

# WILD LANDS ADVOCATE

## World Petroleum Congress

Aftershocks in Alberta

**Six New Special Places** – Mar recognizes important values



Milk River by Cliff Wallis

## P&NG Sales Announced in Protected Areas

### Conservation Groups Take Action to Stop Leases

Alberta's conservation organizations have learned the Alberta government is preparing to sell industrial leases for oil and gas activities within the Milk River Natural Area and the recently established Chinchaga Wildland Park. The Alberta Wilderness Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Edmonton Chapter, and Federation of Alberta Naturalists have written the Environment and Resource Development ministers asking them to abandon the proposed sale. They have also notified the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board that they will be requesting public hearings should their efforts to stop the sale fail and companies purchasing the leases proceed with applications to the Board for drilling. They are initiating efforts to reach potential buyers to advise them not to purchase the leases due to the protected area status of the sites. Local conservation groups are also opposing the sale of industrial leases.

One or more petroleum companies have requested that the petroleum rights in the park and natural area be put up for sale. The names of the companies are not publicly available. The sale is to occur this August or September. The proposed sale covers approximately 16 sections of the Milk River Natural Area or 41 km<sup>2</sup> of the 53 km<sup>2</sup> natural area and about 34 sections or 88 km<sup>2</sup> of the 803 km<sup>2</sup> Chinchaga Wildland Park. The Natural Area is located

adjacent the U.S.-Canada border in southeast Alberta. Together with the tiny Kennedy Coulee Ecological Reserve, it was established to protect the spectacular Milk River Canyon and the associated native, dry mixed-grass prairie. As part of the government's Special Places 2000 program, Chinchaga Wildland Park was established to protect a piece of the foothills and is located about 200 kms northwest of Grand Prairie.

"These affronts by government and industry to parks and other protected areas in Alberta have to stop," insists Cliff Wallis, president of the Alberta Wilderness Association. "We take no comfort in the government's potential stipulation that surface access will not be permitted with these petroleum leases."

The conservation groups say it is possible that in advertising or "posting" the leases for sale, the government will tell potential buyers that surface access, such as roads, will not be permitted. They point out, however, that such a restriction is not legally binding. Because provincial park and natural area legislation in Alberta does not rule out the clearing of seismic lines, building of roads, and drilling, there is no guarantee that the bureaucracy won't change the initial restriction. Furthermore, no public notification is required should they decide to change the restriction, just as the Resource

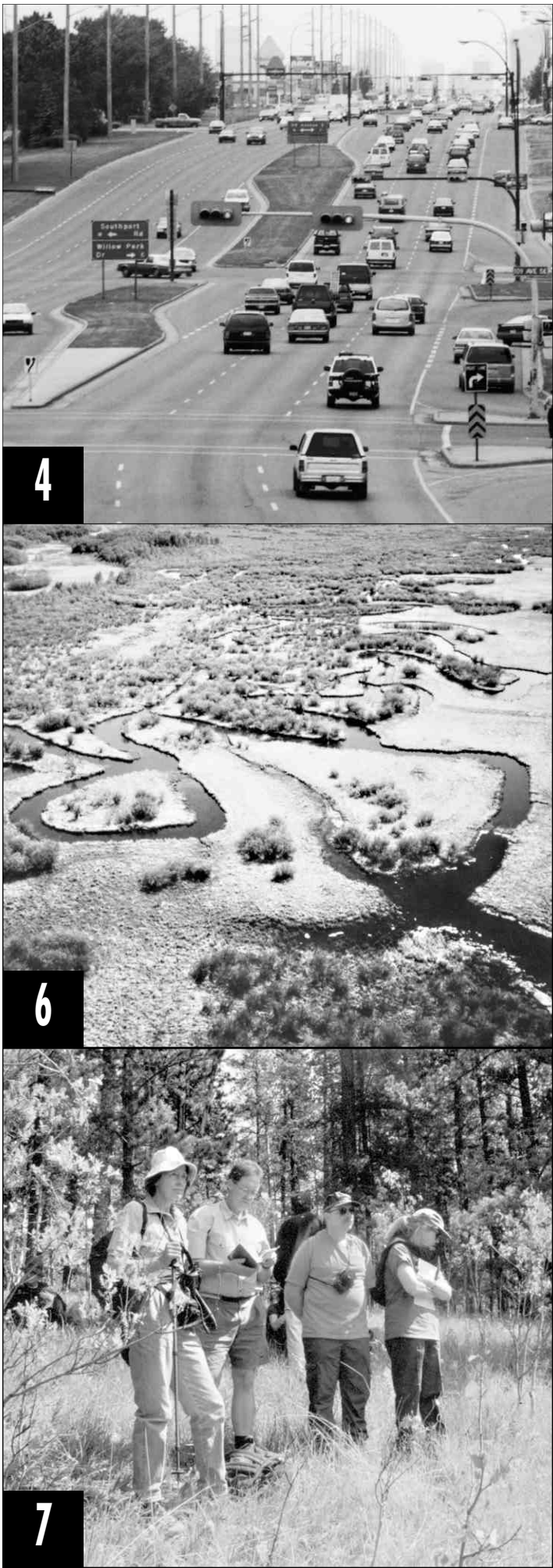
Development Department is not required to notify the public and consider public concerns prior to putting an area of public land up for sale as a petroleum lease.

"The government claims Special Places sites, our parks and natural areas, are protected for future generations. They're certainly not if the government keeps selling industrial leases in them," states Sam Gunsch at the Edmonton Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

The conservation groups point out that when the government brought its Special Places policy into effect in 1995, all existing protected areas, such as Milk River, as well as future ones were put at risk of no longer being protected. The policy overview says Special Places, including existing parks and Natural Areas, will "allow for a considerable range of uses: livestock grazing, oil and gas development, recreation and tourism development, and cultural and heritage appreciation."

