

WATERSHEDS ARE SOURCE OF CONCERN AS PROVINCE LAUNCHES NEW WATER STRATEGY

By Andy Marshall



Plans for a new, province-wide water strategy are flowing through government departments, a move which, according to officials, confirms Alberta's strong support for water quality. But, conservation groups, such as the Alberta Wilderness Association, committed next year to focusing broader public attention on what they believe to be the declining health of the province's critical mountain and foothills watersheds, have dampened enthusiasm for the government initiative unless it leads to much stricter protective measures.

Along with climate change issues, water and watersheds are the top priorities for Alberta Environment Minister Lorne Taylor, says a department spokeswoman, Anne McInerney. Taylor promises an active public consultation process in 2002 for the multi-department strategy initiative. "It's all about co-operation, striking a balance," she says. "We have to address all the challenges."

Those challenges are described as ensuring:

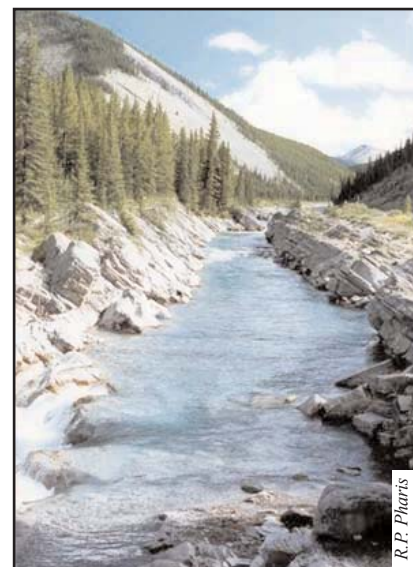
- Safe, secure drinking water for all Albertans.
- Reliable supplies for economic development.
- Healthy rivers and lakes.
- Risk-management plans for drought and floods.

"The first step must be to protect watersheds. Make that the priority," says AWA director Vivian Pharis, helping lead the watershed campaign. Then, it is vital to understand better what is happening to watersheds and water quality.

What discourages her and other conservation leaders is their view the government places heavier weighting on industrial/commercial interests and encourages these interests to extract what they can, particularly from the sensitive Eastern Slopes region.

The major threats to Alberta's watersheds, says Pharis, flow from forestry clear-cutting, energy industry development and the resulting network of roads and seismic lines that dramatically impact how water drains from this region and what happens to its quality. The mass of recreation off-road vehicle enthusiasts who then further beat down this network serve to exacerbate the damage. Other degradation stems from residential sprawl encroaching into the region, the proliferation of golf courses and the growing cattle industry, all of which contribute to contaminated runoff into water courses.

The alignment of the Rocky Mountains and their role in intercepting the prevailing winds to produce precipitation, make the Eastern Slopes a huge water-gathering system for the province's four major river basins -- the North and South Saskatchewan, the Peace and the Athabasca.



North Ram River



Job Pass - Bighorn Wildland

INSIDE

Living or Dead? Choosing wildlife economies	4
Steve Dixon: The Man Who Loves to Fly	7
Vivian Pharis: An Occasional Artist	8
Alberta Wilderness Watch	9
Opposing the Road in Wood Buffalo NP	9
New Regional Planning Process	10
Mountain Caribou in Trouble.....	11
Bighorn Wildland	12
Rally for the Wardens	13
Livestock Trespass in Waterton ..	14
Status of Alberta Wildlife.....	15
Greater Kakwa	16
Waterton Gate Affair	16
Alberta's Forest Policies	17
Is Alberta Forestry Sustainable....	17
Association News	18
Upcoming Events	23

Figures from the world's leading freshwater ecologist, University of Alberta professor David Schindler, show that total flows to the Saskatchewan River system from the Rocky Mountains are 87 per cent of the flow volume at the river's mouth. "This makes the (Eastern Slopes) watershed one of the most vital in Canada. It contributes water right across the Prairies," says Pharis. "Alberta has a national obligation to protect that important watershed."

Forest soil and resource road planning guidelines, plus timber harvesting ground rules requiring such remedies as revegetation to cleared areas and the retention of vegetation along water buffers, all serve to minimize damage, says Robert Storrier, a spokesman for Alberta Sustainable Resource Development Minister Mike Cardinal.

The department oversees all the industrial activities in the Eastern Slopes. Storrier also points to "integrated landscape management" strategies in the region resulting in closer co-operation between the forestry and the energy industries to share access roads. "There is more emphasis on working together . . . to minimize the impact," he says. New technology is also changing the way companies operate.

Three basic values underlie departmental decisions, Storrier explains: concern for the environment, the economy and sustainability. His response, when asked if they carry equal weight: "We look at this on a case-by-case basis. We do what is best for Alberta."

The perceived vagueness of such statements provokes suggestions from people like aquatic ecologist David Mayhood that "Alberta is in the dark ages" when it comes to watershed protection. A recent study by his Calgary company, Freshwater Research Ltd., of 98 smaller stream basins in a 2,500-square-kilometre area in the province's southwest, showed only two were untouched by human activity.

Two-thirds of the streams had a moderate risk of damage from the confined effect of clear-cutting and road development, according to Mayhood. One third were at a high risk of damage, including such phenomena as erosion and changes in the hydrology, or water flow. "This is chilling in that so little was undamaged and not at risk," says Mayhood.

The effects from the 10- to 40-hectare clearcuts by the forestry industry works this way: Trees, especially the more expansive old growth now targeted by lumber interests, play a major role in intercepting, holding and then sublimating into the atmosphere much of the precipitation that falls. Without that cover, water flows off the surface at a much faster rate, leading to pronounced increases in peak flows. Because existing channels are not capable of handling these high flows, they start to unravel, Mayhood explains.

That creates a quality issue downstream -- higher turbidity associated with higher bacterial counts and increased sediment, which can destroy fish habitat. The mass disturbance to the soil and organic matter like moss from the scarifying, or digging-up process, after clear-cutting, also affects the ability of the land to retain precipitation and release it in a more orderly fashion.

Worse than the clear-cutting, though, are the roads, says Mayhood. Made with large sediment deposits -- sand, gravel and smaller material -- they act as highly efficient drainage systems, distributing water quickly into streams, minimizing the land's storage ability and overwhelming a creek's capacity to carry the "flash" flows.

"When those sediment deposits cross a stream as at a culvert (there are estimated to be hundreds of thousands of culverts in Alberta), then essentially you've dumped a bunch of sediment into the water course," he explains. During spring run-off, many of the culvert

crossings "blow out" under the sheer volume of water, causing a prodigious amount of damage."

A map of road allowances his company produced for the Yukon to Yellowstone project, show by far the highest concentration in the Eastern Slopes of Alberta and British Columbia. A road allowance often starts as a seismic line. A petroleum company moves in and keeps it open. Then loggers use the same road, followed by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and the road never recovers. Finally, ranchers bring their cattle in, "and it becomes like a highway -- a muddy, God-awful mess," says Mayhood. "This happens in each little watershed . . . there are limits to what an ecosystem can sustain."

He notes other issues, such as the discovery of logging right up to stream banks, a practice theoretically forbidden by regulations, as further causes of serious erosion. Add in the contaminated runoff from residential development, more concentrated cattle production and golf courses further downstream (there are 50 alone bordering on the Bow and Elbow Rivers in southern Alberta, many of them extensively distributing herbicides, fungicides and fertilizer chemicals), and a disturbing picture emerges.

Larry Skory, a spokesman for the Alberta Forest Products Association, defends his industry's practices. Members consistently go beyond provincial guidelines, he says. "There is much more acknowledgment of ecological impacts," Skory notes, which has led to more sensitive clear-cutting practices. "Members are constantly monitoring water quality, for example."

However, he points to the many uses of the land base in the Eastern Slopes, and the need for more integrated management there. He also notes the involvement of conservationists in the forest audits done through the association's own Forest Care program. He would not speculate on what may arise from Alberta



Vimy Ridge - Bighorn Wildland

R.P. Pharis

Environment's latest water strategy initiative, "but, when you enter a democratic process, you know you can't always have your way. Industry doesn't get its way, and environmentalists haven't, either."

