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AWA

WILD LANDS ADVOCATE

THE ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

Moraine Lake from Mount Temple, Banff National Park PHOTO: © N. DOUGLAS

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COVER PHOTO

Nigel Douglas's cover photograph of the view from Mount Temple in Banff National Park might have been labeled "Closer to Heaven." It powerfully represents some of what is so special about Alberta's Rocky Mountain Parks.

FEATURED ARTIST

This issue of the Advocate is very pleased to be able to feature the work of Franco Lo Pinto. Franco lives and works in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, just east of Kananaskis Country. The land, the animals, the weather and the peoples of this land and their spirit influence Franco's work. He is blessed and privileged to be creating art with the earth (clay). Franco studied art history, sculpture and ceramics at the University of Calgary where he graduated in 1983 with a Fine Arts degree. He primarily works with clay now and creates stoneware fired to 2,400 degrees Fahrenheit. Fire, air, earth and water are part of this creative process. His work is available through the Kingsland and Millarville Farmers' markets as well as through his studio near Millarville. His intention with anything he creates is to present his vision of beauty in a simple and elegant way.

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Alberta Wilderness Association is a charitable non-government organization dedicated to the completion of a protected areas network and the conservation of wilderness throughout the province. To support our work with a tax-deductible donation, call 403-283-2025 or contribute online at AlbertaWilderness.ca.

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Parks for Profit?

Leslie Bella's 1987 book *Parks for Profit* was a rude awakening for me. In the late 1980s I had an idealized, perhaps naïve, view of the history of Canada's national parks. I thought the initial inspiration for establishing Banff National Park, Canada's first, came from foresight. I thought they bowed in the direction of preserving nature, that they arose from a concern about protecting what we now call "ecological integrity." Bella told me I could not have been more mistaken. Banff's establishment was the opening act in a play where governments and business "promoted national parks as a stimulant to profitable tourism."

Conservationists battled this orientation for decades. Many may have thought they turned the tables on the commercialization of parks through amendments to the *National Parks Act* in 1988 and 2001. Those amendments, as Shaun Fluker has argued, failed; stipulating in law that all aspects of parks management must give the first priority to the "maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity" has not meant that either Parks Canada or the courts have interpreted the law that way. "Not only is the preservation of nature not the first priority in the national parks," Fluker writes, "it isn't even a presumption in parks decision-making."

What then will the future hold for parks in Alberta? This is the question guiding this issue's features section. The award-winning writer Jeff Gailus offers you a stinging interpretation of ecological integrity's place in Banff National Park. In a word, it is an illusion. We live a lie, namely that our environmental track record is admirable. Alison Dinwoodie asks you to consider her concerns about what the new provincial parks legislation may mean. Shaun Fluker's argument offers a cautionary context for reading Alison's piece. If the federal legislation unambiguously states that ecological integrity "shall be the first priority of the Minister" little comfort is offered by the province's words that "the primary goal of preservation" will be "balanced" with other goals.

PHOTO: I. URQUHART

Ursula Wohlfarth and Brian Horesji offer you radically different views on what sorts of activities we should welcome and allow in our parks. They tackle an activity that should be very familiar to, and often I suspect, highly valued by AWA members – mountain biking. Ursula's enthusiam for mountain biking rests on pillars such as greater accessibility to the backcountry, its health benefits, its growing popularity and the environmentally responsible message offered by some mountain bike associations.

Brian's assessment of mountain biking could not be more different. In blunt, uncompromising language he first questions the democratic and representative pedigree of the consultation process preceding September's announcement that mountain biking opportunities are likely to be more numerous in Rocky Mountain parks in the future. He also believes that mountain biking "assaults" ecological integrity and that aggressive bikers, "wrapped in body armour," pose a serious threat to other park users.

Less overtly, Nigel Douglas's article is a powerful plea for why more parks and protected areas should be a significant feature of Alberta's future. It is a travesty, from the ecological integrity perspective, that Alberta would consider selling 16,000 acres of mainly native prairie in the vicinity of Bow Island to a potato farming operation. If the sale proceeds native prairie will be ploughed up to grow potatoes.

Finally, I offer some thoughts about the future of the Willmore Wilderness Park. Alberta's Parks department is taking a number of measures to strengthen management of the Park but, unfortunately, the initiative to add Willmore to the Rocky Mountain World Heritage Site appears stalled. Frankly, I don't think very much of the various arguments I have read about why adding Willmore to that Site is dangerous.

I also have the privilege of introducing you to Peter Lee, an outstanding environmentalist, who will be receiving a Wilderness Defenders Award and delivering this year's Martha Kostuch Wilderness and Wildlife Lecture. I am sure Peter's lecture, on November 19th, will give us much food for thought. Finally, this issue sees AWA make a switch in designers. We would like to thank Ball Creative for their help and support over the years. We welcome Marni Wilson to the AWA family and look forward to working with her!

- Ian Urquhart, Editor

The Illusion of Integrity

By Jeff Gailus

Although overpasses prevent wildlife deaths, vehicle collisions, and provide some semblance of connectivity across the Trans-Canada Highway, they are also potent symbols of our unwillingness to change the way we do business in our national parks.
PHOTO: J. GAILUS

"If there is a more exquisite pleasure than driving into Banff, it must be watching it recede in one's rear-view mirror... Mammon has set up stall all the way from Bow River almost to the foot of Mount Rundle, a hundred gift shops dispensing life's identical duty-free necessities obtainable at any international airport: cashmere, crystal, Cartier, Caleche."
Michael Watkins,
The Sunday Times, 30 April 1995.

Last summer, my co-instructor and I dragged six intrepid university students through the southern Canadian Rockies to study conservation biology and community-based conservation in the real world. They couldn't have been more surprised at what they saw.

It was the second half of a two-month university field course for the Wild Rockies Field Institute, located in Missoula, Montana. When I joined the students in Waterton, they had already spent a month in and around Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, learning about how these American gems are managed, and experiencing, firsthand, the legacy of integrity: both of these parks are source areas for recovering grizzly bear populations that are literally bursting at the seams.

We spent a week exploring Waterton Lakes National Park and the Castle Wilderness in southwest Alberta, and then turned our 15-passenger van north towards the Bow Valley. None of the students had ever been to Banff, but they had certainly heard of it and were keen to experience it. The sense of anticipation was palpable as we left Canmore.

But as we passed the park gates and drove into Banff Townsite to pick-up our backcountry permits, the students were utterly shocked at what they found in Canada's first and most famous national park.

"I was surprised to learn as we barrelled down the Trans-Canada Highway (TCH) that we were already in the park," wrote one of the students in her final paper. "Evidently the TCH and the Canada Pacific Railroad run right through Banff. I was in for another surprise as we exited the highway. The town of Banff … was full of people bustling in and out of the Starbucks, Louis Vuitton and Gap stores that lined the streets. It was difficult to grasp that we were in a national park when surrounded by such a developed urban environment. The only reminder was the 360 degree backdrop of mountains."

Such a reaction shouldn't be surprising. These students read Banff's weak new management plan, adopted by Parliament in 2010, which offers little protection for grizzly bears that die in unsustainable numbers in and around the park. More recently, Minister of Environment Jim Prentice's announcement to allow a host of new activities in national parks – including zip-lining and canopy tours and mountain biking – is the latest in a slow but inexorable process to increase the profitable business of industrial tourism in our national parks.

In his introduction to (and approval of) the new Banff management plan, Prentice refers to our national parks as "places of learning, recreation and inspiration where Canadians can connect with our past and appreciate the natural, cultural and social forces that shaped Canada."

"We see a future," he continues, "in which these special places will further Canadians' appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of Canada, the economic well-being of communities and the vitality of our society."

Although he does refer to them as "protected places," at no point does

he refer to ecological integrity, or biodiversity, or the act of protecting (a verb!) the plants and animals within their boundaries. You'd think he was referring to an amusement park or a science centre, not one of the very few places in Canada where federal legislation makes "the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity" the "first priority."

These policies are based on a false assumption that has been handed down by Ottawa to be flogged by the very people who should know better. Greg Fenton, superintendent of Jasper National Park, recently stated that the "very future of the parks depends on getting more people to actually visit and appreciate them."

The claim is ridiculous. There is no question that we need a shift in consciousness to create a better, more respectful relationship with the natural world. We do need natural places that provide people with positive experiences. However, national parks are supposed to offer the pre-eminent level of protection to a natural world under assault everywhere. Many of the most popular parks are already underfunded and overused, their primary mandate to protect nature undermined by government indifference. Development, especially the infrastructure required to facilitate the industrial-scale tourism that dominates Banff, can be as harmful to ecological integrity as strip mines and clear-cuts. Increasing this kind of visitation places a burden on our national parks that they simply cannot bear.

Kevin van Tighem, Banff's superintendent, told me over a coffee that he believes that Parks Canada is making ecological integrity the first priority when it comes to managing our National Parks. But Shaun Fluker, a law professor at the University of Calgary, doesn't share van Tighem's optimism. In a recently published journal article, "Ecological Integrity in Canada's National Parks: The False Promise of Law," Fluker concludes that despite a strengthening of the national parks legislation in 1988 and 2001 to prioritize environmental protection, both Parks Canada and the federal court have "read down the priority of the ecological integrity first priority as simply a factor to be taken into account in parks decision-making. Not only is the preservation of nature not the first priority in the national parks, it isn't even a presumption in parks decision-making."

What we are maintaining here in Banff National Park is not ecological integrity, but the *illusion* of integrity. Like molecules of mercury – each one harmless, but accumulation deadly – the tyranny of small decisions is destroying the commons. All the while, too many of us simply stand by with our hands in our pockets, nodding our heads while the bean counters and profiteers rub their hands together with glee. It's death by a thousand cuts, and the wounds are as much ours as the land's.

It is often said, as I have, that we are loving our parks to death, but I no longer think it has anything to do with love. As Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Chris Hedges makes clear in *Empire of Illusion*, "the power of love is about sacrifice for the Other … rather than exploitation. It is about honouring the sacred."

Are our parks not sacred? Are they not an embodiment of all that is good and right about what it means to be Canadian? Or are they just profit centres designed to titillate and amuse rather than to honour and protect?

Far from connecting Canadians to our national parks and the natural world they are meant to safeguard, a visit to Banff distances us from the ecological realities our leaders choose to ignore; it reinforces the myth that we are responsible environmental stewards, and creates the illusion that we can have our cake and eat it too. Unsuspecting visitors, assuming the federal bureaucracy is fulfilling its mandate, come away with the sense that we can have freeways and railways and ski hills and small cities – and now mountain biking and canopy tours and zip lines and *via ferrata* (cables and ladders permanently attached to mountain climbing routes) – without compromising the ecological health of our National Parks.

The illusion we have created in our national parks, cemented in our imaginations by the wire fences and lofty crossing structures that allow us to speed smugly through the Bow Valley without a care in the world, is part of a larger strategy to develop in Canadians and our visitors a false sense of accomplishment – a kind of blind faith – in the integrity of our environmental track record. "You guys really know how to do it right up here," a school teacher from Virginia told me one day over an impromptu beer at one of Banff's innumerable watering holes. "Those overpasses are amazing."

Thus deceived, again and again, we can return home and easily (and conveniently) feel good about ourselves: that we are protecting our parks; that despite ignoring the Kyoto Protocol we signed almost 20 years ago, we are responsibly addressing climate change; that the tar sands are, in fact, the "green" and "responsible" source of energy Minister Prentice and other Tory politicians would have us believe, despite the growing scientific evidence to the contrary.

"The federal government has engaged in greenwashing as part of its search for environmental legitimacy," writes Douglas MacDonald, a senior lecturer at the University of Toronto, in the most recent issue of the *International Journal of Canadian Studies*. "It is very clear that after the early 1990s, the federal government eagerly contributed to the construction of the new environmental norm of environmental protection coupled with economic growth, purely for anthropocentric reasons. By joining business and environmentalists at the new centre of mainstream environmental politics, the federal government helped to preclude fundamental change in the arc of capitalist development" that is irrevocably unraveling the natural world.

If we do not protect what is left of our parks from our insidious industriousness, we will lose, in the words of Canada's first commissioner of National Parks, James Harkin, "the very thing that distinguishes [our national parks] from the outside world." We need a renaissance in the way our National Parks and other federally managed "protected" areas are managed. Ecological integrity must be made the first priority, with consumptive forms of human use and enjoyment a distant second. They must become sacred places, immune from the corrupting influences of profit and power. As citizens of Canada, it is our responsibility to stand up to the powerful forces of greed that have been unleashed on our parks. "It's easy enough to blame governments and their henchmen, of course, but ultimately it's not them who are failing us," I wrote in *The Grizzly Manifesto*. "We are failing ourselves. The only way to turn things around in Canada is to begin paying attention to the environmental politics that whirl around us like snowflakes in an East Coast storm. We must incorporate these politics into the way we live our lives and, especially, into the way we vote.

Backcountry experiences, far from the madding crowds and luxury shops found in any airport, help visitors better understand what makes Banff such a special place.
PHOTO: J. GAILUS

"Although climate change captures most of the headlines these days, the grizzly bear is trying to tell us there are other problems afoot. Our governments are beholden to corporate interests, and they have become unresponsive and unaccountable beasts."

You are not paying attention, Alberta's beleaguered grizzly bear population is telling us. You are not taking care. Wake up. It is time for a revolution.

Jeff Gailus is an award-winning writer and author from Calgary. His next book, Little Black Lies: One Man's Search for Truth in the Tar Sands Propaganda War*, will be published by Rocky Mountain Books in 2011.*

What is Happening with the New Provincial Parks Legislation?