Groups participating in this action include:

Albertans for a Wild Chinchaga,  
Alberta Wilderness Association,  
Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society  
-Edmonton Chapter,  
Federation of Alberta Naturalists,  
Grassland Naturalists,  
Southern Alberta Environmental Group



# CONTENTS

**1 PROVINCE ANNOUNCES P&NG LEASE SALES IN PROTECTED AREAS**  
Conservation Groups Take Action to Stop Leases in Milk River and Chinchaga

**3 BEYOND CHEVIOT**  
Alberta Conservation Groups Announce New Campaign Focus

**CANADIAN FORESTS IN GRAVE DANGER**  
State of Canadian Forests Much Worse Than Previously Thought

**4 COUNTER CONFERENCE DECLARES PRESENT LIFESTYLE UNSUSTAINABLE**  
“Widening Peoples’ Choices: For a Just and Sustainable Future” Sign-on Declaration

**CONSERVATION GROUPS LOBBY CEO’S FOR WILDERNESS PROTECTION**  
Petroleum Industry Urged to Sign on

**5 LETTERS**  
Spray Lakes Park Proposal Praised

**6 SIX NEW SPECIAL PLACES SITES RECOGNIZE IMPORTANT VALUES**  
“Still lots of work to be done”

**7 ASSOCIATION NEWS**  
Wilderness Resource Centre Open for Business

**8 DECISION MAKING AS IF SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT MATTERED**  
The “Canada Well-Being Measurement Act”

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**WILD LANDS ADVOCATE MISSION**  
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 September 6, 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.





# Beyond Cheviot

## Alberta Conservation Groups Announce New Campaign Focus

### AWA Press Release

Conservation organizations announced a new focus in their four-year campaign to stop the proposed Cheviot mine. They say new evidence presented in March and April to the Review Panel assessing Cheviot shows that the open-pit mine proposal should be abandoned for a more environmentally sustainable development strategy. The AWA Coalition is asking that existing and imminent federal and provincial programs be used to help Hinton and area plan a more environmentally sustainable future. Their goal is to protect the integrity of Jasper National Park by establishing a provincial Wildland Park encompassing the critical wildlife habitat of the Mountain Park area.

For example, they regard the area as a priority place for investment of the \$85 million recommended by the Panel on the Ecological Integrity of Canada's National Parks. Funds would be available over the next five years for stewardship initiatives in the greater ecosystems the national parks are part of. Over the next few months, they plan to meet with community leaders and federal and provincial decision-makers about implementing the conservation recommendations presented by various participants in the hearing.

"The cumulative harm of industrial activity in the region and the proposed Cheviot mine added to this are a prime example of what the Integrity Report is sounding the alarm about," explains Dianne Pachal of the Alberta Wilderness Association. "Albertans have a real opportunity to turn things around and the Cheviot hearing has given us the information to act on. Grande Cache is already facing a future without a coal mine head on by exploring their natural amenity options, such as tourism, and encouraging retirees to move to the area for its mountain scenery, clean air and water, and wilderness next door."

The coalition believes abandonment of the mine for an environmentally sustainable development plan has now become a necessity as the global coal markets make its development very unlikely and cumulative effects information presented at the hearing shows the region's grizzly bears are headed for a crisis due to lost habitat.

As well, on May 2, the Federal Court issued an Order formally preventing the company from acting on the second of the two authorizations it had received for commencement of the mine development. The Order remains in effect until the Panel issues its supplemental report and federal Cabinet has made a decision on the new information and recommendations.

The AWA Coalition consists of the Alberta Wilderness Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Jasper Environmental Association, and Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development. Together with the Canadian Nature Federation and represented by lawyers with the Sierra


Legal Defence Fund, their successful lawsuit against the first federal approval for the mine brought about the supplemental hearing.

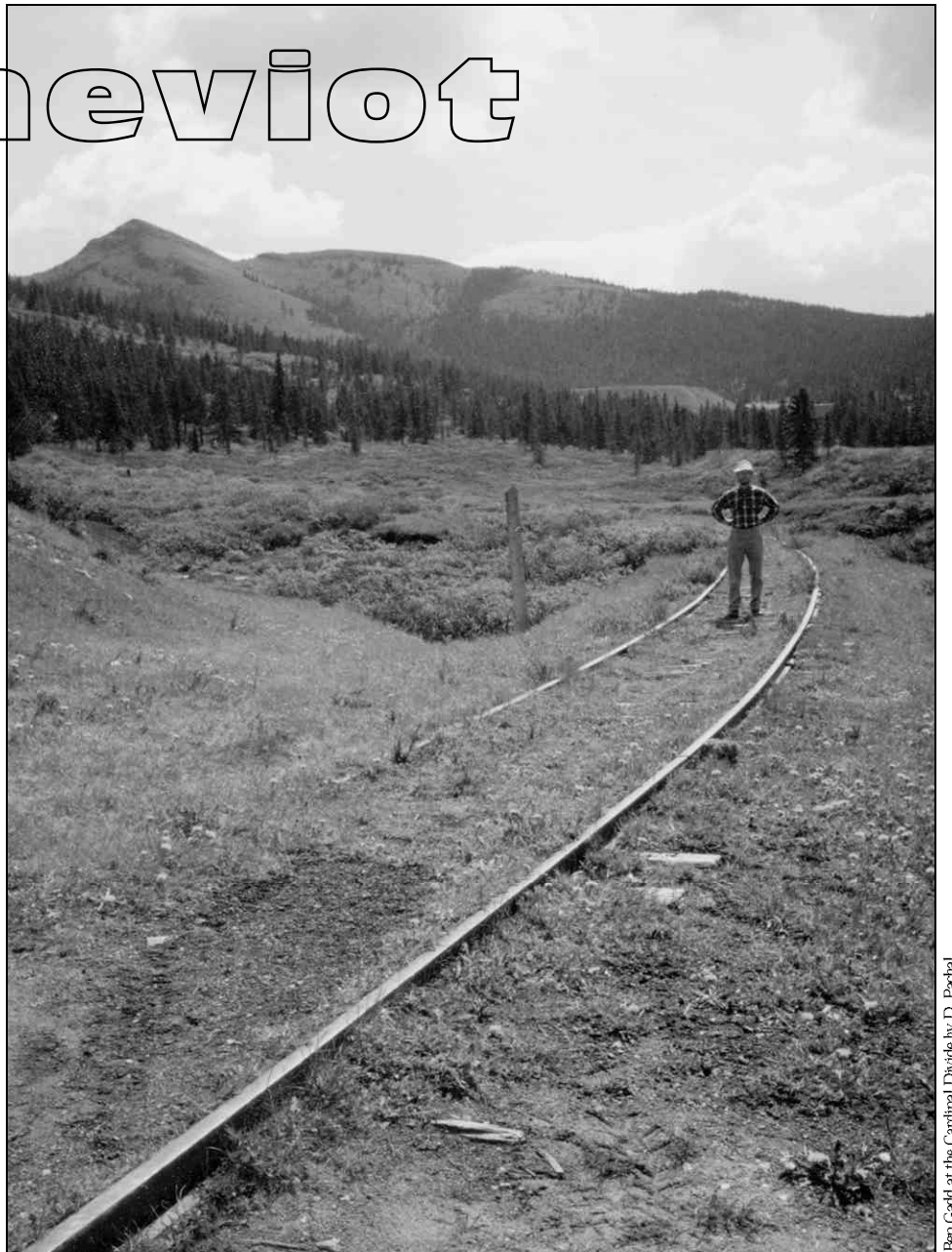
Through a slideshow and presentation, Ben Gadd, naturalist and author of the *Handbook of the Canadian Rockies*, gave the public a first-hand look at the focus of the new campaign. Recommendations of the Ecological Integrity Panel have been endorsed by Heritage Minister Sheila Copps and will play a significant role in the Coalition's campaign.

