lakeland is its canoe circuit that enjoys growing popularity and may be underappreciated and certainly is under-advertised by the Alberta government. A canoe trip can be made from Jackson Lake to Kinnaird Lake to Blackett Lake. There are endless sights to see and there are camping areas and fire pits along the way. Another of my personal joys is to travel along the Touchwood Lake road and cross the Continental Divide. As one descends from the Athabasca – Mackenzie basin into the Churchill basin when approaching the lake on a misty morning an optical illusion may appear, one which must be seen in order to be really appreciated. On a bright sunny spring or fall day the waters of Touchwood appear cobalt blue.

These experiences over many years enabled me to gain an appreciation of Lakeland’s biodiversity. Consequently, in the early 1990s the following ludicrous statement stunned me. It appeared in the document *Biophysical Overview And Resource Assessment Of The Proposed Lakeland Provincial Park And Provincial Recreation Area* and read:

“One species, ‘*Sarracenia purpurea*’ (Pitcher Plant), uncommon to Alberta was found during the field survey. Other uncommon or rare species may also be present, however, the likelihood of finding these species is low.”

I could have wisecracked then and said that the low likelihood of finding them is what must have made them rare. However, given what my years in Lakeland had taught me, I was incredulous when I first read this statement. Incredulity soon boiled into anger when I learnt that the field study was conducted in September and October of 1990. What plants blossom and thrive in Northern Alberta at that time of the year?

I vowed to go to Lakeland at the first available opportunity in order to disprove this absurdity. Armed with an Alberta floral field guide I went to the Shaw Lake Day Use Campground, swung my leg over my mountain bike and headed out along the Mosquito Lake Trail. This is a very old trail - how old no one really knows. Prehistoric artifacts have been found on it. This trail originally ran from Big Bay, east of Lac La Biche to Mosquito Lake, now known as Spencer Lake. Indians (as we called First Nations at that time), Métis, trappers and commercial fishermen, among others, used it. Packhorses traveled it; horse drawn sleighs and wagons used it too. The trail tends to follow high ground, however, in some low spots corduroy roads can still be seen. In any event, at the end of this initial exploratory trip I had observed six orchid species, including the rare white adder’s-mouth orchid (*Malaxis monophyllos*). To date a total of 16 orchid species and some variants have been identified in the region adjacent to Lakeland (the greater Lakeland Region). Yet another hike revealed a yellow variant of the lovely spotted coralroot orchid, and hundreds of hooded ladies’ tresses orchids in bloom. The air was heavy with the fragrance of vanilla.

Subsequent trips led to more exciting personal discoveries such as observing the rare three known Sundew species: round-leaved, oblong-leaved and slender-leaved sundew (*Droseria rotundifolia*, *d. anglica* and *d. linearis*) known to exist in Alberta, the large round-leaved orchid (*Habermaria orbitculata*), and others. I also observed flowers that, according to the distribution maps in E. H. Moss’s *Flora of Alberta*, had not been reported previously. These “discoveries” included



For many Jackson Lake is synonymous with the canoe circuit in Lakeland Provincial Park. PHOTO: T. MACCAGNO

elephant head flower (when I first saw it, I recall saying to myself, “what a delightful flower, it looks just like an elephant’s head!”), small mouth columbine, spotted touch-me-not, and others. I also have had encounters with mushrooms and fungi with weird names (e.g. witch’s butter, shaggy mane, fairy puke, and dead man’s fingers to name a few). Observing a number of the colourful bird species in Lakeland was, and remains, always exciting (e.g. western tanagers, Baltimore orioles, red breasted grosbeaks, and various warbler species).

Lakeland presents a treasure trove for a person involved in nature photography. I can recall an incident on an overcast day where I was on my knees attempting to take a close-up photo of a spotted coralroot orchid. Suddenly, the sun broke out and transfigured this beautiful flower. I was breathless, in awe. It was a near mystical experience. In any event, I did not trip the shutter on my camera. Perhaps it is just as well. Who knows if my camera would have captured what I saw and experienced?

Of course, the likelihood of seeing moose, mule or white-tailed deer, lynx, wolf, fisher, marten, beaver or bear is always there. Some of my truly memorable wildlife sightings include seeing a brown bear sow and her black and cinnamon cub, a family of otters frolicking like porpoises in Shaw Lake and, on one occasion, over a thousand common loons in late summer. There is always the prospect of witnessing a bald eagle soaring or an osprey catching its next meal. On one trip I heard a scream overhead and saw an aerial duel between eagle and osprey. The eagle dove at the

osprey relentlessly in order to force it to drop its catch. Following some spectacular aerial maneuvering the osprey released the fish in its talons and, as the fish fell toward the lake, the eagle made a barrel roll and caught lunch in mid-air. Absolutely breathtaking! On another occasion, in a shaded patch of the boreal forest, a shaft of sunlight revealed a lynx resting and sunning itself on a deadfall.

Lakeland also has some stands of old-growth forest. One can see record or near record size white and black spruce, birch, balsam poplar, jackpine, aspen, and tamarack. On one occasion when I was leading a group from Central Alberta along the Mosquito Lake Trail pointing out various features from time to time as we ambled on I realized that they were no longer following me. When I looked back the group was gathered round an immense white spruce. They had never seen a tree of that size in Alberta. It was a valuable lesson, that is, not in how I see Lakeland, but rather how others see it. This has led to new discoveries. It is amazing how fresh eyes will invariably disclose features not previously observed. An amazing fen exists on the south end of Touchwood Lake. The lush green carpet of mosses is indeed a sight to be seen. Another event to experience is the thermal difference on a warm, sunny day when one enters a cathedral-like old-growth stand of spruce. The refreshing cooler temperature is a welcome relief.

A striking feature of Lakeland is that the names of airmen who lost their lives in the Second World War now grace its lakes. McGuffin, Dabbs, and McGrane Lakes honour their memory and valour. I like to believe these brave men now

stand on guard for Lakeland. As our population grows and economic expansion proceeds at a frenetic pace protected areas such as Lakeland will become more and more valuable. Lakeland’s accessibility to large population centres is also important. The brutal fact is that wilderness is fast becoming an endangered species in Alberta. Threats within Lakeland’s boundaries may be just as potentially devastating as threats beyond its boundaries. Please, take a moment to reflect on what I have said here, and prod the government to better preserve, present and promote Lakeland. We must object to stupidity, self-interest and greed. See and experience Lakeland in its serene splendour and grandeur. I promise – you will never forget it. Share it and become a voice for Lakeland. This is something we must do, for our children and grandchildren, so that they too will have the opportunity to experience the memories and landscapes my generation has seen.

I would like to leave you with the words of the American philosopher, Waldo Emerson: “. . .if eyes were meant for seeing, then beauty is its own excuse for being.” He must have had Lakeland in mind when he said that. 🍷

Tom Maccagno is a lawyer, former mayor of Lac La Biche, and long-time defender of Lakeland’s treasures.



EXPLORING ALBERTA'S MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS

By Steve Patten



Lyell 4's North Ridge Route (as seen from Lyell 3) PHOTO: S. PATTEN

All of us, regardless of where we live, can value wilderness protection as a means of ensuring biodiversity, creating spaces for threatened species to thrive, and protecting the health of watersheds that are essential to life in distant towns and cities. But wild places also allow for a range of low impact recreational pursuits that do a lot to restore our individual bodies and souls to good health. The combination of physicality and connection to our natural world that is experienced while paddling, hiking and mountaineering is something I value more than the material benefits

of our successful careers and city life. Fortunately, however, living in Alberta affords ample opportunity to combine our busy city lives with access to extensive opportunities for wilderness recreation – in my case, wilderness recreation focuses on ascending and exploring the peaks of the Rocky Mountains.

Mountaineering can seem distant and mysterious to the uninitiated. That was once the case for me. Until a decade and a half ago my primary wilderness recreation had been canoeing the flat water of lakes in central and northern Ontario. But, in the mid-1990s a couple of friends and I hooked up with some members of the Toronto section of the Alpine Club of Canada and began climbing the cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment in southern and central Ontario. We also visited and climbed the beautiful granite cliffs above Mazinaw Lake in Ontario's Bon Echo Provincial Park. This whetted our appetite for something more dramatic. Rock climbing at our local crags was challenging but we wanted to get into real mountains – and into real wilderness.

In the late 1990s we made two trips to eastern British Columbia and Alberta. We hiked the Rockwall Trail in Kootenay National Park and scrambled a couple of easy peaks in the Banff-Canmore area. But, for me, the real turning point came when a friend and I participated in a week-long introduction to mountaineering course on the Wapta Icefield, located along the continental divide on the border of Banff and Yoho National Parks (for those familiar with the drive along the Icefields Parkway, the Wapta Icefield can be found in the mountains to the west of Bow Lake and Num-Ti-Jah lodge). This introduction to snow and ice climbing skills and safe glacier travel allowed me to get to the top of high peaks from which we viewed what appeared to be an endless landscape of mountain wilderness. The physical

challenge of mountaineering and the distance I felt from the daily grind of city life was completely invigorating. I was hooked.

A year later my family and I took an opportunity to move to Edmonton. The career prospects were exciting and, as an added bonus, our opportunities to spend time in the mountains would multiply. Camping and hiking became core recreational activities for my entire family. Our kids will forever remember their Easter egg hunt on a hiking trail in Jasper National Park, the first time we encountered a black bear on a hiking trail, and the first time they stood proudly on the top of a mountain. I took advantage of those early years in Alberta to develop my mountaineering skills and learn what it takes to remain safe while exploring the mountain wilderness. In courses taught by professional mountain guides I strove to learn about the full range of mountain "disciplines."

At the risk of oversimplifying (or perhaps overcomplicating) there are five mountain disciplines. Each creates unique opportunities to take exploring the mountain wilderness beyond the experiences available to hikers and cross-country skiers on established trails and each requires a particular base of knowledge and set of skills. These disciplines are: (i) scrambling, (ii) rock climbing, (iii) waterfall ice climbing, (iv) alpine climbing or general mountaineering, and (v) ski touring and ski mountaineering.

Scrambling involves off-trail mountain travel that, unlike off-trail ridge walking, requires the use of hands to provide the balance necessary to safely ascend a ridge or peak. While mountain scrambles do not require the ropes or technical gear associated with rock climbing the boldest scramblers are exposed to extremely steep terrain: loose rock, snow and iced rock that can present significant danger. Scrambling



is significant. Ski touring and ski mountaineering are, in many ways, a part of general mountaineering. What is unique and particularly significant about these winter season mountain pursuits is that they require added training in avalanche safety and rescue.

As I took courses in all these disciplines the mountain wilderness opened up to me. I am not a high-end climber and I do not tackle the most challenging routes and peaks of Alberta's Rockies. But, as an increasingly experienced novice mountaineer, I have had opportunities to participate in a wide range of mountain adventures. Not all of these adventures involve travel to the most remote of Rockies locations. Many enjoyable days have involved ascending recognizable peaks along the highway between Banff and Jasper. I have scrambled Mount Temple near Lake Louise and Mount Wilcox near the Columbia Icefield. Rock climbing has allowed me to summit Mount Louis and Mount Edith near Banff, as well as the recognizable Castle Mountain between Banff and Lake Louise. Mountaineering excursions have included Mount Athabasca at the Columbia Icefield, Mount Victoria at the back of Lake Louise, and a number of the peaks beyond Moraine Lake in the Valley of the Ten Peaks (those are the peaks featured on the old \$20 bill). More recently, ski touring has taken me back to the Wapta Icefield, deep into Jasper's Tonquin Valley, as well as "earning some turns" on Bow Summit just off the Icefields Parkway in Banff.

But my more significant mountain wilderness experiences have involved traveling to areas that I did not even know existed until I took up mountaineering. Each year, a close friend and I participate in at least one multi-day trip with a professional mountain guide. This is not inexpensive wilderness recreation but it allows a pair of novice mountaineers to travel to wilderness locations that would otherwise be inaccessible. Some of these trips have taken us west into British Columbia, but never beyond driving distance. A few years ago we spent a week alpine rock climbing on the world famous granite spires of B.C.'s Bugaboo Provincial Park. On a pair of visits to the region that included B.C.'s Clemenceau Icefield and Alberta's Columbia Icefield I have

Lyell 5's North Ridge Route (as seen from Lyell 4) PHOTO: S. PATTEN

allows those with experience to escape the crowds of hiking trails and ascend seldom-visited mountain ridges and peaks. What differentiates rock climbing from scrambling is that the pitch is steep enough that hands are used to support the climber's weight and make progress, rather than merely provide balance. Due to the steepness of the ridges and cliffs ascended by rock climbers, specialized ropes and technical gear are essential to "catch" a climber's fall and prevent serious injury or death.