Gord Lehn, woodlands manager for Spray Lake Sawmills, recent recipients from the province of a forestry management agreement (FMA) for 4,000 sq. km. of public forest, including about 1,200 sq. km. in Kananaskis Country, also explains the industry's "strong and vested" interest in conservation. "If we do anything to destroy our watershed or forest resources, that's our livelihood . . . we have a 58-year record in the southern Eastern Slopes and we're here for the long term."

As an example of the company's sensitivity, he cites an experiment, launched five years ago in the Maclean Creek area, west of Calgary, in which a baseline watershed inventory and assessment were done with the help of the Mount Royal College Suncor Centre before harvesting plans were finalized. Extensive water sampling was also later carried out. "We found the results to be quite good," says Lehn. Numbers of macro-benthic invertebrates, indicative of the health of a stream for fish habitat, even grew.

Using the so-called Wrens Modelling, a University of Missoula, Montana, team has examined harvest plans by Spray Lake and the quality of the water going into the drainage system and found no cause for concern. The company typically logs one per cent a year of a licensed area. "The impact over the surface flow from such a small percentage of the land base, plus the continual green-ups (from annual reforestation), means the impact is not significant," Lehn says. "We feel comfortable we're holding up our share of the watershed protection side of things."

Spray Lake is one member of the recently formed Elbow Watershed Partnership, hoped to serve as a model for various interests working together to protect water quality and quantity. Lehn notes problems from ATV use, as well as residential



Little Elbow River

development on the Elbow, a critical water source for the city of Calgary.

David Luff, vice-president of environment and operations for the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, says new technology -- from directional drilling to helicopter-supported technology -- has "significantly" reduced the footprint in the Eastern Slopes from his industry.

What is a Watershed?

Watersheds are the sum of the streams that gather from heights of land and flow into a common water basin. The Bow River watershed begins at a glacier, a lake and from feeder streams like the Kananaskis, Elbow, Ghost, Sheep and Highwood. Watersheds are where our water originates, is purified and its flow regulated. Watersheds are also called catchment basins.

Water quantity is regulated by snowfields, glaciers and forests in the headwaters of watersheds. High lands, such as the hills and mountains of Alberta's Eastern Slopes and Rocky Mountains, efficiently intercept water-laden clouds blown west from the Pacific Ocean and cause precipitation. Some of the precipitation accumulates in snowfields and glaciers and is slowly released into the watershed. Some runs down steep slopes until it reaches the foothills forests where much of it is absorbed by the forest's trees, mosses, lichens and organic soils.

Water quality is increased as it passes through health watersheds. Absorption by vegetation and soils cleanses water of pollutants and aeration in fast-flowing streams destroys parasites and bacteria. Water flowing over rocks pickup essential minerals such as calcium and phosphorus.

A map of Alberta's river basins can be found at www3.gov.ab.ca/env/parks/anhic/rivbasin.html

The Alberta Cattle Commission, acknowledging it hasn't always seen eye-to-eye with the AWA, says it has partnered with Trout Unlimited a conservation strategy for the Eastern Slopes watershed. Best practices, encouraged by the commission, promote and enhance watershed management, says spokesman Ron Glaser. Cattle production, done correctly, is benign. "Some level of grazing helps bio-diversity," he says. Nevertheless, "there is a movement afoot to sterilize the landscape."

A new player in the watershed tango is the city of Calgary, showing unprecedented interest in what goes on at the sources of its main water supplies, the Elbow and the Bow Rivers. The city's waterworks department has told Spray Lake it wants an active role in the consultation process before harvesting occurs in the company's new FMA.

While it's not feasible to buy up and essentially fence off watershed areas, as Vancouver, Victoria and some other British Columbia cities are attempting to do, "let's do some watershed assessment . . . we have to be more involved," says manager of strategic services Paul Tesko. The city is also part of the Elbow watershed protection group.

Adding momentum to the city's plans are findings in the water of higher levels of cryptosporidium, a parasite that can attack the intestines of humans and animals. The city has also measured higher turbidity in its supplies. "We have to do a lot more homework to discover the sources," says Tesko. But, "when you look at watershed management practices as a barrier to pathogens, then that's an area we're starting to get a lot more interested in." ❧

(Andy Marshall is freelance writer living in Cochrane.)

LIVING OR DEAD? CHOOSING WILDLIFE ECONOMIES

By Darrel Rowledge

Director - Alliance for Public Wildlife

Facing a relentless saga of game farming disasters, governments across North America are being forced to 'rethink' the whole issue of privatizing and commercializing wildlife. To say that such evaluation is 'long overdue' is understatement in the extreme.

From the beginning, science, economics, and public interest have proclaimed overwhelming objection, based on several inescapable facts:

- Commercial trafficking in wildlife is its greatest known enemy.
- Game farming is flatly antithetical to wildlife, our system of conservation, and our living wildlife economies.
- Game farming brings disease, parasite, genetic pollution, habitat loss, poaching, escape, and a host of other problems that are inevitable-their costs enormous.
- Even the markets targeted by game farming (velvet antler sold as an aphrodisiac and 'trophy' animals for 'penned shoots'), are frivolous/illegitimate, detrimental, and unsustainable.

By any measure, game farming is nothing less than a biological quagmire and a pit of pyramid economics. It is a deficit mine - the deeper we get into it the more it costs.

While unable to refute or address any of these facts, the Alberta government literally (perhaps even illegally), forced game farming through in 1987. That entire process stands as one of the most corrupt in Canadian history. It was shallow, biased, disingenuous, and unscientific. It was not just undemocratic-it was deliberately manipulated by government to force a particular result-over the express wishes of Albertans.

Later, during the Tory leadership race Premier Klein committed, in writing, to put the entire "privatization /commercialization of wildlife issue through a thorough and public assessment." Once elected, however, he quickly attempted to backtrack-incredibly-suggesting that the whole issue had been carefully reviewed by experts and that public was generally supportive.

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Since it was obvious that this ridiculously false information had been provided to him, I informed Premier Klein of the fact and extent of what had actually occurred. He responded with a promise to investigation and inquiry, and he renewed his commitment to legitimate assessment.

While I cannot speak to Premier Klein's motives, it is clear that reneging on that promised inquiry, as well betraying his

commitment to assessment, has served far more than just political purpose.

All evidence suggests that legitimate public assessment of game ranching would have lead to public outcry and an outright rejection of the industry. But by refusing public inquiry and assessment, the government of Alberta propped up the industry-serving the private financial interests of all of those involved. Among others this includes relatives of former Tory cabinet ministers (now Premier Klein's Campaign Manager and current Chief of Staff).



Game Farm Elk

Photo Courtesy of D. Rowledge

Meanwhile (but not surprisingly), the validity and the seriousness of the concerns expressed by scientists have been borne out entirely by our own dismal track record.

As predicted, the breeding pyramid schemes have saturated and collapsed for virtually every species. Valued at more than \$15,000 a few years ago, elk have recently been selling for just a few hundred dollars. Ostrich and emu are all but worthless. Llama breeders are so desperate they're trying to sell their animals for meat. Even bison fetch little more than carcass value.

The venison market... well, just isn't... despite the years of effort/resources spent trying to develop it. Not only does the public not 'want' or need it, any 'success' developing a venison market implies a direct and offsetting loss for existing meat producers (beef, poultry, etc). More importantly, any real success will mean a poaching nightmare for public wildlife.

As predicted, horrific diseases continue to plague the industry: The US Secretary of Agriculture recently (September 21, 2001) declared a "State of Emergency" because of CWD on game farms. Chronic Wasting Disease, is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy of deer and elk, and a sister disease to 'Mad Cow.'

Canada may not have joined in that declaration, but we clearly lead the industry epidemic: some 7,440 elk, 260 cattle, 100 bison and 60 deer have had to be destroyed on thirty-nine

different game farms in Saskatchewan. At least 190 elk have proven to be infected with the disease. There are currently no live tests for this disease and it is always fatal. (A test involving tonsil biopsy apparently does not work on elk.)

Potential for transmission to people is unknown; it is hoped the species barrier will prevent it. That same hope was claimed regarding Mad Cow Disease, but more than 100 people are now dead from TSE contracted from infected beef in Europe, and there may be tens of thousands more. Moreover, invitro experiments show that healthy human prions are converted to malignant ones by CWD prions at the same rate as by BSE prions.

