

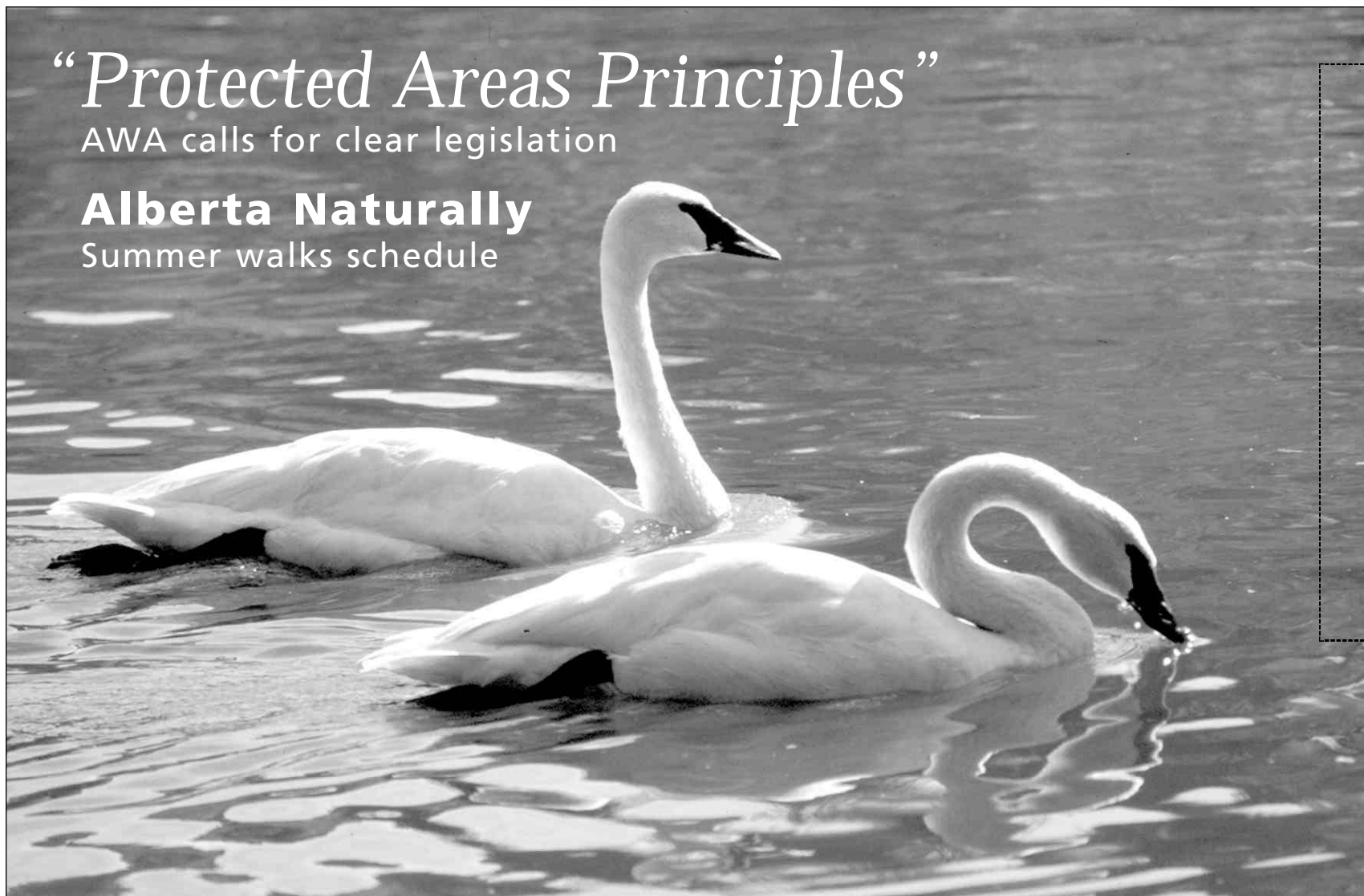
WILD LANDS ADVOCATE

“Protected Areas Principles”

AWA calls for clear legislation

Alberta Naturally

Summer walks schedule



US Proposes Trumpeter Swan Hunt

Action Alert by Marian White

On March 3, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) released a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) in which it proposes to overturn the 82-year-old ban on hunting the rare trumpeter swan, Rocky Mountain population.

Swan hunting of any kind is banned outright in Canada and the trumpeters that would be shot in the U.S. would overwhelmingly be Canadian subpopulation swans that we see and enjoy here in Alberta every spring, summer, and fall.

The trumpeter continues to have Species At Risk “Threatened” status in Alberta. It nearly went extinct precisely because of “incessant persecution in all parts of its range” by hunters (for commercial purposes largely via the Hudson’s Bay Co.). Today the problem is killing for sport.

The trumpeter swan is the largest waterfowl in the world. Today there are three populations. Descendants of the remnant Pacific population breed in Alaska and winter largely along the southern B.C. coast. Descendants of the remnant Rocky Mountain population (RMP) live adjacent to the eastern slopes of the Rockies, breed mainly around Grande Prairie, and virtually all winter in the Red Rock Lakes/Snake River area in the western part of Greater Yellowstone. The interior population to the east is the result of an ongoing and superhuman effort (even including ultralights)

to reintroduce the trumpeter to range from which it had been utterly exterminated.

Trumpeters and tundra swans are North America’s only native breeding swans. Because the tundra swan is smaller and breeds in the Arctic, it escaped massive persecution in the form of commercial hunting that led the trumpeter to the very brink of extinction in the early 1900s.

As a result of the International Migratory Bird Convention of 1916 between Canada and the U.S. and ratifying legislation of 1917 and 1918, trumpeter and tundra hunting was banned in Canada and the U.S. and remains so in Canada to this day. Gradually, however, tundra hunting has crept back in the U.S. and now it is allowed in nine states. This is extremely bad news for trumpeters.

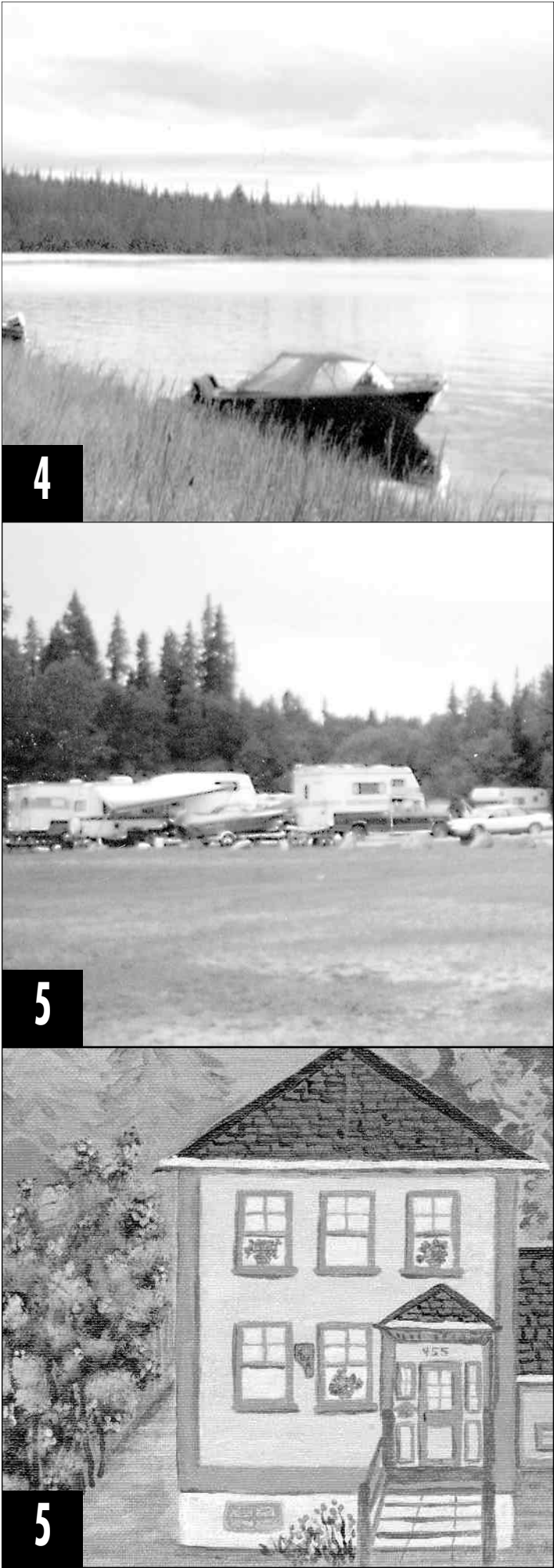
In 1932, only about 140 trumpeters could be found anywhere—virtually all in the Red Rock Lakes area of the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Half were the non-migratory U.S. subpopulation of the RMP, the other half, Canadian RMP migrants. The trumpeter was listed as endangered in Canada, the U.S., and at the IUCN-The World Conservation Union. An enormous effort was launched to bring the species back from the brink of oblivion.