In winter, many rock climbers ascend frozen waterfalls and ice that builds up as a result of seepages on mountain cliffs. While technical ice climbing axes replace the climbers' hands, and ice

screws replace technical rock gear, there are sufficient similarities between the sports that combining rock climbing and ice climbing allows enthusiastic climbers to experience the mountains year round.

Alpine climbing, or general mountaineering, is more difficult to define precisely. Alpine mountaineers frequently aim to ascend the larger and more remote mountains. Their excursions often require glacier travel, scrambling, and technical climbing on rock, ice, and snow. While the typical alpine climbing experience will not require the high end climbing proficiency associated with the toughest rock or waterfall ice climbs, the range of skills and safety knowledge required by the general mountaineer

climbed some of the Rockies highest peaks---Tusk, Tsar and King Edward.

One particularly memorable experience involved a visit to the Lyell Icefield, located on the western edge of Banff National Park, directly west of Saskatchewan Crossing (where the David Thompson highway intersects with the Icefields Parkway). As is the case with many of the most attractive wilderness locations, access is difficult. We approached our destination from the west, driving 80 kilometres on forest service roads until we arrived at the headwaters of Icefall Brook. This magnificent location features large waterfalls cascading off the 610-metre cliffs of Icefall Canyon. There we met a helicopter that took us to a drop point on the edge of the Icefield just west

at the steep snowfield below Lyell 1 (also known as Rudolph Peak). As is the case with Lyell 2 (Edward Peak) and Lyell 3 (Ernest Peak), Lyell 1 is a very straightforward snow climb. With little effort we walked and kicked steps to a gentle summit that afforded spectacular views of the Columbia Icefield to the northwest and Mount Forbes to the south.

The traverse to Lyell 2 was uneventful and we were soon kicking steps up the somewhat steeper slopes of Lyell 3. Some care had to be taken as we crossed a snow bridge over the bergschrund (where the glacial ice pulls away from the alpine ice) and skirted a couple of large crevasses. But, by 9:00 a.m. we were on the summit, enjoying the warmth of the morning sun and celebrating the fact that we had already summited our third 3,350 metre

easy, but the high consequence terrain called for considerable attention and focus. There was, moreover, no time to pause on the summit ridge as the hours were passing quickly and we knew that the challenging north ridge of Lyell 5 (Christian Peak) lay ahead.

As we descended the reasonably mellow south ridge of Lyell 4, the views of Lyell 5 were breathtaking and more than a little intimidating. The accompanying photograph shows the aesthetic north ridge route on Lyell 5. The ascent of this final peak of the day would involve climbing a series of steep snow and ice ramps, interspersed with stretches of rock. Fortunately, although our energy was fading, we summited in good time, enjoyed the ritual handshakes, and began to plunge-step down the snowy south face of Lyell 5 to the upper icefield towards camp. We arrived at roughly 7:30 p.m. (15 hours after our morning departure), gorged on dinner, and quickly made our way into the warmth of our sleeping bags. It was an amazing day on remote mountain peaks that few people have an opportunity to see, let alone to climb. But our middle-aged bodies were drained and we had insufficient energy to reflect on and discuss the privilege of this wilderness experience. We were asleep within moments.

Over the years I have come to love the feeling of moving through the mountains. The feel of my hands on rock, the increase in my heart rate while ascending a steep slope, and the breathtaking mountain views – it revives my soul and keeps me healthy. The experiences of drinking water directly from a glacier, sharing a mountainside with bighorn sheep and mountain goats, or watching a mother grizzly and her cubs forage for food on a remote ridge, connect you with the natural world in a way that few recreational pursuits can. My experiences ascending and exploring the mountain wilderness have been personally fulfilling, while also inspiring a deep commitment to protecting Alberta's wild places. 🐾

Steve Patten lives with his partner and their two kids in Edmonton where he teaches political science at the University of Alberta.



Moraine Lake and the Valley of the Ten Peaks from Mount Temple PHOTO: S. PATTEN

of the B.C. – Alberta border and the boundary of Banff National Park. Once the helicopter departed, we set up camp in a shallow basin that protected us from the winds and featured both snow cover for setting up our tents and a small rocky area for cooking.

Our primary mountaineering objective involved a traverse of the five Lyell peaks. While each of the five summits towers more than 3,350 metres above sea level, the cols (or passes) that separate them are shallow enough that, in good weather, all five can be climbed in one long day. The day we set out to climb the Lyells commenced with breakfast shortly before 3:00 a.m. We were roped up and on the glacier by 3:30 a.m. Our route began with a two and a half hour trek across the glacier lying to the west of the five peaks. By 6:00 a.m. we arrived

peak of the day.

But the more significant climbing challenges lay ahead. From Lyell 3 we could observe the north ridge route to the top of Lyell 4 (Walter Peak). The accompanying photograph shows a long fin-shaped snow ridge rising up from the col between Lyell 3 and 4. Above that is a short, snowy rock step, and then a much longer – but lower angle – series of knife-edge snow fins and corniced ridges overhanging the peak's east face. The final summit ridge is a 200-metre stretch of narrow, undulating, snow catwalks and icy rock towers. I must admit to some trepidation at the sight of this peak.

Travel was slow, but steady, as we moved out onto the surprisingly firm snow fins and climbed through the rock step on the front points of our crampons. Above that, the climbing was relatively



THOUGHTS ON “BEING:” GET OUT THERE

By Paul Sutherland, AWA Hikes, Tours, and Talks Coordinator

On the wall of my home office hideaway, strategically positioned at eye level, is a framed copy of a PowerPoint-generated drawing of a campsite. Under the drawing is a command: “Get Out There!” Sometimes we all need an extra bit of motivation to get out and do the things we enjoy, but too often put off for a more opportune time, a nicer day, or “when I’m feeling more energetic.” I am no different; I love being outside but sometimes I cannot quite work up the will to “get out there.” My framed reminder helps a lot.

Okay, so I like to spend time outside – why? You must enjoy the outdoors too – have you asked why lately? Answering that question can be difficult; I don’t think I have ever really given it an honest try. This article will try to correct that longstanding oversight.

“Look, it’s a whooping crane!” We are driving in west-central Saskatchewan, descending into the valley of the upper Qu’Appelle River. That big white bird certainly has our attention; gravel flies as calipers grip discs and the car’s wheels are squeezed to a reluctant stop. Hands fly to binoculars; optical lenses are jammed against eyeballs. “Oh,” one of us said, “it’s only a pelican.”

Only a pelican! How many times do most of us see a pelican in its natural environment? Certainly most of us don’t see one every day, nor every week, nor probably every year. Yes, seeing a “whooper” would have been excitement of the highest order. But seeing that pelican was also a thrill and we reveled in our sighting.

In the outdoors, especially the wild kind, thrilling discoveries await. They don’t happen routinely but just often enough to keep most of us motivated to keep looking and listening out there. “Intermittent reinforcement” is the term I learned in introductory psychology – I experience the same expectation of a bonanza that keeps a gambler at the poker



Stepping carefully across the Brazeau River PHOTO: J. MILLEN

table or roulette wheel for hours and hours. Am I addicted to these rare thrills? Is the outdoor world habit-forming? If so, it is a habit or addiction I am happy to have.

The April sun warms my shoulders and back and a soft spring breeze caresses my face. I am doing a simple, straightforward hike: a nine-kilometre loop around the Pine Creek Trail in the Cross Conservation Area near Calgary. The brittle, winter-beaten grass crackles under my boots; the sound contrasts sharply with the all-too-familiar crunch and squeak of snow at minus 25 degrees – the sound I had been hearing since December. A robin’s surprisingly welcome song drifts up from the creek valley: “Cheer-up, Cheer-up, Cheer-up.” I decide I will; I do.

Many people go outdoors expecting, at least occasionally, to have some sort of adventure. But what might we expect about the other ninety-eight percent of the time?

Familiarity and comfort – much of the benefit of being out in the wilderness is to once again experience sights, sounds, and other sensations we have experienced

before. We seek encounters, as I did on my Pine Creek hike, which are not strange and novel but rather are familiar and comforting. Most of us outdoor enthusiasts love the sense of comfort we associate with experiencing things that have been an important part of our lives, perhaps since the earliest memories of our childhood. Seeking novelty, but also reveling in the security and comfort of the familiar, is a good impetus for venturing beyond the concrete and asphalt surroundings many of us see daily. What else attracts us to the great outdoors?

My lungs start to burn with a noticeable searing sensation. My legs scream: “Stop this punishment; we cannot take any more!” The seat on my old faithful mountain bike starts to feel like the edge of a very dull knife. It is early June and the winter gate on the Kananaskis Trail, Highway 40, is still closed. This is a great opportunity. That day it is just me, my mountain bike and my trusty backpack – labouring up the inclined “trail” towards the Highwood Pass. It is a weekday so there are no other humans in the immediate vicinity. There are no cars or motorcycles; the road is closed to all motorized traffic until June 15th.

Around me the sub-alpine seems to be slumbering. The only sounds that break the silence are the steady hum of bicycle tires on pavement and the occasional calls of birds. The feeling of peace is sublime. There is time to waste, to allow the mind to muse on thoughts that our daily grind often pushes to the background, unexamined. There is only one irritating interruption – the annoying, growing ache in my legs as they propel the bike steadily upwards.

When I go outdoors I don’t usually just stand around. I like to be physically active: hiking, climbing, snowshoeing, cycling and occasionally paddling. Being out in the natural world automatically encourages me to look around the next



Hiking In Waterton National Park PHOTO: M. McKEE

corner or peek over that ridge right in front of me. In order to satisfy that curiosity I usually have to move my body from one location to another. After enough of this activity my body responds with that feeling of well-being – the release of endorphins – we associate with fitness. It is a great feeling to know that what you are doing will prepare you to do more of the same next week, next month, or next year. There might even be some long-term health benefits from all this outdoor activity!

What did I learn from my day trip to Highwood Pass? Although I don't really feel the need to identify another reason for being outdoors I know being out there feeds and sustains both body and soul. You cannot discount the physical and mental well-being nature bestows on those who venture out to engage her.

I hope by now it is obvious that being in the outdoors means a great deal to

me. Does it end when I put the bike back on the car or can it lead to other forms of involvement and experience? Well, I am writing this article – communicating my thoughts and feelings is one way to inform, and hopefully involve, other people who may share my views. It enriches the experience. I am an active member of the AWA and, as the Hikes, Tours and Talks Coordinator, I try to organize programs and activities that will encourage other people to inform and educate themselves about all things wild.

So, if you have not been out in the natural world much lately, why not make that extra effort to visit a local area set aside as a relatively undeveloped place (if you like I will send you my PowerPoint poster...)? Even though many of us want more and better protection for wild places in Alberta, such areas are out there, “below the radar screen” in our awareness. These areas could benefit

from some increased exposure to those who love the outdoors. For example, this province contains a number of ecological reserves and natural areas, such as Rumsey, which face a number of threats, but are under-appreciated by most of the citizenry. This summer, why not make an effort to seek out at least one of these natural jewels?

Enjoyment of the outdoors is something we all share. It is probably the most important reason people join the AWA. Therefore, I think I can add one more reason why I spend time in the outdoor wilderness: the joy of being involved and knowing that, at least in some small way, I can influence others to do likewise. Thanks for reading this article; I hope you will be one of them. 🍄



DISABLED CITIZENS: WELCOME THEM INTO THE CONSERVATION COMMUNITY

By Ross W. Wein

The Disabled and Conservation: An Underappreciated Resource

Have you ever heard people say “We seldom see disabled people on the trails, so we do not need to worry about accessibility.” Other comments are just as self-fulfilling; few citizens with physical and cognitive challenges visit conservation areas or enjoy wilderness experiences because the impediments are too great. When

pressed to include our disabled citizens I have heard the question: “What do these people want from us?” Here are some ideas to consider.