Despite repeated public warnings from scientists, Canadian game farms continued to ship potentially contaminated velvet for human consumption even after CWD was confirmed in 1996. Dr. Valerius Geist, former Director of Environmental Science at the University of Calgary, warned that velvet antler is both very vascular and highly innervated, making it a potential source of (malignant) prions. Still, shipments continued after it appeared again in dead elk in 1998; and after repeated discoveries 2000. Finally, on October 18, 2000 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency instituted a policy to destroy velvet from diseased animals.

Dr. George Luterbach (CFIA) recently confirmed that product was sold from diseased animals, and that neither the industry nor government made any public effort to recall contaminated product, or warn customers-even after the animals from which the velvet was amputated were proven infected with the deadly disease. "It is not a requirement," he said.

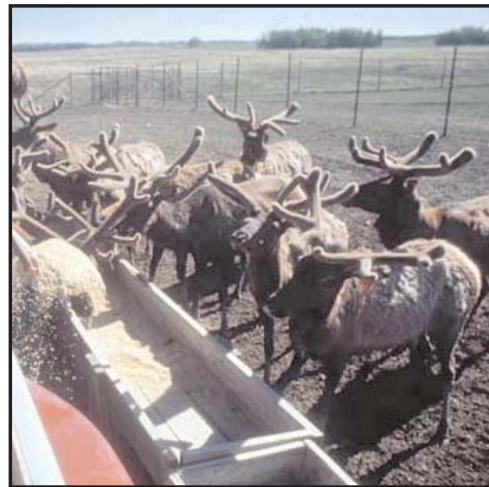
Korea, the biggest buyer of velvet, has banned all imports of product and animals from North American game farms. Incredibly, game farmers responded by lobbying for government assistance to reopen the markets-again without assurance that this so-called 'product' is free of disease.

Dr. Luterbach says the cost to Canadian taxpayers - for quarantine, access, 'depopulation,' handling, laboratory testing, disposal, and funding to compensate game farmers (up to \$4,000 per animal) already exceeds \$30 million. The International Fund for Animal Welfare reported that the total cost will exceed \$70 million. But that's just the beginning.

Thousands of public deer on the Alberta Saskatchewan border are now being killed in an effort to stem the spread to the wild-already confirmed in at least two deer. The industry persists in a pathetic attempt to duck responsibility, and according to Ron Lind (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management), government agencies have still not completed a report regarding the numbers of escapes from (infected) game farms. Equally troubling are instances of

Elk, deer, and other public wildlife are an enormously valuable resource. Beyond their ecological value, each animal represents a living capital asset belonging to the province (public), worth up to \$15,000. This value is a reflection of the substantial industries that have grown up around the enjoyment of public wildlife. Making, selling, and servicing a mountain of outdoor equipment and wildlife enthusiasts, North American 'wildlife economies' generate over \$150 billion every year.

Our public wildlife, and these enormous living wildlife economies, exist today only because a ban on commercial trafficking rescued wildlife from the brink of extinction! By 1900, marketing in dead wildlife had virtually wiped out North America's millions of elk, deer, moose, bison, antelope, song birds, shore birds, migratory birds, etc. The last native elk disappeared from Alberta in 1913.



*Game Farm Elk at Trough
Photo Courtesy of D. Rowledge*

And while our public policy prohibiting dead markets resulted in this phenomenal replenishment of vulnerable wildlife across North America, at the same time, the presence of 'dead wildlife' markets elsewhere in the world continued to wipe out species after species of public wildlife - elephants, rhino, tigers - despite every effort to protect it.

The lesson is that if markets demand dead wildlife, it dies.

Alternatively, the 'living' economies that develop around the enjoyment of public wildlife so dwarf the 'dead' markets, that comparisons are absurd. We could liquidate (kill and sell) every wild creature in North America, but it would not even generate 15 billion - let alone \$150 billion every year!

Some perspective is in order: Public wildlife and sustainable wildlife economies are suffering direct jeopardy, and the public is enduring these horrific costs, in order to generate profit for an unsustainable industry whose express purpose is to mutilate animals for aphrodisiacs/folklore medicines and to provide live targets for penned shoots.

That said, the true depth of this tragedy is realized only when it is understood that governments not only ignored all of the science/economics in order to force game farming through, they have repeatedly and deliberately ignored it ever since-in the face of overwhelming evidence.

**The lesson is that if markets demand
dead wildlife, it dies.**

wildlife entering (and exiting) game farms-but, again, no official data are available. In any case, the costs are obscene.

Not only was the current CWD epidemic predicted by wildlife scientists, so too was the TB epidemic that ravaged game farms across the country in the 1990s. Direct costs for that epidemic also reached into the tens of millions, and it cost all of Canada our TB-free status-estimated by Agriculture Canada to be worth \$1 billion. Dozens of animals remain missing from infected/quarantined game farms.

But rather than finally doing the responsible thing - conducting serious and legitimate assessments - which may have averted the current CWD crisis entirely, the Klein government (among others) deliberately scuttled them!

The issues are, nevertheless, beginning to appear on the public's radar, and, given an opportunity, the vast majority flatly reject even the products and practices of this industry. Montana voters forced it out in the 2000 election (ballot initiative 143-to ban penned shooting operations, and phase out the industry). Other jurisdictions are looking for an exit as well. But not Alberta.

Here the industry only proved yet another prediction by finally abandoning their ridiculous claims of not wanting penned shoots here. Working with their partners in government, they devised a scheme to 'create enough cover' to allow the government to similarly abandon their promises to never allow them.

So-called 'public meetings' were held across Alberta to garner support for penned shooting operations that they dubbed

"cervid harvesting preserves." This may be the most egregious abuse of the word "preserve" in history.

Industry representatives were allowed the only presentation, and their slick, 40 minute show simply ignored any and all of the serious issues. Members of the public were then given 5 minutes to put questions and comments... whereupon, the industry took an offsetting 5 minutes to respond.

All of this would have been perfectly within the rights of any organization-except for the fact that it was pre-arranged with government, who had representatives in attendance to "assess" public support.

Incredibly, even dealing from this deck wasn't good enough... so the industry stacked the meetings with game farmers (60-90% of attendees), who used up all the 'public' time patting

themselves on the back, pretending to be 'hunters,' or making an asinine claim that only PetShoots would save the 'family farm.'

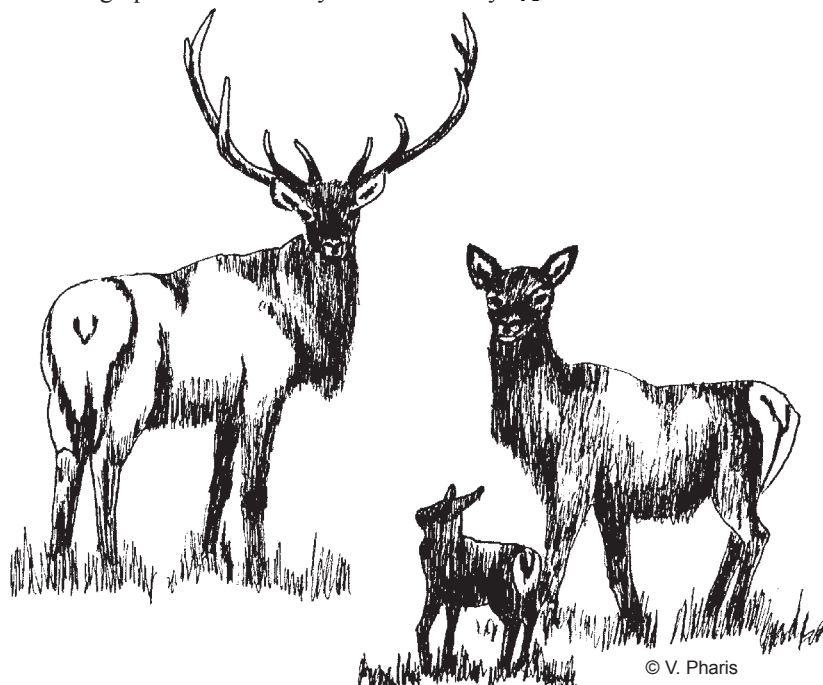
Much to the dismay of game farmers (and government), major editorial boards slammed the 'process.' Conservation organizations then commissioned a respected polling firm to show what Albertans really think. More than 76% oppose legalizing penned shooting operations... and even 78% of people who voted for the Conservatives oppose it. Significantly, this poll was taken after the infamous 'PetShoot Parade.'