As a result the Red Rock Lakes trumpeters climbed back to 641 by 1968 but has been gradually declining ever since and now numbers only 469. The decline is attributed to

overcrowding in the Red Rock Lakes/Snake area in winter. That’s when nearly 3000 Canadian RMP trumpeters join them. Having this many trumpeters converge on one small wintering area is unnatural and strains the habitat. In years of low rainfall the birds converge on an ever-smaller area where ponds do not dry up. Then there is a real danger that starvation and an outbreak of disease among crowded and weakened birds could devastate the RMP. Alternatively, in very cold years, their wintering lakes may freeze over, preventing their foraging for aquatic food. This has already happened—a hundred or more died one recent winter.

Why do trumpeters crowd into one tiny winter area anyway? This is unnatural. Historically, trumpeters overwintered far south, along the Gulf of Mexico, lower Mississippi, and southern parts of North America’s east and west coasts. However, they were shot out of existence from the south first, then northwards until they continued to hang on to existence only “in the wilds of northern Canada” (plus Alaska). Migration is behaviour cygnets learn from their parents. The remnant RMP flock survived merely because it stopped off to winter only as far south as Greater Yellowstone. There it had discovered a remote and improbable mountain sanctuary where, despite 9000-foot altitude and far below freezing temperatures, hot springs

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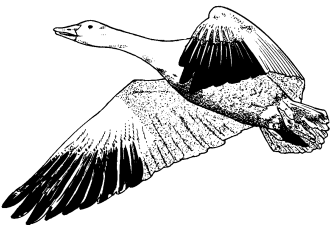
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To provide readers with accurate, current and insightful coverage of wilderness and conservation issues related to Alberta's wild places and public lands, which will stimulate personal action on behalf of Alberta's wildlands, wild rivers and wildlife.

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Although most of our articles are assigned, unsolicited contributions (manuscripts, photos, artwork) are welcomed, with the understanding that the AWA cannot be held responsible for loss or damage. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope to ensure the return of unsolicited material. Guidelines for contributors available upon request.

DEADLINE July 5, 2000

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The Alberta Wilderness Association has five scheduled meetings of its provincial Executive and Board of Directors per year. Policies, issues, concerns, programs and strategies are discussed and decided at these meetings. Any interested AWA members are welcome to attend as guests. Please contact the provincial office, at 283-2025, to get confirmation of the date and location of the meetings, as well as to carpool.



Tourism Organizations Team up to Protest Logging in Bighorn Country



Upper Jkb Creek, Bighorn Country by R. Harris

By Alan Ernst and the
Bighorn Country Coalition

The existence of small local tourism operators in the Nordegg/Sundre area has become threatened by Alberta Environment's plans to allow logging in more than a third of "Bighorn Country." The Alberta Forest Service held a public open house on Tuesday, April 15 at the Nordegg Community Hall to present the latest plan to open the area to logging: the Nordegg Forest Harvesting Plan. Members of the Nordegg West Tourism Association, Nordegg Area Ecotourism Association, AWA, and CPAWS were all in attendance and gave formal presentations.

Representing Bighorn Country Wildlands Coalition, the groups pointed out that despite two decades of vocal opposition from local tourism operators and recreational and conservation

groups, the Alberta government is pushing ahead with the destruction of the wilderness of Bighorn Country by continuing to open new areas for logging and oil and gas exploration.

"We cannot understand why the Alberta government favours the oil and gas and logging industries over commercial ecotourism," said Alan Ernst, member of the Nordegg West Tourism Association. "In the long term, the ecotourism industry will provide more lasting economic benefits to the region, while preserving the character and ecological integrity for wildlife and future generations of visitors."

Nordegg has been mostly tourism oriented for the past fifty years and the vast majority of residents in and around Nordegg, including many outfitters and guides from as far away as Caroline and Sundre, rely on this magnificent area for

their living. Every year new businesses move into the region. Almost all are exclusively tourism oriented. They are attracted by the enormous potential offered by this as yet unspoiled Bighorn Country for low-impact ecotourism and the recreation industry.

Because the Alberta government steadfastly refuses to involve and listen to the local residents, recreational users, and conservation organizations, tourism operators in the Nordegg region want to elevate the issue to provincial and national levels.

The Bighorn Country Wildlands Coalition wants large-scale commercial logging and resource extraction plans within this area to cease immediately. They envision Bighorn Country as a sanctuary for people and wildlife. The Country would consist of landscapes for general outdoor recreation, such as hiking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and education. The area would not include any new industrial activities such as logging or oil and gas exploration and development.

Within Bighorn Country is a network of designated protected areas. These are at present White Goat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas and Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve, as well as the proposed legal designation of the Bighorn Wildland Recreation Area. Off-road vehicle use outside of these core protected areas would be on appropriate designated routes.

To facilitate their vision further, the groups have prepared a petition to urge the government of Alberta to support the establishment of Bighorn Country as a legislated protected area where:

- The natural landscape is maintained and protected for present and future generations;
- Tourism development provides those services necessary for the enjoyment of wildland recreation;
- The area is managed for outdoor recreation, environmental education, and ecotourism;
- The area is also managed for the protection of wildland landscapes, watersheds, wilderness and ecological resources, wildlife, natural ecological processes, and the natural and cultural heritage present there;

- There is no new surface disturbance from industry, including no new industrial dispositions;
- The area includes traditional managed hunting and trapping;
- Motorized access will be on appropriate designated routes in the Bighorn Country zones outside of the core protected area;
- Everyone will have continued access by foot and traditional horse use to Bighorn Country lands in the core protected area as presently set out by legislation and management for the Whitegoat and Siffleur Wilderness Areas, Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve, and the Bighorn Wildland Recreation Area.