The Review Panel heard three new sets of key evidence and recommendations about the mine's ecological impact, economics, and health risks. Parks Canada identified the western third of the proposed mine as prime grizzly bear habitat that should be maintained along with three other areas in the region. Parks Canada's very direct final presentation again warned the mine threatens the integrity of Jasper National Park and its wildlife, indicating the new information made them even more concerned about this threat than at the hearings in February 1998. New economic analysis revealed it is highly unlikely the mine will be built given the declining current and future markets for the Cheviot type of coal and the cost of the mine. Economically, the option of leaving the wildland undisturbed versus the option of proceeding with the mine are of comparable value to Alberta. Lastly, the mine would open a Pandora's box of risks to human and environmental health. Mining in the same geological formation downstream at Luscar has caused selenium levels to exceed safety guidelines in streams and the man-made lake, and in fish. A fish consumption advisory was issued by Alberta Health in February.

The Review Panel's second report is pending, with such reports usually issued within three months of the close of the public hearings. The first review failed to address the cumulative impacts on critical wildlife habitat and endangered species of the proposed mine in combination with logging, oil and gas, and other mines in the region.

At Luscar's May 11 annual meeting, President and CEO Gordon Ulrich told shareholders that the company's decision on proceeding with the Cheviot mine will depend entirely on the international market.

"Issuing an approval for the mine with the hope that the mine will not happen anyhow is still a bad scenario for the region," comments Sam Gunsch of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. "As long as a permit for a mine remains there, it will be a roadblock to better protection for wildlife, Jasper, and an enlarged provincial park, just as the present coal lease held back consideration of the area under Alberta's Special Places 2000 program for park establishment." 



Ben Gadd at the Cardinal Divide by D. Pachal

## Canadian Forests in Grave Danger

State of Canadian forests much worse than previously thought

### World Resources Institute and Global Forest Watch

Peter Lee, a World Wildlife Fund biologist, presented damning conclusions from a newly released report on the state of Canadian forests to delegates of the Alberta Environment Network's Annual General Meeting & Assembly, May 26-28. Fifty delegates representing more than 30 Alberta ENGOs were in attendance.

The Report entitled "Canada's Forests at a Crossroads: An Assessment in the Year 2000" is a joint effort of the World Resources Institute of Washington, D.C. and Global Forest Watch Canada and is the most thorough examination of its kind to date.

The Report states that "Canada maintains its lead as the world's largest timber exporter through logging of old growth and primary forests, which account for 90 percent of the harvest. Fully 80 percent of the annual harvest is still by the way of clear cuts." Furthermore, Mr. Lee informed listeners, "the southern Canadian forests are virtually depleted, so the large timber companies are pushing further north in a search for new fibre." Having signed many international agreements with environmental implications and commitments, "Canada is not fulfilling its obligations and promises to the rest of the world," said Mr. Lee, President of Global Forest Watch Canada.

Award-winning, B.C. forest campaigner Colleen McCrory of the Valhalla Wilderness Society, keynote speaker of the weekend conference, stated that

"kraft pulp mills, in which Alberta has so heavily invested, are losing market share to much more efficient CTMP mills."

Conference delegates were introduced to new, on-the-market, high-quality papers from two separate nontimber sources: bagass (sugar cane waste) and straw. Although more expensive than traditional paper, "prices should become competitive as markets grow" was the assessment of Margaret Chandler, editor of *Encompass* magazine.

### Report Highlights

*Canada's Forests at a Crossroads: An Assessment in the Year 2000*

- Within Canada, Alberta is second only to Prince Edward Island in percent of the province converted from forested lands to nonforested lands due to human-caused changes (page 29).
- Within Canada, Alberta is second only to New Brunswick in percent of its forests "accessed" due to linear disturbances (page 29).
- Fifty years ago, the forests of Alberta were still mostly free of roads and other linear disturbances versus now, when industrial access has fragmented Alberta's forests into small patches (page 30).
- Only six percent of Alberta's forests are left in patches greater than 9 km<sup>2</sup>, and these patches have a mean size of only 64 km<sup>2</sup> (page 30).
- The vast majority of the fragmentation has been due to the oil and gas industry. 





File photo

## Counter Conference Declares Present Lifestyle Unsustainable

*Ayal Dinner, Sierra Youth Coalition*

**B**elow is the declaration that was written by a group of participants and presenters at the teach-in: "Widening Peoples' Choices: For A Just and Sustainable Future" held in Calgary, June 9 & 10, 2000. The teach-in and declaration are in response to the World Petroleum Congress. The Sierra Youth Coalition invites individuals, groups, organizations, and so forth, to sign on. It is our hope that this declaration will be used as a document supporting campaigns, to be included in media correspondence, and in any way that will help with social and environmental justice campaigns and related advocacy and actions.

Please distribute this widely and feel free to use it within press releases and other media.

Please email or call me (my info is below) to sign on to the declaration. The sooner the better, as we can then release it as officially supported by a certain number of groups with names included, which will give it more weight.

P.S. To those of you involved in the teach-in, thank you for helping to make it an incredible event!

## Widening Peoples' Choices for a Just and Sustainable Future

A parallel conference organized by young people concerned with their future on the occasion of the World Petroleum Congress 2000.