One wonders what it would be if they knew the whole story. ☞



Diseased Elk

Photo Courtesy of D. Rowledge



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Steve & Helen Dixon

STEVE DIXON: *The Man Who Loves to Fly*

By Andy Marshall

At 84, Steve Dixon still loves to fly his own aircraft over Alberta's foothills. But much of what he observes from 10,000 feet makes him queasy. The spreading blotches from forestry clear-cutting, the scars of oil and gas activity, the crisscross of roads and pipelines - they're patterns of an intensifying industrialization of the wilderness that darken his view of the province's horizon.

"You see what's going on from the air . . . the future doesn't look good," he says. He's sitting with Helen, his wife of 62 years, in their prairie farmhouse, about 45 kilometres southeast of High River.

"We're overpopulated. Everything is being consumed, and the wildlife are dying out," is the stern assessment from one of the Alberta Wilderness Association's founding members who still maintains an active involvement with the group today.

A once-avid hunter who regularly stalked big and small game in the foothills as long as 65 years ago and who recalls when cougar tracks were as common as rabbits, Steve has seen the damage close-up on the ground, too. "Once the roads opened up, the game went down. People slaughtered at a hell of a rate."

Short and wiry, with large, muscular hands constantly on the move to emphasize his words, Steve speaks of the passion prompting the launch of the AWA almost 40 years ago. He had been active with the Fish and Game Association, but its lack of commitment then to strong conservation principles sparked his vow to start another group for that purpose.

He repeats the challenge from fellow Fish and Game member Bill Michalsky, now dead but also long active with the AWA: "When are you going to do it?". Rarely a man to mince his words, Steve shot back: "As soon as you and I get together for a meeting."

Official records cannot be found of their initial gatherings in Lundbreck in southwest Alberta during the early 1960s, but the groundwork was laid, leading to the AWA incorporation by 1969.

The Association mostly comprised sheep hunters, "tired of climbing mountains and finding a Pontiac had driven up the other side," says Floyd Stromstedt, the first officially-elected AWA president.

"Steve was one of the sparkplugs," is his recollection. With his feisty approach, Steve was also good at doing the necessary research for strong presentations to government or business. "He's like a brass band when he speaks. Everyone hears him," says Floyd, now living in Berwyn, northwestern Alberta.

Early projects undertaken by Steve and the AWA still remain hot issues today, notes AWA director Vivian Pharis, whose husband, Richard, was a first vice-president in the new organization. Pushing for the preservation of the Castle wilderness area is just one example. "It shows the AWA hasn't varied from its original goals and ideals," she says.

From Steve's perspective, a turning point in Alberta's degradation occurred after the election of the Peter Lougheed

Conservatives in 1971. The message was clear: All of the province, including the wilderness, is open for business. Since then, successive governments have maintained a position of encouraging industrial and commercial development over the interests of preserving wilderness ideals, he says.

"Once you destroy the wilderness, you can't bring it back," warns Helen.

The seeds for Steve's lifelong commitment to conservation were sown by his Grade 1 teacher while he was growing up in Kamsack, Sask., he says. By the time he and his family moved to Calgary in the 1920s, his love for the wilderness and for hunting was confirmed.

His mechanic father soon opened up a shop in Brant, close to where Steve runs his farm today. Steve already knew Helen by age nine and, at 22, he married his childhood sweetheart. She shared his love for the wilderness, often accompanying him on his many trips into the foothills and the mountains.

"I had good genes," says Steve. "I could climb and walk all day." Because they couldn't afford horses, he learned to pack out heavy game carcasses, too.

While in Brant, Steve picked up the intricacies of mechanics and lathe work that have helped him do all the servicing for the various aircraft he's owned, including the four-seater Piper Archer and the Ultralight in his hangar today. He even made his own rifles and mounted home-built scopes on them.



*Steve Dixon, in his younger years,
"with the best company in the wilderness"*

After serving in the Air Force during the latter part of the Second World War, Steve bought his first aircraft, a Cessna 120, in 1947. Three years later, he and Helen started farming south of Brant, eventually expanding their land base to 960 acres.

As in other aspects of his life, Steve has methodically applied conservationist principles to the farming operation. Virtually no fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides or other chemicals for him. Nevertheless, his outstanding yields and seed quality still raise eyebrows at the seed cleaners in nearby Vulcan.

Another secret he's prepared to share with neighbouring farmers, but one they seem loathe to adopt, is his use of a blade system to work the soil. It conserves moisture in the soil far more efficiently than other tillage methods. He proudly displays some of his inventions: The Stev-Lock for securing trailers (samples of which have been auctioned off at recent AWA functions) or the planer-blade cultivator designed for small acreages.

Without the efforts of the AWA, Steve wonders how much more threatened the wilderness would be today. "They've put up some tremendous battles. I'm amazed how they've held out." While his active lobbying days are over, he plans to continue flying for as long as he can and keep his eye on things. "The bird sees more than the worm," he says, his sharp, blue eyes still sparkling. ✍

VIVIAN PHARIS AN OCCASIONAL ARTIST

By Vivian Pharis

From the time I was a young kid, I drew. But, although I taught art for 10 years and spent 4 years at Art College specializing in textiles, I do not consider myself to be an artist. Other aspects of life have pushed the art aspect into a far corner. Occasionally though, when inspired or when necessary, I do pick up a pen and drawing pad. My cartoons that are occasionally used by the AWA



Vivian Pharis on a trail ride in the Bighorn Wildland

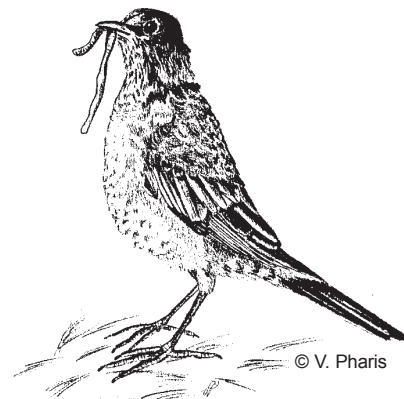
were done through occasional fits of inspiration. Wildlife drawings were produced more through occasional necessity when the WLA needed new graphics.

My earliest art was in comic book format. I dealt prodigiously with serious, violent topics, mainly the antics of cowboys and Indians. My father found these hilarious because of their lack of sentimentality and my attempts at spelling as a 5-year old. He still has a collection of "Indones on the Warepath" where the air is thick with fat, feathered arrows and comet-like

bullets, and when he digs them out from the bottom of a drawer, they still make him roar with laughter.

In an attempt to broaden my artistic talents, my grandfather, who was an accomplished calligrapher, gave me several wonderful drawing books and a fine collection of drawing pens. In Grade 7 I won a Western Canada school poster contest with a poster extolling the virtues of "Registered Seed". The \$10.00 prize and use of my poster to advertise Registered Seed almost turned the head of this small town girl from North-East B.C., but I stuck with my plan to become a veterinarian, not an artist.

Actually, I became a biologist and then a teacher. In the 1970's, Springbank School west of Calgary was rural and so small that I was unable to fill my teaching timetable with biology classes. An Art Teacher was needed, so I agreed to fill in for a year and ended up teaching the high school biology and art programs for 10 years. Supply budgets being miniscule, I would spend hours each week scrounging paper and free supplies in order to carry out a full art program. There was no curriculum, so I taught a scatter gun approach to art, staying just ahead of my students by taking many Calgary School Board continuing



education classes in arts and crafts - everything from picture framing to silk screening.

When I decided to quit teaching, it was in part to spend more time on AWA issues, in part to spend more time in New Zealand, and in part to attend the Alberta College of Art. ACA's programs were demanding, but the 4 years I spent at the college were some of the most inspiring and broadening that I've experienced. As a result of those 4 years, I am prepared with a consuming hobby for my retirement, if and when the AWA finally releases me. ✍

ALBERTA WILDERNESS WATCH

BEST ARGUMENTS NEEDED TO OPPOSE ROAD IN WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

By W.A. Fuller



I lived in Fort Smith for nine years (1947 to 1956) during which I flew over every part of Wood Buffalo National Park (hereafter the Park), travelled its rivers, and studied its wildlife. I have been back to the Park a number of times, most recently in August of this year.