Let me begin, though, with a different question: what should conservationists want from the disabled community? Simply put, their support – individuals who are exposed to nature are much more likely to become defenders of nature. Unfortunately, the conservation

and environmental communities are not sensitive enough to marginalized Canadians and do not appreciate the reservoir of support the disabled could bring to conservation campaigns.

There are many other reasons AWA should try to involve “these people” in the conservation movement and recreational activities. Many of these citizens will have low visitor impact on our natural areas. Furthermore, they can

be an inspiration to many Canadians. Ross Watson, the blind manager of William Watson Lodge in Kananaskis, climbs mountains (see the next story in this issue of the *Advocate*); Diane Bergeron, a legally-blind member of the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, recently sky-dived. These activities are often seen by the able-bodied as ones where the disabled overcome challenges but there are other dimensions important to conservation. For those with challenges, these extreme sports deliver a wild sense of freedom and a meaningful connection to nature. By relying and drawing on their "compensating" senses, they are able to interpret nature in ways that are refreshing and valuable to the rest of us. They can educate us to "see" nature in new ways.

Barriers to Participation

Do you remember if the last Annual General Meeting of your favourite society was held in a facility of universal design? Do you remember seeing visible minorities and other marginalized Canadians at the meeting? How many wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, and other aids replaced chairs at that event? Was sign language available? If those in attendance mirrored the percentages of Albertans with disabilities you should have expected to see between 10 and 15 percent of attendees to be challenged. That is the range for the disabled population in this province of nearly 3.7 million people.

Here are some useful ballpark figures for estimating the significance of the disabled community in Alberta. Obviously this list adds to more than the 10 to 15 percent so there is overlap between the groups.

- **Caregivers** – 600,000
- **Disabled Citizens** – 350,000
- **Seniors** – 350,000 (Some seniors

are very fit so I don't mean to suggest here that the label "disabled" applies strictly to this group. But mobility/vision difficulties are more significant among this group than among other elements of the population.)

If these seniors, disabled citizens and those who care for them (note to politicians - read voters here) are not represented in the conservation movement, then the efforts of conservation societies will become



Tay Hanson of B. C. Parks helped Danny Wein enjoy an outing at Mount Assiniboine with transport in a luggage cart because trails were too rugged for Danny's wheelchair. PHOTO: R. WEIN

increasingly irrelevant to a significant segment of Alberta society.

There are many social, cultural, and economic reasons why persons with challenges are excluded from the conservation community. For example, it is estimated that there are 53,000 Albertans (2.3 percent of the population) with significant vision loss (most over 65 years of age); 90 percent have some sight. How are these citizens welcomed? Another fact is that 75 percent of this population is unemployed. Unemployed citizens are excluded from many activities including visits to conservation areas because transportation and other costs put such outings beyond their financial reach. All citizens with challenges face similar impediments.

If people with challenges visit conservation areas, what information do they need to plan their trip and to make their visit safe, pleasant, and informative? They need to know if the facilities and other resources meet their

needs; without careful planning the trip can be a waste of money or worse. Even if the advertisements indicate that the natural area is accessible, this does not always deliver all of the information an individual needs. The disabled visitor needs many more details than the able-bodied person because older facilities were designed largely for able-bodied persons.

The internet is excellent if sufficient information is given in text, audio, and image forms. Basically the potential visitor wants to know the degree that accessibility standards have been implemented. Here are a few points to include on the conservation area website for each of the seasons:

- Location and availability of public transportation
- Features of interest in the region that are accessible
- Access to the parking area and trail heads
- Activities possible within the conservation area
- Accessibility of the main site and buildings
- Accessible features of bedrooms, dining areas, bath rooms
- Communication systems available
- Safety standards
- Qualifications and sensitivity of on-site staff
- Costs

Of these, accessibility to facilities is probably the most important issue and barrier. Cost is probably the second most important issue. People with a disability come from all types of backgrounds but frequently the family is saving for future needs and their families have high day-to-day expenses, especially when travelling. Many potential visitors with a disability require medical attendants, family members, or friends to accompany them. These persons may need additional accommodations. This list does not end with caregivers – animal companions are now accepted as necessary for quality experiences while travelling.

Think of All Four Seasons

There is no perfect time for disabled persons to visit conservation areas because each season brings different experiences and challenges. Much of the literature and conservation area experiences are oriented to summer activities. This is generally the holiday

period of primary and secondary students. Mosquitoes, poison ivy, and swimmer's itch may be a serious summer annoyance for people who do not have sufficient mobility to brush insects away or to avoid other annoyances. Autumn can be a special time of year for those with challenges because there are no biting flies after the first frost.

Winter is challenging because low temperatures may curtail activities of individuals with limited mobility and with poor blood circulation in their extremities. Low temperatures mean extra clothing and the need to have easy access to shelter. Winter is well recognized as the period of isolation in the urban environment and it follows that this is the most important time of the year to improve the quality-of-life of the disabled by getting outdoors. In winter, there is even greater isolation as the days get shorter, especially from October to December, when people may suffer from the "blues" or the more serious Seasonal Affective Disorder. The Christmas holiday period in the early winter may be when isolation and depression can be at their greatest. It seems reasonable that the conservation community should make opportunities for those with challenges to experience nature in the winter. This conjures up pictures of roasting turkeys for Christmas dinners in a quinzee! Disabled persons would say, "Why not?"

Winter travel to natural areas demands some other considerations and measures. When those with physical and cognitive challenges visit conservation areas, snow and ice must be cleared from parking lots, paths, ramps, and



A TrailRider pulled and pushed by six friends gave a disabled person an opportunity to enjoy the rugged trails of Ptarmigan Cirque in Kananaskis Country. PHOTO: R. WEIN

entranceways or special transporting equipment is needed. Universal access to facilities and trails is the key solution. This means ease of movement from the parking lot and sheltered entranceways. For buildings, accessibility demands adequate ramps, automatic door openers, and wide doors and hallways. For trails, universal access means more removal of impediments and more specialized equipment than for urban areas. In Alberta, particular concerns include movement over snow and ice, sand and mud, and puddles of water.

Special equipment can meet many of these challenges and provide a greater range of opportunities for our disabled citizens to access conservation areas year-round. Commercial medical rehabilitation enterprises are largely dedicated to

providing equipment for persons who need physical assistance in their home and in the the urban environment. This equipment has limitations for outdoor use. The development and use of specialized outdoor equipment is exciting and will bring back visitors year after year. Emergency parts and tools are especially important because repair shops may not be nearby. Back-up equipment provided at conservation areas could include wheelchairs with wide wheels to navigate soft terrain, accessible canoes and boats, electric golf carts, and bicycles/tricycles.

Innovative leaders and staff who are sensitive to the needs of disabled persons are valuable resources at a conservation area; they can make practical decisions that provide unique experiences or save the day if equipment breaks. Three examples from personal experience with equipment pop to mind. First, a quadriplegic wheel chair seat was necessary for a person to experience a sea kayak trip. The leaders found a way of wedging the special seat into the craft and a great afternoon experience resulted. In another case, a folding wheelchair could not be pulled and pushed over rough mountain trails. A two-wheeled aluminum luggage cart and camp furniture cushions saved the day on Mount Assiniboine British Columbia (see the accompanying photograph). Another example was to lash together two canoes with a wheelchair platform with tie-downs. My wheelchair-bound son experienced travel across a lake to



Lake Gloria at the foot of Mount Assiniboine PHOTO: R. WEIN

view a waterfowl nesting area for the first time since his motorcycle accident.

What could Alberta Wilderness Association members do to get more disabled citizens out into nature? Many of the solutions lie in adaptive equipment. Basically, the more rugged the terrain, the more specialized equipment is needed. Let me suggest a transportation unit that will enable disabled persons to see the remote areas of Alberta. For many years the British Columbia Mobility

Opportunities Society established by Sam Sullivan, former mayor of Vancouver, has produced TrailRiders. These special “wheelbarrows” have taken disabled persons to the mountains in British Columbia and across North America. Extreme events include trips up Mount Kilimanjaro and to the Mount Everest Base Camp. Disabled citizens would say: “Let’s go.”

I hope these ideas and observations will foster the belief among AWA

members that disabled persons can do almost anything – with a little help from their friends. 🐾

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Gary McPherson (1946-2010) who demonstrated to all of us that we should focus on ability rather than disability.

Ross Wein is Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta and President, Alberta Abilities Lodges Society



BLIND AMBITION: THE ROSS WATSON MESSAGE

By Ian Urquhart

Every Picture Does Not Tell the Whole Story

This story begins with a picture. The photograph is of three mountaineers, roped together, who are deliberately, methodically, working their way up a slope of hard-packed snow. Brilliant sunshine bathes their ascent. From the photograph it appears the slope they are ascending must be in the neighbourhood of 45 degrees; ice axes and ski poles are used to steady the climbers and assist them up the steep incline.

This picture falls far short of telling the whole story. It does not reveal the climbers’ goal – the west summit of Mount Logan, Canada’s highest mountain. At 19,551 feet (5,959 metres) Logan is the crown of Kluane National Park in the southwestern Yukon; only Alaska’s Mount McKinley (or Denali, “the Great One,” in the Athabaskan language) is higher in North America.

It also does not disclose that, during the 19 days in May 2000 this climbing team took to reach the summit, the climbers were buffeted by 60 kilometre per hour winds and endured overnight temperatures of minus 35 degrees Celsius. Nor does the photograph tell you that, as relatively pleasant as I thought it would be to climb in brilliant sunshine, climbers actually cook in that sunshine.

What looks comfortable to the untrained eye actually depicts circumstances where climbers could suffer from heat exhaustion.

But the most important omission concerns the second climber in the trio. He is blind. He is Ross Watson, manager of the William Watson Lodge in Kananaskis Country and a Cochrane town councilor. Another Ross, the author of the previous article in this issue of the *Advocate*, calls him a “very special person.” When I sat down with Ross over coffee and Lindsey tarts in Cochrane it was clear why Ross Wein complimented him so.

From Brick Walls to Rock Walls

A pellet gun accident robbed Ross of the sight in his right eye when he was ten years old; complications from that accident left him totally blind two years later. The practice then, as told on Ross’s website (rosswatsonspeaker.com), was to send blind children to residential schools. So Ross left Calmar for Vancouver. At the age of sixteen one of the school’s supervisors encouraged Ross to enroll in a climbing club. He tried; the club turned him down.

Ross corrected me when I asked why he refused to accept that verdict. He, when he was a teenager and a young adult, did accept it; he accepted the belief

that his blindness meant that, a personal ambition such as climbing, could not be realized. “At that time I accepted it,” he said, “because you hit a brick wall and you walk away. That’s it.” For seven years he kept his ambition to climb in a drawer. Then, during his university years, he tried again. He phoned a climbing school in Colorado and was told that, while the instructors had no problems working with a blind person, the school felt that perhaps its “normal” clients who had paid a hefty fee for the course would object. Again, Ross had hit a brick wall.

Denied the opportunities these more formal routes would have offered him Ross only took his first hiking and climbing steps when he moved to the mountains. There he found like-minded, open-minded, souls who did not view blindness, by definition, as fatal to his ambitions. They offered him what clubs and schools had not to that point in time – opportunity.

In May 2001, almost one year to the day after Ross and his team stood atop Mount Logan, the American Eric Weihenmayer became the first blind person to reach the summit of Mount Everest. Weihenmayer’s triumph spoke emphatically to the importance of opportunity. “When he (Weihenmayer) was sixteen,” Ross told me, “he went to a school where climbing was a mandatory

part of the curriculum. When I was sixteen I was denied the opportunity.... The key message there is opportunity. Given the opportunity blind mountain climbers would not be rare.”

Social attitudes and the policies and practices they inspire may transform brick walls into rock walls; too often in our past, however, they have reinforced them. Ross and I agree on the point that Canada has a long way to go when it comes to offering the disabled the same recreational opportunities other groups receive. But he is optimistic: “I have seen a marked shift in society for the better and government. We’re not there but it doesn’t mean that we’re not going there.”