Counter-conference participants, organizers, and presenters included human rights activists, labour representatives, students, environmental activists, scientists, business people, and the general public. We heard from those directly impacted by the oil industry, who related how the oil and gas industry negatively affects communities as close as the Lubicon Cree in Northern Alberta and as far away as the Ogoni people of Nigeria. But we also discovered that we are all adversely affected by fossil fuels for the following reasons:

1. Human rights abuses and cultural devastation at the hands of oil developers.
2. Environmental destruction on a local, regional, national and international level.
3. Dramatic global change, including frightening climate destabilization.

We concluded that our present fossil fuel addicted lifestyle is unsustainable, unjust, and inhuman. However viable alternatives do exist, and if implemented they can create improved health, employment, equality, human rights, and environmental protection.

Social changes and technological improvements, such as energy conservation initiatives and renewable systems, can lead to genuine collaborations between civil society, government, and corporations in the effort to control our energy production and strengthen democracy in our communities. Better futures exist, potentially, for all of us — our families, our communities, and the world.

We are committed to just transitions for workers and all who are dependent on fossil fuel industries as they are phased out. As individuals and organizations committed to building the power of constituencies represented here and to reaching out and increasing the numbers of those working to this end, we invite you to join us in creating a brighter, and more just and sustainable future for us and our children.

To sign on to this declaration contact:

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# Industry CEOs Urged to Lobby for Wilderness Protection

**AWA and Federation of Alberta Naturalists Press Release**

**A**lberta conservation groups have urged the province's top ten petroleum industry chief executive officers (CEOs) to take advantage of the World Petroleum Congress (WPC) by acting on their industry's stated environmental protection policies. In May the groups asked the CEOs to sign a joint letter to Premier Klein to take action to protect Alberta's best remaining wild lands under the Special Places program and stop further petroleum development in the sites.

"Premier Klein promised Special Places 2000 would enlarge and complete Alberta's protected areas network. On paper the petroleum industry has reiterated its support for Special Places, but on the ground the companies and the government continue to use petroleum leases to block adequate habitat protection for endangered animals like woodland caribou," said Dianne Pachal, conservation manager for the AWA. "These CEOs need to bring their companies' actions in line with their promises to protect Alberta's wildlife. They hold enormous power in Alberta that could make wilderness protection happen if they wanted to."

Glen Semenchuk, executive director of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, said, "Back at the launch of Special Places in 1995, the oil and gas companies claimed to want certainty about which areas were protected, so they could avoid valley-by-valley, site-by-site opposition. We took them at their word. But given their track record in Special Places and this weak response to take action now, I really have to question how serious they are."

Pachal said "All the oil and gas companies refused to indicate specific support for protecting any of the ten key ecological areas, either in whole or in part. The CEO's position seems best reflected in the response we received from Jim Buckee, president and CEO of Talisman Energy who responded by saying 'I do not support the three more-specific requests outlined in your draft correspondence to Mr. Klein.'"

Five companies replied to the May 9 letter from the Alberta Wilderness Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Federation of Alberta Naturalists, and World Wildlife Fund. Only Suncor's environment director wrote a partial endorsement of the conservation groups' requests to Premier Klein.

The CEOs were asked to write in support of ten new parks and wilderness areas being designated which would total about 29,000 km<sup>2</sup>, or four percent of the province under the government's Special Places 2000 program. The letter asked Premier Klein to immediately implement the petroleum industry association's existing agreement with the conservation groups to phase out existing oil and gas developments from parks and other protected areas, and support new legislation that permanently protects Alberta parks from oil and gas development. Both industry and the

provincial government have so far ignored that agreement.

This spring, a spokesperson for the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers proposed that it might take a hundred years to phase oil and gas developments out of provincial protected areas such as new Special Places sites.

"Despite the petroleum industry's general policies and promises, local people in the Special Places process saw oil and gas companies lobby against every specific big wilderness site. The World Petroleum Congress is an opportunity for these CEOs to commit to specific actions, beyond the general principles. Our letter about specific action items essentially requested a show of good faith from the leaders of Alberta's most powerful corporate sector, but just one of them sent a partial endorsement to the premier," said Glen Semenchuk.

Only about one percent of the province has been established as designated protected areas during the last decade including sites under the Alberta government's Special Places program. Many remain open for industrial use. According to the Environment Department studies, the government land-base targets have been capped too low for wildlife needs, recreation, and ecotourism demand. For example, Special Places has been capped to protect only two percent of the Foothills Natural Region, leaving 98 percent open for oil and gas development and other industrial uses. The foothills provide important habitat for the endangered woodland caribou, grizzly, and songbird populations.

Alberta's petroleum industry has already caused significant degradation to the province's parks and other public lands. Based on statistics and analysis from the provincial Environment Department, the ecological integrity of some parks has been heavily degraded by the petroleum industry, and new Special Places sites will see more petroleum development: Slave Lake Provincial Park has 100 petroleum wellsites in 61 km<sup>2</sup>; over one-half of all the sites designated as protected areas during Special Places legislatively provide for industrial uses within them; Chinchaga Wildland Park, 802 km<sup>2</sup> designated on December 15, 1999, has 24 petroleum and natural gas leases, all of which are presently allowed to proceed to full development; and an estimated 1.5 to 1.8 million kilometres of seismic cutlines have been bulldozed in Alberta for petroleum exploration.

Petro-Canada, Gulf Canada Resources, Suncor Energy, Shell Canada, and Talisman Energy responded with letters to the conservation groups reiterating their support in principle for both Special Places 2000 and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers' Consensus Agreement with environmental groups as the extent of their companies' position on petroleum and protected wilderness areas. All the oil and gas companies contacted refused to indicate specific support for protecting any of the ten key ecological areas, either in whole or in part.



Four environment non-government organizations asked the CEOs of Alberta's top ten petroleum corporations to endorse the following letter to the premier. None of the CEOs would indicate specific support for protecting any of the ten key ecological areas in whole or in part.