By Dr. Alison Dinwoodie

Earlier this year, a questionnaire from Tourism, Parks and Recreation (TPR) was circulated to ask for opinions on new provincial Parks legislation. This is the next development of the *Plan for Parks*, which was introduced last year. This Plan originally bore no relation to previous proposals. It was focused almost entirely on people, recreation and tourism – conservation, which previously had always been the priority, was not mentioned at all.

The consequent outcry from many sectors led to a full day public discussion with Minister Cindy Ady. This resulted in a new vision statement which was still primarily people-oriented, with protection just one of several actions: *"Alberta's parks inspire people to discover, value,* ***protect****, and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations."*

Compare this with the previous vision statement from 2004: "Alberta's parks and protected areas preserve in perpetuity landscapes, natural features and processes representative of the environmental diversity of the province." Today government says: "the primary goal of preservation is balanced with three other goals: heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation and heritage tourism." It may suggest that the primary goal of preservation really is not that primary after all if it has to be balanced with other goals.

The new legislation seeks to rationalize the Parks system by consolidating and streamlining three laws into one 'Provincial Parks' Act. The laws to be merged are: the *Provincial Parks Act*, the *Wilderness Areas*, *Ecological Reserves*, *Natural Areas*, and *Heritage Rangelands Act*, and the *Black Creek Heritage Rangeland Trails Act*. Heritage Rangelands will be given a new specific Act, and the Willmore Wilderness retains its own separate Act. The remaining three types of parks under the *Provincial Parks Act* and the three types of protected areas under the WAERNA Act will all be classified 'Provincial Parks.' The ostensible reason for this new legislation is to simplify the Parks system so that the public has a more realistic expectation of what conservation values and recreation activities are supported in each park.

There may be advantages to the merger of these Acts as they can be confusing, with few clear definitions. But, if the legislation is to be effective, it must make clear that the primary purpose of the Act is to ensure the protection of Alberta's natural heritage and biological diversity for future generations, with any human use being consistent with this goal, depending on the ecological sensitivity of a given area. It should also define the three zones (A-Recreation, B - Mixed Use and C - Conservation). It is difficult to see how changes in nomenclature or variations within zones will help to distinguish accurately the very different roles of the current mix of parks and protected areas. For example, a Wilderness 'Park' or Ecological 'Park' conveys a very different message from a Wilderness 'Area' or an Ecological 'Reserve'!

Table 1: Types of Provincial "Parks" in Alberta

3 types under the Provincial Parks Act	No.	Average Area (sq.Km)
Wildland Provincial Parks (WPP)	32	541
Provincial Parks (PP)	75	29
Provincial Recreation Areas (PRA)	229	3.7
3 types under the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas, and Heritage Rangelands Act	**No.**	**Average Area (sq.Km)**
Wilderness Areas (WA)	3	336
Ecological Reserves (ER)	15	18
Natural Areas (NA)	137	3 (without 6 large Heritage Rangelands)

The general public at present poorly understands the parks system. When a questionnaire asked 'what did Albertans want in their provincial parks?' the reply was 'more campsites and flush toilets.' They usually think of the popular weekend get-away campsite areas, such as Crimson Lake, or special tourist destinations like Writing-on-Stone and take for granted the need to maintain the physical and ecological characteristics which makes these places so special.

Table 1 notes there are nearly 500 "Parks" in the current system. Only 15 percent of the "parks" listed there are what people commonly think of as Provincial Parks. The large majority (75 percent) are very small, highly developed Provincial Recreation Areas or unprotected Natural Areas. Looking at Provincial Recreational Areas (47 percent of the total) first they are easily classified as Zone A, primary use recreation. They are mostly small, well-developed sites that cater to a large number of people. They provide facilities such as campgrounds and day use viewpoints. Unfortunately, Parks has already had to close a number of these wayside stops recently because of lack of funds, or alternatively they have become privatized and therefore less under Parks supervision. A few are larger areas identified for motorized recreation use, to recognize the increasing demand for such 'playgrounds.' But, there are also several similarly large areas used for more intensive non-motorized recreation e.g. Cooking Lake-Blackfoot (home of the annual Birkebeiner Ski Race). So how do you distinguish between types of Provincial Recreation Areas?

The second largest category of 'parks' is Natural Areas (28 percent of the total), which are the least well known and also the least protected. They too are very small in area and many were originally unallocated school allowances in each section of land. They are widely scattered around the province. They were intended to 'protect sensitive sites of regional and local significance from disturbance and provide opportunities for local education and nature appreciation, with limited low-impact recreation activities.' Unfortunately, because of the lack of legal protection and money to provide adequate support, many have been increasingly abused; the very attributes that made them significant have been under attack and sometimes destroyed. Parks has delisted some NAs in exchange for a similar area of at least equal value by adding to an established park. For example, Astotin NA was exchanged for some increased land area in an adjacent Provincial Park. Larger areas are usually of more ecological value than small piecemeal bits but the variety of species found in a Natural Area like Astotin is not necessarily duplicated in the new reserve. Some feel that Parks would like to get rid of the majority of the NAs or turn them over to Alberta's counties, as it is increasingly difficult for Parks to look after them properly, even if they were given more legal protection. In several cases, it is only the presence of the Volunteer Stewards keeping a watchful eye on them that has kept them alive.

There is an opportunity under the new legislation to include Natural Areas in their legally protected Conservation areas. It should also include most of the over 100 NAs which only have a Protective Notation Term (PNT). The PNT is a flag to indicate the NA's significance, but it does not even outline the NA's legal boundaries. Recently a county bulldozed a road right through the Clyde Fen NA, destroying the fenland drainage that was vital to maintaining several rare species. The county claimed they were unaware that the fen was even considered a special area!

And what about the larger lands at the other end of the spectrum? There are three large Wilderness Areas, White Goat, Siffleur and Ghost River, which, along with the Willmore, fill in the gaps in the Rocky Mountain National Parks. They are the most highly protected lands in the province, under the protected areas (WAERNA) Act. Wildland Provincial Parks, the corresponding larger wild areas under the *Provincial Parks Act,* may sound similar in intent to the WAs, but WPPs allow significantly different and more intensive activities. In the WAs, only foot traffic is permitted, to maintain their undisturbed natural state. But if they become re-classified as Wildland Parks, there will be immediate pressure to open them up to more recreation activities, such as horse use and hunting. Such activities have greater physical impacts and ecological disturbance. The Wildland Parks concept is also coming under pressure to allow more use of motorized vehicles, a use obviously contrary to the idea of non-intrusive, sustainable, nature-based backcountry recreation.

Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park.
PHOTO: S. NICHOLS

The two remaining categories may be easier to deal with as the current Provincial Parks conform to the familiar model of Zone A-Recreation (camp sites, and facilities etc.), occasionally Zone C - Conservation, (with strictly controlled visitor use). But the majority fall within Zone B - Mixed Use, (where almost any non-motorized outdoor activities may be permitted). Ecological Reserves, identified in the protected areas (WAERNA) Act, should clearly be zoned entirely as Zone C – Conservation. But this designation should come with a higher level of protection, meaning minimal human disturbance, to protect natural heritage in an undisturbed state and to create benchmarks for education and research.

What Will the New Parks Legislation Mean in Practice?

It would be nice to be able to answer that question. But, we live in a sea of confusion. For example, I attended the recent Stewards Conference at Sherwood Park on September 12th. Parks staff told us then that they knew no more than we did! So much for staff input (and "certainty" about what the new legislation is likely to offer)! It is supposed to be an 'enabling' Act which is likely to mean all the zoning details, etc. will be covered by Regulations (to be discussed later).

What, then, must the new legislation deliver "on the ground?" The emphasis in the protected areas currently under the WAERNA Act must place conservation before any recreation activities. We have been assured that the degree of protection will not be watered down, but the government should seize the opportunity to increase protection, for example, by giving formal legal protection to Natural Areas.

It would also be helpful if the general intent of the different areas could also be described more exactly. Clarify, in other words, permissible activities. Designate Zones B and C (Mixed Use and Conservation), for example, for non-motorized recreation activities only. Motorized recreation is more suitable in designated Recreation Areas. Also be sure that mentions of 'recreation' always distinguish between motorized and non-motorized activities.

I am glad to see that any boundary changes proposed in Provincial Parks will require mandatory advance public notice. This useful condition would be extended to all categories. But, the same conditions should also apply to any zoning change – at the moment Ministerial Orders may make changes without any public notice whatsoever.

Park plans ostensibly are being developed to align with the Land-use Framework and TPR will be working closely with the Regional Advisory Councils. But, it is not clear enough if TPR will have a real influence it should have in the final decision for deciding how much development will take place in our Parks in a particular region. TPR's major voice should come from the fact that our parks belong to all Albertans, not just the people who live in a specific region.

The legislation should also define strict limits on any industrial development requiring surface access (e.g. oil/gas wells, mining, pipelines or other linear disturbances). Existing land-use commitments should be respected but, phased out as soon as possible, as at present.

I confess to scratching my head when I try to make sense of what Alberta is proposing. There are so many unknowns about this whole proposal that is difficult to foresee the future of our Parks. In fact, at the aforementioned Stewards Conference, one respected individual, who sits on many international committees for conservation and biodiversity, suggested what Alberta is proposing is a very retrograde step and demonstrates the province's lack of commitment to conform to any of the international standards for protecting biodiversity.

One might say that, with the present information, Albertans are unlikely to have a better understanding of our parks system than they do now. It may be just as likely that they are more confused! The possibility of confusion aside I think we are missing a real opportunity to develop a world-class system of Parks and Protected Areas here.

Do Other Approaches Offer More?

There are some different initiatives that could be used to illustrate the merits of other approaches to the issue of provincial parks legislation. Three of them are:

1. Demonstrate the limitations or shortcomings of the proposed three zones. For example, the existing Whitehorse Wildland Park Management Plan lists 7 zones:

Preservation, two types of Wildland Zone, Natural Environment, Special Management, Access, and a Provincial Recreation Area (not in the WP but adjacent to it).

Under the new legislation, how would these zones be re-classified to ensure appropriate activities are understood? There needs to be much more explanation given to the public in this regard than I think the legislation offers us.

2. Encourage greater co-operation with other conservation/recreation bodies in the region. For example, the Beaverhills Initiative (BHI) has joined with three other major bodies including a National

Park and several different counties.

- Beaverhills NAs and the national Important Bird Area around Beaverhills Lake (currently dried out).
- Strathcona Wilderness Centre, a popular hiking, nature study and cross-country skiing destination that also runs very successful programs of outdoor education for schools.
- Blackfoot – Cooking Lake Recreation Area, with an extensive trail system for summer and winter non-motorized recreation.
- Elk Island National Park, under federal jurisdiction, with it own rules and regulations, but is compatible with the general direction of the other co-operating bodies.

Because of the wide local buy-in, it also encourages other local landowners to make conservation easements on their property, this co-operation between different bodies, and particularly the acceptance by the counties, indicates a way towards a greater respect for a Conservancy area in a region under the Land-use Framework.

3. A recent local initiative to resolve disputes between motorized and non-motorized users. Two parcels of public lands and four NAs along the North Saskatchewan River in the vicinity of Drayton Valley have been designated as Eagle Point Provincial Park and Blue Rapids Provincial Recreation Area. The recreation bodies involved will look after their facilities and perform some trail maintenance. A local council manages it but Parks still has the authority for enforcement and maintenance of public roads.

Alison Dinwoodie has been a passionate advocate for and steward of Alberta's parks and protected areas for more than 30 years.

Franco Lo Pinto's most cherished creation carved from a piece of tree that had grown around this rock.
PHOTO: K. MIHALCHEON

Do Mountain Bikes Belong in the Backcountry? Absolutely.

By Ursula Wohlfarth

Going up the headwall to Carnarvon Lake in my cycling shoes was a bit of a challenge. It would have been a whole lot easier in my hiking boots. But hey, at least I avoided the long walk in on the old logging road. Getting there on my bike was a lot more fun!

Yes, in my opinion, mountain bikes have their place in the backcountry. It is another way to access the wild lands and natural places we all love. And a mountain bike is the ideal way to get to destinations like Carnarvon Lake or Loomis Lake that are a bit too long to reach in a day hike.

Mountain biking is for people who like to combine sport with adventure. And, for people who believe in self-propulsion, as opposed to sitting on top of a horse or on an all-terrain vehicle.

Certain trails lend themselves perfectly to mountain biking. Elbow Loop in K-Country west of Bragg Creek is one example. The entire 46-kilometre distance is on old four-wheel drive roads that are

Mountain bikers on the Moraine Lake Trail, one of the few trails in Banff National Park that allows mountain bikers.
PHOTO: M. SEKELLA

Mountain bikes are an increasingly popular means to travel in Alberta's backcountry.
PHOTO: M. SEKELLA

not particularly interesting to walk on.

Bike and hike combinations are particularly appealing to me. My favourite is the combination trip to Shadow Lake in Banff Park. Ride the 9-kilometre Red Earth Creek fire road, lock up your bike, then hike the remaining four kilometres or so to the lake where you can take in the stellar views of Mount Ball.

Another top destination is Elk Lakes, just over the B.C. border from Elk Pass in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park. How special it can be to travel there as I did on a perfect July day this summer. We parked the bikes at the Alpine Club hut and hiked the one kilometre over to the Lower Lakes campground to have lunch amidst the tranquil beauty of the lakes. I could not have been there at all without using my mountain bike for transport.