I am disturbed by some of the arguments concerning a proposed new road that have been made by people who, apparently, have never been near the Park. I have detected misinformation and wild exaggeration, none of which, in my view, really helps the cause of environmental protection.

I will begin with some basic information. When the Park was established by Order in Council in December 1922, its southern border was the Peace River and its area was between 13 and 14 thousand square miles. When some of the bison imported from Wainwright crossed the Peace River (in 1926) and settled in the Peace-Athabasca Delta, the Park was enlarged to about 17,300 square miles, or 44,300 square kilometres. The Peace River, then, divides the Park as a whole into two pieces.

In the early 1950s the land north of the Peace was divided into "smaller and less healthy fragments" by a road to Peace Point by way of Pine Lake. The smaller piece, bounded by the road on the west and Slave River on the east, is, at a rough estimate, no more than one-sixth of the total, which left a big chunk to the west of the road of about 12,000 square miles.

In the 1960s Highway 5 was pushed through to Fort Smith from the northwest and the northern part of the Park was further subdivided. Northeast of the highway is a piece that may be as large as 3000 square miles, leaving about 9000 square miles (23,000 square kilometres) for what is now the "largest piece of undisturbed boreal forest."

The proposed road parallels the north bank of the Peace River and in some places almost touches it. So the fragment between the road and the Peace River will, indeed, be small but the other "smaller and less healthy fragment" will still be in the order of 9,000 square miles or 23,000 square kilometres.

The road would be 118 kilometres long. Assuming a width of 10 metres, 118 hectares of habitat would be lost. I have seen a claim that the ecological integrity of the Park will be degraded by such a loss. But 118 ha is only 1.18 square kilometres and I have a hard time believing that removal of 1.18 km² from 44,300 km² will degrade the ecological integrity of the entire Park.

Some fear that the road will go "through the heart of Wood Buffalo National Park." Can somebody please tell me how one determines the heart of a huge park? Does it have only one heart or might it have several hearts?

I turn now to threats to the large ungulates. In my day, barrenland caribou routinely came from the north as far south as

Lake Athabasca and as far west as Slave River every winter. Occasionally, they crossed Lake Athabasca on the ice and went farther south. Occasionally too, they crossed the Slave River and occupied the lowlands between the Slave River and the Little Buffalo River (park boundary). A few may have got beyond the Little Buffalo, but none ever got within many miles of Peace Point where the new road begins.

In one year barrenland caribou did invade the northern part of the Park as far as Buffalo Lake in large numbers. Now, I am told by old timers at Fort Smith that they do not come within many kilometres to the east of the lower Slave River.


I can't remember ever seeing a woodland caribou in the Park, either from the ground or from the air, in my nine years there. Presumably woodland caribou still live on the Caribou Mountains, which, in reality are no more mountains than the Cypress Hills. If so, the occasional one may wander into the Park in the general vicinity of the proposed road, but I don't foresee a "great threat" to caribou from either vehicular traffic or wolves.

So what about moose and bison? I have no recent knowledge about road kills for either one. I can only say that in my time there I only knew of one death of a bison from a collision with a vehicle. This was a time when there were at least 10,000 bison in the Park, and it was normal to encounter everything from a lone bull to a herd of 40 or more on the road to Pine Lake.

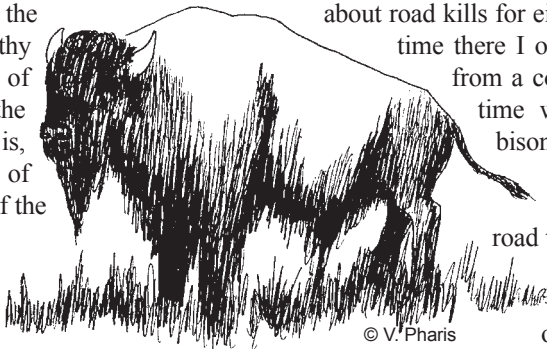
In August of this year my wife and I saw a total of 14 bison on the round trip to Pine Lake and back. I believe that the density of bison has always been lower west of the Peace Point road than to the east of that road. That, coupled with the decline in the bison population to 3,000 or less, makes road kills of bison on the proposed road highly unlikely.

In short, to attribute to the proposed road such things as "irreparable damage," wounding the "heart of the Park," destroying "ecological integrity," and serious fragmentation is nonsense in my opinion.

There are, however, valid reasons for opposing the road. One argument that really rings true concerns the moose. A friend in Fort Smith fears that the road would provide easy access to poachers while the nearest enforcement officer would be in Fort Smith.

The over riding concern, however, must be the possibility that approval of the proposed road may open the door to destructive developments in other National Parks. For that reason alone, it should be attacked vigorously. But let us, as defenders, get our facts straight. 

(Dr. Bill Fuller spent 25 years in the zoology department of the University of Alberta. He now lives near Athabasca.)



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PROVINCE TO LAUNCH A NEW REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

By Vivian Pharis, AWA Director

On October 26th, I was asked by the Alberta Environment Network to attend a strategy planning workshop in Edmonton where a new province-wide process was being discussed. I was the sole public representative out of 24 mainly industry and government people at the meeting. It was a grueling process to get public concerns advanced. The process is to see the province divided into 5 or 6 regions and plans completed in 3 years.

I wanted to know what was driving this new initiative and was told by one of the two Deputy Ministers in attendance, that it stems from a 1999 government document on sustaining resources and managing the environment. Also, industry needs a greater sense of security when operating on the public land base. I found these answers unsettling. Even more perturbing is the possibility that some 'quicky', broad-scale planning process is going to replace the Eastern Slopes Policy and Integrated Resource Plans.

Points I made to the meeting, with as much force as I could muster, included:

- Missing and fundamental policies and pieces of legislation need to be in place first
- Any planning process needs to be properly resourced, science based, supported by the highest levels of government, democratic and led by a competent team
- Sustainable development is not achievable for non-renewable resources; planning must focus on sustainable environments and communities
- Alberta's range of economic drivers must be re-examined, they are much more diverse than petroleum extraction, forestry and agriculture and new planning must reflect the economic basis of future communities
- Intact ecosystems are becoming rare and must be a major goal of new land planning
- Industry is going to have to make concessions; proper planning cannot proceed if all lands are already committed to industry and these commitments are all honored
- Cumulative Impact Assessments are needed in order to understand the limits of tolerance and to give plans a logical basis on which to begin
- Multiple Use cannot continue to mean every use on every piece of land.

My report to the AEN's fall meeting, Nov. 16, on this planning strategy met with a fair amount of skepticism and cynicism. There seems to be little appetite among ENGOs for more provincial land planning. There is still a great deal of resentment and feeling of betrayal amongst ENGOs over the way the Alberta Government dismissed the several years of hard work put in by hundreds of public representatives into the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy.

Many ENGOs feel that the Special Places initiative fell far short of any sort of comprehensive and scientifically defensible land protection process. They see other hard won planning gains being eroded, like the Prime Protection Zone of the Eastern Slopes Policy and the Policy's watershed priority. People see that

lands designated as 'multiple use' have been multiply abused and have often been given over to single interest industrial uses.

New planning processes like the Northern East Slopes Sustainable Resource initiative is seen as hopelessly hamstrung by the commitment to honor all industrial commitments. There is a general feeling that in order to serve the 'Alberta Advantage', the Alberta Government will ensure that any new planning initiative will be geared to serving extractive industry first and foremost - it will be to sustain development rather than to sustain the environment or communities.

The AWA has identified the following policy and legislative gaps that need to be filled prior to any proper new land planning.