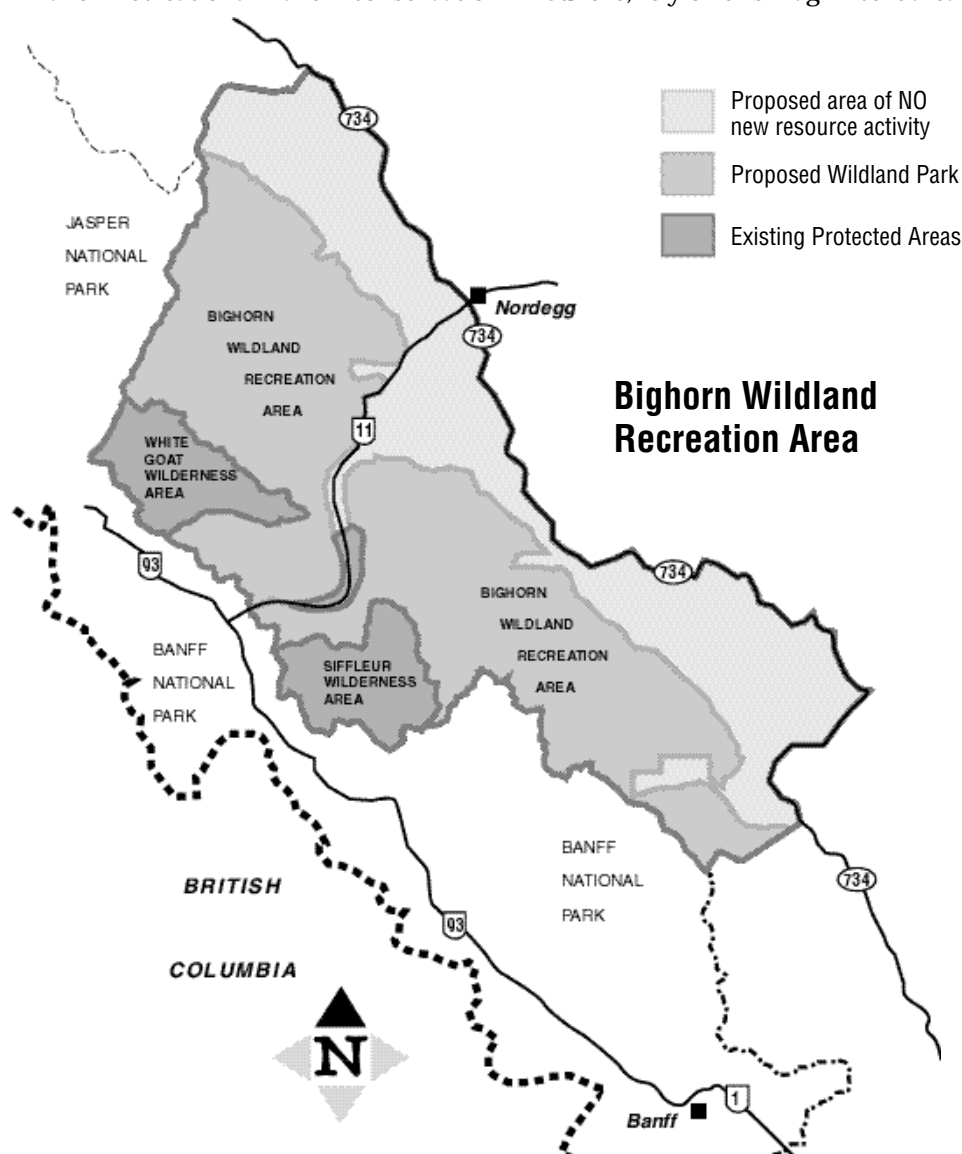
"We are looking forward to a legally protected Bighorn Country which will assure that its natural landscape and ecological integrity are maintained while allowing for a variety of compatible recreational activities and low-impact tourism," says Lane Moore, local outfitter and member of the Bighorn Country Wildlands Coalition.

How can you help?

Write a brief letter to Premier Ralph Klein. Let him know you support the Bighorn Country alternative to the logging proposed by Forest Management Agreement holders and the Alberta Forest Service. Ask him to instead designate the area as Bighorn Country and to provide legal protection for the Bighorn Wildland Recreation Area as a Wilderness Park. Ask that he place a moratorium on any proposed logging and any other new roads and industrial disturbance until there has been a public hearing on the alternative of Bighorn Country and whether or not logging should extend into this area.

Send copies of your letter to your MLA and to the Bighorn Country Wildlands Coalition, Box 427, Caroline, AB T0M 0M0.

If you would like to be part of the Bighorn Country Wildlands Coalition, contact Lazy M Ranch at (403) 722-2053 or the AWA at (403) 283-2025, email: a.w.a@home.com.





"Protected Areas Principles" Proposed to Save Alberta's Natural Heritage

By Christy Sarafinchen and Richard Thomas



A photograph of the Touchwood Lake in Lakeland Recreation Area, July 1996, by Patricia Clift

The Alberta government's plan to replace Bill 15 with a reworked Natural Heritage Act in this spring's sitting of the Alberta legislature prompted leading scientists and conservation groups to announce fundamental Protected Areas Principles for Alberta. Intended to safeguard vital ecosystems, the scientists and conservationists believe the five Principles must be incorporated in the new legislation in order to protect the province's natural heritage for the future of all Albertans, Canadians, and the world community.

"Our quality of life, our health, and a healthy economy are totally dependent on Earth's biological diversity," said Dr. Richard Thomas, one of Alberta's leading conservation scientists. "We cannot replicate natural ecosystems. Protected areas are internationally recognized as the most efficient way to maintain biological diversity. Protected areas are sites that are legislated for protection in perpetuity and on-going management of these sites ensures maintenance of ecological diversity."

Calling on the Alberta government to legislate sites for protection and strict management that ensures maintenance of ecological diversity, the scientists and groups urgently recommend the provincial government commit to the Protected Areas Principles.

"These Principles are fundamentally required so that Alberta can join the world in setting appropriate legislative standards that protect ecological integrity," said Dr. Thomas. "The Canadian government has just recently seen fit to put protection first. Alberta needs to ensure that it has a quality

protected areas system as well."

The Alberta government's proposed new Natural Heritage Act has already received widespread criticism for permitting ongoing industrial development in Special Places 2000 and other protected areas. The previous draft Natural Heritage Act, Bill 15, was withdrawn from the Alberta legislature in 1999 by then Alberta Environment Minister Ty Lund, who after significant public outcry, chose not to pass the Bill.

"Last year's version of the Natural Heritage Act meant that a lot of land, said to be protected by the government, would be permanently open to industrial development," said Sam Gunsch, Edmonton spokesperson for Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. "The bill would have continued the failure of Special Places 2000 where the provincial government has put industrial development and motorized recreation before the preservation of wildlife habitat and wildland values." By signing the 1992 "Statement of Commitment" along with all federal, territorial, and provincial Ministers of Environment, Parks, and Wildlife, the Alberta government committed to establishing a representative network of protected areas by the year 2000. Premier Klein was Minister of Alberta Environmental Protection at the time.

"There is an urgent need for new legislation that incorporates these Principles," said Dr. David Schindler, the world's most distinguished freshwater ecologist and one of Canada's most honoured scientists. "For Alberta's and Canada's boreal forest, for example, unless Canada reduces industrial development and protects the nation's

landscapes in a network of protected areas, the next generation will not see the same white spruce, lake trout, and peat bogs in our boreal ecosystem. Key wildlife species such as lynx, wolverine, cougar, and grizzlies will all disappear without a concerted effort to protect them and that includes the urgent need for new protected areas legislation," he added.

Albertans are urged to contact their MLAs, Minister of the Environment Gary Mar, and the Premier, Ralph Klein, to support inclusion of these five Principles in a revised Natural Heritage Protection Act. The future health of Alberta's natural heritage is at stake.

Protected Areas Principles for Alberta

Protected areas are sites that are legislated for protection in perpetuity and legislated management principles ensure maintenance of ecological diversity.

Our Goal: To achieve legislation that permanently protects Alberta's ecological diversity.

Principle 1: No industrial or commercial development within Protected Areas.

Principle 2: Permanently designate at least 12 per cent (20 per cent of Boreal Natural Region, 25 per cent of Foothills Natural Region) of each of Alberta's 20 Natural Subregions within 5 years.

Principle 3: The scientific principles of conservation biology are the basis for the identification, establishment, and management of each site and the provincial system, and maintenance of ecological integrity is the primary goal driving all management decisions.

Principle 4: Protected Areas legislation is not subservient to other legislation and Protected Areas are not subservient to other land uses.