For sport riding, you can't beat the trails on Moose Mountain west of Calgary, which you can access from the Station Flats or West Bragg Creek parking lots. The Calgary Mountain Bike Alliance and the Moose Mountain Bike Trail Society (MMBTS) have done a lot of work over the last two summers with Calgary-area recreational clubs to build and maintain the Moose Mountain trails. Alberta Sustainable Resource Development approved the development of these trails and the Alberta government and the National Trail Coalition provided $70,000 to the project.

Can anyone seriously dispute whether or not the mission of the MMBTS is a good one? The Society's mission is: "To advocate, develop, and maintain mountain bike trails and to promote healthy, active, fun, and environmentally responsible community involvement."

Trails that are sustainable and that will require little, if any, maintenance are the Society's goal. Contrast that ambition with existing trails in Jasper and Banff National Parks that see heavy horse traffic. Horses—historically entitled to access so many trails in our mountain parks—create mud holes and braided trails that are very unpleasant for hikers who have to use the same trails. And, horses leave dung behind, which along with spilled feed, contributes to the introduction of invasive species of flora that are not members of natural mountain and foothills ecosystems.

Mountain biking on the other hand is clean, green and healthy for the rider.

In southern Alberta, we are fortunate to have many miles of trails available in Kananaskis Country. Another terrific riding location is Jasper National Park. But Banff Park, for whatever reason, has chosen to be more restrictive when it comes to mountain biking. They have cited possible run-ins with bears as one reason for this more restrictive stance, yet it is hard for me to see how biking in bear territory is more dangerous than hiking there. Personally, I hope Banff Superintendent Kevin van Tighem will interpret the new national recreational activities guidelines announced in September in a way that will create opportunities for responsible mountain biking in Canada's oldest National Park.

Yes, it is possible that multi-users on trails will result in occasional clashes. But I maintain that the vast majority of mountain bikers, like the hikers and equestrians we share the trails with, are well mannered. Hikers and bikers alike definitely yield the right of way to horses!

Mountain biking is increasing in popularity with many teenagers getting into the sport. Once those young people mature and get over their love of the rush they get from riding downhill at places like Canada Olympic Park, they will be riding cross-country like the rest of us.

In closing, I suggest that mountain biking on park trails is here to stay. It should be. It is another way to enjoy nature at its finest and the wild lands that we are so lucky to have in our back yard.

Ursula Wohlfarth is a Calgary-based consultant, committed community volunteer and enthusiastic mountain biker.

A Sordid Affair: Mountain Biking in Canada's National Parks

By Dr. Brian L. Horejsi

Canadians have long been suspicious and distrustful of government(s) that exclude the public from decision making. While they have rarely done anything about transgressions of their democratic right Canadians remain, collectively, a powerful force that routinely diverges in its opinions, desires and vision from that of the special interests that lobby government or are included in the government fold because they endorse a given government agenda. In an effort to neutralize, that is "control", this latent public power and still, at least superficially, mollify those members of the public who take participation seriously, governments degrade and compartmentalize the public into the category of "special interests." The public is just another stakeholder, like so many commercial and corporate special interests.

This transformation of public rights was nothing short of a brilliant political takeover. As one environmentally perceptive author states, it easy to "understand the dynamics of power and repression at work" in something like the rise of stakeholder politics. And it is in the area of environmental protection and regulation where this subversive process plays a particularly potent role. A process

that reduces the voices of millions down to a dozen or so representatives maintains control by picking and choosing who will be allowed to "play the game." And as dishonest, to me, as it is evident, governments appear to "find their principles" when picking and funding stakeholder participants, insisting on "equal representation." As a consequence, 33 million Canadians find themselves "represented," albeit begrudgingly, in some federal government decision making by a handful of spokespersons from environmental groups while invariably more commercial and corporate representatives join them at the table. In the interests of "equal representation," democracy is arguably denied in stakeholder roundtables where three or four environmental representatives find themselves facing eight, 10, or more commercial/ corporate stakeholders plus spokespersons from the government running the process.

This is exactly what occurred when Parks Canada held its hand picked, closed to the public meetings that concluded that mountain biking is, in principle, a recreational activity that could be allowed in Canada's National Parks. They invited three environmental "delegates," provided they were a "Senior representative of an ENGO whose mandate is in line with that of Parks Canada." These sorry delegates were to represent the Canadian public at a "table" stacked with 37 other people representing interests such as "partners, mountain biking groups and associations, equipment suppliers, companies who manage the activity". As if this were not a sordid enough affair, Parks Canada hired the former executive director of the Canadian International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) as National trails coordinator, who no doubt chaired this meeting! Having stacked the consultation deck, it appears Parks Canada willingly followed the recommendations of this questionable body as the Minister recently reaffirmed that mountain biking "could soon become part of the menu of activities offered in national Parks." This is actually a dishonest statement, since biking has already invaded parks like Banff and Jasper.

While this arguably betrays the democratic process, what is equally as disappointing is the eagerness with which certain individuals and environmental groups embrace and defend their now

Lilies on the trail in Waterton National Park.
PHOTO: H. UNGER

favoured stakeholder status and seem to ignore scientific studies that point to the ecological damage mountain biking may cause. They encase themselves in these now closed to the public meetings and discussions. While this process has evolved since the 1970s, stakeholder politics continue to be democratically erosive. They also may be environmentally destructive, as I am convinced they are with respect to the issue of mountain bikes in National Parks, an invaluable public resource.

From this very sorry consultation process has oozed the latest in what has become a mountain of threats to Canada's National Parks — mountain biking. Reflecting a secretive political and management culture Parks Canada held no public hearings on this issue. Let me emphasize this; we are talking about never — and Parks Canada did not commission or itself conduct any social impact or environmental impact assessment of the widely known and well documented damages and conflicts generated by mountain biking. Nowhere in the National Park system is the threat greater than in Banff National Park, where policy is disproportionately influenced by special commercial interests with deceptively folksy names such as the Association of Mountain Parks for Protection & Enjoyment.

The major problem with this close-knit alliance between big business, public lands agencies and hand picked environmental group "stakeholders" is that this arrangement actively excludes participation by "low-impact public lands users," who have a right to be heard. There is no voice for those of us who oppose the expansion of destructive and divisive commercial exploitation in our National Parks.

Contrary to claims by the IMBA and bikers, I think mountain biking is largely driven by competition, speed, aggression, thrill seeking and idolatry of gear. In most cases it has as much to do with being in and appreciating the outdoors as would be the Yankees' claim that they play baseball because they are outdoor enthusiasts. The mountain biking industry, along with its trade associations (like BikesBelong and IMBA), on the other hand, is driven by sales and consumption and it openly fuels biker extremism and aggression.

Wrapped in body armour, virtually unable to look left or right, hearing impaired (by helmets and riding noise), engrossed in overpowering and surviving the trails and their "obstacles" – labeled in one mountain biker forum as "whoopdeedos" — and pumped with adrenaline and testosterone (75% or more of bikers are white males) this is an activity that negates every one of the benefits for me of being outdoors: enjoying and interacting with the natural world, finding solitude and escaping from the stress, noise and pressures of modern society. Mountain biking assaults the principle of ecological integrity found in section 8 (2) of the *National Parks Act*.

In the backcountry of Waterton National Park.
PHOTO: H. UNGER

We also should be concerned about mountain bikes in National Parks because of the threat aggressive mountain bike riders traveling at high speeds pose to other trail users and to themselves. A group of physicians familiar with the behaviour and impacts of mountain bikers and bikes says it best: "We as physicians see the shared use of these narrow trails as hazardous to both pedestrians and cyclists. Because these dangers are inherently obvious, as has happened elsewhere, pedestrians would begin to avoid these shared trails, reducing their options for recreation and exercise." And that's precisely what is happening in Jasper NP, where bikers have now taken control of over 200 kilometres of former hiking and walking trails.

Mountain bikers and the mountain biking industry have so far waged a highly successful campaign to deny the impacts and conflicts of their passion. As Minister Prentice's announcement suggests, they have pulled the blinders over the eyes of management agencies and fooled the public. But the reality of their impacts and conflicts will inevitably come to light.

The incremental and cumulative environmental and social impacts of mountain biking should be as obvious as the schnozzola was on Jimmy Durante's face, yet management agencies seem to be indifferent or in denial. The physical impacts of bikers that travel as much as 70 kilometres a day are seven to 10 times greater than the average hiker. With weight loadings on tires that are 6 to 8 times greater than those of the human foot, their impacts on soils, streams and vegetation are far more significant. These impacts are seriously aggravated by skidding, spinning, cornering, and jumping, much of those behaviours deliberate. Yet some researchers and institutes insist that "the available published literature indicates that mountain biking (at least trail-based) as an anthropogenic disturbance is similar in its environmental effects as other forms of summer season trail use" as though extensive and growing mountain biking impacts were only significant if related to those of traditional legitimate hiking impacts.

Fortunately, other voices may be heard regarding the hazards of mountain biking; it should be obvious that the following also applies to the science, management, and prevention of impacts associated with biking: "we should not assume the lack of studies implies safety, nor should we allow the absence of scientific certainty to stand in the way of exercising our common sense." Regulation and protective management is based on extension and inference from existing information, common sense, and conflict elimination and it is irresponsible to keep passing the buck because of dubious claims that a smoking gun has not yet been identified.

The loss of habitat security, much of it due to fragmentation and fracturing of habitat, is a worldwide problem directly responsible for critical declines in fish and wildlife population viability and ominous losses of biological diversity. National Parks and wilderness areas were established partly to counter these threats and to prevent landscape degradation commonly found on private lands and public lands "managed" for extractive exploitation. When new trails are constructed to cater to bikers, or hikers and the walking public are displaced from existing trails by high speed vehicles (bikes), or "trails" become roads as they are hardened and widened to accommodate speed and all weather travel, wildlife displacement and harassment will escalate and habitat security and effectiveness will be damaged and lost. It is a massive distortion to imply, as Minister Prentice did in September, that these activities are somehow compatible with "unique and treasured protected areas"!

It is increasingly difficult to tell whether Canadians just don't care about insuring that our National Parks privilege ecological integrity over all else. I don't think this is the case for many. Rather, we suffer from being too blitzed by commercialization and private sector schemes, or from being pounded into a state of numbness by government resistance or from laying down our principles and rights to those who would exploit public resources and corrupt public consultation. Whatever the case may be, the sweep of mountain biking into National Parks will be a not so thin edge of a phalanx of privatization schemes wherein National Park managers join other public lands managers in throwing open the door to ecologically and socially destructive behaviour and commercial and economic interests. One thing is certain; we, the people, have been outfoxed and betrayed by those stakeholders who claim to represent us. Canadians are slowly letting themselves become "customers," and customers always pay when using a "product;" National Parks, which we still own and once thought we controlled, are no exception. Commercial interests, and mountain bikers, are turning our National Parks into Disneyland.

Brian L. Horejsi earned a PhD in the behavioural ecology of large mammals from the University of Calgary. He has worked for governments, industry and non-profit organizations since then. He is particularly interested in maintaining public ownership and control of public lands, wildlife and democratic processes.

The Willmore: Stronger Management… What's So Evil About World Heritage Status?

By Ian Urquhart

The Wild Lands Advocate's "Recall of the Wild" feature has taught me much. Its articles have showed me just how longstanding and deeply felt the appreciation for "wild spaces" is in Alberta. The views many current AWA members have about the importance of wilderness are not new, they are not radical. In fact, their views are traditional inasmuch as they reflect what many citizens before them believed. On the other hand, a feature like "Recall of the Wild" also inspires regret, regret you never had the chance to hear from earlier generations of Alberta's wilderness advocates.

The Honourable Norman A. Willmore, who died tragically in an automobile accident in 1965, would be close to the top of my list of those from earlier generations I would have liked to meet and learn from. One of the few quotations of his I am familiar with is from a speech he delivered as a cabinet minister 55 years ago. In my opinion few, if any, ministers in today's provincial government seem likely to believe what he said: "The broad basic problem is whether or not the Government should condone and encourage the industrialization of Alberta at the expense of the rivers, the air and the countryside of our Province through a lack of policy and foresight, or should we endeavour to promote industrialization in an orderly manner which will bring the greatest possible benefits to all the people in Alberta without necessitating the improper exploitation of our greatest nature resources – which are the air we breathe and the water and the soil."

With death came recognition. The Province of Alberta gave Willmore's name in 1965 to nearly 4,600 square kilometres of wilderness park near Grande Cache. But, as is so typical of recent Alberta history, demands to cripple the wilderness values embodied in Willmore Wilderness Park soon emerged. Through legislative fiat, the boundaries of the park have been reduced on two occasions. Willmore thankfully is recognized in its own piece of legislation, the Willmore Wilderness Park Act. Section 4 of the Act specifically and wisely prohibits "any industrial activities" from taking place within the Park.

Despite this prohibition AWA has been concerned for years that the Park does not have a management plan. This past August AWA met with Mr. Bill Werry, the Deputy Minister of Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation (TPR), and reiterated the Association's view that a management plan is a key tool that should be drafted to guide management actions. While AWA supports now, as it has for the last 40 years, traditional land-use activities in the Park such as outfitting, trapping, hunting and fishing we want to insure two things: first, that no non-traditional activities (such as major recreational developments) ever are allowed into the Willmore and second, that traditional activities are conducted in a way that do not diminish the wilderness, historical and cultural values embodied in Norman Willmore's vision.

AWA is pleased that Alberta TPR is committed to enhanced patrols and enforcement activities in the Park. AWA also agrees with the government that cabins erected in the Willmore as part of TPR's patrolling activities will be secured and unavailable as routine destinations for park users. The cabins are there for historical appreciation, Parks staff use and emergency situations. These initiatives by the government, along with surveys of visitors, seem to AWA to be essential to fulfilling the promise of the Act to the current and future generations.