Dear Premier Klein,

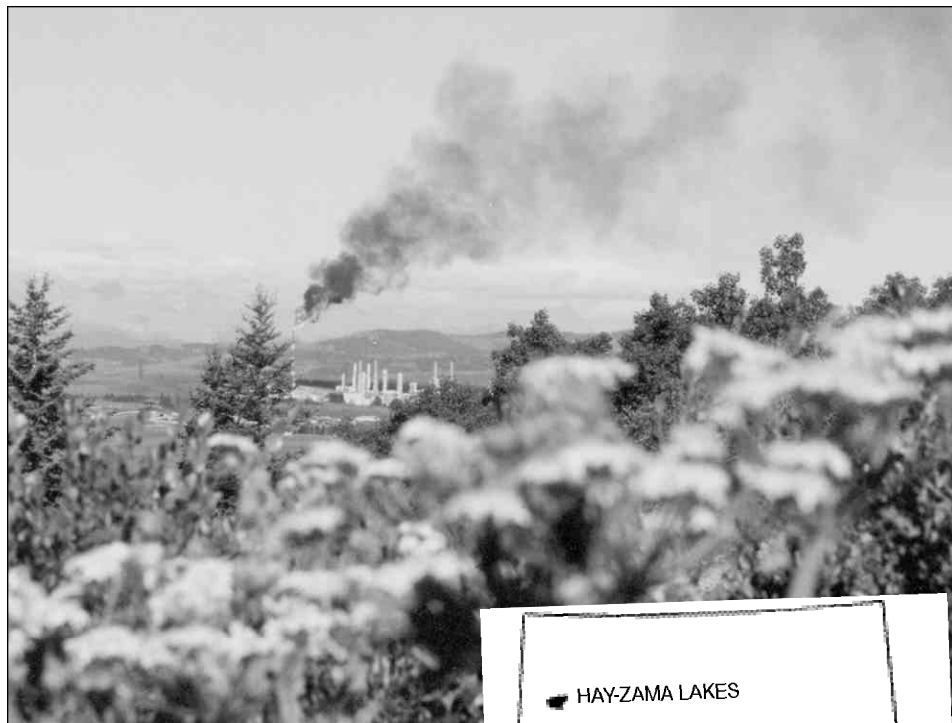
We encourage your government to complete Alberta's protected areas network by the end of 2000.

The Alberta government's Special Places 2000 program is nearing the end of its term and there are many important ecological areas that are not yet secured as protected areas. As you may recall, the oil and gas industry, through the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, has clearly supported the completion of a network of protected areas. We believe the successful completion of that program would assist in providing clarity of where our companies cannot operate due to over-riding ecological and public values for preservation. Our companies are concerned by the government's lack of resolve in securing the protection of Alberta's remaining wildlands and by the increasing risk to some of the markets for our products.

The important ecological areas of Alberta are mostly well known and long studied. Action is what is needed to bring the Special Places program to a successful conclusion.

Specifically, we request the following:

1. The immediate establishment, as protected areas, of the following ten outstanding, world-class natural heritage sites: Bighorn (approximately 6,000 km<sup>2</sup>), Birch-Wabasca (approximately 6,000 km<sup>2</sup>), Caribou Mountains (approximately 8,000 km<sup>2</sup>), Bodo (approximately 250 km<sup>2</sup>), Cardinal (approximately 700 km<sup>2</sup>), Castle (approximately 800 km<sup>2</sup>), Chinchaga (approximately 6,500 km<sup>2</sup>), Sheep River (site recommended by local committee for Special Places), Lakeland (designate the Recreation Area), Milk River-Sage Creek (approximately 1,000 km<sup>2</sup>).



Gas plant west of Cochrane by V. Pharis

### 10 sites ready for immediate protection

2. The immediate passage of clear protected areas legislation that incorporates the following principles:
  - No industrial or commercial development within protected areas.
  - At least 12 percent (20 percent of the Boreal Natural Region, 25 percent of the Foothills Natural Region) of each of Alberta's 20 natural subregions permanently designated within five years.
  - The scientific principles of conservation biology will be the basis for the identification, establishment, and management of each site and the provincial system; maintenance of ecological integrity is the primary goal driving all management decisions.
  - Protected Areas legislation is not subservient to other legislation and Protected Areas are not subservient to other land uses.
  - An independent Protected Areas auditor to be appointed to monitor progress towards realizing the legislation's goals and to ensure that adequate funding and personnel are committed to its enforcement.
3. The immediate implementation of the agreement known as the "CAPP/ENG0" agreement (i.e., Petroleum and Natural Gas Ex-



ploration and Development and the Alberta Special Places 2000 Initiative – Meeting the Challenge: Statement of Consensus and Outstanding Issues) for resolving oil and gas issues for the above ten sites and for the other sites that will be required to complete a network of protected areas in Alberta, with a commitment to phase out existing oil and gas activities in protected areas in five years.

We believe resolving the issue of protected areas is important to Albertans, important to our companies, and important to the balance needed to achieve both financial and ecological responsibility in Alberta.

Sincerely

## Letters

### Spray Lakes Proposal Praised

The Hon. Ralph Klein  
Dear Mr. Klein,

I want to express my joy and elation upon receiving the news from Environment Minister Gary Mar that the devastating proposal for the Spray

Lakes has been completely canceled. That, and the proposal to create a provincial park in the area, is an event the environmental community seldom hear and wholeheartedly endorse.

The announcement was made at the Emerald Awards for Environmental Excellence held at the Winspear Center. At the reception, after the event, everyone expressed the same feeling as I have. There was a genuine belief that the province of Alberta has turned a significant corner in environmental and habitat protection.

Now that your government has shown leadership of this sort we are hoping to see the Natural Heritage Act be resurrected in a form that will truly

protect our incomparable natural heritage. Alberta is looked at by the rest of the world as one of the remaining regions of pristine natural beauty. We are expected to make every effort to preserve what we have had the common sense to conserve thus far.

We are aware that your government is concerned over the extraordinarily large amount of carbon emitted in Alberta and would remind you that intact forests are a well-documented sink.

Yours sincerely,  
David J. Parker, PEng  
Alberta Green Party

## FAX OR WRITE THAT LETTER!

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Addresses are correct as of July, 2000

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# Six New Special Places Recognize Important Values

*“Still lots of work to be done”*

By Wendy Adams

Shortly before Environment Minister Gary Mar was shuffled out of his portfolio he announced six designations in the Parkland and Boreal Forest Natural Regions. These sites add 31,070 hectares (311 km<sup>2</sup>) to Alberta's Special Places program.

Gary Mar announced the sites on June 6. “These six designations preserve a significant wildlife corridor in the Boreal Forest Natural Region, and vital shorebird habitat, rare sand dunes, and extensive marshland in Alberta's Parkland natural region,” he said.