- **Wildlife Act** -the current one is not designed to protect wildlife, but rather to exploit it. There is no provision for Endangered Species. A new Act reflecting the values the public places on wildlife, is long overdue.
- **Wildlife Policy** - the 1981 policy is very outdated. Although this policy is extensive, it contains no elements of protection for wildlife. It is a policy to guide wildlife exploitation, especially through game farming. A protective wildlife policy - one that addresses the variety of values the public attributes to wildlife and one that includes provisions for threatened and endangered species, is needed.
- **Public Lands Policy** - policy is needed that reflects the variety of public land values, such as provisions for biological diversity and healthful, non-motorized recreation.
- **Implementation of the Forest Conservation Strategy** is considered an essential foundation to new provincial land planning. This strategy had the signed support of industry and would form a sound starting point for land planning on forested lands.
- **Forest Policy for Watershed and Oldgrowth** - while oldgrowth is covered to some extent in the Forest Conservation Strategy, watershed is not well represented. Watershed was the priority of the Eastern Slopes Policy and enjoyed a long history of priority position for Eastern Slopes and foothills forests. Lately this priority has slipped and the Eastern Slopes watershed forests are being seriously degraded.
- **Water Policy** - The public considers water to be the most important natural resource, yet there is no comprehensive, interdepartmental or overriding strategy or policy for its safeguarding and management. This is a fundamental policy gap.
- **Access Management Policy** - again, such a policy is long overdue and because of its absence, watersheds, sensitive high elevation and riparian lands and key wildlife habitats, including fish spawning beds, are being seriously eroded and degraded. Access abuses from off-road vehicles are escalating. A recent study of forested areas indicates the majority of seismic lines over 20 years old have not regenerated, due to constant motorized recreational use.
- **Policy Integration** - there is a need to integrate land, water and wildlife policies throughout government departments. ✍



Why Mountain Caribou Are in Trouble and How Research May Help

By Elizabeth Anderson

Woodland caribou are a threatened species both provincially and federally, meaning they are likely to become endangered if nothing is done to stop the factors causing their vulnerability. Historically, the southern limit of caribou distribution in the foothills and mountains of Alberta extended south of Edson to Nordegg and the Siffleur Wilderness area; however, over the past 100 years, populations have declined and distributions receded northward.

Within Alberta, two types of woodland caribou can be distinguished based on behaviour and habitat use: boreal caribou (non-migratory, peatland-dwelling) and mountain caribou (migrate between summer ranges in alpine/ subalpine habitat and winter ranges in mature/old-growth coniferous foothills habitat). The West Central Alberta Caribou Standing Committee (WCACSC) has designated four mountain caribou ranges in the province (Narraway, Redrock/Prairie Creek, A La Pêche, and South Jasper).

Monitoring of the populations is conducted by Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Jasper National Park, and WCACSC to assess adult survival, calf production, and calf survival. The surveys generally indicate the various populations are stable to declining. For example, surveys of the South Jasper population in the late 1980's found about 150 animals while the average during the 1990's was 110 animals and a recent survey found less than 100 individuals.

Research is ongoing into factors contributing to declines in caribou populations. Predation is the most important natural cause of death. Mountain caribou may try to avoid predators by maintaining small herds (3 - 20 animals) at low densities and utilizing different habitats from other potential prey such as moose, elk, or deer.

For example, female caribou calve at higher elevations than other ungulates. However, on their wintering grounds in the foothills, timber harvesting creates attractive early successional stages upon which other ungulates browse. As these ungulate populations increase so do wolf populations, which may result in higher predation pressure on wintering mountain caribou.

Alberta Fish and Wildlife has also examined the behaviour of caribou on their wintering grounds in relation to progressive timber harvesting during the past two decades and found reductions in herd distribution, daily movement rates and individual winter range sizes. This may compress caribou into non-harvested areas, counter to their predator avoidance strategy of existing at low densities. Several studies are currently examining caribou habitat selection (Tara Szkorupa) and the effects of habitat alteration on population dynamics (Kirby Smith, Bob Lessard)

Roads, seismic lines, and pipelines may also contribute to population declines by allowing wolves and humans to move more easily throughout caribou ranges. This penetration can result in increased encounter rates and higher mortality of adults and calves due to predation, poaching, or vehicle collisions.

Gerry Kuzyk, a graduate student with WCACSC and the University of Alberta, is examining location of wolf kills relative to roads, seismic lines, and cutblocks, while Paula Oberg recently completed her graduate work examining the effect of linear features on mountain caribou.

She found caribou in the Redrock/Prairie Creek range avoided roads and streams but not seismic lines. WCACSC is also participating in a project to recover the human footprint in caribou ranges by revegetating idle roads, pipelines, and seismic lines. Within Jasper National Park, a pilot project is assessing caribou response to human use of critical winter range in the Maligne Valley.

Finally, populations may decline if availability and access to the main winter food source for woodland caribou, terrestrial lichens, is limited. Mature and old-growth forest stands typically contain the highest amounts of lichens but also are the stands targeted for harvest. If the rotation age is too short or forestry practices too destructive to allow adequate lichen regeneration, winter caribou habitat may be lost.


Weyerhaeuser, Alberta Newsprint Co., and Weldwood are involved in research examining the effects timber harvesting practices (i.e. thinning) on terrestrial lichen regeneration within some forest stands on the A La Pêche winter range.

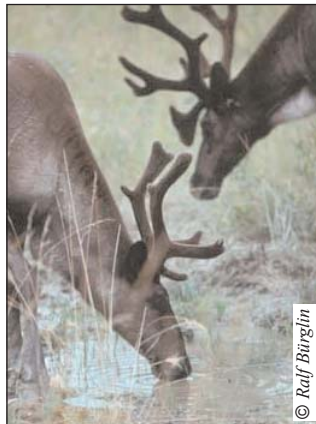
Weldwood is pursuing other studies including lichen enhancement of second-growth stands and effects of scarification and prescribed burning on lichen re-growth. They are also continuing a thesis project completed through Foothills Model Forest and U of A that examines lichen regeneration as a function of season of harvest, type of scarification, and location of delimbing. As lichen regeneration is slow, these studies are long-term.

As the process is often frustratingly slow, a research program needs to be well-coordinated to produce useful and timely results. This is no more evident than with the ongoing research into mountain caribou declines in west-central Alberta. Industry and government are making valid attempts to evaluate and mitigate the effects of development on caribou.

For example, research findings to date have led to the implementation of industrial guidelines and mitigation strategies for activity occurring on caribou ranges. These include coordination of access development and management, use of low impact and hand-cut seismic lines, reduction in the forestry companies' annual allowable cut, timing restrictions, and 'caribou cowboy' program (someone actively chasing animals off the highway between Hinton and Grande Cache).

However, it remains to be seen whether current and future recommendations resulting from this research will preserve mountain caribou populations in Alberta.

For more information on woodland caribou in Alberta, visit www.rr.ualberta.ca/research/caribou/index.html and www.gov.ab.ca/env/fw/status/resports/index.html 





Our Goal to Protect Bighorn Wildland This Year

by Tamaini Snaith, AWA Conservation Specialist

This month we have been busy planning a new campaign to protect the Bighorn Wildland Recreation Area. To many of you, this will not be a new story. The Bighorn has been a major focus of the AWA for decades.

The Bighorn Wildland Recreation area borders on Banff and Jasper National Parks and is an important area for wildlife, watershed, and recreation values. It is one of the few remaining large unroaded wilderness areas in the province. Protection is critical.

Most of the area was protected by policy (not legislation) years ago as Prime Protection Zone under the Eastern Slopes Policy. In 1986, Minister Don Sparrow announced the Bighorn Wildland Recreation Area and promised legislation. Boundaries were drawn on maps. Rules were made. Official pamphlets were produced, and government documents listed the area as one of the province's protected areas.

But the legislation never came through. The AWA kept pushing for it and were constantly reassured not to worry – the Bighorn was protected.

Suddenly the government has de-protected the Bighorn. It is gone from the maps. Industry wants in. Snowmobile trails are being promoted. Access is being planned.

The fight to protect the Bighorn is back in full swing.

The major focus of our campaign is to raise public awareness and support for the Bighorn. We need your help. The more letters, faxes and postcards the government receives about this issue, the more pressure they will feel to protect the area.

We have created an "action centre" on our website where you can read about the issues and send an immediate fax to critical decision makers asking them to protect the Bighorn.

We will have a postcard campaign, so watch your mailbox for information and postcards to send to the government.

We are going to produce a documentary-style video for television, and shorter versions for TV news clips and a mail-drop in gateway communities.

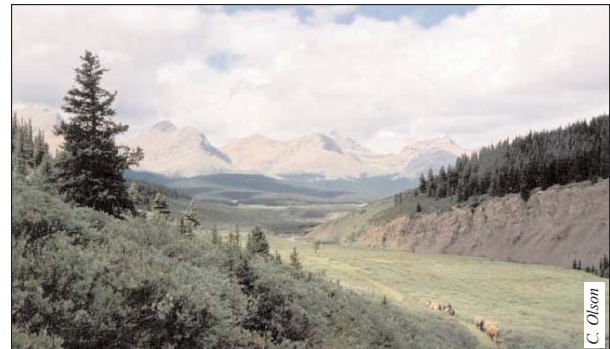
We are planning a series of community meetings to raise local support for our campaign. An important outcome of these meeting will be to gather local information about land-use in the area, and to conduct meaningful public consultation – we want to know how people use the area, what they value, and what they think of our campaign.