Although AWA supports many of the activities and statements of the Willmore Wilderness Foundation (WWFdn) we part company when it comes to one important possibility for the future of the Willmore: UNESCO World Heritage Site status. In 2006 the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) made an overture to the federal government about applying to add the Willmore, and other areas adjacent to the Rocky Mountain Parks, to the Rocky Mountain World Heritage Site. Unfortunately, from AWA's perspective, this possibility appears stalled, if not dead. Parks Canada recently stated that an application has not been submitted to expand the Rocky Mountain World Heritage Site. Although Parks Canada, for its part, still claims to be interested in working with the governments of Alberta and British Columbia on such an application they believe the two provinces "appear to have some other priorities."

The Parks Canada communication confirms an email sent in late 2009 or early 2010 to Susan Feddema-Leonard of the WWFdn. Camille Weleschuk, TPR's Public Affairs Officer, stated: "Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation is not actively working on a Parks Canada submission to expand the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site in Alberta…The Parks Division does not have resources allocated to pursue addition of provincial parks to the World Heritage Site at this time."

As much as this situation concerns AWA it must delight the Willmore Wilderness Foundation. The Foundation's

Ridgetop view of Eagle's Nest Pass, Willmore Wilderness Park.
PHOTO: R.V. RASMUSSEN

Persimmon basin, Willmore Wilderness Park.
PHOTO: R.V. RASMUSSEN

January 2010 newsletter is a great source of information about where the World Heritage Site expansion application stands. Unfortunately, for me, it is also filled with dubious fears about what applying for and actually receiving official World Heritage Site status would entail and mean. The newsletter raises the spectre that mysterious international interests may be using such an application to try to seize control of Canadian headwaters. The spectre is raised when the newsletter asks the questions: "Do international interests want control of our headwaters? Is that what is behind all this sudden need to nominate the rest of Alberta's eastern slopes?" Where, I wondered in reading this, is there one scintilla of evidence that would make such questions worth considering?

When it comes to the application process Susan Feddema-Leonard, the article's author, seems worried about "secretive backroom deals" that would cede control to foreign interests of a Park that matters very much, and I would say rightly so, to members of the Foundation. Why? Weleschuk's email to her stated: "Any change like a world heritage site expansion would involve an *extensive consultation process* to make sure we know what Albertans want for their provincial parks." (my emphasis) So, the Foundation has a written commitment to extensive public consultation. But, Feddema-Leonard feels that public consultation is something to be suspicious of too. She writes: "Public consultation can be a manipulative process. The manipulation comes in the way questions are phrased, and unsuspecting citizens are easily duped into agreeing to questions of which they are not fully informed." Sure, consultations may be massaged, maybe even manipulated, but where does her perspective leave us? Should justifiable concerns about "secretive backroom deals" and less-valid ones about the merits of consulting citizens lead us just not to raise or consider the issue at all. This is what such obviously contradictory positions say to me.

Finally, readers are told that the "Foundation feels a need to stay alert at all times and be aware of foreign threats to our western way of life and traditions…" On the one hand, I agree unequivocally. I enjoy all-too-rare time in Alberta's wilder spaces with either a fly rod or a candidate for the "long-gun registry" under my arm. I also believe outfitters and trappers are important to the meaning and understandings we have of this place. We would be diminished without them.

So the question then becomes: "Is there anything in World Heritage Site status that would threaten "our western way of life and traditions?" My trusting nature is confirmed by the fact I am convinced by what the Alberta government has to say about this important question. Government officials, after all, probably have spent more time thinking about this issue than me or anyone from the Willmore Wilderness Foundation has. Please see the adjacent text box for the government's interpretation of what World Heritage Site designation would mean for the activities that both the Foundation and myself think are valuable ones.

What is stated, plain as the gorgeous fall day I have to view from my office, in that text box is what genuinely angers me when I read what some "Progressive" Conservative members of the legislature had to say in an April debate about the Willmore Wilderness Park. The fear mongering engaged in by some members of the governing party in that debate may only be justified, in my view, by their informed suspicion that few members of the Alberta (or, shudder, the global) public would actually read what they said. Ty Lund's comments (member for Rocky Mountain House and one-time Minister of the Environment) stand out for me. How could a former Minister of the Crown (presumably Ministers are informed MLAs) actually infer in the official record of Alberta's most important democratic institution – the Legislature – that World Heritage Site status would mean that Albertans would "start turning these things over to, say, UNESCO." Or, how could the MLA who moved the motion being debated (Motion 507) say at the end of the debate that: "Motion 507 may not be popular among certain environmentalists who have urged a greater *global control* over Alberta lands…" (my emphasis)

May I recommend that those MLAs consult their own government's statement in the text box (a statement not crafted, obviously, by any environmental organization). If they are unsure what "commemorative" means I am sure many of their colleagues in the government caucus may be of assistance.

So, to conclude, perhaps I should apologize to those who are still reading this article and object to the idea of taking issue with what the Willmore Wilderness Foundation and government members of the legislature have to say about a Park that I cherish no less than they do. But, I won't. Frankly, I am angry about and distressed by the extent to which people today, in public debates about environmental issues that matter to all of us, seem willing to speak on and base their assertions on a foundation of quicksand. If you think there is little evidence to justify the claims people make - call them and demand they support their argument.

How does an area's designation as a World Heritage Site affect current activities and land use?

- World Heritage Site designation is commemorative. It does not change recreational activities permitted on the land, although the status of the outstanding universal values being recognized by the designation must be maintained.

- For example, if Willmore Wilderness Park were to receive World Heritage status, activities like hiking, horseback riding, backcountry camping, hunting and fishing would continue to be permitted, as would Willmore's trapping and commercial guiding/outfitting operations, as long as they continue to be properly managed.

Source: http://www.tpr.alberta.ca/parks/managing/whs.asp

Potatogate: Turning Endangered Species Habitat into Potato Chips

By Nigel Douglas, AWA Conservation Specialist

Connections, it would seem, are everything. If you have the right contacts within the Alberta government and its bureaucracy, it appears that Public Land in southern Alberta is available for sale – never mind if it is vital habitat for endangered species, or one of the few remaining large areas of native prairie in the province. And never mind that the land is owned already: by you and me. The Alberta government manages Public Lands on behalf of all Albertans: or at least that is what should be the case. Sadly, the distance between reality and rhetoric seems to be as far away as the prairie horizon on a clear, crisp October day.

In early September 2010, AWA learned that, through a secret government process, 25 sections – or 16,000 acres – of public land was about to be sold to SLM Spud Farms Ltd. The land, near Bow Island, is predominantly native prairie and is known to be home for several species listed under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (including burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, Sprague's pipit, chestnut-collared longspur, McCown's longspur, short-eared owl, and long-billed curlew). But despite the importance of this habitat to these species, if the sale goes ahead, the land will be ploughed up and used to grow potatoes.

At the time of writing the proposed public land sale was before Cabinet for approval. If the details had not been leaked out by AWA, then none of us would have been any the wiser: it appears that we, the owners of this land, have no right to any information, let alone any consultation, when our public land is being disposed of.

According to Minister of Sustainable Resource Development Mel Knight, speaking in a radio interview on Let's Go Outdoors radio, broadcast on September 19, this counts as doing business "in an open and transparent manner." In that interview, Minister Knight commented: "There never is a requirement for public consultation with respect to the sale of public land for agricultural use. This has been going on in Alberta since before it was a province and there never has been public consultation to my knowledge." How this equals doing business "in an open and transparent manner" was not explained.

Habitat for numerous species at risk –such as this ferruginous hawk – stands to be destroyed if the proposed Bow Island land sale goes ahead.
PHOTO: C. OLSON

The timing of the proposed land deal is particularly ironic, given that a few short days earlier, Albertans were being asked by the government for input on the new sample regulations for the provincial *Public Lands Act*. AWA's comments in a September 3 letter to Minister Knight, are particularly prophetic: "There is an obvious deficiency in the Sample Regulations in regard to defining a meaningful public process for notification of plans for sale, trade and disposition of

public lands" (see side bar).

The lack of any sort of transparent, public process for the disposal of our land could not have been any better illustrated than by the secretive process which has led us to the verge of losing another 16,000 acres of precious native grassland. There seems little reason to believe that the new regulations will fix the current, noxiously secretive, system of land sales.

History Repeating Itself

For readers of the *Wild Lands Advocate* this is a familiar story. In an article in the December 2007 *WLA* ("Storm Brewing on the Prairies – Public Lands up for Grabs") Joyce Hildebrand detailed previous sales of public land to Louis Ypma, owner of SLM Spud Farms Ltd. "In 2004 Ypma acquired a similar piece of native prairie for potato production – this was also public land, in the same area as the land he is now looking to acquire. He took title of the land in January 2004, but ploughed the land during peak nesting season in spring 2003 – while it still belonged to Albertans." According to documents acquired at the time through the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPP), this deal went ahead despite a wildlife survey that found evidence of four at-risk wildlife species on the land that was sold and cultivated, and despite the fact that Fish and Wildlife biologists were opposed to the sale of these public lands.

More than anything, the current land sale debacle illustrates what AWA has been saying for more than four decades: Alberta desperately needs a publicly developed public lands policy to deal with all aspects of public land, including access, sales, management, and conservation. No such policy currently exists. AWA opposes any further destruction of native prairie grassland and sales of public land until a public lands policy is developed through a transparent and democratic public process. Recent developments would suggest that Alberta may be further away from open and public management of public land than at any time in the province's recent history.

The Government of Alberta's 2010 Business Plan for Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) defines the ministry's mission as "Stewardship of Alberta's lands, forests, fish and wildlife that benefits both present and future generations of Albertans." One of SRD's stated goals is "leading Government of Alberta efforts to conserve biological diversity and enable sound management of Alberta's natural resources on a sustainable basis." It is high time that the ministry started to live up to these lofty, admirable goals, rather than bowing to the special interests who seek to make a killing out of the destruction of our native public lands.

Franco Lo Pinto's work often depicts bison and this particular bowl was highly sought after at the 2010 Wild West gala.
PHOTO: N. DOUGLAS

On September 3 2010, before knowledge of the upcoming land sale leaked out, AWA wrote to Minister of Sustainable Resource Development Mel Knight, offering recommendations to improve the Sample Regulations for the *Public Lands Act*. AWA's comments included:

- There is an obvious deficiency in the Sample Regulations in regard to defining a meaningful public process for notification of plans for sale, trade and disposition of public lands.

- The Sample Regulations need to specify a public consultation process if public lands are to be sold or traded. Once again we will emphasize that AWA is adamantly opposed to the sale of any public lands. The Sample Regulations propose enabling the Minister to "exchange public land for other land if, *in the opinion of the Minister*, adequate compensation is obtained for the public land" (emphasis added). This provision has not been well applied in the past when the advice of Fish and Wildlife staff about the conservation value of a piece of land has been ignored. AWA believes that deferring to the "opinion of the Minister" is not adequate; there must be a defined public process.

- A public process for the disposition of public land should be graded according to the environmental significance of the land: more environmentally significant land should go through a more stringent process.

Newcomers to Wild Spaces

By Nuno Fragoso

Alberta's population, due in part to our strong economy, has grown impressively in recent times. Statistics Canada reported that Alberta's 2006 population was 3,290,350, 25.2 percent higher than it was in 1996. Foreign immigration is an important part of that growth and is changing dramatically the demographic composition of our citizens. To take Calgary as an example, in 2006 23.6 percent of Calgarians were born abroad.

Given immigration's importance it is imperative that organizations like AWA try to expand their membership and include these new Canadians. As an increasingly significant component of the Canadian citizenry they are now, and will be more so in the future, a crucial source of support for our goals.

Recognizing this, AWA sponsored generously with a grant by Mountain Equipment Co-op, partnered with Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) to introduce recent immigrants to Alberta's natural regions. Part of this introduction came via the classroom. AWA was invited to give a presentation to CCIS's Language Instruction for Newcomers Classes (LINC Level 4 & 5). The students heard about AWA programs and its mission to defend wilderness through awareness and action. They also learned about the diversity of Alberta's landscape and were encouraged to get out and explore it.

But, without a great deal of experience and exposure to Alberta, the idea of exploring our foreign landscapes is very daunting. The basic questions of what to do, where to go, how to get there, and what to bring are even more challenging to answer when you know few people, have limited resources and may have difficulty speaking the language. To help with these concerns the students were invited to join AWA staff and volunteers, as part of AWA's "Newcomers to Wild Spaces" initiative, on a day trip to Dry Island Buffalo Jump.

The first half of the road trip was rather quiet as students were nervous and hesitant to ask questions in their second language. But as we left the city behind us and started to see things many AWA members and Albertans take for granted, the questions started to flow. Who knew that hay bails, grain elevators, and natural gas wells were novel and exciting. Seeing what for us are everyday items through the eyes of someone who has never seen them, allows you to see them anew yourself and makes them a little less common place. Tom Beck, a founding member of AWA, shared our history with the students; Nigel Douglas described for them the plight of grizzly bears. Their information fascinated the students. But, I am not sure Nigel convinced them all that grizzlies like Chinese food! Such jokes may be, for the time being at least as a recent movie title suggests, "lost in translation."