A Different View From the Top

The last hike I took with my father was in the Valhalla Ranges of B.C.’s Selkirk Mountains. The view from our camp at Gwillim Lakes was exceptional. To the southeast loomed Asgard, Gimli, Midgard and the other peaks of the Devil’s Range. To the north were Lucifer and Bor. To the south a carpet of smaller mountains stretched uninterrupted to the end of the horizon. Undoubtedly some are drawn to hike to high elevations or climb mountains because of the “view from the top” those excursions allow. That, and the opportunity to be together in the outdoors, was why Dad and I chose to go to the Valhallas.

Obviously, Ross cannot share the view we enjoyed. Why, then, climb at all? Remoteness is part of his answer. Through his hard work on a mountain Ross knows he stands where few other people ever have; he feels that experience also. That combination of knowledge and feeling creates a personal, powerful sense of achievement. “It is an innate and visceral feeling of being out in the wilderness that you really only gain when you have worked hard to be there... It really becomes something very visceral, very spiritual.”

This amalgam of knowledge and feeling, most importantly perhaps, is not fleeting. Choosing his words carefully Ross explained: “They create a feeling that doesn’t just last a minute. It actually does something for you that you can call on in other times of your life... The high points in your life... take you across the long stretches of... disappointing times.” Climbing is one route Ross takes to

produce something we all should seek – a sense of self-achievement and self-worth able to sustain us for long periods of time.

Teacher?

Ross is too modest to claim he teaches either other climbers or people like me through his alpine experiences. Underline “too modest.” Especially on longer climbing adventures some of his fellow climbers have suggested they start to “see” the mountain differently when they climb with Ross. “They start,” he offers, “to experience the same thing I do.” His words underline sight’s great power as a means of interpreting our surroundings. As such it often overwhelms or displaces our other senses and the emotions, reactions and thoughts those senses inspire. “If you are around a person that’s blind for a long length of time when you’re on the mountain it isn’t that something new is happening to you it’s just that you actually close your eyes and think about it... That’s what I think. I think that vision, in essence, becomes this powerful medium that overrides the other emotions... not that they’re not there, it’s just that it overrides them.”

He tells me that, when it comes to wilderness, we must “feel it, touch it” in order to get the maximum experience possible. He strengthens his point by talking about how some park interpretation programs will take people out on night hikes, hikes that should give them a very different understanding of the landscape they may know very well in the daylight. There is far more to Mother Nature than our customary sensory patterns of interacting with Her tell us.

When we talk more generally about creating opportunities for disabled people to get into nature for recreation, a subject Ross knows intimately given his managerial responsibilities at William Watson Lodge, social justice themes (justice with respect to subjects such as opportunities and privileges) loom large. Again, his words have much to teach us and those who govern on our behalf.

When it comes to parks and recreation he convinced me we have a very static, as opposed to dynamic, perspective on how we imagine the public and what we consequently offer the citizenry. We need to build facilities for everyone, not just able-bodied thirty-something fellows with rippling biceps, and build them, in

Ross’s words, “for the whole scope of their lives.”

He also argued that, in my words – not his, we treat the outdoor recreation interests of the disabled like many would treat a homeless beggar in Edmonton or Calgary – with little sympathy and even less coin. Alberta subsidizes “normal” climbers and hikers (why shouldn’t we be even more generous to them, I wonder, given how we cater financially to petroleum in Alberta). His message though is less confrontational than mine. He just wants equality between the “normal” – the vast majority of hikers, climbers and campers we see in the outdoors – and the disabled. He just wants to silence remarks such as “isn’t it nice that we are doing this for the disabled” when a special commitment to the disabled is made or a subsidized facility such as William Watson Lodge is created. Thirteen percent of our fellow citizens in Alberta have disabilities. Is anywhere near thirteen percent of provincial spending devoted to meeting the needs of that community? When it comes to accessibility to outdoor environments do we do enough?

Alberta – all governments in Canada for that matter – have more than enough information to make those environments accessible; sadly those governments and arguably those who elect them just do not have the heart to respect those needs.

Ross knows all too well, as the manager of William Watson Lodge, just how great the demand is for the services the lodge offers to the disabled and seniors. They are, to put it mildly, oversubscribed. When it comes to booking accommodation at the lodge for July and August the entire facility is completely booked within the first three hours they accept telephone reservations. June and September are slower months – the facility is not booked completely until the end of the first day reservations may be made.

This situation harkens back to an earlier observation – government could certainly do more. But, on this issue, Alberta is a leader among laggards. No other province has a facility like William Watson Lodge. We lead the country when it comes to providing this type of facility for the disabled and the success of the lodge fuels the interest in and demand for a second one. Some have suggested that Lakeland would be a strong candidate for

William Watson Lodge North. Is it too much to hope for that our government might regard it as imperative to act on this interest and demand?

Looking Ahead

Having been too often disappointed in the past by our provincial government I prefer to look ahead and anticipate more likely outcomes. This summer will see Ross headed back to climb the peaks he loves. His ambition is to climb the

ten highest mountains in the Canadian Rockies. Logistical problems and bad weather have frustrated three previous attempts to scale Mount Robson. And, to avoid a dangerous nighttime descent, his party turned back from a push to the summit of Mount Temple when it was within their reach. The last week of July will see Ross and three other climbers leave the relative comfort of the Hind Hut before dawn to try to reach the summit of Mount Assiniboine. At just over 3,600

metres Assiniboine is regarded widely as the “Matterhorn of the Rockies.” I wish Ross and his fellow climbers the very best in this summer’s attempt on Assiniboine. As I imagine him on the top of the summit near the end of July I hear him saying the words he said to me over coffee and Lindsey tarts at his dining room table: “This makes everything worthwhile...and you are willing to take on more.” 🍷



NORTH AMERICA’S ORIGINAL FREQUENT FLIERS

By Cleve Wershler

To celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day, April 22, 2010, the American Consulate hosted a video conference for several centres across Canada, including Calgary, to view a power point presentation on migratory birds entitled Bird Migration Flyways Across North America by Dr. Gary Langham, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon California. Participants included representatives from a variety of interest groups. I attended on behalf of AWA. A discussion followed the presentation with participants invited to ask questions and share observations. The following is a summary of the presentation as well as related interesting information.

Bird migration is an ideal symbol for Earth Day since birds are familiar to so many of us, they are indicators of environmental health, and their predictable long distance flights provide an important link across numerous countries and jurisdictions in the Americas.

Migration is related primarily to the scarcity and abundance of food and is typically triggered by day length and weather. A classic example of this is the extreme fluctuation in food associated with seasonal productivity in the northern part of our continent – most bird species flee this region when food is scarce in winter, only to return to feast during the extraordinary peak in insect life in summer. The numerous species that make



A “grain” of sanderlings. The sanderling is a complete migrant that breeds in the High Arctic. It travels between 3,000 and 10,000 kilometres from those breeding grounds to its wintering grounds. PHOTO: C. WALLIS

this biannual journey, one fraught with high-energy cost and risk of mortality, are driven by the need for food and reproduction.

Three basic migration strategies exist for North American birds. Complete migration involves all individuals leaving the breeding grounds after the young have grown. Most of these species breed in north temperate climates and many (for example, the stilt sandpiper) travel incredibly long distances between breeding and non-breeding habitats. Partial migration involves seasonal movement of some, but not all, individuals of a species (for example, the red-tailed hawk) away from a breeding area and there is some overlap between breeding and non-breeding areas. Irruptive migration is not seasonally or geographically predictable and the numbers of migrants and the distances they travel also vary. Included in this category are food specialists (for example, white-winged crossbills that depend on conifer cone crops) that depart

the boreal forest for more southerly areas when a major food item becomes scarce.

Among the variety of methods researchers employ to study bird migration are banding programs, radar, and radio-telemetry. An additional source of information that has grown immensely since 1900 is citizen science – bird counts by amateur observers.

The routes of migrating birds in North America can be divided into four generalized flyways—the Atlantic, Mississippi, Central and Pacific. While these flyways tend to be oriented north-south and follow major topographic features such as coastlines, their boundaries are often poorly defined. In the Panama region, portions of all four flyways merge into one.

The diversity of bird species displays astonishing variability in distance covered during migration and in the time taken to complete it. Speeds vary from 15 to 23 km/hr for blackpoll warblers to 28 to 50 km/hr for common loons. Several hummingbird species fly

500 km non-stop over the Gulf of Mexico. Some blackpoll warblers fly 8,000 km from their Canadian breeding grounds to winter habitat in South America; their journey includes 88 hours/3,500 km of constant flight. Red knots cover more than 11,000 km between their Arctic breeding range and Argentinian winter range with several feeding stopovers. The most famous of these stops is Delaware Bay where birds gorge on horseshoe crab eggs on their return journey to Canada.

Sufficient fuel, in the form of body fat, is critical, especially for long-distance migrants. Many species double their body fat prior to migration. In the red knot, body fat fluctuates from a high of 66 percent at the beginning of the journey to a low of 3 percent at the end. At Delaware Bay, red knots must increase their body fat in two weeks by 60 percent prior to completing their northward flight. This illustrates the importance for conservation of maintaining key habitats along migration routes.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of

migration is how birds navigate. Diurnal migrants, including birds of prey and cranes, and nocturnal migrants, including most songbirds, utilize a wide variety and combinations of techniques, including sun position, spatial relationships among star constellations, odours carried on the wind, magnetic fields and internal compasses. While the sun is an important cue for diurnal migrants even nocturnal migrants, many of which take off at twilight, appear to use the sun for navigation.

The major threats to migratory birds are related to habitat loss (including breeding, migratory and wintering habitat) and climate change. Conservation programs must address all aspects of a species' habitat and this requires international cooperation. It is noteworthy that many migratory species that breed in Canada spend a greater part of the year in other countries. For example, a number of the colourful wood warblers we treasure as our own spend more than twice as much time in their tropical wintering habitat than in their

boreal breeding habitat.

An estimated five billion birds – 30 percent of our land birds, 40 percent of our waterfowl, and 30 percent of our shorebirds – migrate to the boreal forest region of Canada and Alaska to nest. This, combined with declines in species and loss of habitats, has been instrumental in the formation of the Boreal Songbird Initiative, a non-profit effort dedicated to outreach and education on the importance of the boreal forest region to North America's birds, other wildlife, and the global environment. Other examples of international programs dedicated to the conservation of migratory birds include Partners in Flight and Important Bird Areas of the Americas.

One of the challenges in effective bird and habitat conservation is how to engage the public and broaden the audience and support for these programs. Involving youth will be a key component in the success of future strategies.

Cleve Wershler is the owner of Sweetgrass Consultants and a long-time supporter of AWA.



CLIMB AND RUN FOR WILDERNESS 2010

By Christyann Olson, AWA Executive Director



AWA's annual Climb and Run for Wilderness held at the Calgary Tower is a signature event devoted to increasing public awareness of wilderness, wildlife and wild water issues in Alberta. This event combines learning opportunities, athletic challenges (the Tower's 802 stairs!), and fundraising for AWA. This year our participants ranged in age from two to 93! A family focus, a corporate challenge, a simply "fun time"

element plus a serious opportunity to test one's athleticism combine to make this an exceptional Earth Day event.

We believe this is the best Earth Day event in western Canada. This year we attracted more than 1,500 individual participants, volunteers, entertainers and guests. Participants came from as far away as Tampa, Florida to Vancouver, B. C.

It was a highly successful day blessed by great weather and very happy and generous people. Energetic individual fundraisers plus generous corporate sponsors generated more than \$119,000 for wilderness conservation. The Climb and Run for Wilderness has raised nearly \$1.5 million for wilderness conservation over the last 19 years.



And they are off! PHOTO: D. OLSON

THE 8TH URBAN RUN FOR WILDERNESS

Gord's Running Store sponsors and helps make this run such a great event each year. This was our 8th annual run; racers run at street level for 1 km then sprint up the 802 stairs of the tower. Cuauhti Olguin was the fastest male runner (9 min., 32 sec.) and Syl Corbett was the fastest female runner (9 min., 52 sec.). Syl is Canada's snowshoe champion and more... After running

the race, she represented Planet Foods, providing samples of Ultima and Honey Stingers throughout the event. Our Oldest Runner again this year was 78 year old Nessie Hollicky. She is a real inspiration to all of us (not least because her time this year of 16 min., 44 sec. was more than a minute faster than her time last year!).