We are trying to find support from the oil and gas industry. In November, we met with representatives from many of the key energy companies. The outcome was somewhat encouraging: we were able identify some common ground with some of the industry representatives, and there was general agreement that industry respects the Prime Protection Zone and will continue to do so.

In the new year, we will expand our industry campaign to the forest sector. We then hope to be able to approach the government with a position on the Bighorn that is supported by industrial interests.

The Alberta Snowmobile Association has just released their latest "Guide to Snowmobiling", a brochure which promotes the Bighorn as the second most extensive snowmobile destination in the province. According to government policy, most of the Bighorn is off limits to snowmobiles. We are very concerned about the use of snowmobiles because the area provides important winter habitat for wildlife which are easily disturbed by the machines. We have been in close contact with government officials and have requested that the guide be removed from circulation (for more information, see our press release at www.AlbertaWilderness.com). We will have the full story on this issue in the next Wild Lands Advocate.

The government has initiated an access management process for the Bighorn. AWA was invited to participate in the advisory group for this issue. We have a number of reservations about this type of government process because, in the past, we have invested a lot of time in advisory groups only to have our "advice" ignored in the end. Of particular concern in this process is the possibility that it will lead to increasing industrial and motorized access into the Bighorn, even in areas where this kind of access is currently prohibited.



I attended the first of these advisory group meetings in early December to present some background on the Bighorn, and to explain our position on the process. I was able to raise a number of our concerns and have them put on the agenda. However, we are not yet convinced that our continued participation in the process will be useful or appropriate.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

January 8, (Tuesday) 6:30-8:00 pm

Sundre, West Country Centre 104 2 Ave. NW

January 16, (Wednesday) 6:30-8:00 pm

Rocky Mountain House, Community Centre

January 22, (Tuesday) 6:30-8:00 pm

Edmonton, Centennial Room, Stanley A Milner (Downtown) Library, 100 St/102 Ave

January 29, (Tuesday) 6:30-8:00 pm

Calgary, AWA Hillhurst Room, 455 12 St. NW

February 13, (Wednesday) 6:30-8:00 pm

Red Deer, Public Library, 4818 49 St.

February 14, (Thursday) 6:30-8:00 pm

Nordeg, Community Hall

For further information contact Nigel Douglas (a.w.a@shaw.ca) or Tamaini Snaith (awa.scp@shaw.ca) or call 403-283-2025.



Rally for the Wardens

By Mike McIvor

A bitter wind, hinting of snow on the way, quickly dispelled any illusions of warmth cast by the bright sunshine as more than 300 people gathered in Central Park in the Town of Banff on the afternoon of October 13, 2001. But few grumbled about the cold. We were there to show support for national park values in general, and, in particular, to demonstrate solidarity with national park wardens whose essential role in park protection has been curtailed by senior parks management.

On February 2, this year, Parks Canada ordered the wardens, who are trained and qualified peace officers on top of the myriad other things their jobs require them to be, to stop enforcing the law in national parks across the country.

An enforcement vacuum ensued until May 17 when Parks Canada announced it had reached agreement on a contract with the RCMP that would see an additional 140 Mounties assigned to the national parks for the next 2 years at a cost of \$20 million per year. (Of course, this represents \$40 million less for Parks Canada to spend on research, ecological restoration, or expansion of the national park system.)

Their task is to act "temporarily" as replacements by undertaking enforcement duties that have been the responsibility of park wardens since the Fire and Game Guardian Service (later known as the Warden Service) was established in 1909.

The issue, on the surface at least, around which this bizarre situation has developed, has to do with whether or not wardens should be equipped with sidearms when they are enforcing the law. It came to a head when a Banff warden filed a complaint with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) under the Canada Labour Code alleging that he and his colleagues were facing danger because they did not have adequate equipment for modern day law enforcement.

The occupational safety officer in Calgary who investigated the matter agreed, observing that "officials carrying out similar duties such as federal Fisheries Officers, Environment Canada Wildlife Enforcement Officers and provincial conservation officers, are authorized to carry sidearms". On February 1 he issued a directive to Parks Canada to correct the unsafe conditions or to discontinue the activity that constituted a danger. A day later, Parks Canada chose the latter.

But this issue no longer is about guns. How could it be when the men and women now enforcing the law in national parks at the request of Parks Canada - i.e. members of the RCMP - are carrying sidearms? It's about whom should be protecting the national parks. And while no one is faulting the Mounties who have been forced into a difficult position by political intransigence, should it be people trained to enforce the Criminal Code or those most familiar with the Canada National Parks Act? Should it be people more accustomed to travelling on highways than in the backcountry? Should it be people who report to their detachment commander or to the chief park warden?

The answers were clear to those who participated in the rally. Master of Ceremonies for this event, organized by an ad hoc citizens' group calling itself the Committee for Returning Wardens to Park Protection, was Ben Gadd of Jasper who introduced a variety of speakers including writer and former park

warden Sid Marty, author and historian Brian Patton, union representatives, Banff Town Councillor and former chief park warden in Banff, Bob Haney, a spokesperson for a group of wardens' spouses known as the Not So Silent Partners, and Wild Rose M.P. Myron Thompson (with Ben Gadd referring to "strange bedfellows" and noting it must be a non-partisan issue for him and a Canadian Alliance M.P. to be sharing a podium). Members of Precipice Theatre performed an hilarious skit that highlighted some of the consequences in the parks as a result of wardens being relegated to bystanders.

I spoke very briefly on behalf of the AWA and the Bow Valley Naturalists, pointing out that our two organizations were very active in the process leading to revisions of the National Parks Act in 1988. At that time language about "ecological integrity" as a first priority became a central feature of the legislation. (That idea was strengthened in the more recent amendments that became law this year.)

Since one way to contribute towards achieving ecological integrity is by enforcing the Act and its regulations, it was imperative that park wardens be returned to that role for which they are best trained and best qualified.



Sid Marty speaking at the Rally for the Wardens, Banff

I know I share the feelings of many people who detest the idea of wardens packing hand guns. Perhaps this reflects a reluctance to acknowledge the reality of the kind of world we are living in. But I detest the idea of someone other than wardens enforcing the law in national parks even more.

Parks Canada appealed the order from HRDC and a hearing was held in Ottawa at the end of November. A decision is expected early in the New Year. The CEO for the Parks Canada Agency has made it very clear he does not want to see Parks Canada employees carrying guns.

So if the appeal is unsuccessful it is hard to say what the response from the federal government might be. The great fear is that senior management could use this episode as cover for a move to fundamentally change and diminish the role of the Warden Service, which traditionally has been perceived as the part of the organization most committed to park protection.

Wardens should be patrolling the backcountry of the national parks on foot or horseback rather than occasional RCMP helicopter flights. Wardens should be in campgrounds educating people about the problem of habituated wildlife, checking anglers for compliance with fishing regulations, investigating and preventing the theft of rare fossils, dealing with illegal campers. Wardens should be confronting the host of impacts ranging from minor to major that are to be expected in protected areas that are

promoted as playgrounds and attract millions of visitors every year.

If you agree, please consider writing a letter to the Prime Minister, Heritage Minister Sheila Copps, and Parks Canada Agency CEO. Tell them you want to see the Mounties returned to their regular duties where they are needed and the wardens returned to active duty in protecting the national parks. ✍

(Mike McIvor is the president of the Bow Valley Naturalists and was a director of the AWA from 1980 to 1994.)