Participants in AWA's "Newcomers to Wild Spaces" program were able to explore the dramatic landscapes of the Dry Island Buffalo Jump.
PHOTO: T. BARRATT

As we approached the Park, there was a strong chorus of "oohs and ahs" as the ground gave way and the Red Deer River Valley appeared before us. The students were captivated instantly by the views from the lookout, scanning along the buffalo jump and across to the mesa. We were fortunate to have local residents and AWA members, Rob and Tjarda Barratt, as tour guides for the day. Their love and knowledge of the area and its history were evident immediately. As they shared details on how the area was formed and how it has been used over the centuries the interest in the day's hike grew. The highlights for many included hearing about near-by fossil discoveries that created the hope they might stumble across a dinosaur bone. Such hopes depend on insuring that that precious landscape remains intact.

After a delicious lunch on the Red Deer River, we set off on a two-hour hike to reach the top of the mesa. As we hiked, smaller groups formed and personal stories were shared between students and AWA members. Diveristies of languages and cultures, our differences, were rendered much smaller as common interests and experiences were found. Throughout the hike local and foreign names and uses for rocks, plants, and animals were exchanged. Hearing how wild sage may be used in tea to alleviate discomfort during pregnancy was interesting, but learning that bentonite may be used in a paste applied to the belly button to alleviate a fever was eyebrow raising to say the least!

Though not everyone made it to the top of the mesa, everyone shared a strong sense of accomplishment and awe. Regrettably, the time to return to the bus and head back to Calgary came too soon for all. But the enthusiasm among these new Canadians to get out and explore was palpable and they welcomed AWA memberships and MEC gift cards. The future of the landscapes Albertans have loved rest significantly with our new neighbours – let's do as much as we can to encourage them to leave a healthy environmental legacy to their children.

Sunrise On A Mountain Top

By Heinz Unger, AWA President

For the past few years Heinz Unger, AWA's President, and his wife Marilyn, have offered a fabulous outing as an auction item during the September Gala - an evening at their home along the Ghost River and a hike up Black Rock Mountain to see the sun rise. Here's Heinz's account of last year's hike.

On top of the world.
PHOTO: H. UNGER

A practice I remember from my youth, when mountaineering in the Austrian Alps, was to get up in the middle of the night to start a climb. We'd stumble around groggily, get our lights and gear and scramble upwards in the darkness for a few hours. We did this mainly for safety, in order to summit before the sun made the snowy and icy slopes treacherous. The sunrise on top was "just" a bonus. At the time, I couldn't have imagined that almost 50 years later, I'd be doing the same thing in the Rockies, waking at 2 a.m. just for the pleasure of watching a sunrise with new friends.

We'd had a fun evening with four delightful young guests from Calgary who had come out to our house overlooking the Ghost River. At the last AWA Gala they'd won the bidding for the "Black Rock Mountain Sunrise Hike", with me as their "guide". Over dinner we had talked about our different interests and experiences, and although they all were active in various sports (one of them was a triathlon athlete) and loved nature and the outdoors, none of them had any actual mountain-climbing experience.

After a quick cup of coffee we were off, driving up the Forestry Trunk Road and then the Transalta Road to the trailhead on the North Ghost River. It's quiet and dark on the drive, except for the glimpses of some large bonfires by random campers in the Ghost. There's no moon, the sky is clear and the stars are very bright. We find the trailhead and turn off our flashlights, because hiking in the dark makes for a much more aware and connected experience. It takes a while for our eyes to adjust to the dark, and for everyone to become comfortable walking on the forest trail without stumbling. It's amazing how much we can see with just the stars shining through the treetops: in the few clearings we cross, we even cast faint shadows in the starlight. We don't talk much, focusing on the trail below our feet and the quiet night noises in the forest. Birds, deer, or… what else could that noise be? Someone wonders aloud whether bears are active during the night ….. Although the early morning air is cool, we're starting to perspire due to the crisp pace set by the triathlon athlete.

My son Kris and I had scouted this night hike a few years ago, after enjoying sunrise climbs of Jamaica's Blue Mountain, Egypt's Mt. Sinai, and determinedly taking pleasure from an unplanned all-night hike from South Ghost Pass to Lake Minnewanka the year before. Black Rock Mountain, in the Don Getty Provincial Wildland Park on the North Ghost River, is a former fire lookout, right at the edge of the forested foothills. At an elevation of 2,450 metres it offers beautiful views in clear weather, looking out across the foothills, meadows and prairie. Calgary is but a distant glow. Seeing a sunrise from a mountaintop is magical, spiritual, and I'm sure the practice goes back a long way, to ancient rites and rituals. I've enjoyed the experience so much that I wanted to introduce others to such a beautiful adventure.

After more than an hour, the trail leaves the forest and climbs through steep meadows, below the looming towers of the mountain. We start to see some light in the northeastern sky and can begin to make out the grey silhouettes of the surrounding mountains, and the dark blue hues of the valleys below us. In the slowly brightening light, we climb easily over rocks and through scree up a steep gulley that leads us to the wide and gently sloping meadows reaching up to the rocky peak still far ahead of us.

After another hour we reach the peak; we're soaked in sweat. A cold, strong wind makes us take shelter in what's left of the fire lookout structure – rough-hewn planks and wind-battered shingles frame empty windows. Our attention is on the eastern sky and horizon: glowing shades of red, orange and yellow interspersed with darker clouds, while the prairie landscape far below us is still dark, almost black. The valleys, lakes and wetlands are covered by pale, slowly swirling mist. We huddle and shiver, waiting for what seems like hours before the sun finally rises, sending long bright rays high into the sky: a huge orange disk slicing through the clouds. Light and colours change completely the moment the sun is fully up, and the earth, including our small group, is reborn for another day. We watch the giant shadow of Black Rock Mountain cast across the Ghost valley onto Phantom Crag and start to feel the warmth of the rising sun. It's simply magic.

We share snacks, take lots of pictures of the quickly changing scenery and just enjoy the moment on the top. On our way down, in the high meadows below the rocks and scree of the peak pyramid, we spot some bighorn ewes closely guarded by a big ram, indifferent to us as we watch them through our binoculars. Further down, the meadows are lush and abundant with wildflowers. We hear the whistle of the hoary marmot, and eventually see him

sitting still on a rock outcrop, enjoying the view over the valley. There's a great spot on a vertical, almost overhanging, drop-off of several hundred metres where the braver of us pose for pictures. The others admire and want to identify the abundant alpine flowers in the now bright sunlight, and we marvel at the beauty and great variety of the mountain flora all the way down the mountain to the trailhead.

Once we reach the valley bottom, I can tell from the faces of my companions that this was more than just a good workout for the new mountaineers – it was also a profound nature experience, maybe even something spiritual. It begins in the silence and dark, and proceeds to beauty and light where we admire the splendour of life on the mountain. It happens to me every time I hike Black Rock Mountain.

Dawn from the summit.
PHOTO: K. UNGER

AWA's 2010 Wild West Gala

The *Wild West Gala* is a wonderful evening when we celebrate our wild spaces, wildlife, wild water and the passion we all have from knowing these wild things. It is a tradition where friends, colleagues, members and supporters gather to enjoy a great meal and an evening filled with entertainment, conversation, auctions and plain good fun. The success of this event is entirely dependent on the volunteer spirit that was such an admirable part of the frontier tradition. We thank everyone for joining the fun and making our 22nd Wild West Gala the best one yet!

Everyone had a great time swinging to the entertainment provided by Tim Williams and his band the Electro-Fires. John Reid and Blaine Hraibi opened for Tim. Our own Nigel Douglas displayed one of his many talents by offering a song as well.
PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

Our guests joined Executive Director Christyann Olson in a toast to Wild Alberta.
PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

Jesse Starling from Graham Auctions runs the bidding during the always-entertaining live auction portion of the evening.
PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

Volunteers, like Ian and Sarah, are the heart and soul of AWA; we couldn't possibly put on a successful evening like the Wild West Gala without them!
PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

Donations Help Create Successes

We cannot emphasize enough, as we are in the middle of our fall fundraising campaign, how vital individual and institutional donations are to AWA's efforts to sustain and restore the ecological integrity of our landscapes. There is an important link between your donations and successes such as the expansion of Sir Winston Churchill Park.

Fiona Mulvena and Karen Thompson of Kinder Morgan present AWA's Nigel Douglas with a cheque for $900 to support AWA's trail maintenance work in the Bighorn. AWA is very grateful for Kinder Morgan's continued support of this work.
PHOTO: C. CAMPBELL

Tom Maccagno, long-time AWA member, along with many others hears about the expansion of Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park during September's designation ceremony. AWA believes Tom's long-standing passion for the natural jewels in the Lac la Biche area, plus AWA's commitment, was important to the Park's expansion.
PHOTO: N. RAFFAEL

AWA Director Vivian Pharis tempts the crowd with her home-grown organic vegetables.
PHOTO: K. MIHALCHEON

Diane Mihalcheon holds Calgary Flames Cory Sarich's jersey high, while she talks up the guests.
PHOTO: K. MIHALCHEON

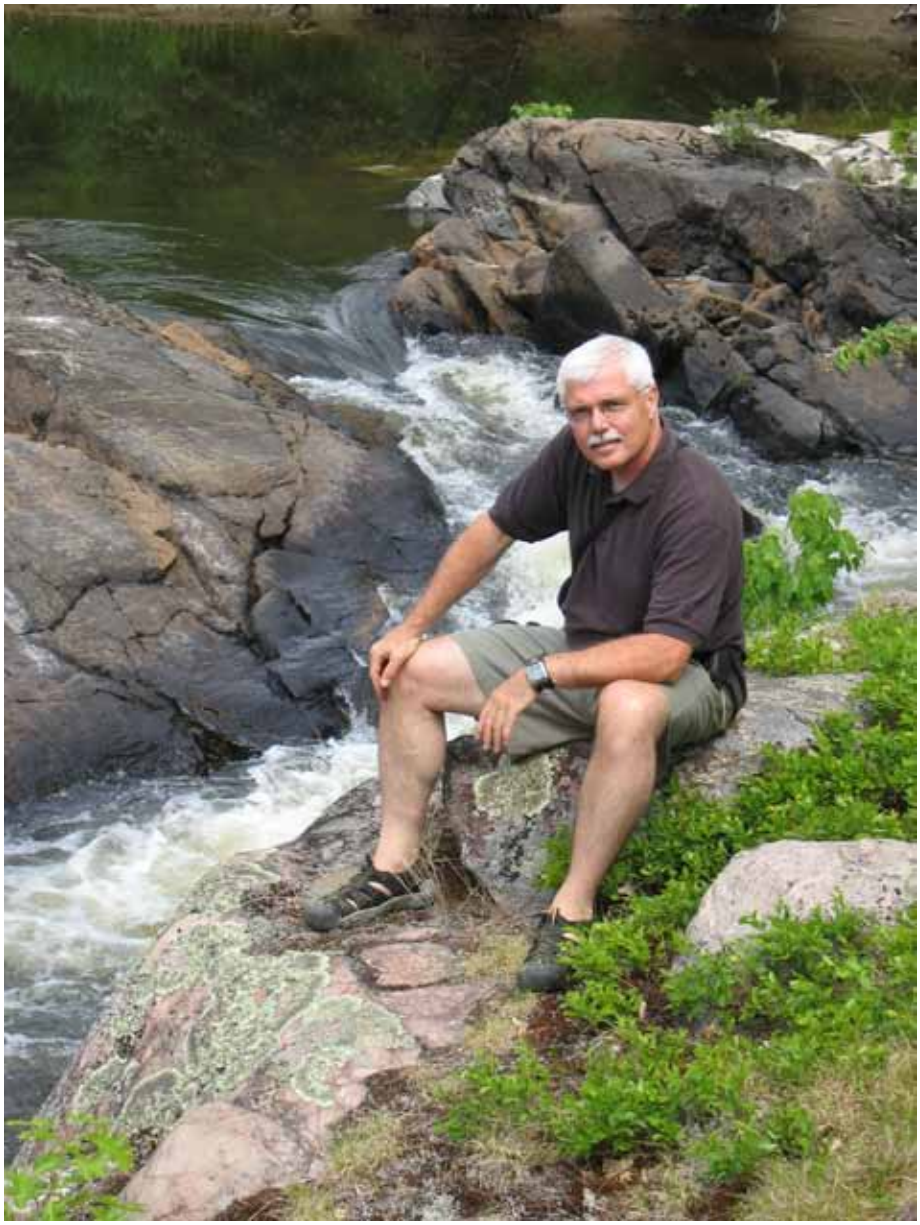
One way to get Albertans to pay attention to grizzly bears may be to ask the bears to hand out the grub!
PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

AWA member Lee Tymchuk's homemade bread was snapped up quickly.
PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

The Red and White Club was turned briefly into a farmers' market as the tables overflowed with a wealth of freshly-baked goods and produce for sale at the auction.
PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

Peter Lee: I Know Martha Would Approve

By Ian Urquhart



Having spoken to more than my fair share of pretentious souls in industry, government and the academy over the past 23 years it was a real pleasure to interview Peter Lee. Pretentious is probably the last adjective any sane person would use to describe the conservationist who will deliver this year's Martha Kostuch annual lecture and, with Tom Beck, receive a Wilderness Defenders Award on November 19th.

Peter is the Executive Director of Global Forest Watch Canada, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of information we have about how we use Canada's forests and what the environmental consequences of our activities are. Like a home-run hitter he has touched all the bases that figure in the debates about environmental issues in Alberta. His career is one that has seen him work with industry, government, and non-governmental organizations. After graduating from Lakehead University with a Bachelor's degree in Geography in the late 1960s Peter, like many a young man then, came west to work on the rigs. He soon found himself in the offices of Syncrude as part of the team that wrote the company's initial environmental assessment in the early 1970s.