Principle 5: Appoint an independent Protected Areas System Auditor to monitor progress towards realizing the legislation's goals, and to ensure adequate funding and personnel are committed to its enforcement.

Supporting Principles for Protected Areas Legislation

- Industrial commitments must be expeditiously removed within Protected Areas through the application of tools such as lease exchanges/swaps, voluntary relinquishment, non-renewal, compensation, royalty credits.
- The legislation must be clear and definitive so as not to be misleading and so as to reduce or eliminate ministerial or bureaucratic discretion with respect to its interpretation and enforcement.
- Protected Areas boundaries must be legislated in perpetuity.
- All Protected Areas legislation and all existing Protected Areas categories must be consolidated under the Natural Heritage Protection Act.
- Albertans in general must have intervenor status and direct say in decisions that support the protection goals of legislation.
- No consumptive uses will be permitted within protected areas unless scientifically determined to be (a) ecologically sustainable, and (b) necessary for management purposes.
- Natural forces and controls must be used as management tools.
- The legislation must compel the establishment of buffers surrounding protected areas and corridors linking protected areas as defined by the scientific principles of conservation biology.

SWAN HUNT Continued from page 1

keep some lakes open, allowing winter feeding. Members of this flock generally do not have the propensity nor, now, the learned knowledge to migrate further south. Hence the congestion as their populations rose.

Conservation strategy in recent decades has centred on expanding RMP trumpeter winter range back down south—into southern Idaho, Utah, and Nevada. Thousands of birds, nearly all "our" Canadian swans, have been relocated in efforts to get them to migrate to "new" (or reclaimed) wintering grounds in adjacent southern states. Almost all of these birds have been "lost" and the effort was a failure.

There are three possible explanations for this. First, Utah and Nevada are among states allowing tundra swan hunting and hunters can't tell the difference between trumpeters and tundras in flight. So they kill trumpeters too, by mistake. Also, such harassment sends the few more adventurous trumpeters scurrying back north to the safety of the Red Rock Lakes refuge.

Second, in Utah and Nevada, killing

a trumpeter swan is an indictable offense punishable by large fines and jail terms. Nervous hunters are antagonistic towards conservation efforts to regain trumpeter winter range.

Finally, the state Fish and Game departments concerned are financed by hunting licences, so Fish and Game staff regard hunters as their clients, hence this tends to colour policy.

The worst may be yet to come

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has just released a draft new environmental assessment on trumpeter swan RMP management and trumpeter and tundra hunting. I am told it contains four alternative strategies. The one USFWS favours is to open the season to trumpeter swan hunting (thereby dodging the tricky issue of hunter concerns).

Ruth Shea, executive director of the Trumpeter Swan Society, (of which I am a member), told me that trumpeter conservation proponents oppose the USFWS preferred alternative because it clearly advocates trumpeter hunting on the one hand, but has no firm

conservation strategies on the other. Conservation proponents favour Alternative #3 which severely limits tundra swan hunting, bans trumpeter hunting, and tolerates related accidental trumpeter shooting only on condition that the strictest conservation management policies are in place and carried out.

The whole point of efforts to bring the trumpeter back from extinction is to allow a good number of them to once again inhabit their former range. While the Canadian numbers (though pitifully not the American) are coming back, the availability of usable habitat free from hunting is not.

Even though it's "our Canadian trumpeters" that are largely at stake in this issue, I was shocked and saddened to learn that not one word of support for the trumpeter has yet been received from the Canadian Fish and Wildlife Service or their provincial counterparts, as far as the Trumpeter Swan Society knows. I therefore urge these officers as well as naturalists and other concerned people to phone or email the USFWS and obtain a copy of the EA, then write in, opposing the hunt (USFWS preferred

alternative) and supporting Alternative #3. The more requests he gets, the better. His office needs to know that large numbers of Canadians care and want to make sure our threatened trumpeters don't get hunted. Written public input receipt deadline is June 17.

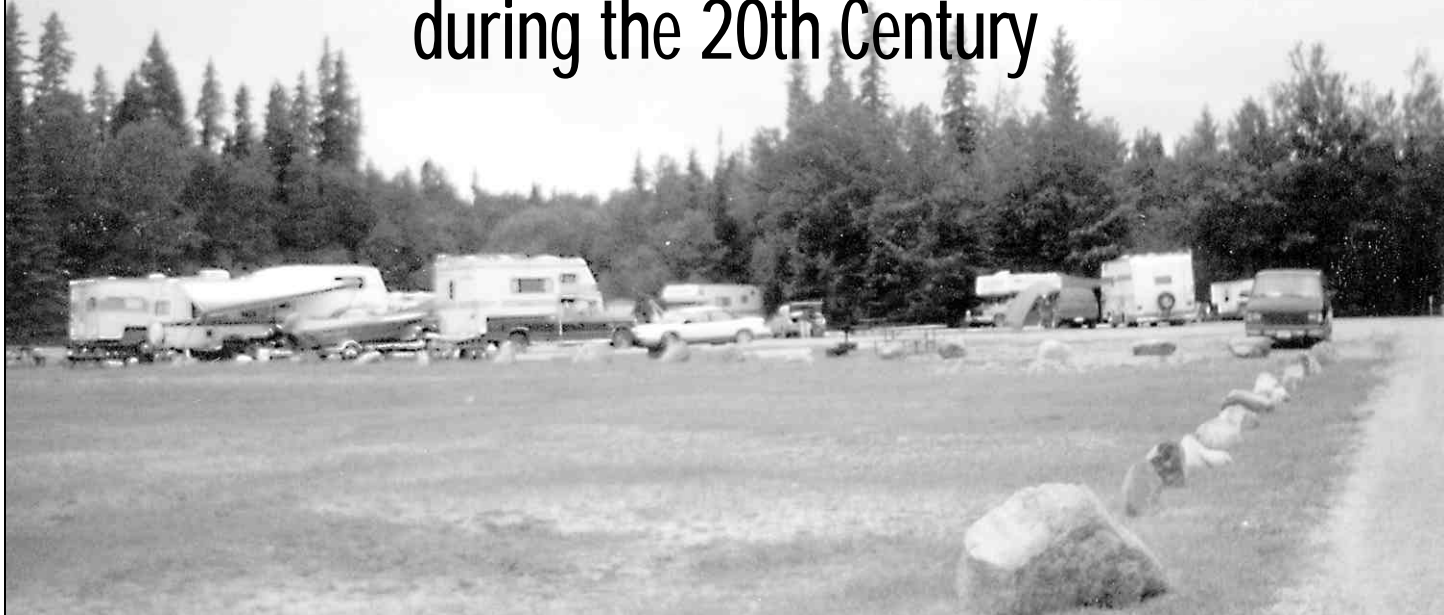
To obtain your EAcopy, contact:

Robert Trost
USFWS, Office of Migratory Bird Management
Portland, Oregon
Tel: 503 231-6162
email: robert_trost@fws.gov

For more information on the Trumpeter Swan Society, contact:
www.taiga.net/swans/index.html
Marian White (Calgary)
Tel/Fax: (403) 246-2994
Email: sherwood@nucleus.com
Ruth Shea, Executive Director (Idaho)
The Trumpeter Swan Society
Email: ruthshea@srv.net
Madeleine Linck (Minnesota)
The Trumpeter Swan Society
Tel: (612) 476-4663
Email: ttss@hennepinarks.org



Alberta's Challenge in Protecting Areas during the 20th Century



Richard Lake in Lakeland Recreation Area. Patricia Chene

Alberta lacks public accountability in establishing and managing protected areas. The following examples are indicative of a disturbing pattern of poor performance in managing existing protected areas:

Lakeland Provincial Park and Recreation Area is "on the verge of ecological collapse," with 500 km of linear disturbances. This has led to reduction in wildlife habitat effectiveness by at least 50 per cent. 48.9 per cent of all the old-growth white spruce has been logged, 40 per cent of the protected area is leased to the petroleum industry, there is heavy off-highway vehicle use, and the fishery is declining.

Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park has 100 petroleum wellsites in 61 km² or 1.6 wellsites for every km². This is at least five times greater than the average density of wellsites in Alberta's Boreal Forest.

Natural Areas located in the Foothills Natural Region have three times the average density of oil and gas wellsites found throughout this region. (Natural Areas are one type of protected area under Alberta's Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, and Natural Areas Act and the Foothills region is one of Alberta's six major Natural Regions.)

A 1996 study found that of the four largest provincial parks in Alberta's Foothills, 1) they were all highly fragmented by development; 2) their habitat effectiveness for wildlife has been severely compromised; and 3) they were all in the process of becoming ecological islands.

Many sites designated or referred to by the Alberta government as protected areas are open for industrial and other intrusive uses. For example:

- Over one-half of all the sites designated as protected areas during Alberta's Special Places 2000 program legislatively provide for industrial uses within them (e.g., all Natural Areas and Hay-Zama Wildland Park).
- The 802 km² Chinchaga Wildland Park, designated on December 15, 1999, has 24 petroleum and natural gas leases and 9 metallic and industrial permits, all of which are presently allowed to proceed to full development.
- Whitehorse Wildland Park allows off-highway vehicles, despite being in the Prime Protection Zone (the most environmentally sensitive lands) of the Rocky Mountains.
- Castle Special Management Area Forest Land Use Zone allows logging, petroleum and natural gas

activity, and excessive off-highway vehicle uses.

- Crimson Lake Provincial Park has so much disturbance that only fractions of the protected area are left with any ecological integrity.

These examples, although dramatic, are by no means unique throughout Alberta's protected areas.

An economy driven by resource extraction

Oil & Gas

As conventional oil and gas reserves rapidly decline in next few decades, the number of subsurface pools that will need to be accessed to maintain the same level of production is expected to increase nearly tenfold. This will have dramatic effects on Alberta's landscapes in terms of increasing fragmentation rates due to surface exploration and development. Areas such as the Eastern Slopes will experience increasing pressures for access to conventional natural gas supplies.

There are presently an estimated 1.5-1.8 M km of seismic lines in Alberta (approximately four times the distance from Earth to the moon) and this will continue to increase until conventional reserves are depleted by 2040.

Agriculture

Agriculture has an enormous effect on Alberta's landscapes, with 32 per cent of the province in improved and unimproved farmland, concentrated in southeastern Alberta and the Peace River region. For example, 95 to 98 per cent of Alberta's Aspen Parkland region has been lost to agriculture. Farmland and livestock densities and practices have a negative impact on water quality, riparian areas, and wetlands. There are huge projected increases in populations of hogs and cattle over the coming decades.

Forestry

About one-third of the province is leased to the forest industry. The rate of logging continues a decades-long exponential rise. Logging pressure is focused on old-growth forests. Between 1918 and 1997, a minimum of 15,000 km² of Alberta has been logged. Over the next two or three decades, at least another 30,000 to 40,000 km² will be cut under present forestry agreements. Recent studies indicate a severe wood supply problem due to cumulative impacts of multiple land uses.

Population pressures

Alberta's population growth, presently 2.85 per cent per annum, was double the world average, 1.48 per cent per annum, between 1990 and 1995. Under Statistics Canada's high growth projections, Alberta's growth is expected to exceed the world average for many more decades. Alberta's population has been projected to increase 23 per cent by 2016, from 2.9M in 1999 to 3.5M by 2016, and increase 64 per cent by 2041. The largest growth center is expected to be Calgary, which will increase by 42 per cent by 2016 (1.2M) and perhaps to 2.3M by 2041. By 2041, Calgary will contain one-half of Alberta's population.

Alberta's population will undergo considerable aging during the early part of the 21st century and the elderly will contribute double their current percentage to the overall population by 2016.

Alberta has become rapidly urbanized, from only 20 per cent living in urban centers at the start of World War II to over 80 per cent in 1999. The ratio of urban to rural population will likely continue to increase. Such a population explosion and rush to urban centers will have profound social, economic, political, and environmental consequences.

The continued reliance on resource extraction to drive the Alberta economy, accompanied by rapid population increases that far exceed the world average, result in an urgency to secure the most important biological areas in Alberta within a network of real protected areas. ☹

Carlson Urges Government to Stop Spray Lakes Project

Liberal Environmental Protection Critic Debby Carlson presented the following Private Member's Statement to the Alberta Legislature on March 23.

"In recent weeks I have received many letters from Albertans who are worried about proposed developments in the Spray Lakes area of Kananaskis. If plans go ahead, there could be a large four-season resort at the southern end of the Spray Lakes as well as heli-skiing and boat tours on the lake. A large resort in this location with the volumes of traffic that it would create would cause serious fragmentation of important wildlife habitat. Studies have shown that grizzly bears are particularly vulnerable to human intrusion, and the Spray Lakes area is one of the last relatively undisturbed north/south corridors.

"In survey after survey Albertans have made it clear that they do not want further commercial development in Kananaskis Country. The provincial government has ignored Albertans' wishes by permitting developers to proceed with their applications despite the fact that there is so much opposition to it.

"We know that the government intends to proceed in due process, which in this case includes an environmental impact assessment and a hearing by the Natural Resources Conservation Board. However, the repercussions of this development are so far-reaching that many people believe it should be stopped now before further costs are incurred. This would mean negotiating with the developer and offering an alternative location outside Kananaskis in a less environmentally sensitive area. It could also mean providing compensation. I believe that this is a cost that many Albertans would be willing to pay to rectify the current government's mistake.

"Development of the Spray Lakes area would have irreversible and far-reaching effects not only for animals in the immediate vicinity but for their movement along the eastern Rockies. We need to protect this very valuable area now, and I urge the government to act immediately." ☹

Buffalo Nations Cultural Centre Cancelled

By Dave Poulton, CPAWS

The Alberta government has cancelled the Buffalo Nations Cultural Centre, long proposed for Bow Valley Provincial Park and the mouth of the Kananaskis Valley. The project was found not to have met the terms of the December 31, 1999 deadline applicable to the six projects grandfathered under last year's Kananaskis Recreational Development Policy.

As the Kan-Alta golf course planned for Evan-Thomas Creek was pulled by the proponent, the only major projects still alive for K-Country are the condominium development proposed for the Fortress ski area and