The pristine Greene Valley Provincial Park and La Biche River Wildland Park add native, undisturbed land to the Boreal Forest Natural Region, while the extension to Poachers' Landing Provincial Recreation Area combines recreational and preservation values.

Protected land in Alberta's Parkland Natural Region has tripled with the addition of Killarney-Reflex and Ribstone-Edgerton Natural Areas, combined with the extension to Dillberry Lake Provincial Park. These sites feature important wildlife species such as stilt sandpipers and endangered piping plovers, and diverse landforms such as sprawling sand plains, dunes, and ecologically significant streamside habitat.

The Parkland natural region — an important transition zone between boreal forest to the north and grassland to the south — is found only in Canada's prairie provinces. This region features aspen and balsam poplar forests, glacial lakebeds, and steep-sided river valleys.

“Most of the land in this region is privately owned and under cultivation, making it imperative to protect available Crown land wherever possible,” Mar said. “These designations are an important step towards meeting that goal.”

Cliff Wallis, president of the Alberta Wilderness Association, expressed his appreciation for the new protected sites. “The AWA has identified these sites in our own ‘Areas of Interest’ for many years. We're happy to see these values recognized by our provincial government.” However, Wallis cautioned that the designation of sites in Alberta does little more than draw a line around these areas. “We still do not have strong legislation that protects these areas from resource activity,” he said. “While they're important additions there's still lots of work to be done in the Parkland Region.”

Sam Gunsch, Edmonton spokesperson for Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), was equally divided in his praise. He agreed the province's six new Special Places contain some valuable wildlife habitat but noted the province left out ecologically important lands identified in the government's own assessments. The Parkland sites of Ribstone, Killarney-Reflex and Dillberry contain important wildlife habitat but should have been fifty percent larger based on the Environment Department's habitat studies, reported in the 1997 Parkland - Special Places Report.

Furthermore, the new parks in the boreal are extremely small compared to the needs of boreal wildlife like the endangered woodland caribou.

“The government failed again to meet its own Special Places 2000 targets. With only five percent or less of the parkland remaining in its natural state, all the ecologically significant public land that's left needs protection,” says Gunsch. “Even the minister acknowledges that most of the parkland natural habitat has been lost to agriculture expansion, including critical habitat for endangered species like the piping plover.”



Bistare Creek by Cliff Wallis

While the government's news release cites the boreal forest as habitat for animals such as woodland caribou, the province's new boreal sites, like most Special Places sites in the forest, are again either surrounded by development or so much smaller than what is necessary for these wide-ranging animals that CPAWS says they are really better termed “Postage Stamps 2000.”

“The province keeps implying the ‘ecological fiction’ that these tiny boreal sites have lasting value for endangered woodland caribou or other wide-ranging wildlife like wolverine. These wildlife need several thousands of kilometres protected, but in Alberta it's only the oil and gas and logging industries that get that amount of protection from government,” added Gunsch. “One pulp mill alone has 60,000 kilometres for its use, but not a single core habitat for woodland caribou has been protected since 1987 when they were officially listed as endangered.” The largest boreal site announced was 168 km<sup>2</sup>.

The government news release also acknowledges that the largest boreal site contains oil and gas leases. Industrial development is permitted in Alberta parks under current laws. The government's new parks bill, the Natural Heritage Act, has been delayed because of public opposition to government plans to allow continued industrial development of oil and gas under the Bill.

## Greene Valley Provincial Park

Greene Valley Provincial Park is located about 140 kilometres northeast of Grande Prairie. This site adds 3,131 hectares (31 km<sup>2</sup>) to the Dry Mixedwood subregion of the Boreal Forest Natural Region. Greene Valley is a major tributary to the Peace River and is a wildlife corridor that serves as winter range for moose and mule deer.

This site is pristine and unspoiled with no active gas wells, no road development, minimal trail development, low facility development, and limited access into the valley due to steep slopes and rugged terrain.

## La Biche River Wildland Park

The La Biche River Wildland Park is located about 145 kilometres northeast of Edmonton. This site encompasses 16,844 hectares (168 km<sup>2</sup>) of the Dry Mixedwood subregion of the Boreal Forest Natural Region. It is an undisturbed site with no facility or road development and few petroleum and natural gas agreements.

The Wildland Park contributes to several natural history themes including sandy plain, ground moraine, wetland, and important streambed habitat.

## Poachers' Landing Provincial Recreation Area

The Poachers' Landing Provincial Recreation area is located about 140 kilometres northeast of Edmonton. The

expansion to this site adds 150 hectares (1.5 km<sup>2</sup>) to the Mixedwood subregion of the Boreal Forest Natural Region. This site contributes to heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation, and tourism goals of Special Places.

Poachers' Landing is an important balance between preservation and recreational opportunities for Albertans.

## Killarney-Reflex Heritage Rangeland Natural Area

All Natural Areas, including Heritage Rangeland, are currently open to resource activities, e.g. oil and gas drilling. This site is located about 235 kilometres southeast of Edmonton. The Killarney-Reflex Heritage Rangeland Natural Area contributes 2,522 hectares (25 km<sup>2</sup>) to the Central Parkland subregion of the Special Places program.

Killarney-Reflex includes major nesting areas for the piping plover, an endangered species. It is a significant shorebird migration area, attracting thousands of birds including stilt sandpipers, western sandpipers, least sandpipers, and pectoral sandpipers.

## Ribstone-Edgerton Heritage Rangeland Natural Area

This site is located about 215 kilometres southeast of Edmonton. Ribstone-Edgerton contributes 8,394 hectares (84 km<sup>2</sup>) to the Central Parkland subregion. This area contains diverse landscapes including sand plains, dunes, and riparian (streamside) habitat.

The Edgerton dunes are listed as a high priority “Special Feature” for protection under Special Places. The site is home to the ferruginous hawk, sharp-tailed grouse, whitetailed and mule deer.

## Dillberry Lake Provincial Park Expansion

This site is located about 240 kilometres southeast of Edmonton. The Dillberry Lake Provincial Park expansion adds 217 hectares (2.2 km<sup>2</sup>) to the Central Parkland subregion.

Leane Lake, included in the Dillberry Lake Provincial Park expansion, provides important habitat for nesting waterfowl and marsh birds. The park contributes to lake and sand plain natural history themes in the Parkland Natural Region.