The Love of the Outdoors – the Need for Protected Areas

Peter's love of the outdoors, nature and wildlife came from where he grew up, on the north shore of Lake Superior in the boreal forest of the Canadian Shield. The pulp mill town he grew up in truly was in a wilderness setting; only the railway connected it to Thunder Bay, then known as Fort William and Port Arthur, the major population centre of northwestern Ontario. Family, especially his father who was an avid hunter and fisherman, nurtured this love of nature and also encouraged Peter to get the best education he could.

These interests led Peter, after his stint with Syncrude, to the University of Alberta's Master's program in Biological Sciences. He recounted how his Master's research took him to the "terrestrial, island paradise" of Cypress Hills Provincial Park where he studied the competition between elk and cattle. Even then pressures, from ranching and tourism, were being felt in the Park. "I think because of Cypress Park," he recalled, "I started to connect the extraordinary importance of protected areas to insure that…either naturally beautiful areas or naturally wildlife rich areas were maintained in the longterm."

The Government Years and Life Thereafter

The nearly 20 years Peter spent working in the Alberta government may have been pre-ordained by the fact that the government, to its credit, helped to fund his Master's research. On the one hand, those years were rich and interesting ones, filled with opportunities to visit and study parts of Alberta few of us get the chance to see; and, then, as now, the public service had very talented biologists who he enjoyed working with. But, with the passage of time the public service environment became increasingly frustrating. Part of that frustration arose from the administrative reorganizations

"The Sun" was created with red clay from Medicine Hat. The clay's textures add dimension to this large piece.
PHOTO: N. DOUGLAS

that, like the changing seasons, regularly took place in the province's renewable resources/environmental bureaus. Those reorganizations diverted staff attention from their substantive mandates. Frustration also arose from the fact that the distance between politicians and public servants, the concept of administrative accountability that existed when Peter began his career, evapourated. As any textbook on public administration will tell you political "interference" at the lower levels of public bureaucracies – whether by Ministers or MLAs – is inappropriate; so too are political appointments at the levels of the administration normally occupied by career public servants. "I was beginning to realize," Peter said, "that my either usefulness or value or even interest in my job in government was waning… I moved on and tried to do some more exciting stuff that really excited me."

World Wildlife Fund Canada first gave Peter that opportunity, an opportunity he now pursues through his work with Global Forest Watch Canada (GFWC). Global Forest Watch (www.globalforestwatch.ca) monitors forest development across Canada with sophisticated technologies such as satellite imagery and Geographical Information System (GIS) software. Given the fact that, in Canada, provinces own the natural resources on their public lands there was very little national data or national analyses of forest resources available. This niche is one that GFWC has filled very well over the past decade.

GFWC is a very fitting destination for Peter to arrive at in light of some comments he made nearly 20 years ago at a community-based boreal forest conference in Athabasca. During part of his presentation on the "boreal wilds" he noted that issue simplification, even public manipulation, was an important, unfortunate, part of the debate then about the future of Alberta's boreal forest. GFWC's mandate and the information it provides is a vaccine against exaggerated claims – whether made by industry, government, or environmentalists. "I think part of our job…is to get the facts out, the information out…and we don't pretend to be the purveyor of truth…but the pursuit of that is the right thing to do… to make sure your fellow citizens have… the information…"

How to Measure Success?

When you ask Peter to look back over his career and talk about his accomplishments his response is modest and self-deprecating. He is reluctant to say that he has made a difference over the more than 30 years he has been involved in conservation issues or that the "I must make a difference" mindset is really a positive one. In part that comes from his knowledge that today's successes may be short-term. They may vanish (one example of this that immediately came to my mind was what happened to the McClelland Lake wetlands – with a stroke of a pen their protection from tar sands mining was taken away in 2002).

Lee prefers to think of our accomplishments in terms of how we behave, how we interact with others. A successful life then is one where we "act with integrity, try to be a role model, have some fun…" It's that concern with integrity that led Peter and Dr. Kevin Timoney to threaten to launch a defamation lawsuit against a senior Alberta Environment scientist who argued publicly that Lee and Timoney reported data selectively to make their case that oil sands operations pollute the Athabasca River. The scientist apologized.

Never Overestimate the Opposition

Lee's outlook on how to measure success animates and guides his approach to how we should "do" conservation. Conservationists "should always go for the jugular… but you have to do it with integrity…You have to be tough…because there is so much against you. They have all the money; they have all the political support; they have all the cards."

Despite the money and political support industry and politicians enjoy Peter has, what struck me at first as, some surprising advice for advocates: Never overestimate your opponent. Despite the well-known disadvantage environmentalists face when it comes to political resources Peter sees environmentalists as still possessing an important edge over their opponents because opponents "don't have the commitment or the passion, hardly ever." The failure to recognize the fundamental strength that passion, commitment and the intelligence produced by those two characteristics bestows on advocates too often leads them, mistakenly in Peter's view, to overestimate their opponents. Lacking commitment and passion the opponents of environmentalism are more likely to make mistakes, which in the media age we live in, often means letting themselves become media targets.

Where are We Now? What About the Future?

As I alluded to above I think the first time I saw Peter was at a conference on the boreal forest in the fall of 1991. He made a number of observations then that foreshadowed well the path Alberta was about to take. One of them was that our species was becoming increasingly interested in subduing the boreal, rather than just trying to fit in. So I wanted to ask Peter for his views on what had changed in Alberta since then and what he thought the future held for us.

We both agree that our species has been doing an excellent job of subduing the boreal since then. As Peter noted, "the pace and scale of industrial activities in the boreal forest is jaw-dropping." But, in his view, there is still time to insure that, at least nationally or globally, a significant portion of the boreal may be spared from feeling the bootprint of industrialization. If we consider the boreal in those two contexts, not from the local or regional ones, "there is still probably over 50 percent of the boreal still in its historic pristine state. So…it is one of those conservation opportunities that is unparalleled just because of the size and magnitude of what's left even though the pace and scale of development is jaw-dropping."

The formidable nature of the boreal forest is an attribute Peter thinks might, despite our seemingly unstoppable technologies, force us to "fit in" more in the future than we have for the last generation. "It's a formidable environment and historically and maybe even in the future man will just have to learn to fit in and will never conquer the boreal." Amen to that.

PHOTO: C. WALLIS

Continuing Failure to Protect Burrowing Owl Habitat in Suffield

AWA is baffled by a federal government decision to limit habitat protection for the endangered burrowing owl. In a letter sent to Environment Minister Jim Prentice in September, AWA and other members of the Suffield Coalition voiced their concern that his department's apparently selective identification of critical habitat overlooks burrowing owls in the Suffield National Wildlife Area.

The *Species at Risk Act* required the federal government to produce a Recovery Strategy for the burrowing owl by June 2006 and to identify the species' critical habitat, to the extent possible, based on the best available information. Now four years late, the current draft still fails to do so. Once again, the issue is not one of a lack of data. Environment Canada, in its own testimony before a joint environmental assessment review panel in February 2008, noted that the endangered owls are known to nest in the area's rare natural prairie environment.

The case has echoes of the successful sage-grouse court case in 2009, when a federal court judge ruled that Environment Canada broke the law by refusing to identify critical habitat in its recovery strategy, stating that it was "unreasonable" for the government to claim it could not identify breeding grounds when knowledge of their locations was "notorious."

AWA believes that National Wildlife Areas should be havens for species at risk. The decision to overlook critical habitat for endangered burrowing owls in Suffield National Wildlife Area comes while the minister is still deciding whether or not to approve plans to drill 1,275 new gas wells in the area.

The Suffield Joint Review Panel released its report and recommendations regarding EnCana's proposed drilling project in the Suffield National Wildlife Area (NWA) in January 2009. The Panel confirmed the primary role of the NWA – to protect wildlife. AWA believes that the minister must act to prohibit any further oil and gas development in the NWA, and immediately identify known critical habitat for species at risk, including burrowing owls.

The Suffield Coalition comprises seven groups: Alberta Wilderness Association, Federation of Alberta Naturalists, World Wildlife Fund Canada, Nature Saskatchewan, Southern Alberta Group for the Environment, Grasslands Naturalists, and Nature Canada.

- Nigel Douglas

Lower Athabasca Regional Plan

AWA has both contributed to and closely watched the evolution of the provincial Land-use Framework planning process. We were supportive of the promised outcome of better management of cumulative effects on the landscape. In late August, the broad principles of the first regional plan were released for the Lower Athabasca, covering northeast Alberta. In September AWA staff participated in stakeholder and public consultation sessions on these principles in four locales: Fort Chipewyan, Fort McMurray, Lac La Biche and Calgary. We are disappointed to conclude that significant strengthening of the environmental commitments are needed for this to constitute an approach to cumulative effects management that respects Alberta's commitment to maintain biodiversity in the region.

The 40 page Vision document that Alberta's new Land-use Secretariat released in late August 2010 was drafted by its appointed Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council (RAC). This multi-stakeholder Council included tar sands industry, forestry industry, municipal, federal and aboriginal representation. There was a representative from a wetland conservation organization, but no member of the Alberta Environment Network, to which AWA belongs. The Vision document plus an accompanying "workbook" survey were the basis for public consultation sessions and written input from early September to early October. Regrettably, more detailed recommendations, whether unanimous or non-consensus, that were in "letters of advice" that RAC sent to Cabinet, remain secret, depriving the public of a key means to assess more fully what may be in store.

Before turning to our major concerns with the proposals, several positive concepts should be acknowledged. Outside existing protected areas, there are five main land zones proposed, with different priority uses: conservation, recreation and tourism, population centres, agriculture, and mixed-use resource (the latter mainly forestry and tar sands extraction). This is a step forward compared to the prevailing "all uses, anytime, anywhere" land management system. For example, we should recognize that recreation and tourism further important economic and social goals but that they are not necessarily compatible with conservation goals. Another good concept is to place a cap within the mixed-use resource area on the total footprint of oil sands (mining or in situ) extraction, which could shift locations as reclamation occurs – though we believe the suggested cap of 15 percent of the mixed-use area for intensive oil sands extraction is too high.

Another good concept is to identify overlays that cut across other zones and have special management considerations. Multi-use corridors in theory would bundle linear disturbance from transportation, pipeline and utility infrastructure to minimize environmental impacts. River and stream corridors would maintain water quality and quantity, maintain biodiversity and provide critical fish and wildlife habitat. There is reference to "equally

This conventional oil and gas installation on the approach to Lakeland Provincial Park is but a small example of growing linear disturbance fragmenting Alberta's boreal landscape. Conservation Areas with active forestry and tar sands leases, as proposed in the Lower Athabasca Vision document, would be practically meaningless for protecting ecological integrity.
PHOTO: G. WIRUN

important" aboriginal traditional use and recreation and tourism opportunities and "secondary intent" for commercial and industrial access in river corridors, so the concern would be to ensure these other uses didn't in practice undermine the ecological intent. And there is a third large overlay in the south called Lakeland Country that extends from Lac La Biche to the Saskatchewan border. Here the stated emphasis of "preservation of the aesthetic and ecological characteristics" must be honoured. It would be wise to develop an array of water-based recreation and tourism opportunities in some parts of that region and expand the backcountry conservation area around the ecologically sensitive lands where Lakeland Provincial Park and Recreation Area are now.

These positives notwithstanding, we cannot support the overall plan because the Conservation Areas look useless to us. As proposed, the use priority is stated to ensure ecosystem integrity, yet existing oil sands tenures would be "permitted to continue but will terminate when existing mineral tenures expire." Active oil sands leases of many decades would hugely erode biodiversity in a Conservation Area and render the area of no value with respect to protecting caribou range. Timber harvesting would be allowed in Conservation Areas to "protect the forest from wildfire, insects and disease," yet these are the natural disturbance regimes upon which the variable mosaic of boreal forest habitat relies. What is required in the plan is permanent legal protection from active energy or forestry tenures, as well as strictly limited motorized access. This is nowhere to be seen

The Vision document proposes 20 to 32 percent of the region as Conservation Areas, which would be progress from the current situation. Still, conservation science suggests we need 50 percent of the boreal region at a pre-disturbance state to meet biodiversity and species-at-risk commitments. Missing from the recommended Conservation Areas is the McClelland Lake wetland complex. There should also be more woodland caribou habitat protected and more representative areas in the south, informed by biodiversity needs. To meet urgent woodland caribou habitat needs, in particular, the provincial government should move promptly to establish protected areas in contiguous zones in the Lower Peace, Upper Peace, Upper Athabasca regions.

Periodically the Government of Alberta re-negotiates with federal officials the terms of the federal lease of provincially-owned lands on the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range. In fact, AWA learned at the end of September that a new round of negotiations is underway now. The province needs to act swiftly to designate Conservation Areas there, just as the province arranged for energy exploration on areas of the lease decades earlier. AWA understands that some areas that are not used now by the armed forces could be designated for primary conservation use, while other areas that are used but are still relatively intact, roadless habitat should be designated secondary conservation areas.