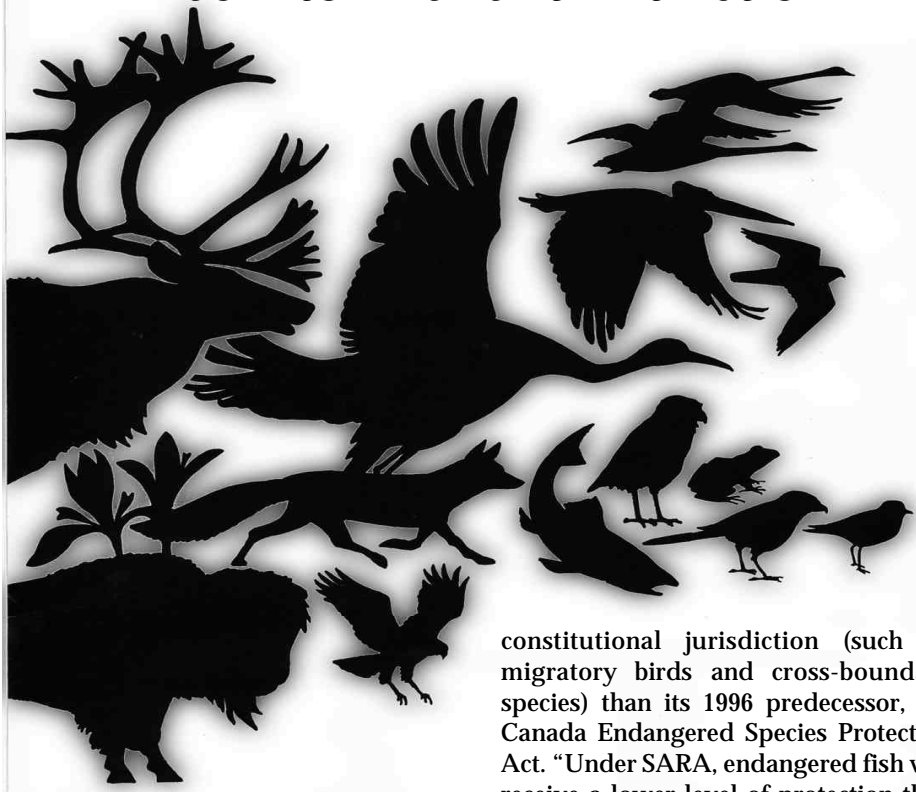
the three phases of development proposed by Genesis Land Development Corp. for the Spray Valley.

The deadline for public input on Genesis only applied to commenting on the terms of reference for the environmental assessment. It continues to be critically important that we let Premier Klein know that we want this project stopped now. ☹

Email the Premier at
Premier@gov.ab.ca
Contact all government members at
albertaconnects@gov.ab.ca
Make sure you give your full street address for a response in writing.



Groups Claim Species At Risk Act Too Weak to Prevent Extinction



Canadian Endangered Species Campaign

After more than seven years of promising to pass effective federal endangered species legislation, the Chrétien government has introduced a bill which environmentalists charge is too weak to curb the tide of extinction. The Species at Risk Act (SARA) was introduced into the House of Commons by Environment Minister David Anderson. The bill proposes a framework for endangered species conservation which requires political discretion at every major stage including listing, protection, recovery, and habitat preservation.

"It's a very disappointing bill," said Stewart Elgie, managing lawyer, Sierra Legal Defence Fund. "This was the Chrétien government's last chance to improve their poor environmental record. Unfortunately, this bill will do little to ensure that endangered species and their habitat are protected. It leaves everything up to political discretion."

"We're calling on David Anderson to work with us to get a law which can actually protect species at risk on the ground," said Sarah Dover, director of Canadian Endangered Species Campaign. "SARA is not an effective bill because the Prime Minister has yet to provide the needed leadership which would give Anderson the necessary clout at Cabinet and with the provinces."

David Anderson is the fourth Liberal environment minister to attempt progress on this legislation.

SARA has been pitched as an "enabling" bill targeted at supporting on-the-ground efforts. However, because support for stewards is also discretionary, SARA would do little for conservation-minded landowners, labour, communities, and citizens. "The scope of the Cabinet discretion is far broader than just when to apply regulations," said Dover. "Ottawa politicians will decide when a species and those affected by it receive the benefits of the whole recovery framework. For every species left off the list, there is a community of people abandoned despite their best efforts."

The listing process is the official trigger for stewardship support, recovery planning, and compensation.

SARA was also criticized for being a weaker approach to species which are under the federal government's core

constitutional jurisdiction (such as migratory birds and cross-boundary species) than its 1996 predecessor, the Canada Endangered Species Protection Act. "Under SARA, endangered fish will receive a lower level of protection than your average fish," said Andrea Addario, Canadian campaigns coordinator for the International Fund for Animal Welfare. The federal Fisheries Act automatically prohibits the destruction of fish habitat, whereas endangered fish must survive a number of layers of political decision-making before its habitat might be protected. "At the very least, one might have expected the federal government to protect a monarch butterfly if it lands on the front lawn of Parliament."

Habitat destruction is the number one threat to the survival of Canadian species at risk. Environment Minister

David Anderson has been adamant that SARA will protect habitat; however, it is simply not the case that the habitat of a single species at risk will be required by law. SARA makes it possible, if unlikely, that the habitat for species such as Peary caribou, swift fox, and burrowing owl will be protected. Habitat protection will only be achieved if Cabinet agrees and, in many cases, after the federal minister negotiates with a province or territory which is already failing to protect a listed species.

SARA is currently an endangered species act which does not apply to any endangered species. The current list of species at risk, established by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) will not be appended to the legislation. The new SARA fails to establish a legal list of species at risk developed by independent, credible scientists. Cabinet will decide which species deserve legal recognition. This approach to listing is weaker than the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act which includes scientific listing.

Canada first committed to passing endangered species legislation in 1993 by signing the Convention on Biological Diversity. Over half of Canada's species at risk are "cross-boundary," meaning they migrate or range across international boundaries. Despite influential constitutional opinions submitted to the government, SARA does not accept federal authority over these species which include the peregrine falcon, Furbish's lousewort and wood bison. "The fact that Canada does not yet have an endangered species act is not only internationally embarrassing, it's irresponsible," said Kevin Scott, director of Canadian Programs for Defenders of Wildlife. "Ultimately, it is our Prime Minister who will be held accountable on the international stage for undermining the recovery efforts in which other countries have invested." ☸

Tools, Training and Tactics for Conservation

A new national conservation initiative based on a successful U.S. program called the GrassRoots Environmental Effectiveness Network, is being developed that will dramatically change the way Canadians participate in conservation projects across the country.

Wildcanada.net will offer a new organizing tool to conservationists, and will use its electronic organizing system to help Canadians connect with

everyday Canadians who love wildlands and wildlife with the skills they need to protect Canada's natural wonders," says Stephen Legault, the project's executive director.

Wildcanada.net will begin its efforts to help mobilize Canadian activists by working on federal endangered species legislation. Soon Wildcanada.net will take on other high-priority campaigns across Canada such as protecting national parks,

WILD CANADA.NET

decision-makers about federal endangered species legislation, national parks development, and other national issues.

Wildcanada.net will create a network of concerned citizens in each of Canada's 301 federal ridings. Through a sophisticated database system, network members will be given tips on how to strategically target their local MPs on conservation issues and improve their environmental campaigns. Wildcanada.net will create tailored action alerts for each federal riding that will provide the very best tactical advice to concerned Canadians about how they can protect the things they care about and provide activists with the skills and support to influence conservation decision-making through on-line tutorials and face-to-face training sessions. The service will be provided free of charge.

"Wildcanada.net is about providing

the boreal forest, and international trade and the environment issues. Because many conservation issues are provincial issues, Wildcanada.net will apply its database program to provincial MLAs and MPPs as well.

"The Internet is a powerful tool," says Stephen Legault, "but people don't want to be inundated with appeals to work on every issue under the sun. Wildcanada.net will send people timely alerts that provide them with suggestions for action that are strategic and targeted where they make the most difference: local media, Members of Parliament, or other decision makers."

Contact Stephen Legault,
Executive Director of Wildcanada.net
(403) 609-2509
email: wildcanada@telusplanet.net

Wilderness Resource Centre Settles into Permanent Location

By Christyann Sloan

Activity levels in the Wilderness Resource Centre continued at a very high pace throughout the past several months. Generous donations of books and items for the collection were received and all possible resources were integrated. We now estimate the collection contains more than 20,000 resources. Shirley Bray, our director, has been meticulously organizing and classifying each item. In May she mentored Angela Watt, a student from the S.A.I.T. Library and Information Technology program. Together they reviewed and established a system for handling our map collection, the videos, and other sections of the Wilderness Resource Centre.

At the same time, construction to renovate the lower level of the Hillhurst Cottage School began. A significant amount of volunteer effort was required to relocate and reorganize stored items, demolish the existing shelving and drywall sections, as well as the difficult work of cleaning and painting. All this while the renovation construction was in progress.