## New Parkland and Boreal Forest Natural Regions

GREENE VALLEY  
3,131 hectares

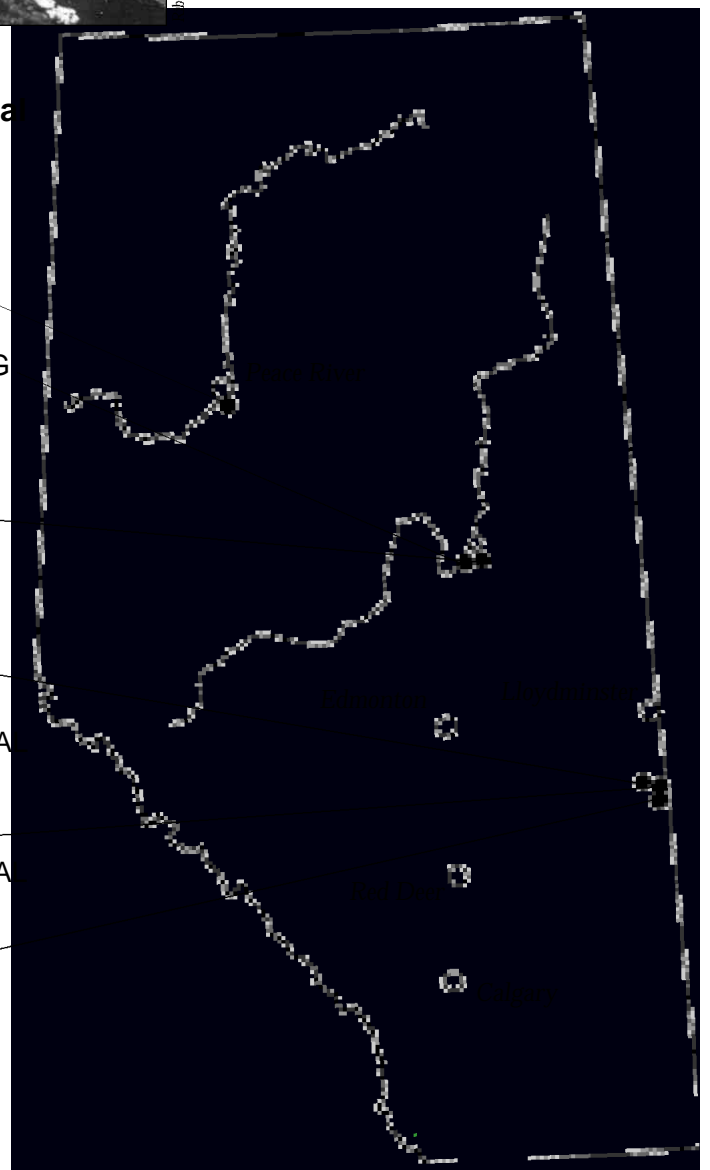
POACHERS' LANDING  
PROVINCIAL  
RECREATION AREA  
extension = 150 hectares

LA BICHE RIVER  
WILDLAND  
PROVINCIAL PARK  
16,844 hectares

KILLARNEY-REFLEX  
LAKE HERITAGE  
RANGELAND NATURAL  
AREA 2,522 hectares

RIBSTONE CREEK  
RANGELAND NATURAL  
AREA 8,394 hectares

DILLBERRY LAKE  
PROVINCIAL PARK  
extension = 8,394 hectares



# Open for Business



Ribbon cutting ceremony by John Geary



Barry Worlitz, Rob Blaxley, Vivian Pharis by John Geary

By John Geary

A year's worth of work came to a culmination in northwest Calgary Tuesday night (June 27) with the official opening of the Alberta Wilderness Association's Wilderness Resource Centre.

Located in the lower level of the AWA's provincial office, the new facility houses 30 years of Alberta's wilderness history. The centre is a public resource, and includes a unique compilation of literature dealing with Alberta wildlands, wild waters, and wildlife. It

is a source for information about conservation; the impact of human activities, from recreation to urbanization to industry; and what the people of Alberta have done and what they can do through public involvement, government policies, and laws to protect our most important natural resources. It contains a vast collection of unpublished photographs of wilderness and wildlife. It is also a storehouse of maps and audiovisual materials.

The  
Centre's  
resources  
are for  
everyone  
needing  
information  
on  
wilderness  
protection

The renovations for the centre were made possible with the support of a grant from the Community Facility Enhancement Program and hundreds of volunteer hours. Grants in support of the Resource Centre have been received from Canada Trust Friends of the Environment, Alberta Sport Parks Recreation and Wildlife Foundation and Alberta Ecotrust. As well, donations from private individuals and corporations have made the library possible.

In his remarks at the ribbon cutting ceremony, AWA past-president Peter Sherrington said a facility like this one helps the AWA fulfill one-half of its two-fold motto.

"Our motto is 'defending wild Alberta through awareness and action,'" Sherrington told the audience. "Most people see us on TV or read about us in the papers while we are involved in the 'action' part. But for every five minutes of action, we spend much more time in trying to create awareness about issues concerning wilderness."

He pointed out that this library is accessible to anyone wanting to research wilderness topics, whether they are advocates, writers, conservationists, or politicians.

Calgary Mountainview MLA Mark Hlady was on hand to cut the ribbon. He said a resource like this can play an important role in the political process.

"With a resource like this, we can have informed debate and make informed decisions regarding wilderness," he said.

Hlady was one of three MLAs at the event. Liberal MLAs Debby Carlson and Bill Bonner from Edmonton also attended the event. Chantelle Hughes represented the NDP.

Until now the bulk of the library materials were already present, but organization of the books, periodicals, maps, and other documents was

haphazard. Work to organize the library began a year ago with the application for grants to fund the project. The library catalogue will go online later this year as part of the extended services of the AWA website

<http://albertawilderness.ab.ca>.

AWA Director Christyann Sloan was one of the driving forces behind the project. She said the project was a success because of two things: the generosity of funders and the hard work of volunteers. Sloan thanked the many people and organizations who made donations, but said the initial "seed money" — a sum of \$10,000 from Canada Trust Friends of the Environment — was extremely important in getting the project off the ground.