Another key weakness of the Vision document is this very weak guidance on a wetlands policy: "implement Alberta's new wetland policy once it is developed." Alberta's commitment to extend a wetland policy to the northern boreal forest is years overdue, and the policy should be the widely-supported compromise policy negotiated at the Alberta Water Council to maintain wetland areas and functions at a provincial level. We need to protect the exceptional McClelland wetland complex, Peace Athabasca Delta and other highly ecologically-valuable wetlands from industrial development. For other wetlands, in line with the "polluter pay" principle, industrial development proponents should have strong incentives to avoid wetland loss in their project design and compensate for boreal wetlands degraded or destroyed. Another huge concern is the proposal to allow significantly more destructive forms of forestry on public and private lands. AWA strongly rejects the recommendations that would allow forestry practices such as plantations, genetically modified species, thinning, and fertilization on public lands outside Conservation Areas. These

A summer evening on Lac La Biche. A pro-active approach to plan intensive recreation areas away from the most ecologically sensitive parts of Lakeland Country could be of positive environmental and economic value for the southern Lower Athabasca region.
PHOTO: S. COULSON

practices would greatly degrade habitat for many species, and would violate standards of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification currently in place for the Forest Management Agreement area leased by Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Inc. (Al-Pac) over much of the Lower Athabasca. We are even concerned about these proposals applying to private lands because of their harmful impacts to biodiversity. The future of Canadian forestry is sustainable, ecosystem-based management at FSC certification standards, not plantations, particularly on the vast tracts of public lands in the northern boreal forest.

For surface water and groundwater management, the general concepts put forth in the Vision document are sound and overdue, namely, identifying key indicators for quantity and quality, establishing triggers and thresholds, and implementing strong monitoring. The threshold for defining fresh groundwater should be broadened in line with other jurisdictions to better manage a broader spectrum of this resource, and *in situ* operating requirements should be tightened to reduce risk of further fresh and near-freshwater aquifer contamination. Given the past precedents on the Bow, Oldman and Athabasca Rivers, we question whether quantity thresholds will be set at sufficiently precautionary levels given aquatic ecosystem and groundwater knowledge gaps. We also question whether there is political will to fund sound monitoring and actually reduce contaminants from emissions and tailings waste. However, the actual details of these water and air management frameworks are not yet public.

The central problem in the Lower Athabasca region is that the government has over-leased our lands to forestry and energy interests. For forestry, the Vision document proposals seem to confirm what environmentalists loudly warned to no avail: that the current forestry industry's infrastructure is not compatible with ecosystem-based forestry in our fragile boreal forest. We should choose to curtail industrial forestry rather than the boreal ecosystem. Moreover, the laissez-faire approach to granting of energy tenures is fundamentally incompatible with sustainable development principles.

AWA over the decades has called for the protection of the most ecologically significant wilderness areas, including the large tracts of intact caribou habitat needed to sustain those herds, before government leased to energy and forestry extraction industries. We now support compensation for leaseholders, though this is a regrettably reactive position because of lack of foresight by our government. AWA will continue to insist that Alberta's priorities must be to honour our biodiversity commitments, support sustainable ecosystem-based forestry, and greatly reduce oil sands impacts in the Lower Athabasca region.

- Carolyn Campbell

Environmental Groups and First Nations File for Caribou Protection

On September 8, 2010, Ecojustice, on behalf of AWA and the Pembina Institute, filed an application for a federal judicial review, asking the court to order Environment Minister Jim Prentice to issue emergency protections for seven caribou herds in northeastern Alberta. The application alleges that Prentice failed to meet legally-binding protection requirements for woodland caribou, a threatened species under Canada's *Species at Risk Act*.

This application supports a similar application filed by Woodward & Company on behalf of the Beaver Lake Cree Nation, Enoch Cree Nation and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation.

The federal government has committed to proposing a national caribou recovery strategy by summer 2011. In the meantime, urgent action is necessary. Of the seven herds named in the review application, the 2005 Alberta Woodland Caribou Recovery Plan identified one herd as at immediate risk of extirpation (Slave Lake Herd), three as declining and just one as stable.

Despite the fact that industrial expansion in caribou habitat is known to pose a constant threat to their survival and recovery, the Alberta government has also refused to implement a recommendation in its own caribou recovery plan, prepared in 2005. The plan calls for a moratorium on further mineral and timber allocations in certain caribou ranges. This call was reiterated by the Alberta Landscape Team's 2009 report for the Alberta Caribou Committee. Dr. Stan Boutin, in an expert report prepared for the Beaver Lake Cree, fully supports the Team's recommendations. Boutin wrote: "The suite of management actions must include: aggressive restoration of seismic lines, well pads and pipelines; no further increase in industrial activity (no further habitat change caused by human land use; full protection of caribou range); and reduction of caribou mortality risk."

The federal *Species at Risk Act* is increasingly being seen as a tool to push both the federal and provincial governments to begin to live up to their obligations to endangered species in the province.

In July 2009, a federal court judge in Vancouver ruled that Environment Canada broke the law by refusing to identify critical habitat in a recovery plan for the endangered greater sage-grouse

Alberta's assault on caribou habitat continues.
PHOTO: P. SUTHERLAND

(See "Sage-grouse Court Victory a Major Step for Endangered Species Recovery", *WLA* December 2009). The lawsuit was filed by Ecojustice in early 2008 on behalf of AWA, Federation of Alberta Naturalists, Grasslands Naturalists, Nature Saskatchewan and the Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

But of course AWA would much rather see both levels of government taking positive action to protect habitat for endangered species, rather than being dragged kicking and screaming through every step of the legal process. Many species, including sage-grouse and woodland caribou, do not have the luxury of time on their side.

- Nigel Douglas

GEAR - PACKING LIGHT

By Jennifer Douglas

It's difficult to know what to take with you and what to leave behind when heading out on a multi-day backpacking trip. One of the most important considerations is weight. As a rough guideline, a pack that weighs more than one-quarter of your body weight is going to become uncomfortable very quickly. For example, a person of 150 pounds should top out with a maximum weight of between 35 and 40 pounds. The longer you go for, the heavier your pack will need to be, because of the extra food you will need. If you are only going for one night you can use the "extra" space to take a few luxuries!

Clothing

The first thing to keep in mind is that you must take enough clothing to keep yourself warm and dry in all types of weather. However, that doesn't mean you need to take an entire wardrobe. Regardless of the length of trip you need about the same amount of clothes: basically, a set of clothes to wear and a spare set. For example you only need two base layer tops for a five-day trip. Nobody cares if you smell in the wilderness! If desperate you can always wash one t-shirt in a stream and leave it to dry in a tree overnight. Make sure what you do take is the lightest you have. Kitchen scales are a great way to discover which of your fleeces weighs the least.

Sample list for any length trip (within limits):

- 2 non-cotton t-shirts or long-sleeved shirts (depending on time of year)
- 1 pair pants/shorts (convertible pants are ideal)
- 1 pair long underwear
- 2 pairs socks
- 1 lightweight mid layer (fleece or similar)
- 1 thicker warmer mid layer (fleece or similar)
- 1 waterproof breathable outer shell
- 1 waterproof breathable pair pants
- Whatever underwear you deem necessary
- Toque and mitts (always)

Food

It's well worth spending the time to plan your menu carefully before you go. Work out how many breakfasts, lunches and dinners you are going to need, and decide what and how many snacks you'll need to keep going each day. Once you've got your numbers, plan a menu and pack accordingly. Below are some tips for getting it right:

- Remove all unnecessary packaging – if necessary cooking instructions are on outer packaging, cut them out and put them in with the food.
- For things like margarine, oil for frying, hot sauce, maple syrup and other condiments, use little screw-top Nalgene containers and take just the amount you need. They come in an enormous range of sizes starting at 15ml. You can find these at good camping stores like MEC.
- If you are taking liquor don't take the heavy glass bottle! It can be put into a plastic bottle or drinking bag: you can even get special wine carrying bags now! Apparently they help it keep and you don't get the plastic taste. These are also available at camping stores. Not taking the glass bottle has the added advantage of removing the possibility of it breaking. There is nothing worse than carrying your last night celebratory booze for a week and then dropping it on the last day!
- Learn exactly how much rice, granola, dried pasta etc you need for a meal. Do this by tipping the amount you would normally use into the scales and checking the weight. If you do a lot of backpacking it's worth writing down all your weights in a notebook or the back of a recipe book so you've always got it to refer to. Remember that you often want a little bit more when you've been exercising in the fresh air all day!
- Always have a little bit extra just in case if you are going for more than 2 nights. I usually have some extra instant soup and potato flakes – light but satisfying if needed.

Kitchen Equipment

It's often the extra bits and pieces that can really add up where weight is concerned. If you are going with a group it's worth planning beforehand who is going to bring the things you can share like stove, pots, water filters etc. You don't need one each. Think about how many pots you need – the whole set or just one? Do you need a knife and a fork and a spoon? Do you need a bowl and a plate or will just a bowl suffice? Don't take a litre of fuel if you only need 500ml. (However, it's worth taking fuel in 2 smaller bottles rather than one big one in case it should get knocked over). Don't even think about taking a washing-up bowl.

Other Stuff

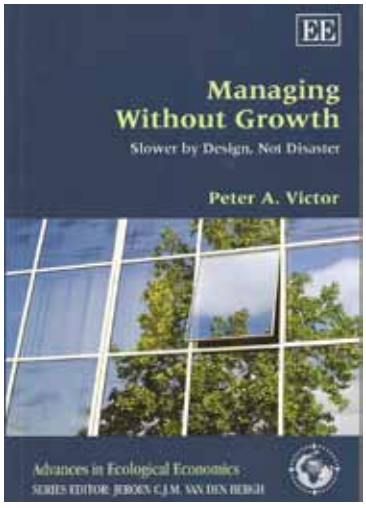
- If you only need a few pages of a guidebook, photocopy the relevant parts and just take those along instead of the whole thing.
- Take your pack of cards out of their package and just put an elastic band around them.
- Find a relatively light book to take along to read. Those hardcover Harry Potters are REALLY heavy!
- You won't need a large towel. If you really need a towel, take a small towel or a lightweight travel towel.
- Just like with foodstuffs, sunscreen and other toiletry items can also be decanted into smaller containers. Take care not to confuse your sunscreen and your mayonnaise!

Even though you are trying to cut your weight down, it is always worth taking one or two luxury items: having that little extra thing can really make a difference to your trip.

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

Salt bowl and spoon created exclusively for Michael Nobel of NOtaBLE - The Restaurant.
PHOTO: K. MIHALCHEON

READER'S CORNER



Peter A. Victor, *Managing Without Growth: Slower by Design, Not Disaster* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008)

Reviewed by Heinz Unger

In August 2010 Dick Smith, a famous Australian entrepreneur and millionaire, announced the "Dick Smith's Wilberforce Award": $1 million will go to a young person under 30 who can impress him by showing leadership in communicating an alternative to our population and consumption growth-obsessed economy. Candidates will need to believe firmly that we can have a viable, strong world economy that is no longer obsessed with growth for its own sake, but instead encourages both a stable population and the sustainable consumption of energy and resources.

When establishing the award, Dick Smith said that he had benefited a lot from a long period of constant economic and population growth but thought that sooner or later this consumption growth will have an end. He talked about mankind already bumping against the limits of what our planet can sustain because we are failing to acknowledge there are limits to growth in a finite world, and we aren't ready for a more sustainable way of organizing our economy.

If Peter Victor, a York University professor in environmental studies, were younger he may have had a good chance of winning the Wilberforce Award: his 2008 book *Managing Without Growth* not only exposes the risks and failures of continuing economic growth but also explores the possibilities, and viability, of a low or no-growth economy. He first debunks, using statistical data, the mistaken belief that economic growth will eliminate unemployment, poverty and income inequality. He then tests various economic scenarios using a computerized model of the Canadian economy, including 'business as usual' and 'no/low growth.' While in the former scenario unemployment and poverty rise and social indicators don't improve, the latter scenario – when implemented with care and good management – can lead to stability around 2030, with attractive economic, social and environmental outcomes: full employment, virtual elimination of poverty, more leisure, considerable reduction of GHG emissions, and fiscal balance.

According to Victor, achieving such an outcome will require a suite of policies dealing with (i) population, by limiting immigration to humanitarian cases, (ii) the environment, by setting targets on resource inputs and waste outputs, (iii) poverty, using a range of measures to combat social exclusion, (iv) reducing work time which would also increase the general level of happiness (see below), (v) investment, by imposing a capital tax and favouring maintenance and repairs, (vi) productivity, (vii) technology, and (viii) consumption of goods, to be taxed differentially depending on their durability, and their health and environmental benefits.

In his final chapter Victor suggests that the movement towards managing without growth would have to be driven from the grassroots, weaving together already existing strands, such as the 'simple living' or 'voluntary simplicity' movements. In addition, governments would have to introduce appropriate policies (see above) – based on widespread support – and this is where Victor seems somewhat doubtful whether or when such a major paradigm change will actually happen. He is concerned that in the Canadian economy, power, influence and wealth are concentrated in just a few hands, many of which lie outside our borders. These powerful players may not see any benefits in slowing growth and would not support such a change.

In a much more positive vein, Meinhard Miegel in *Exit: Well-being Without Growth*, published in Germany in 2010, sets out a very appealing vision of human well-being without growth, resulting in a greater enjoyment of nature, the arts and beauty; the pleasure of learning

new things; having time for oneself, for children, family and friends; occasional silence, and a revival of our cultural-spiritual dimension. Germany seems to be much further ahead in thinking about the damages unbridled growth may deliver. In 2009 the then Federal President Horst Koehler said: "Society should try to be happy and content with less consumption. We should strive for a new kind of growth: the growing well-being of mankind and the creation.

Why should AWA members be concerned about this growth issue and read what Victor and others have to say on this topic? He provides a simple explanation: economies are open systems that rely on the natural environment to supply materials and energy and to provide capacity for their disposal. This means that there are biophysical limits to economic growth, and it is starting to show as natural resources, such as energy and land, are becoming more costly, and the disposal of wastes is using up more energy and land. Economic and consumption growth, partly driven by population growth especially in developing countries, is the major threat to the natural environment and the wild spaces that we want to protect. The only way to reduce the development pressure on our land and on natural resources will be to find the right incentives for society to switch from the growth of consumption to a growth in the quality of our lives.