CORPORATE TEAM CHALLENGE

After five hours of repeated climbs up the 802 stairs, the field was dominated by QuIC Technologies, the QuIC Pikas: Ammon Piepgrass, Chuck Herr, Alex Tikhonov, Mike Cullingham combined their athletic abilities for an amazing 91 climbs. A single climb involves more than just the 802 stairs up; there is a short course that takes the athletes outside the tower and through the mall before they begin their next ascent. QuIC Technologies was a new sponsor of the event this year and their four teams and sponsorship were especially appreciated. Their red shirts, stood out as beacons

of excellence as they ran the stairs, mingled in the crowds and joined in the awards ceremonies. Shell Canada's five corporate teams provided QuIC with some healthy competition. Shell Canada is the Climb and Run for Wilderness's Platinum Sponsor, bringing to this event recognition of the work we do together to ensure the highest possible standards are met when operating in our wild spaces. Suncor Energy was a new corporate sponsor this year and continued the support we have received in the past from Petro-Canada.



QuIC on the run PHOTO: D. OLSON

INDIVIDUAL CLIMB CHALLENGE



Calgary firefighters at the start of their climb PHOTO: D. OLSON

The amazing diversity of individuals climbing the tower's 802 stairs this year included everyone from highly trained and fit athletes to participants with handicaps who took on the challenge and made it to the top. Those who help with handicaps were there too, and two hearing dogs were part of the crowd in the stairwells. We are always thrilled to see our Calgary firefighters take on the challenge, and this year two teams of

four from two different stations competed with each other and climbed the stairs in full gear with masks and tanks. Everyone was impressed to see them out and demonstrate their fitness and ability to defend Calgarians against fires. Next year I'm sure the challenge these eight made will have even more firefighters out to see if they can better the mark established this year – they climbed the Tower in full gear in less than 11 minutes!

This year's individual winners, by age category, were:

Most Climbs Adult

Male:

Eldon Karabonik (23 climbs)

Nic Ranicar (23 climbs)

Most Climbs Adult

Female:

Veronica Redway (22 climbs)

Most Climbs Youth 15-18

Male:

Gareth Hadfield (23 climbs)

Most Climbs Youth 15-18

Female:

Sarah Farley (10 climbs)

Most Climbs Youth 14 and under

Male:

Andrew Gillis (16 climbs)

Most Climbs Youth 14 and under

Female:

Mahni Bruce (11 climbs)

Oldest Climber

Male:

Richard Guy (93 years)

Oldest Climber

Female:

Louise Guy (91 years)

Youngest Climber:

Naia Lee (2 years)



Phyllis Hart with Louise Guy and Nessie Hollicky, incredible seniors inspiring all of us to do more. PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

PHYLLIS HART AND RICHARD GUY AWARDS

Last year, in recognition of two incredible seniors who continue to inspire us year after year, we began two special prizes for those who take on the challenge in their golden years.

Phyllis Hart Award for Most Climbs Senior 75 and over – Female: Louise Guy (91 years: 2 climbs), with a consolation prize given to Nessie Hollicky who also climbed twice after completing the race earlier in the day.

Richard Guy Award for Most Climbs Senior 75 and over – Male: Bob McPherson (80 years: 3 climbs)

WARD NEALE MEMORIAL AWARD



Three generations on the stairs; Abigail and Heather Hadden and Christyann Olson made the climb together. PHOTO: T. AMIRTHANLINGAM

Each year we recognize outstanding fundraisers and we added a new category this year, as we had our first babe in a backpack raising funds. The winners this year are truly outstanding supporters. Thanks to everyone who raised funds and especially to these winners. David Hockey received the award for the top individual fundraiser over \$2,700. He raised an impressive \$2,865. Once again the Overend family (Bill, Patti, Sam, and Alex) made a tremendous financial contribution to the Climb. They were our top fundraising family and raised \$6,050. Abigail Hadden claimed the distinction of being the “Babe in a Backpack” who

raised the most money (\$1,000). What we can learn from our children... Other top individuals and teams were recognized at our awards ceremony.

The Team Spirit Award went to Community Natural Foods' Green Lightning Team: Ligia Hernandez-Portal, John Daly, Cam Harper, and Jackie Trent.

This year's Outstanding Family Award went to Gord, Cathy, Ailsa and Gareth Hobbins for their tremendous family support of our event. They have climbed together as a family for numerous years, raising funds to support AWA's work.



Sylvie Tran, Foothills Development Manager, Shell Canada brought greetings to the crowd from Shell Canada our Platinum Sponsor.

PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM



PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

The Will Farrington Memorial Prize for Outstanding Volunteer went to Margaret Main for her untiring efforts with our mural competition and the support she provides for months in advance with the organizing and execution required for this event.



PHOTO: D. OLSON

VOLUNTEERS

All of the 170 volunteers who make this event happen deserve our thanks and recognition; we offer our sincere thanks to each and every one of you! This year we also honoured new volunteers, Ali and Jordan Tailfeathers for their efforts with our mascot, as well as Andrew Wray and Colleen Cole for their ongoing support and years of working with volunteer

performers to make our entertainment line-up a success. Our photographers this year, Kevin Mihalcheon, Dan Olson and Thushyanthan Amirthalingam captured the day for us and if you check out our websites www.ClimbForWilderness.ca and The-Bit Photography Ltd. www.the-bit.org you will have a chance to see even more of the great shots from that day.

MURAL PAINTING COMPETITION

In the month prior to the climb day we hold a Mural Painting Competition that has produced an amazing gallery of murals on the walls of the stairwell. With almost 100 murals featuring wildlife, wilderness and wild water, the opportunity for artists to showcase their talents and for climbers to feel refreshed and inspired, the mural competition yields one of the signatures of the Climb and Run for Wilderness. The Tallest Gallery in the West, or perhaps anywhere, is a legacy to all for years to come, and we sincerely appreciate the ongoing support we receive from Aspen Properties and the Calgary Tower for the gallery and the Climb and Run for Wilderness. The mural competition winners will be featured throughout the next issue of the *Wild Lands Advocate*.

The partnership we have with Aspen Properties makes this event possible. The help we receive from our 22 corporate sponsors and the more than 3,000 supporters of the climbers, the displays, the volunteers, the staff and the work of Alberta Wilderness Association, means we can continue our efforts defending Wild Alberta and the critical habitat that species like grizzly bears need to be safe and healthy in our wild lands. Thank you to all those who made April 17, 2010 an amazing day! We are already planning for our 20th Earth Day event for April 23, 2011 and we hope to see you there.



PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

WILD ALBERTA EXPO

This year 19 conservation groups and vendors set up displays throughout the Calgary Tower mall to help participants learn about their work and/or their environmentally focussed products. Peter Sherrington awarded the **Barbara Sherrington Memorial prize for the best display** to the Weaselhead Preservation Society.

Our awards ceremony and the prizes we give to individuals depend on the generosity of individuals and sponsors. This year Gord's Running Store, Brooks, Mountain Equipment Coop, MLA Dave Rodney, Diane Mihalcheon, Dan Muhlback, Cheryl Stewart, IMPACT, Planet Foods and Aurum Lodge all contributed to make sure we had an amazing prize inventory for winners. Throughout the day Loblaws provided bottled water, bananas and apples and Tim Hortons (the 32nd avenue N.E. location) had fresh coffee and donuts for early morning treats. Calgary Co-op provided apples and oranges to support our volunteers.



Carolyn Campbell addressing participants at the “After Copenhagen” climate change conference. PHOTO: D. MARSHALL

Factoring climate change into managing river water withdrawals

AWA was invited to present on an innovative aspect of Alberta watershed planning at an international conference in April 2010. “After Copenhagen: Collaborative Responses to Climate Change” was hosted by the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. The conference’s goal was to connect scientific research with public policy options and educational approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change. This was the first conference in what is envisaged as a biennial global climate forum between Texas and Alberta.

The topic of AWA’s presentation was how climate change-affected river flow forecasts were incorporated into the lower Athabasca River water management framework process. As noted in previous *Wild Lands Advocate* issues (December 2008 and April 2010), AWA was a member of a multi-stakeholder committee that issued both consensus and non-consensus recommendations in February 2010 on a river water withdrawal management framework for the lower Athabasca River. Its mandate was to examine social, environmental and economic impacts of various sets of rules governing river water withdrawals by oil sands mining projects and develop recommendations for federal and provincial regulators. Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Alberta Environment

will draft regulations and, informed by First Nations and public consultation in 2010, will implement regulations governing river water withdrawals in early 2011.

The environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS) on the committee, led by World Wildlife Fund Canada representatives, argued that climate change-affected river flow projections, not just 1957-2007 historic flow data, should be used in modeling water withdrawal impacts. The ENGOS were concerned that a 2007 study by D.W. Schindler, W.F. Donahue and John P. Thompson projected dramatic declines in future summer and winter Athabasca River flow volumes by projecting forward the trend of actual flow measurements since 1970. The 1957-2007 data mask the potential future importance of this recent trend. The ENGOS believed that, in the interests of healthy aquatic ecosystems, any river water management rules had to be robust in the face of potential climate change-affected flows at least out to the 2040 planning horizon of these recommendations. Other stakeholders were highly critical of simply extrapolating forward a 30 or 50-year trend analysis.

The solution the committee arrived at was to create a small sub-group of government, industry, First Nations and ENGO representatives to examine the issue; all sub-group members co-authored the ensuing paper. This sub-group reviewed recent global circulation model

(GCM)-based forecasts of Athabasca River flows. It commissioned two new reports that analyzed 100-year flow trends upstream and generated 50-year and 30-year lower Athabasca River flow trend analyses. The sub-group summarized a range of flow scenarios out to the year 2039, expressed as percentage change of both summer and winter average river flows. Then the main committee agreed to adjust the 50-year historic data of winter and summer flows with percentage changes found in five scenarios. The result was a range of GCM and trend analyses. All performance measures, including modeled impacts to fish habitat, river navigation and water storage costs, were re-run with the adjusted river flow data. In the main committee’s final report, key water withdrawal rule sets were analyzed for the robustness of their performance for mid-range GCM and 50-year trend scenario.

AWA recounted this process at the Texas conference, praising the inclusive and transparent approach. AWA also recommended that consideration of climate change-affected river flow scenarios be built upfront into other watershed management processes in Alberta and elsewhere. We hope the Alberta government takes a lead in replicating this approach in regional watershed and land use planning.

- Carolyn Campbell

An Alberta Context for the BP “Spill?”

As an English bulldog I have trouble wrapping my rather large head around the magnitude of the ecological disaster the media tells me is taking place in the Gulf of Mexico. CNN told me this disaster resulted from the tragic explosion and sinking of the Deepwater Horizon offshore oil platform. A good friend of my master invited him to check out the following website <http://www.ifitwasmyhome.com/> You might want to visit it too. Type in a place name to get an appreciation of what all this “freed” oil in the Gulf would look like if we smeared it across a place you care about. I hail from Innisfail. My jaw dropped when I pawed in the town’s name on my laptop to place the centre of this eruption there. This eruption would contaminate the land from Edmonton to Calgary and from Highway 36 in the east to well inside Banff National Park. For a few seconds that image led me to think less about my next bowl of kibble and more about the necessity of what some in the petroleum industry might regard as a four-letter word – regulation. Should Alberta’s bulldogs be concerned about how our government regulates oil and gas? I dunno...those few seconds have passed and all I can see now is the treat the Editor is offering me to get off this soapbox.

- Meatball

Regional Watershed Planning Update

Regional integrated watershed management planning is underway across several river basins in Alberta. Several Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs) have recently issued State of the Watershed reports based on a compilation of best available data and are proceeding to develop management plans. There is an extra impetus as provincial Land-Use Secretariat and Alberta Environment officials are encouraging WPACs to develop detailed management plans to help inform regional land-use planning.

AWA has been deeply involved in Bow River basin watershed management planning. AWA was on the Steering Committee for the Bow River Basin Council (BRBC) that developed a Phase 1 management plan focused on water quality objectives. BRBC and AWA were two of the key partners that organized

the “Managing the Commons: Our Place in the Headwaters” workshops in 2008 and 2009. AWA also was active on the BRBC strategic planning committee that suggested Phase 2 focus on land use with an emphasis on headwaters, wetlands and riparian areas. We will stay engaged as we see progress reports for Phase 1 and as planning for Phase 2 proceeds later in 2010.