The money made it possible for the association to buy computers and software to aid in the organization and cataloguing of the library as well as pay for the professional services of library project coordinator Shirley Bray.

Extensive building renovations, including painting, plastering, sanding, and finishing also had to be done, both in the basement and the former main floor location of the library. The main floor was transformed into a proper boardroom for meetings, press conferences and open house functions.

Volunteers supplied much of the labour that carried the project through to its finish.

"I can't say enough about the work our volunteers did, to help make this dream become a reality," said Christyann Sloan. "They really are the backbone of this organization."

The public is welcome to visit the AWA Wilderness Resource Centre during office hours. If you would like to be a part of the ongoing development of this library contact Dr. Shirley Bray, (403) 283-2025 for Centre hours and information. ☎

## Alberta Naturally in Rumsey

By John Geary

Dorothy Dickson and Felix Gebbink launched the Alberta Naturally walking program in the Rumsey Natural Area on June 3. Thirteen participants explored the Rumsey Natural Area and were introduced to the diverse wildlife and multiple-use history of the region. This hike was the first of six in the Alberta

Naturally: Walks and Talks 2000 series that is part of the Alberta Wilderness Association's Outreach 2000 program.

We visited three different areas in Rumsey. After Dorothy Dickson gave us a good introduction and background of the area at the Tolman Bridge campsite, we headed off. We started by exploring the southwest corner of the natural area and were given a good view of "knob

and kettle" topography. Rolling hills stretched out to the horizon, dotted with groves of aspen and poplar trees and the occasional marsh pond. At one such pond, members of the group spotted some American coots, a hairy woodpecker, and several red-winged blackbirds. While wandering across the landscape looking at the various species of wildflowers, a piercing cry alerted us to the presence of a pair of red-tailed hawks circling overhead.

Next we jumped back into our vehicles and drove north along the highway to access the ecological reserve portion of Rumsey. Special permission is required to enter this area. Although only a short distance away, this area is characterized by much more forest cover than the southwest corner.

Felix Gebbink pointed out how the non-native brome grass was threatening to overrun the native fescue grass in the area. We also saw an old oil well road that has been reclaimed. Although

fescue seed has been planted there three times, the non-native brome grass is still encroaching into the area.

After lunch, we headed south and into the heart of the ecological reserve area. Our guides showed us two areas that had been reclaimed: one is the site of a former oil well, while the other is the site of the current natural gas pipeline that makes its way through Rumsey. This section is broad and open with less tree cover than either of the two previous areas we visited. We spent an hour hiking and watching jackrabbits and Richardson's ground squirrels darting across the ground into their holes, perhaps trying to stay out of sight of the hawks we saw soaring high above our heads from time to time.

No one in the group had ever visited Rumsey before, and everyone left with a great deal of knowledge and appreciation of the area, as well as some good information about the AWA and its programs. ☎




Birdwatching in Rumsey by J. Geary

## Annual Dinner and Auction Donations

The auction committee is accepting artwork, outdoor trips and clothing, entertainment gift certificates, tickets, and books. Charitable receipts for the in-kind value can be issued for many donated items. This is a great way to advertise your environmental business or ecotourism companies or share your talent with other wilderness aficionados. Contact AWA Provincial Office (403) 283-2025 to discuss your auction item donations.


This year, charitable tax receipts will be issued for a portion of the ticket price. Dinner tickets purchased before August 31 qualify for exciting early-bird prizes. Reserve your tickets today!






# 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

# Decision Making as if Society and Environment Mattered

By Mike Nickerson

Bill C-469, the “Canada Well-Being Measurement Act” (CWBMA) could transform the decision-making process.

What we count and what we measure signifies what we value. When all we count is monetary transactions (GDP), talk about environmental quality and social cohesion does not produce action. When we legitimize other factors by measuring and reporting on them in our core measure of progress, they become visible. That visibility, in turn, enables anyone to see how policies and actions affect the measures and encourages decision makers to pay attention to them.

The purpose of the CWBMA is to establish a set of indicators to measure “the economic, social and environmental well-being of people, communities and ecosystems in Canada.” The Act would require public input to determine “the broad societal values on which the set of indicators should be based.”

There are two things you can do to advance Bill C-469. One is to encourage people to think about and discuss what well-being means to them. What do we value? How can we tell if the circumstances related to those values are getting better or worse?

A Discussion Kit is available from the 7th Generation Initiative with suggestions for holding discussions about the questions above. It includes a feedback sheet so we can collect the opinions that will determine what should be measured.

Think of the issue or issues that matter to you. How can we tell if the situation is getting better or worse? This is the information needed to establish an effective monitoring system that can inform good decisions. Please help us collect this information and expand the network of interest needed to assure that the potential of this Act is not watered down for lack of public participation or strategic coordination.

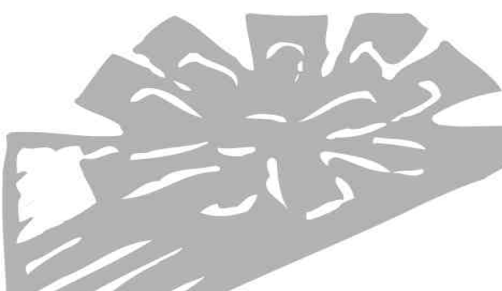
The second thing you can do is to lobby your MP. Our experience so far has been that when people review the Act and background materials, they see the sense of it and add their support. The trick with MPs is to get their attention. They are very busy. They do, however, respond to persistent constituents. Ask your MP what s/he thinks of the “Canada Well-Being Measurement Act.” S/he can get full details from the Ottawa office of Joe Jordan MP. Check back every week or two until you get a response. Contact information for all MPs is available from 1-800-667-3355.

The Act is politically safe because it only requires that we pay attention to the factors that people identify as important. What will happen when these concerns are legitimized by regular reporting and witnessed moving up or down is another story. This is the domain of stages two and three of the 7th Generation Initiative.

For more detail, see:  
<http://www.cyberus.ca/choose.sustain/index3.html>

or ask us for a free copy of the new edition of *Measuring Well-Being*

Write:  
Joe Jordan M.P.  
7th Generation Initiative  
Rm. 422, Confederation Building  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
or contact:  
Mike Nickerson, Coordinator,  
email: [sustain@web.net](mailto:sustain@web.net) phone: (613) 269-3500



## 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 (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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**We do not sell or trade our membership list.**