It is clear that the right economic policies alone will not bring about this conversion. This is why we should also consult a 2007 book written by another Canadian economist, Mark Anielski: *The Economics of Happiness: Building Genuine Wealth*. Anielski developed the Genuine Progress Indicators (GPI) that measure social well-being and environmental sustainability; they are a much more appropriate indicator of healthy ecosystems and happy humans. Anielski also quotes research that shows once our needs have been met, additional consumption does not add to our happiness.

Could this be the message – less economic growth will bring us more happiness with family, community and nature – that will make us eligible for Dick Smith's Wilberforce Award?

RECALL OF THE WILD

Marmie Hess – Footprint shaped by our Foothills

By Carolyn Campbell

Calgarian Margaret (Marmie) Hess came to know southern Alberta well in the early and mid decades of the twentieth century. Over the years, its mountains, foothills and plains shaped her life. Today, her breadth of knowledge of this part of the West, its native artists, ranches and wild lands, has few equals. I met with her recently to hear some of her stories and reflections.

Love of plains and mountains

Marmie has had a close connection to the lands of southern Alberta from her earliest days. "I was born near the Elbow River opposite Woods Park in Calgary. Some of my earliest memories are of the sounds of water, seeing the movement of the river and smelling the fresh air. Calgary was a lucky city to grow up in, placed between the foothills and mountains to the west, and the prairie to the east. There are the rivers, wetlands and oceans of grass. Southern Alberta has unique sunlight and clear night skies. We have altitude and latitude, and we keenly experience the four seasons."

Her school friends were descendants of those who came west as explorers, Mounties, railroad people and missionaries. "It instilled in you an awareness of that environment: where the water was to make a camp, how careful to be with fire on the prairie." From a young age, the importance of the high country and the plains became inter-twined. "In the prairies, where there's water, there's food. And you knew that the foothills are where the water comes through, starting from the mountain snow and glaciers."

Marmie became a capable horsewoman. "My Dad was from an era where if you wanted to get somewhere, you either went by horse or by driving a horse. I rode a great deal with him, and from an early age I knew and loved the distinct interaction humans can have with horses." From a Mountie who rode cavalry in the South African war and then emigrated to the Canadian prairies, Marmie learned much about the discipline of horsemanship.

First Nations communities also made a lasting impression on Marmie. She and her young friends watered their horses at a place on the Elbow River favoured by the Sarcee (Tsuu T'ina) people before they would continue on to the country. Marmie sometimes stayed with family friends in Banff, and saw the Stoney (Nakoda) people in their wagons driving towards Banff for Indian Days. In later years she studied pictographs of the Rockies' Eastern slopes for the National Museum. "I was part of a research team trying to figure out how people came from the Pacific, through waterways or mountain passes." Marmie also came to know many Native artists. "They influenced me very much. They know everything in nature has a spirit, and each thing contributes and inter-connects."

A love of high country and plains is reflected in much of Calgarian Marmie Hess's life.

She feels privileged to trace her love of the Rocky Mountains from the influence of master mountaineer and surveyor M.P. Bridgland, who married her

mother's cousin. "Uncle Morris" worked for the Dominion Lands Survey; nearly every summer for 28 years he ascended, surveyed and photographed peaks in Alberta and British Columbia. Marmie and her family passed many fascinating winter evenings watching shows of Bridgland's hand coloured photographic slides, and hearing his stories of mountain landscapes, wildlife and geology. After he retired, Marmie was able to spend some summer holidays with her uncle, hiking and observing the alpine country with him. Marmie recalls that as the Icefields Parkway road from Banff to Jasper was constructed in the 1930s, Bridgland took her to see how the route was developing along the land contours.

At the University of Alberta, Marmie studied geology. After two years in Edmonton she transferred to the University of Toronto to complete her BA. There she enrolled in the first geography classes taught in Canada by famed geographer and explorer Dr. Griffith Taylor, who had just arrived to found the U of T's geography department. In the years to come, Marmie would teach at a number of post-secondary institutions in Calgary and abroad. "My lectures always connected to themes of how people, culture and art are shaped by the natural environment."

Marmie's father's work took him up and down the Eastern Slopes, and she would often accompany him. She became familiar with many areas between Banff and Rocky Mountain House, sometimes following old explorer routes on horseback. As a young adult she deepened her love of the mountains with trail riding into areas such as Skoki in Banff National Park, and thrilled to the early days of downhill skiing at Sunshine.

From Rangeland management to Kananaskis Advisory Committee

Marmie's love of horses and foothills led to her forming a strong connection with cattle ranching country in the Eastern Slopes. "Cattle and horse ranches are run as businesses, to produce food and for people's livelihood. But there's still a strong sense of nature, a constant watching of conditions. You cannot assume any two years will be the same. Many things affect how many animals are placed in an area, and how a rancher weighs growing or bringing in feed. In winter, the animals have to drift with a winter storm and be able to continue eating. In summer, you watch the water sources, and you watch the condition of the grasses. The whole thing is, never to get greedy." As an Eastern slopes land owner herself, Marmie took her stewardship responsibilities seriously. "From listening to the experience of area ranchers, you learn that."

In 1978, the Peter Lougheed government decided to establish Kananaskis Country to help fulfill its commitment to maintain at least 70 percent of the Eastern Slopes in a natural and wilderness state. That year, the government chose Marmie Hess and eight other Albertans to serve on a new Kananaskis Citizen's Advisory Committee to provide advice on the development of public facilities in K Country.

I asked Marmie about the need for protected areas. "We need places where nature is without controls. And," she added wryly, "we need rules in those places so the public cannot do what it will later regret. But, at the same time, tourism in the mountains is very important. This landscape is some of the best we have to show to ourselves and to the rest of the world."

Marmie recalls her work on the committee as quite varied. "Many people presented their ideas and experiences to our group – we tried to find what was their personal vision of enjoying Kananaskis Country, and then we looked at the feasibility of trying to make that a reality. I want to laud Peter Lougheed for his vision, for the support that he and the civil servants gave to our ideas, and for the tempo with which things were accomplished."

In examining options for facilities, the committee learned where wildlife had their established territories. "We looked at their watering spots and trails and tried to upset their habitat as little as possible." Marmie also pointed to Kananaskis' accessibility as very significant. "We wanted visitors to be able to enjoy the area without much cost to themselves. As the only Committee woman, I provided a perspective on how to make outdoor facilities friendly for families and seniors. We suggested trails with a bit of paving close to campsites so that a parent could push a stroller there. And it was important to have picnic tables that wheelchairs could fit under. William Watson Lodge, where people with disabilities could stay in the mountains, was really unique."

Outlook

In 2003, Marmie accepted an honorary doctor of laws degree from the University of Alberta and delivered the November 20 convocation address. In her remarks, Marmie referred to values held by Dr. R.C. Wallace, the University's president when she studied there in the early 1930s. "President Wallace believed that the measure of a liberal education is what we do with our leisure time, that is the time spent contributing to our family, community and nation beyond the bounds of vocation or profession."

She urged graduates to keep part of their leisure time unstructured, to "walk in the woods where we can commune with nature, reflect and experience our essence and our connection with the 'timeless' rather than the fleeting."

Today, Marmie remains busy with community service. She also takes a keen interest in the latest books published on western Canadian natural and cultural history, and keeps up with researchers in these disciplines at Alberta's universities. "Alberta's natural areas get right into your personal being. I consider myself very fortunate to have been shaped by them. We have so much here to be curious about."

The plate Franco holds in this picture was made to memorialize his beloved horse.
PHOTO: K. MIHALCHEON

EVENTS

TUESDAY TALKS

Pre-registration is advised for all talks.**Phone**: 403-283-2025
Toll-free: 1-866-313-0713
Online: www.AlbertaWilderness.ca
Adults $5, Children $1

Tuesday, October 19, 2010
THE LYNX CYCLE

With Gabriela and Seth Yates
Project Lynx is using new radio collar technology and DNA analysis techniques on lynx in the Nordegg area in order to understand their unique 10-year population cycle and their movement patterns.
7:00 PM,
AWA Office, 455 – 12 St. NW, Calgary

Tuesday, November 9, 2010
THE GRIZZLY MANIFESTO

With Jeff Gailus
Join Jeff as he shares new insights into the fabulous and threatened world of Alberta's grizzly bears.
7:00 PM,
AWA Office, 455 – 12 St. NW, Calgary

Tuesday, November 23, 2010
TURKEY VULTURES – MOTHER NATURE'S CLEANUP CREW

With Wayne Nelson
Populations of this fascinating bird appear to be expanding in Alberta. Learn about the dedicated work of Wayne and his team as they expand our knowledge of their habits, their range and their future.
7:00 PM,
AWA Office, 455 – 12 St. NW, Calgary

The spectacular sight of a turkey vulture in flight is becoming increasingly common in southern Alberta
PHOTO: W. NELSON

Saturday November 6, 2010
MUSIC FOR THE WILD

AWA's **Music for the Wild** series features local artists performing in support of AWA and Alberta's Wild Spaces.

***AWA is proud to present master guitar player and multi-award winner* Tim Williams**. *Tim's live solo shows are a trip down the river of North American music...blues, ragtime, old-time country with dashes of Mexican and Hawaiian influence, performed on a variety of string instruments.*

Tim Williams performs at AWA's Wild West Gala in September 2010
PHOTO: T. AMIRTHALINGAM

Opening act: Robbie & Will.
Robbie Bankes and Will Lynch are two of Calgary's hottest young players. Expect highly skilled Celtic, folk and pop tunes with a bit of blues on the side.

7:00 – 10:30 PM,
AWA Office, 455 – 12 St. NW, Calgary
Cost: $15
Pre-registration is required.
Phone: 403-283-2025
Toll-free: 1-866-313-0713
Online: www.AlbertaWilderness.ca

IN MEMORIAM

(NANCY) LOUISE GUY
Sept. 30, 2010 at 92 years of age

AWA is so sorry to say goodbye to **Louise Guy**, one of our most cheerful and dedicated supporters. Louise, 92 years young, passed away on September 30th. With her passing she left behind her husband Richard, two sons and a daughter, plus six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She also left behind a tremendous legacy of accomplishments.

Louise's connection with AWA came primarily through her faithful and enthusiastic participation in our annual Climb and Run for Wilderness. This past April this amazing woman climbed the Calgary Tower not once but twice! The contribution she made to AWA is just one example of a life dedicated to bettering the various communities she belonged to. Her obituary notes that service, giving back to the community, defined her life. She taught lepers in Singapore and the deaf in Calgary. She delivered meals-on-wheels. Her passion for peace and the health of the global community led to her support for organizations such as Project Ploughshares and Eyesight International.

When it came to the outdoors and the environment Louise took up rock-climbing in her fifties and participated in that sport until she was eighty. She won her section of the Lake Louise Loppet; she climbed Ha-Ling Peak into her nineties; she supported the Friends of Nose Hill and its environmental goals. She was made an Honorary Member of the Calgary Mountain Club and the Alpine Club of Canada, the latter of which also had bestowed its A. O. Wheeler Award for service to the club to Louise. She also was a patron of the Mountain Guides Ball.

In 2009, in recognition of her enthusiasm and extensive list of activities, CBC gave Louise its "Most Active Senior" award.

As a sign of our appreciation to Louise's remarkable life AWA will add a poetry prize, the Louise Guy Poetry Prize, to AWA's annual Climb and Run for Wilderness celebration of Earth Day. We hope Louise would approve.

Wild Alberta – A Year in Review

Every fall, Alberta Wilderness Association pauses to take a deep breath and to reflect on the past year.

- *We celebrate our wild spaces, wildlife, and wild water and the passion we all have from knowing these wild things with colleagues, friends and family at our Wild West Gala.*
- *We recognize the enduring commitment of one or more wilderness champions in Alberta with the Wilderness Defenders Awards.*
- *We challenge ourselves with new ideas in our Martha Kostuch Annual Wilderness and Wildlife Lecture.*
- *We hold our Annual General Meeting and review the past year.*
- *We make plans to seize the days as the next year unfolds and we continue our quest for Wild Alberta.*

We invite you to join us this year for the

AWARDS PRESENTATION AND ANNUAL LECTURE

Friday November 19, 2010

ALBERTA WILDERNESS DEFENDERS AWARDS

In recognition of their outstanding conservation achievements, AWA is pleased to present the 2010 Wilderness Defenders Awards to Peter Lee and Tom Beck. Their love of Alberta's wild lands and their persistence in defending them have inspired countless Albertans to take an active role in conservation.

MARTHA KOSTUCH ANNUAL WILDERNESS AND WILDLIFE LECTURE

Thucydides, Grant MacEwan, Cliff Wallis: Environmental Citizenship in a Hostile Jurisdiction

Peter Lee, noted Albertan and Executive Director of Global Forest Watch Canada, will weave together his impressions of Thucydides, Grant MacEwan and AWA's own Cliff Wallis to suggest how we may become better citizens and conservationists.

Location: 455 – 12 St NW, Calgary
Reception 6:00 p.m. • Lecture and Awards: 7:00 p.m. • Cost: members - $25; Non-Members - $40
Reservations required, space is limited: 403-283-2025 or 1-866-313-0713 or online at www.AlbertaWilderness.ca

AWA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday November 20, 2010
Time: 11:30 a.m. Location 455 12 St NW, Calgary
Registration required: 1-866-313-0713 or 403-283-2025

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:

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