Join us June 27, 2000 for the official ribbon-cutting ceremony as we celebrate the significant contributions of so many.

If you are interested in supporting the Wilderness Resource Centre we will be happy to send our sponsorship information to you. Please contact Dr. Shirley Bray at (403) 283-2025.



ALBERTA WILDERNESS
ASSOCIATION

Resource Centre and Library

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Vivian Pharis
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AWA NEWS & EVENTS

Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition Hiking Schedule 2000

Join the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition for hiking in the magnificent Castle Wilderness and help us obtain protection by getting to know the area. All hikes are day hikes, unless otherwise specified, and generally last from 6 to 8 hours. We start with easier hikes and work up to longer and more difficult ones.

For general information on CCWC hikes contact Dave Sheppard (403-627-4914; email: shepid@telusplanet.net) or the CCWC office (403-627-5059; email: ccwcbref@telusplanet.net).

For information on a specific hike contact the hike coordinator, or Dave Sheppard if unable to reach the coordinator. For hike descriptions go to www.ccwc.ab.ca

Prairie Bluff

Coordinator: Reg Ernst
(403-381-0528) June 3

Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition

Annual Meeting at the Syncline Group Camp. Nature walks with John Russell, Wilbur Tripp, and Patricia Wagenaar. See the meeting program for details or contact the CCWC office. June 17.

Suicide Creek

Coordinator: Dave Sheppard
(403-627-4914) June 18.

Whistler Mtn.-Table Mtn.

Coordinators: Czaba Lorinczi
(403-627-3739) and Dave McNeill
(403-627-3476) July 8.

Lynx Creek-Mount Coulthard

Coordinator: Don Ferguson
(403-328-0145) July 22.

Castle-Crown Wilderness

Eight days of horse-assisted hiking in the marvellous South Castle headwaters with Diamond Hitch Outfitters. Horses carry your tent and equipment, leaving you free and light-footed to hike the trails and climb the ridges. Camping at several locations during the eight days provides a variety of scenery and hiking opportunity. Cost: \$640 per person, home-cooked meals included. A \$200 deposit is required by June 1 to hold your place (refundable up to a month before the trip starts). July 30 to August 6. Maximum enrollment: 12 people.

For more information contact:
Mike Judd, Diamond Hitch Outfitters,
403-627-2949, Box 2316, Pincher Creek,
AB T0K 1W0
email: wonearth@telusplanet.net.

AWA Career Opportunity Executive Director

The Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) is searching for a talented individual to join the AWA as executive director. Candidates must demonstrate excellent leadership, interpersonal, communication, budgeting, and fundraising skills. This is a 12-month position with an expectation to continue based on performance.

Please submit your application including a resume to AWA, Executive Director Hiring Committee, Box 6398, Station D, Calgary, AB T2P 2E1. The competition will remain open until a suitable candidate is selected.

All members, sponsors, donors, and volunteers are invited to the Wilderness Resource Centre ribbon-cutting ceremony and to see the amazing transformation of our newly renovated centre and provincial office.

**June 27
4 pm to 8 pm
Special Guests
Mini-Auction
Prizes Reception**

Share in the excitement—become a partner through our donor program

Thanks to Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation and all our Supporters

Check It Out!



Alberta Naturally

Explore the diversity of southern Alberta's wildlands with the Alberta Wilderness Association. The AWA is presenting a series of guided hikes. All walks are within a two- to three-hour drive of Calgary. Each of these walks is relatively easy. Participants are advised to wear appropriate footwear and to pack a lunch and water.

Space is limited, so people need to register and pay in advance. Fees are \$5 per hike for AWA members, \$10 for non-members. Memberships are \$25 for a single membership, \$30 for a family membership. Children can hike for free.

Rumsey Natural Area

Characterized by aspen woodlands, wetlands, and grasslands, it is home to rare species like the Cooper's hawk and prairie vole. June 3.

Foothills (Bragg Creek Natural Area)

Where boreal forest meets the subalpine; home to more than 120 bird species and 200 plant communities. June 17.

Kootenay Plains (free)

AWA annual field trip. June 25.

Milk River Canyon

One of the few remaining large wildlands left in the grasslands of Alberta. Home to many rare and endangered species. July 8.

Castle Crown Wilderness

Bighorn sheep habitat and two of the Rocky Mountains' three critical movement corridors for grizzlies and wolves. July 22.

Whaleback

The largest intact piece of montane wilderness in Canada and home to grizzly and black bears, wolves, cougars, deer, and wintering elk. August 19.

K-Country

Alberta's Eden. August 26.

For detailed information or to register, call John at (403) 283-2025.
<http://albertawilderness.ab.ca>

Advocates Retreat and Workshop

The weekend will include a Friday night potluck supper, a Saturday facilitated discussion on advocacy in Alberta ("Where are we headed?") and a Sunday field trip to Kootenay Plains.

Pioneer Ranch Lodge on Crimson Lake
June 23, 24, 25, cost: \$25.

Deadline for registration: June 12

For more information or to register contact John Geary, in the Provincial Office at (403) 283-2025.

<http://albertawilderness.ab.ca>

AWA launches its new, fully redesigned website albertawilderness.ab.ca. Bringing the AWA into the twenty-first century, a team of dedicated volunteers worked hundreds of hours to develop a format that will keep viewers coming back again and again.

Surf on in and find out about upcoming AWA-sponsored events and reviews of past events (did the camera catch you there? LOL). Follow your favorite @ RISK campaign as we work to protect Alberta's remaining wilderness. Sign up for special email updates on how you can help.

Bow River Basin Water Council

The AWA is looking for a volunteer to act as an alternate representative of the AWA (and the Friends of the Oldman River) on the Bow River Basin Water Council. Its commitment entails one entire day for its general meetings, usually held once every two months. Also, its committees and project meetings are held usually once or twice each month for half a day. The Bow River Basin Water Council's mandate is to protect water quality and water quantity of the Bow River Basin. We are looking for serious candidates who can commit time to the BRBWC for more than one year.

If you would like more information, please contact Stella Riesen at (403) 275-0830.

FAX OR WRITE THAT LETTER!

YOU CAN MAKE

A DIFFERENCE

Addresses are correct as of January, 2000

Government of Alberta
www.gov.ab.ca/env

Premier Ralph Klein

307, 10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B7
Fax: (780) 427-1349
Phone: (780) 427-2251

Hon. Gary G. Mar QC

Minister of Environmental
Protection

323, 10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Fax: (780) 427-6259
Phone: (780) 427-2391
email: gmar@assembly.ab.ca

Hon. Steve West

Minister of Resource
Development

408, 10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
Fax: (780) 422-0195

Hon. Ty Lund

Minister of Agriculture, Food
and Rural Development

208, 10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
Phone: (780) 427-3740
Fax (780) 422-6035

Hon. Mike Cardinal

Associate Minister of Forestry
402, 10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB

T5K 2B6
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Fax: (780) 415-4818
email: mcardinal@assembly.ab.ca

Debby Carlson MLA

Environmental Protection Critic
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email:
Edmonton_Ellerslie@assembly.ab.ca

Dr. Raj Pannu, MLA

New Democrat Opposition
213, 10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB

T5K 2B6
email: rpannu@assembly.ab.ca

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien

Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A0A6

Hon. Sheila Copps,

Minister of Canadian Heritage
15 Eddy Street, 11th Floor
Hull, PQ K1A0M5

Fax (819) 953-8594
Phone (819) 997-7788

Hon. David Anderson


Minister of the Environment
House of Commons
Parliament Building

Ottawa, ON, K1A0A6
Phone: (819) 997-1441

Fax: (819) 953-3457





... and remember to **put postage** on your mail to the Provincial Legislature. Only the Federal Government accepts postage-free mail! Send us copies of your correspondence and we may reproduce it in the *Advocate*. Thanks!