AWA attended the unveiling of the Oldman Watershed Council’s State of the Watershed report in April. One key issue we will monitor is how watershed planning will influence forestry planning decisions. A significant concern with the report is the data gaps authors identified; this holds for “State of” reports in other watersheds too. In the case of the Oldman, AWA is concerned that data gaps may have given a more favourable rating to the headwaters region historically than may be the case in 2010. A draft plan for the C5 forestry area (extending from the south Kananaskis Country down to Waterton Lakes National Park) was suspended in 2006 pending the release of this State of the Watershed report. Whether a final forestry plan actually reflects updated watershed concerns remains to be seen. In a recent meeting with AWA, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development Minister Mel Knight confirmed that the Oldman report would be considered by the South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council. But he added that no further consideration of the C5 region forestry plan will occur before the South Saskatchewan regional land use plan is finished – which in AWA’s view is at least two years off.

AWA recently became involved in Red Deer River regional watershed planning. The Red Deer River Watershed Alliance (RDRWA) released its State of the Watershed report last year and its Board approved an integrated watershed management planning process in March 2010. AWA is a member of the newly formed Technical Advisory Committee that will advise RDRWA and its community stakeholders on the most urgent data gaps to close, and on targets and thresholds for priority indicators. AWA, in collaboration with other advisors, will offer expertise on wildlife and ecosystem goods and services issues.

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA), having completed

its State of the Watershed report several years ago, has commissioned many other thorough reports analyzing various water supply, demand and quality issues. NSWA is now drafting its first watershed management plan and is engaged in many outreach activities, including fostering awareness and discussing key vulnerability issues for the health of the watershed. AWA’s Executive Director, Christyann Olson, attended an NSWA headwaters communities meeting in Drayton Valley to ensure healthy headwaters ecosystem perspectives were well represented. At NSWA’s March 2010 conference, Carolyn Campbell presented highlights from the ‘Our Place in the Headwaters’ workshops and gave an overview of key findings and recommendations from AWA’s Bighorn recreational trail monitoring project. Carolyn will also give this presentation in June 2010 to the Red Deer regional chapter of the Canadian Institute of Planners.

Regional watershed planning ideally is a multi-stakeholder collaborative process that by its nature is lengthy and uncertain. With increasing public awareness about the links between land use practices and water abundance and quality, and with committed local stewardship, regional watershed planning offers an excellent opportunity now for conservation initiatives on river corridor and aquatic ecosystem habitat crucial to so much of Alberta’s wildlife.

- Carolyn Campbell

It’s Official - Grizzlies are “Threatened:” A Reason to Celebrate?

The Alberta government response to the report *Grizzly Challenge: Ensuring a Future for Alberta’s Grizzlies* was surprisingly quick. Less than a week after environmental groups published the report news came in that grizzly bears had finally been designated a ‘threatened’ species in Alberta. Eight years after government scientists had first recommended such a designation – and who knows how many years after the population began to decline – the recommendation was finally enacted.

AWA and other groups were quick to congratulate Minister of Sustainable Resource Development, Mel Knight, on a bold decision. Now that the government is finally acknowledging that grizzly bears are in trouble and need help, the

stage is set for a renewed commitment to recovery actions. The past eight years have seen several preparatory steps towards recovering bears: a recovery team produced a recovery plan, a state-of-the-art five-year population survey was conducted, detailed maps of grizzly habitat were drawn, and now the government official threatened designation. But, without further action, none of these steps actually benefits grizzly bears.

The message is crystal clear that grizzlies need more secure habitat and less motorized access into core habitat. Whether the new threatened designation is a sign the government is finally ready to begin addressing this issue remains to be seen. The relevant legislation – *Alberta's Wildlife Act* – is extremely vague (see Shaun Fluker's article in the April 2010 *Advocate*) and whether the government will do anything more than it has done is open to debate. This will

be a hollow victory if threatened status is nothing more than a token gesture and it remains business as usual in grizzly habitat. AWA and other ENGOs will work hard to hold the government's feet to the fire to ensure that grizzlies benefit from the long drawn-out recovery process. To help keep the pressure on to protect grizzly bear habitat visit www.savethegrizzly.ca and the satirical website www.nomoregrizzlies.com
- Nigel Douglas

THINKING ABOUT NEW GEAR? HERE ARE SOME IDEAS

By Jennifer Douglas



Trekking poles make river crossings safer, particularly when you are weighed down with a heavy pack. Hikers on AWA's 2009 White Goat backpack trip make their way across the Brazeau River. PHOTO: N. DOUGLAS

Trekking Poles

If you have never thought of using trekking poles before they are well worth considering if you hike a lot. These expandable poles are a godsend for hiking in Alberta's foothills and mountains. However young, old, fit or unfit you are they will make your day more comfortable, especially on your knees going downhill. You may think you haven't got bad knees yet; using hiking poles will postpone the day when you do. When you don't want to hike with them they tie neatly on to your backpack.

There are many types available: good pairs tend to start around \$60. A good pair will have a comfortable handle that fits your hand neatly; it will have easy to use but sturdy mechanisms for expanding and contracting as well as a small "scree basket" at the bottom to stop your pole tips from disappearing between cracks in rocks.

Many poles are referred to as "compact." These are designed for women having a smaller handgrip and

extend to a slightly shorter length. When shopping you will see many features advertised – titanium, airlock, elliptical shape. Many of these features are very nice to have but they are not necessary for the average hiker and they do cost more.

Hiking Shoes

Many of us have been using heavy-duty leather backpacking boots for a long time. I always have sworn by them but recently have realized that, for day hikes, when you are not staggering along under an enormous weight, a much lighter shoe is more comfortable and still provides all the support you need. Conventional wisdom tells us that a pound (in weight) on your feet is equivalent to 6.4 pounds on your back.

There are many light hiking shoes available in outdoor and sport shops. *Keen* have a very good selection: you can choose them light and breathable for hot weather, or with a waterproof, breathable membrane for wet conditions. Be cautious though when choosing a light hiker as some of them do not offer as much support as others. To test the shoe, grip the heel and the toe and give it a good twist. If it is fairly stiff, this is good. Most ankle support comes from the sole of the shoe, so you don't necessarily always need a high ankle boot unless this style makes you feel more comfortable.

My favourite footwear option for light hiking is my *Salomon* trail runners. These are designed for off-road runners and, in my experience, give you the required support and cushioning for moving rapidly over long distances and rough terrain. They are lightweight, super

comfortable and very supportive over a long day. Again, they are available with either mesh or waterproof breathable membranes. *Montrail* and *La Sportiva* also make excellent trail runners. I started wearing these last season and now am a convert: I have even used the waterproof breathable ones for snowshoeing! However, don't forget that these light shoes are not suitable for hiking with a heavy overnight pack.

Carrying your water

Many readers will have seen runners, cyclists, and hikers with a tube snaking over their shoulder. This likely comes from a specially designed water reservoir that fits neatly in their backpack. I thought these were a bit of a gimmick until I actually tried one. The convenience of being able to drink while you walk, without having to stop and take off your backpack, is immeasurable. It is easy to set off up a steep hill on a hot sunny day and, despite being super thirsty, decide to keep your rhythm going and not stop for a drink until the top. This means, of course, that for half your climb you are probably dehydrated. Being able to drink while you move really puts an end to this. Not having to remove your pack every time you need a drink means you are far more likely to keep yourself hydrated throughout the day. They are also much lighter than a traditional plastic or metal water bottle.

While shopping for one, look out for a brand and style that is easy to clean. Ones with ziplock type openings are much more convenient to use than ones with a screw cap. *Platypus* and *The Source* are good brands.

Clothing: Base Layers and Outer Layers

Having learned over the years that we are not supposed to wear cotton I have been wearing base layers and T-shirts made of man-made fibres for several years. While these are comfortable, cool and quick-drying they develop, over time, an indelible odour. You can combat this by using Nikwax base layer wash; it is designed to eliminate such odours. However, this year I will slowly begin to replace my man-made fibre base layers with merino wool. This wool is very breathable, soft and expensive; but I feel it is worth it.

This year I also will be buying a new outer shell jacket. I always will carry a lightweight waterproof breathable jacket “just in case.” But, unless it is really raining hard, I find these too “rusty” and uncomfortable so I am going to invest in a “soft shell.” These jackets range from

super lightweight to fleece-lined winter weight and for most conditions make an excellent outer shell. They are windproof and water-resistant. They are made of super tough fabric so you really have to try hard to rip them. They are much more comfortable than a waterproof jacket and much quieter. Good brands include *Mountain Equipment Coop* (MEC) and *Patagonia*.

When buying new gear please always think of the impact you are having on the environment. You can check out the brand by carrying out research online and find out what the companies’ environmental and social policies are. *MEC*, of course, has excellent environmental and social policies which are explained in detail on their website – www.mec.ca. Also, they are members of “One Percent for the Planet,” which means one percent of their sales goes to environmental causes worldwide. *Patagonia* also has

an excellent environmental record and is also a member of “One Percent for the Planet.”

Remember the three Rs: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Do you really need something new? Can your old item be reused – for example can it be donated to a charity? Or can your old gear be recycled in any way? Be mindful when putting things in the garbage: try to bear in mind what will happen to it when your garbage is collected and don’t let out-of-sight be out-of-mind. Don’t forget to recycle or reuse your packaging, and take a bag with you to put your new items in (Canadians use 50 million disposable shopping bags a week: let’s help lower that number)! 🍷

- Jennifer Douglas has worked at Mountain Equipment Coop for the last two years and loves gear!

PHOTOGRAPHY IDEAS

It does not take long for anyone involved with AWA to appreciate how important volunteers are to our organization’s accomplishments. This section on photography (not to mention this issue’s cover photo by Derald Lobay and last year’s June cover photo and article by Ray Rasmussen) could not have been compiled without the generous contributions members of Images Alberta Camera Club made to AWA (see the club’s website www.imagesalberta.ca).

Mufty Mathewson was the inspiration behind a 2009 photography project in Lakeland. Mufty, Shirley Coulson, and Gerry Wirun spent many hours in different seasons photographing there. The result of Mufty’s inspiration is an impressive photographic record of Lakeland’s marvelous natural assets. AWA’s Carolyn Campbell has been using those magnificent visual representations of the area in her efforts to champion the need for increased protection there.

There is no doubt those images are a valuable asset in that campaign. Some photography suggestions from Gerry and Shirley are found later in this section.

The section begins with a piece by Fred Rushworth, the editor of the Images Alberta newsletter. Fred generously offered to write a piece about the Waterton Wildflower Festival for this issue of the *Advocate*. Please enjoy what follows.

- Ian Urquhart



PHOTOGRAPHY TECHNIQUE AND THE WATERTON WILDFLOWER FESTIVAL

By Fred Rushworth

The Waterton Wildflower Festival is a nine-day event covering two weekends and the weekdays between. Waterton National Park is a natural and superb location for this event as the Park lays claim to having over 50 rare Alberta wildflowers species within its boundaries. Waterton offers a

mix of microclimates as the mountains explode from the prairies and reach for the sky offering visitors a chance to see everything from marsh marigolds and bog orchids at lower elevations to alpine poppies.

The Waterton Wildflower Festival is now in its 7th year and runs from

June 19th to 27th this year. The festival attracts visitors from across the world to its workshops, hikes, and talks. Each year an artist runs an in-depth painting or drawing workshop. No fewer than four different photographers run field sessions ranging from three hours to two days in length. Naturalists and



Spotted saxifrage PHOTO: F. RUSHWORTH

conservationists lead interpretive strolls, hikes, and horseback rides exploring Waterton's wildflowers.

My wife and I went to Waterton last summer to attend a two-day photography workshop led by professional photographer, Paul Gilbert. Over the course of two days we toured the park and were introduced to the wildflowers of the region as we learned about photographic composition and technique.