Wilderness Celebration

2000
12th Annual Alberta Wilderness Association
Dinner & Auction



Enjoy
great food, raffles & entertainment

Unique
items to bid on in **Live and Silent Auctions**

October 28

Glenmore Inn, Calgary
Preview: 6 pm
Dinner: 7:15 pm

Tickets **\$75**

Call the **AWA Office**
(403) 283-2025

Donations
Gratefully accepted. Call (403) 283-2025

Go Wild 2000

The 9th Annual Canada Life Climb for Wilderness co-sponsored by the Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) was held April 29, 2000. Our event was challenged by maintenance at the Calgary Tower with only one elevator working to carry climbers down. We apologize to everyone who was inconvenienced by the wait in the observation deck of the Tower.

1,220 climbers raised more than \$83,000 for our work in wilderness protection. Phyllis Hart (85 years old) was our eldest climber and made the ascent twice. Jed Cergan (3½ years old) was the youngest, climbing up and down the 802 steps. Additionally, we had a number of babies riding in backpacks, training for future years. Ten corporate teams entered our fist corporate challenge and have encouraged us to make the challenge bigger and better for next year. PanCanadian raised the most funds and BP Amoco had the most participants in two teams. The climbers from St. Anne's won our spirit award and the award for the most number of ascents by a team. Calgary Flames mascot Harvey the Hound climbed all of the 802 steps and raised \$458.50 in pledges. Thank you to all the volunteers!

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Katrina Aburrow | Ed Hoffman | Jackie Puscus |
| Doreen Allary | Kathrine Ikeda-Cameron | Ann Rawcliff |
| Trevor Allary | Deanne Ivany | Heather Reddekop |
| Andrea Alton | Linda Javeri | Kristen Rikihana |
| Judy Archer | Chris Junc | Shane Roth |
| Fiona Boulet | Jane Kennedy | Tom Schlemp |
| Patsy Boychuk | Edith Konrad | Claire Serdula |
| Bob Cameron | Cathy Laberge | Barbara Sherrington |
| Norma Chan | Larry Lalonde | Peter Sherrington |
| Ashley Chase | Louise Lance | Kent Slaney |
| Barb Clayton | Eric Langshaw | Christyann Sloan |
| Allison Coletta | Ann Lemorande | Heather Sloan |
| Lillian Davies | Shirley Lorange | Russell Sloan |
| Mel Dunford | Gail MacCrimmon | Raymond Soneff |
| Ann Fabris | Margaret Main | Steve Swettenham |
| Ian Fabris | Dave Marks | Kathy Taxbock |
| Gina Fryer | Cathy Martyn | Kathy Taylor |
| Kathy Garland | Wayne Martyn | Liz Titmarch |
| Jean Gaucher | Adam McAllister | John Twaddle |
| Maurice Gaucher | Ken Millard | Lee Tymchuk |
| John Geary | Ava Morasch | Thomas Ulbrich |
| Susan Given | Gareth Morris | Darcy Vandenbrink |
| Christina Greco | Joe Obad | Judi Vandenbrink |
| Bruce Greenfield | Dan Olson | Kim Wells |
| Hugo Haley | Pam Pearson | Linda Wiggins |
| Kate Harper | Dave Poulton | Jason Williamson |
| Graham Heath | Nancy Pullen | Jerry Young |
| Katherine Hodges | | |

Time Magazine Names Albertan Hero for the Planet

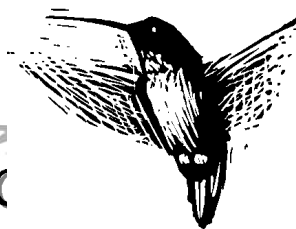
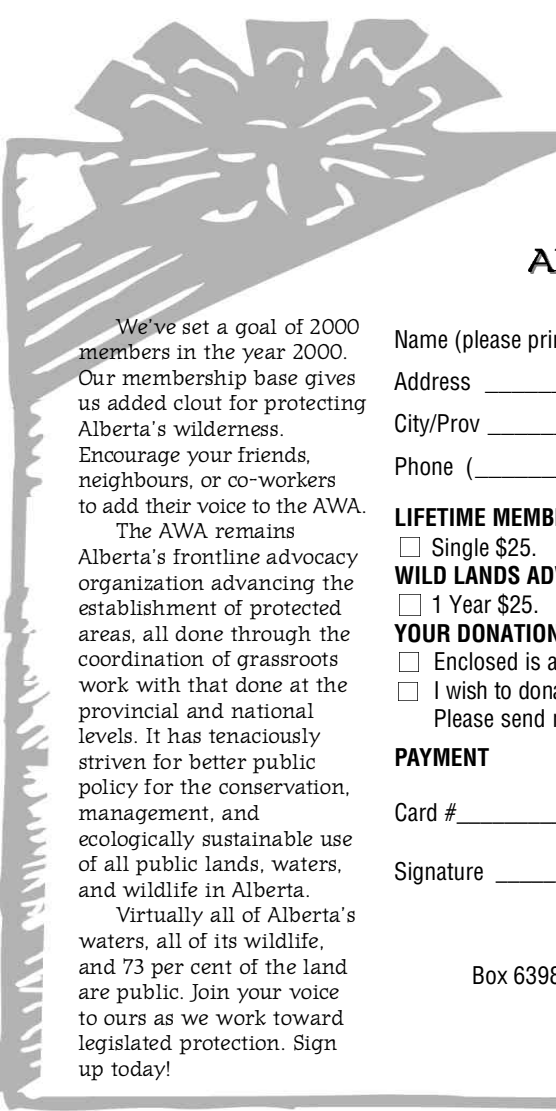
Time Magazine recognized Brian Staszenski, a 30-year Alberta environmentalist and founder of Destination Conservation, as a Hero for the Planet in Time's Earth Day issue April 19, 2000. Staszenski is one of four Canadians to be given this honour.

Brian Staszenski founded Destination Conservation (DC), an Alberta-based environmental education program, in 1987 in conjunction with the Edmonton Public School Board. Currently DC is delivered in 2,700 schools across Canada and is being piloted in ten U.S. states. In the years to come, DC will be delivering environmental education to children in schools throughout the world. "Our planet's future is in the hands of our children," says Staszenski. "It's very

important that we teach them actions that will help lead to environmental sustainability before it is too late."

Destination Conservation's mission is to reduce energy use, conserve water, and minimize waste production in schools. The DC program delivers a technical component which trains building operators to perform energy audits and retrofits to schools and an educational component which increases students' awareness and offers ideas and solutions to help them become more environmentally responsible.

For more information on Destination Conservation see www.dc.ab.ca or contact the head office in Edmonton at (780) 433-8711.



2000 in 2000

AWA Membership Campaign

We've set a goal of 2000 members in the year 2000. Our membership base gives us added clout for protecting Alberta's wilderness. Encourage your friends, neighbours, or co-workers to add their voice to the AWA. The AWA remains Alberta's frontline advocacy organization advancing the establishment of protected areas, all done through the coordination of grassroots work with that done at the provincial and national levels. It has tenaciously striven for better public policy for the conservation, management, and ecologically sustainable use of all public lands, waters, and wildlife in Alberta. Virtually all of Alberta's waters, all of its wildlife, and 73 per cent of the land are public. Join your voice to ours as we work toward legislated protection. Sign up today!

Name (please print) _____

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City/Prov _____ Postal Code _____

Phone (_____) _____

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP (includes a 1-year subscription to the Wild Lands Advocate)
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Signature _____

ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP
Box 6398, Station D, Calgary, Alberta Canada T2P 2E1 Phone: (403) 283-2025

We do not sell or trade our membership list.