Paul's teaching style was very relaxed. We started each day with a half hour discussion on topics like design elements, lighting, and the challenges of close-up or macro photography. He often illustrated these topics with his own photographs from his book *WILD COLOURS: Canada's Rocky Mountain Wildflowers*, which he co-authored with Katherine Graham. Those discussions continued in the field with some hands-on advice as we photographed: shoot from a low angle and slightly uphill to make a small patch of flowers appear to extend to the horizon, look at the strong lines and swirl on the leaves of the false hellebore, or since red flowers will always override other colours to attract the viewer's eye make them the focal point in a field of assorted flowers. We learned how to soften harsh direct light by using a unique, collapsible and very packable diffuser and conversely how to use a small reflector to 'throw' a little light into deeply shaded areas.

We traveled the Old Chief highway towards the U.S. border stalking the sparrow's egg lady slipper, a striking white orchid like the yellow lady slipper that I often find in boggy areas on

my hikes around Edmonton. Further down the road, we came across a red fox crossing a field of glacier lilies. The fox quickly departed and we then spent the better part of an hour creating photographs of flowers amongst the weathered textures of some old wind-felled trees and close ups of petal and stamen details. We also worked at creating leading lines – visual elements in a photo that draw the viewer's eye to the main subject. Tripods were essential as any camera movement is exaggerated when working on close up shots.

Photographing wildflowers demands that we be especially aware of our personal footprints on the landscape. A group of eight or ten photographers could leave a path of devastation on delicate ecosystems so we worked from trail side and followed established paths or stepping points to avoid damaging other plants as we searched for the desired viewpoint.

A trip up the Red Rock canyon road took us to rolling subalpine meadows that were still early in their blooms of sticky geraniums, wild strawberries and Mariposa lilies. As most of us were preoccupied with trying to capture the fine hairs that protect the petals of the Mariposa lily we were suddenly brought up from our viewfinders as someone caught sight of a lone black bear about 500 metres behind us. The bruin was making its way across the meadow towards the river quite unconcerned about our presence. In rolling meadows above the Blakiston valley we switched our photographic style from detailed close ups and floral portraits to use instead the

wildflowers as a foreground for scenic landscapes featuring the mountains in the background.

On our second day, we travelled down the Cameron Lake road past the relics of Waterton's short-lived oil days of the early 1900s and on to the Lineham Ridge trail. The trail starts with a meander through a mixed forest and then, grade-by-grade, makes its diagonal climb towards the alpine meadows. We stopped along the way having discovered Oregon grape growing in an opening of the wooded slopes. Paintbrush, purple clematis and columbine abounded amid windfalls, watercourses and slide zones. Further up the sun emerged as we entered the meadow above the trees. Here we pulled out Paul's diffuser and took turns holding it above photographers contorted in yoga-like poses above shooting stars. A few added polarizing or neutral density filters to their cameras to reduce the light entering their cameras and let them shoot at slower shutter speeds. This technique created a soft milky flow to the small streams surrounded by vibrant flowers.

In the afternoon, we returned to the Waterton town site and the Lower Bertha Falls trail. This was a much gentler trail to walk. Here we often had to deal with lower light in the shade of the deciduous trees. We dealt with that situation by using slower shutter speeds and larger aperture settings to allow more light into the camera. Those with a digital camera also could change to a higher ISO setting. I found that ISO 400 was as high as my camera would let me shoot without creating too much graininess in my images. The low light also required us



Three-flowered avens PHOTO: F. RUSHWORTH

to use our tripods as much as possible to avoid camera shake. Sometimes though the terrain would not cooperate and we could not set a tripod where we wanted it – then we simply rested the camera on

a bag or jacket. We found that either the timer feature or a remote shutter release on the camera avoided camera shake as we took our photos at those longer exposures. When the breeze was an issue we often created a wind block with a bag or a jacket to prevent any wind induced motion.

At the end of the two days we had learned many valuable lessons we have continued to use as photographers and hikers. We gained an understanding of the flowers, how to identify them, and where to look for them.

We had gone to Waterton for a weekend with indefinite plans for the next two weeks. In the end we stayed a full two weeks practicing the techniques we had learned and expanding our knowledge of Waterton's wildflowers. We watched fields where flowers had been just opening come into full

bloom. We hiked the trails and saw the progression of flowers that had been in full bloom in the valleys appear in bud and then bloom at higher elevations.

The Waterton Wildflower Festival offers a great series of talks, interpretive walks and hikes, and workshops for both the novice and experienced photographer. It is well worth a visit. If you would like more information about the Festival and its program schedule please visit their website:

www.watertonwildflowers.com

- Fred Rushworth is an Edmonton based photographer with a story to tell who edits the newsletter of Edmonton's Images Alberta Camera Club. He often shares his photos and their background as he explores the world of photography and writing through his blog skinnyskierpress.blogspot.com.

TEN TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR ALBERTA WILDERNESS PHOTOGRAPHY

By Gerry Wirun

Nature's power is so awe inspiring we all instinctively want to capture and keep some reminders of the wilderness experiences we enjoy. Photography is one of the best ways to do this. An excursion to wilderness and natural surroundings is an opportunity to document and tell a story of your adventure. You don't need any special photographic skills to follow these ten suggestions and I think if you follow them you will improve your photographic interpretations.

Do Your Homework

Doing a little research about your wilderness location before you leave is great for getting background information about things like terrain, trails, natural landmarks and viewpoints. Learn about the natural history and development of the landscape surrounding you. Study the watershed information to get the big picture of the area you'll experience. Check on climatic conditions for the season. And, of course, avidly study the types of flora and fauna you can expect to see and learn to identify some of the different species. All of this background information will inform your images to make them more meaningful and valuable.

Be Prepared

Use a camera and photo equipment that you're familiar with, not new or borrowed equipment. A hike in the woods is not the time to be struggling with camera and lens settings or trying to find the hidden release to change the memory card. Know how to change and charge the batteries, remove and re-insert the memory card, connect any cables, and adjust the basic settings on whatever type of camera you use. It's also a good idea to carry spare equipment and supplies, like spare batteries, spare memory, and even a backup camera.

Get Up Early

Much of the action in wilderness photography starts very early in the day when the air is fresh and the breezes are soft. The birds and other animals are already active at the first hint of daybreak on the horizon, foraging for food or heading to their favourite watering hole. Flowers are opening to embrace the morning light. As that light on the horizon grows and strengthens, colours warm and intensify in preparation for the "magic hour," that half hour before and after sunrise when the light is rich and shadows are long and dramatic.

Have Your Camera Ready

Be prepared to take a picture from your

first step on the trail or even before. It's impossible to get that great shot or capture the fast-moving action as it happens if your camera is in the car, in your backpack, or hidden under three layers of clothing with the lens cap on. Make sure you have your camera out and accessible, with plenty of memory and power, and with initial settings and adjustments made. Have the lens cap off and the power on before you hit the trail.

Have a Plan

Every wilderness experience is unique to each of us. We know what interests and excites us in nature and we want a photograph to remind us of the feelings and thoughts we have on the trail. Plan to document and capture images that reflect your own personal interests. Know what you want to bring back with you, whether it be a record of the symphony of colours or shapes of plants and flowers, or perhaps the broad vistas of the bright sky, or long horizon lines with an interesting foreground. Plan ahead with some forethought to photo techniques, subject matter, and desired results. Your photo experience will be much more focused and productive.

Look Closely

Once you've chosen your subject look at it closely to determine the best angles

to accentuate the form or colour. Decide what you want to include in the image and move in close to frame your subject and reduce or eliminate a distracting, cluttered background. Move around, side to side and up and down. Carefully study the lighting and select the best of front, side or back lighting. Check the outside edges of the picture in the viewfinder to ensure that nothing unwanted is in the frame of view.

Concentrate

Be alert and focus on finding that great image. Avoid and eliminate distractions such as telephones, radios, and iPods. Be still. Listen to the birds, wind, and water, and focus on your subject matter and camera operation. Concentrate on the changing action around you. The light and shadow is constantly changing. Animals may be moving about. Concentrate on your surroundings. Keep conversations with companions to a minimum, to avoid scaring off birds and other wildlife. Clear your mind; think photography.

Change Locations

Photo opportunities are always nearby but sometimes we're just not in the right place at the right time. If you've documented the subject and run out of ideas, or if the light isn't right, or the animals are hiding, move on to a new location that inspires you. Perhaps you may want to make a note to return to a

Shirley Coulson took this photo of a chipping sparrow singing in the boreal forest of Lakeland in the late spring of 2009. The chipping sparrow breeds throughout most of North America and winters in the southern United States and Mexico. Its nest is so flimsy and delicate that light may be seen through it.

Shirley was one of three photographers from the Images Alberta Camera Club who made several trips to Lakeland to detail the region's natural beauty. Shirley took this photo with an Olympus E-510 camera with an Olympus Zuiko digital 50-200mm f/2.8-3.5.

To obtain the blurred background in this photo Shirley selected the aperture priority mode and set the aperture to an F-stop of 5.6. The shutter speed was 1/200th of a second. The lens' image stabilization feature was turned on. When Shirley photographs birds in flight she normally selects panning mode.



PHOTO: G. WIRUN

special location that might be captured when the time of day or lighting is better. Don't get bogged down. Look for a variety of locations and subject matter. There's always another photo opportunity around the next bend.

Respect your surroundings

The more you respect the natural wilderness around you, the better your images will be. Be aware of where you fit in the natural scheme of things. Unnecessary noises will alert and frighten the other animals and your photographic opportunities will suffer. Instead, be quiet, still and patient and the birds and animals will become less timid and protective. Your pictures will be better and more plentiful.

Take a Break

Concentration and mental focus can be exhausting. After you've spent an hour or two, or more, thinking about all the

details and nuances of every image and subject and camera setting the mind needs some time to rejuvenate. Put down the camera gear, lay back, close your eyes, breathe deeply and take in the sounds and smells of the wilderness around you. Give your eyes and mind a rest from photography and re-energize yourself for your next photographic expedition.

Conclusion

If you follow these tips and suggestions, your images should go from "good to great" and your Alberta wilderness images will stir your senses for a lifetime. Enjoy!

- Gerry Wirun got his first camera when he was 13 years old and, like AWA members, is inspired by nature. He organizes workshops for Images Alberta Camera Club.



PHOTO: S. COULSON

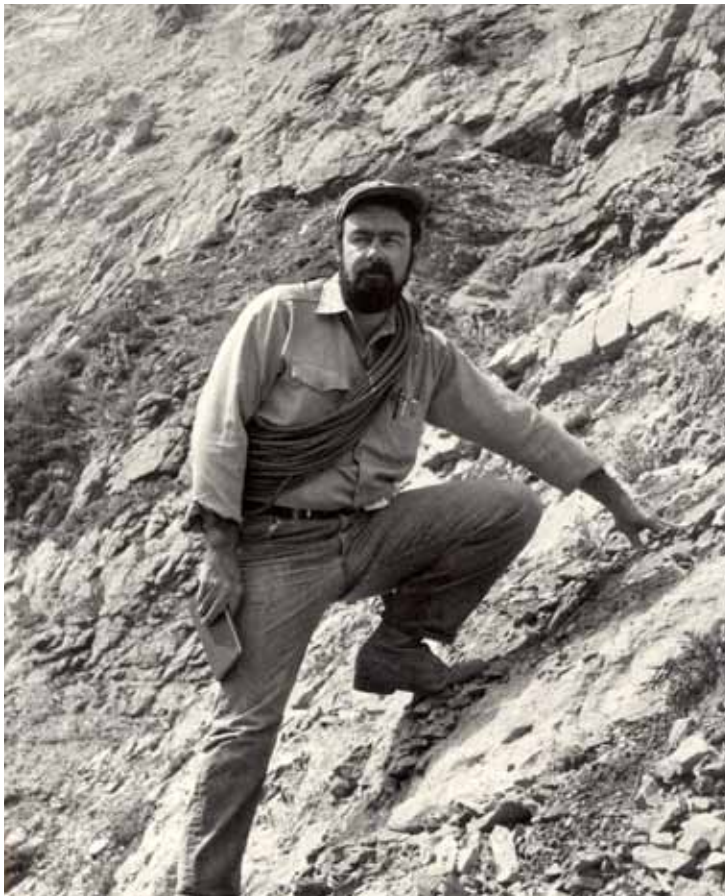
Doug MacFarlane - A Geologist AWA Loved

- By Vivian Pharis and Norma Ruecker

In the 1960s McIntyre Porcupine Mines Ltd. had coal leases in the vicinity of Grande Cache and had made it clear to the provincial government that it wanted to develop the area's bounty of metallurgical coal. The company's CEO, while on an Australian business trip in 1975, drew a bath so hot he scalded both feet. They became gangrenous and he died. His tragic death may be one reason why the superb goat and caribou habitat on Caw Ridge was not destroyed thirty-five years ago. As readers of Wild Lands Advocate appreciate Caw Ridge is an area AWA has fought to protect since the 1970s and Alberta's formulation then of *A Coal Development Policy for Alberta*.

The intrigue of personalities playing against each other over the fate of Caw (Copton) Ridge is only one of the fascinating stories in the lore told by Doug MacFarlane, one of AWA's favourite geologists. He recently reminisced with us through an entertaining evening, regaling us with stories of close encounters and extraordinary feats from his life as a geologist who, literally, did his work "on the edge." He is proud to have never carried a weapon or felt unsafe during his adventures in Alberta's shrinking wilderness. Many would consider Doug retired; Doug is not among them. Geology does not change and, as an expert in coal deposits in Alberta, his expertise is still sought for one reason or another.

Doug was born into the rocks, mines, and mountains of the Crowsnest Pass but his life took many twists and turns before



Geologist Doug MacFarlane in the North Kootenay Pass, 1970.

he realized his destiny lay in his origins, in geology. Best described as a maverick his geology career was carried out with the tenacity of a bull rider. He stayed with every job until it bucked him off or he rode it out. And, he had a lot of mean jobs.

Doug departed school early and joined the navy. He loved the travel but not the authority so after three years he found himself back in "The Pass" looking for work. He applied to one of the local mines and a few hours later he was hired and sent 2.5 miles underground. There he stayed until the mine closed five years later.

Again without work Doug used union benefits to take a Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) course that got him a government job as a radio operator. Doug, back to dealing with

orders and bureaucracy, soon decided more education might be the ticket to gaining more independence. At twenty-six he finished high school by correspondence and followed a counselor's advice to become a pharmacist. Doug knew this was a bad career choice in the first ten minutes of his first class but he persevered to earn his degree; he returned to rock tunnels soon after graduation.

These tunnels were through the Bennett Dam on the Peace River where Doug supervised a band of independent spirits from all over the world – part of the 6,000 man work force employed to build that massive structure. The dam was completed in 1967 and Doug again looked to education for advancement; this time he followed the lure of rocks to the University of Alberta's Geology department.

Two years later, degree in hand, Doug embarked on a whirlwind of jobs that took him to the farthest oil and gas drilling outposts in the high Arctic, Yukon's Mackenzie Mountains, northern B. C., the southeast corner of B. C., Montana, many parts of Alberta and to uranium prospecting sites on the Saskatchewan-Northwest Territories border. During this whirlwind he was part of a team that mapped all of the Paleozoic rocks in the huge Fernie Basin – a dream job for Doug in a dreamland. Another dream job found his team surveying foothills lands between the U. S. border and Grande Prairie and mapping Upper Cretaceous coals. It was a time to see great wildlife and wander through great country not to mention the great beer, burgers and hospitality small town Alberta served Doug.

But Doug decided, after years of

working as a geologist in extreme places under extreme weather conditions and enduring extreme travel (via float planes and helicopters), that this was a too treacherous path – he needed a quieter life not to mention more time at home with his wife Irene.

Seeing a one-line advertisement in the Calgary Herald that was looking for a coal geologist Doug showed up for the interview at a Calgary hotel. He liked his two interviewers on sight: one wore a three-piece suit while the other wore suspenders over undershirt, big boots and a bowler hat. These two were from Indianapolis, representatives of Meadowlark Farms, a respected coal operator. The company had just purchased exploration leases in various parts of Alberta's Front Range. They needed a local geologist to handle their drill testing programs. Doug signed on.

Doug's first job was in the Panther River area in 1972. Little did Doug know that, at that time, Meadowlark Farms was already in AWA's sights. AWA was in the midst of writing its presentation to the all-important 1973 Eastern Slopes hearings where it argued that nine areas along those Slopes merited full protection from development. The areas included the Panther Corners and the Ram-Whiterabbit Creeks. AWA also was incensed that lands had recently been withdrawn from Willmore Wilderness Park in the vicinity of Grande Cache and had begun the fight to restore protection for Caw Ridge. All of these areas were open to coal leasing and were acquired by Meadowlark Farms.

Ironically, Doug belonged to a sister conservation group to AWA also opposed to industrial development of the Eastern Slopes. But, what could Doug do? The Alberta government had issued the leases and he wanted to practise good geology. But the beauty and elevation of Jap Mountain in Panther Corners where the drilling was to occur made Doug realize this was "the totally wrong spot" to ever mine. But roads and drill pads soon gouged and disfigured the face of the mountain. Tests showed the coal lay in deep seams that would require expensive underground mining. Also, it was thermal coal not the more coveted metallurgical coal. The Panther Corners project was uneconomic to develop. With an observation that might lead us now to ask questions and think critically about

reclamation requirements Doug recalled that the reclamation bond required of Meadowlark "was a mere \$5,000 – hardly enough to sow a mile of track." Fortunately for the landscape there, Heritage Trust Fund money was available for Eastern Slopes reclamation work in the early 1970s; the area was reclaimed at taxpayer expense.

Doug's next project was in the area delimited by the South Ram and Whiterabbit Creeks. Doug showed us photos of one drill site in a "totally unmineable" area on the top of an 8,000 foot precipitous ridge in the headwaters of Whiterabbit Creek. But testing decisions were made in Indianapolis, far from the reality of the landscape. On a more positive note, this South Ram job was carried out using complete helicopter support; there was no ground-work or disturbance whatsoever. Not an inch of road or trail was constructed. It could have been used as an example of an innovative alternative to intrusive exploration but, unfortunately, it was prohibitively expensive (for companies, not the landscape). Drilling was conducted in late fall and winter due to the need to avoid migrating elk. This drilling took place in almost impossible weather conditions. One drill shack was blown off the ridge face, forcing the crew to spend a night sheltered in a snow cornice. No mineable coal was found here either.

Doug's third project was on Caw Ridge near Grande Cache. This assignment was through a joint venture with the leaseholder, McIntyre Porcupine Mines. This was the coal company that preceded Smoky River Coal Ltd.; Smoky River preceded Grande Cache Coal, the present leaseholder.

Meadowlark was to conduct a systematic drilling program to test for coal seams across the brow of Caw Ridge (or, Copton Ridge, as it was called then). This project was not a winter program by choice. It was initiated in July 1974. All open holes were to be logged by the fall and core drilling was to commence the following spring. Doug told us that McIntyre found a loophole in the joint venture agreement that forced Meadowlark to carry on through the winter or forfeit the agreement. Temperatures dipped at times below -50 degrees Fahrenheit and the winds

were fierce. But, to invoke the words of Churchill, Doug's team carried on in a winter remembered with anguish. Seven rigs drilled 150 test holes in a grid that showed enough surface mineable coal to last 20 years. A rail line was envisioned up the Sheep River to a townsite and new cleaning plant on Beaverdam Creek below Caw Ridge.

Doug suggested that Meadowlark Farms had a good environmental track record in the U.S. and undertook an extensive set of environmental studies on Caw Ridge. The Alberta Coal Policy was now in place and companies were nervous that all alpine areas would be put off limits. McIntyre Porcupine and Meadowlark Farms secured hasty meetings with local MLA Bob Dowling and Environment Minister David Russell to lobby for Caw's exemption from the protective Category 1 of the policy. Caw, sadly, ended up as a Category 4 area – open to mining.

All was not lost, however, as feuding between Meadowlark and McIntyre officials took place and they sued each other for large sums. The suits dragged on for several years; Doug never knew the outcome. The CEO of McIntyre Porcupine met his fate in Australia and took a major player out of contention. Today Grande Cache Coal claims Caw's riches but, to date, there is still no mine on the ridge. It is though, through exploration programs, getting dangerously close.

After Caw, Doug continued checking prospects for Meadowlark Farms in B. C. and Alaska, always upholding his record of "never making a mine." In fact, he is quite proud that he very often, as a consultant, recommended that marginal mines be closed and old mines not be re-opened. He may hold no record for proven discoveries, but, as he explains, he just "cannot stand to see bad geology." With this view Doug is an activist in his own right and continues to petition against destroying natural land for unprofitable ventures.

For all of that AWA members should be very pleased Doug MacFarlane was the geologist on so many Eastern Slopes coal projects. 🍷

EVENTS

AWA SUMMER HIKES, TOURS AND BACKPACKS PROGRAM

AWA's hikes program is a great way to explore the lesser-known wilderness gems of Alberta and learn about AWA's work to protect the plants and animals of these magnificent landscapes.

For more information about all our summer hikes, please visit our website: www.AlbertaWilderness.ca. or call 1-866-313-0713.

Pre-Registration Is Required for All Trips

Online: www.albertawilderness.ca/events
or By phone: (403) 283-2025
Toll Free: 1-866-313-0713

DAY HIKES

\$20 – AWA members
\$25 – non-members

Tuesday June 29, 2010

Dry Island Hike

Enjoy the view from the top of this topographical feature in the beautiful Red Deer River valley.

With Tjarda and Rob Barratt

Tuesday July 6, 2010

Porcupine Hills Hike

Situated between the prairie and mountain environments, these hills exemplify the diversity to be found in Alberta's foothills ecosystems.

With Vivian Pharis

Saturday July 10, 2010

Ya Ha Tinda Hike

"Mountain Prairie" in the Stoney language, Ya-Ha-Tinda is an enigmatic region of prairie and parkland situated along the upper Red Deer River.

With William Davies

Wednesday July 28, 2010

Plateau Mountain Hike

Explore Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve, located in southern Kananaskis

Country.

With Nigel Douglas

Saturday August 7, 2010

Sage Creek Hike

Located in southeastern Alberta near Manyberries, this impressive mixed grass prairie has the look and feel of the wide open spaces.

With Lorne Fitch

Tuesday September 14, 2010

Beehive Natural Area Hike

Contributing to the headwaters of the Oldman river in southwestern Alberta, this protected area is a stunning mix of cool, dark sub-alpine forests and broad, green alpine meadows.

With Nigel Douglas

Saturday September 25, 2010

Whaleback Fall Hike

Experience the wide-open vistas and fall colours of this spectacular montane environment.

With Bob Blaxley

Saturday October 2, 2010

Rumsey Ecological Reserve Hike

A relatively undeveloped example of aspen parkland located in central Alberta, the Rumsey Ecological Reserve retains most of the original parkland flora and fauna.

With Paul Sutherland

BACKPACK/CAMPING TRIPS

For the more adventurous travelers, our backpack and camping trips offer 3 or 4 days of wilderness wonder. These trips are for people of varying availability, so please call AWA's office for more details.

\$100 - AWA members

\$125 – non-members

Monday July 19 – Wednesday July 21, 2010 (2 nights)

Castle Backpack

Come and spend three days and two nights in the truly spectacular surroundings of the front canyons and

peaks of southwest Alberta's Castle region.

With Reg Ernst

Friday August 13 – Sunday August 15, 2010 (2 nights)

Lakeland Camping and Hiking/Biking Weekend

Join us in the Lac La Biche area for a long weekend of camping and guided day hikes to different scenic parts of Lakeland Provincial Park and Recreation Area. The fee for this trip includes three nights of campground fees.

With Aaron Davies

Thursday August 19 – Sunday August 22, 2010 (3 nights)

White Goat Backpack

Limited to foot access, the White Goat Wilderness preserves wilderness values – especially available to those with an adventurous spirit.

With Nigel Douglas and Paul Sutherland



Hikers on the 2009 White Goat Wilderness backpack trip

PHOTO: N. DOUGLAS

EVENTS

ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS



AWA Board Member Jim Campbell presented Miss Sophia Nagan, from Branton Jr. High School, with the 2010 AWA Wild Alberta Award at the Calgary Youth Science Fair. Sophia's award-winning project was entitled "L'ocean, ses menaces et nous."



AWA supporters enjoying the atmosphere at June's Wild About Wilderness event at Edmonton's Royal Glenora Club. Guest speaker Richard Secord delivered a thought-provoking presentation on environmental law in Canada. PHOTO: S. NICHOLS



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