The Right Honourable Jean Chretien,

Prime Minister of Canada

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Hon. Sheila Copps, Minister, Canadian Heritage

Fax: (613) 994-1267; e-mail: copps.s@parl.gc.ca

House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Mr. Tom Lee, CEO, Parks Canada Agency, Jules Leger

Bldg., 7th Floor, 25 Eddy St., Hull, QUE K1A 0H3;

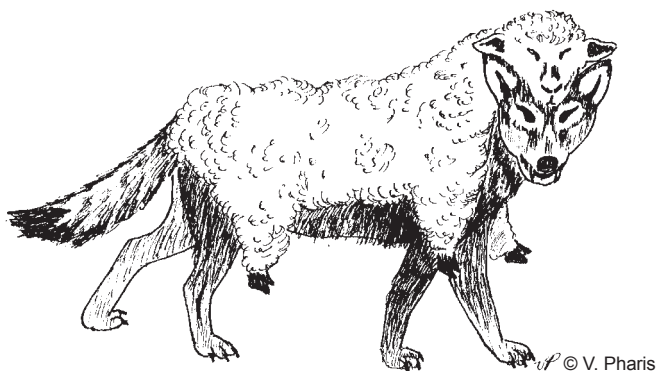
Fax: (819) 953-9745; e-mail: Tom_Lee@pch.gc.ca

DOMESTIC LIVESTOCK TRESPASS IN WATERTON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

The following letter was sent to the following people at Parks Canada: Gaby Fortin, Director General, Western and Northern Region, Peter Lamb, Superintendent, Waterton Lakes NP, and Tom Lee, CEO.

I would like to bring to formal attention a significant case of livestock trespass in Waterton Lakes National Park in fall of 2001.

On the 6th of October, 2001, I and another person spent the day walking in the northwest corner of Waterton near Kesler Lake (Section 2, TWP 3, RGE 30) and in nearby Oil Basin and Dungarvan Creek. At Kesler Lake we were surprised to see domestic livestock on the Park side of the fence "separating" the Park from adjacent private lands. These animals were distributed around the west end of Kesler Lake, which is in the Park. I counted 28 animals in trespass and took a photograph showing some of them beyond the fenceline (in the park).



Later in the day we descended and exited the park along Dungarvan Creek northwest of Kesler Lake. There was abundant and distinct evidence of livestock trespass in this region. It began near the exit of Dungarvan Ck from the hills to the west (northwest quarter of section 2) and continued to the Park boundary. Evidence of livestock use included well-worn trails, abundant and widespread distribution of droppings and tracks, and numerous patches of grassland and meadow that had been heavily grazed and polluted with dung, urine and beds. As a former Range Management Forester for the Alberta Forest Service, my experience with livestock indicated that trespass had been ongoing for several weeks at a minimum.

This is a violation of Waterton that ought not to be happening in this day and age and the obvious indications that it has been an extended event are disturbing. We all know that Waterton Lakes NP is struggling against all odds to maintain some degree of ecological integrity, an issue particularly relevant to large mammal populations such as elk and grizzly bears.

Low lake level predictable

This has been a very dry year and the consequences of that are not and should not be lost on any of us. A low lake level allowing cattle to skirt the boundary fence because of retreating water levels may be partially responsible of this trespass but this should not have been an unpredictable event. I understand the fence has been extended since I was there but this is a corner of the Park that has a long history of relatively intense conflict between local landowners and users and the interests of Canadians as expressed through the Park.

Given that ungulate (deer, elk, moose, bighorn sheep) populations are presently disturbingly low in the Park and in the region, and the grizzly bear population is locally and regionally threatened, if not endangered, efforts to coddle the truce (such as it is) between some specific local landowners (others are more understanding and cooperative) and the Park Agency are unwarranted and give no cause to treat trespass casually.

The impact of trespass livestock use in the Park can, particularly in times of drought, be relevant in redistributing wildlife on or from Park lands away from or to adjacent private lands. This should be a management consideration.

Persistence of non-native plants and historical disturbance regime

The Dungarvan Creek area is ecologically polluted with non-native grasses, most of which became established years ago primarily as a consequence of livestock practices. This is a widespread problem in Waterton Lake NP and the Park Agency should be making efforts to re-establish native vegetation in disturbed areas, thus reclaiming native biological diversity. Continued abuse of these areas by livestock, even if it is occasional, is prolonging if not aggravating, an unsatisfactory situation. The continued large-scale importation of invasive plant seed sources via livestock and the maintenance of a disturbance regime are not acceptable in the Park and should be directly addressed.

I could suggest a number of additional issues and actions that could be given consideration; for example, that trespass fees be charged to the livestock owner(s) responsible and that the

Canadian Park Agency adopt a more aggressive ecosystem defense strategy. However, I want to emphasize the following:

Fence Law

The only possible justification for cost shared fencing is that both parties benefit equitably from the fence. Because livestock trespass constitutes an appropriation of the rights of Canadians and imposes a cost on the Park and the public ecosystem, the Park is beginning to suffer a loss of value for which the Canadian Park Agency and the Canadian people are not being compensated.

Therefore I recommend the Canadian Park Agency begin discussions with local land users and the Province of Alberta about conversion from a "fence-out" to a "fence-in" rule. As ecologically protected areas become increasingly valuable it appears the time has come to shift responsibility for livestock distribution and it's associated costs from the Park and the people of Canada to local land users and owners. The Canadian people and the Park Agency have a right to see that Waterton is free from disturbance from unwanted livestock. I would like to see this right defended aggressively.

At the same time, the Park Agency must begin to examine ways to minimize conflict with and intolerance of some private landowners regarding wildlife leaving the Park. While an "unwritten truce" between landowners and the Park may be in existence it serves no long-term purpose nor does it hold prospects of recovering large mammal populations to more biologically sound numbers and distribution.

In this regard, the fence-out, fence-in issue is less important than the existing Park fence location. The next paragraph addresses this important issue and offers a solution to the existing conflict.

Friends of the National Parks Public Interest Conservation Easements

The most productive, reasonable, and defensible strategy is that the Park Agency purchase conservation easements over adjacent conflict lands (Sections 1,2,11 & 12 in TWP 3, RGE 30 and Sections 5,6,7 & 8 in TWP 3, RGE 29), essentially subsidizing the removal of livestock from these areas and dramatically improving the ecological status of wildlife populations, particularly grizzly bears and elk, in the northeast corner of the Waterton Lakes NP. We might call these Friends of the National Parks Public Interest Conservation Easements, for they would be all of these.

This is a strategy that would receive a huge level of endorsement from the Canadian people and from independent, and perhaps even government scientists, concerned about the integrity of Waterton Lakes National Park and the entire Crown of the Continent Region. The cost would almost certainly be less than \$2 million, a pittance in terms of the monstrous benefits that would accrue to North Americans for at least the next century.

This is a permanent solution to a life long threat to the integrity of Waterton Lakes National Park, including its grizzly bear and elk populations that should be initiated with the Minister of Heritage and the Minister of Finance immediately.

Please reply to my letter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian L. Horejsi

Speak Up For Wildlife Foundation

25 October 2001



Status of Alberta Wildlife

By Cliff Wallis, AWA President

The Alberta Government recently released its "General Status of Alberta Wild Species". It can be viewed at <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/fw/riskspecies/speciesatrisk/index.html>.

This report is part of the process that evaluates the status of wild species in Alberta.

A clear understanding of status is a key element in conservation programs and land use planning. The detailed status evaluations will be used by the Alberta Endangered Species Conservation Committee (ESCC) to



Western Hognose Snake

assess whether there is reason to recommend to the Minister of Alberta

Sustainable Resource Development that a species be given legislative status as "Endangered" or "Threatened" under Alberta's Wildlife Act.

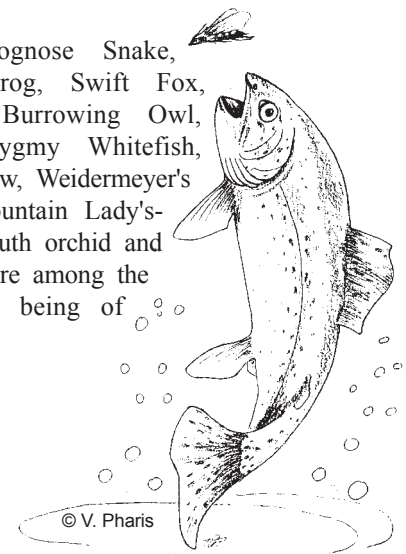
The document updates a previous status report but goes further by evaluating some groups of plants (ferns and orchids) and invertebrates (butterflies).

Reptiles and amphibians are the groups of animals of greatest concern with over 30% of the species that may be at risk and an additional 30% of reptile and 60% of amphibian species considered sensitive. Ferns and orchids were highlighted in the report due to high numbers of sensitive and may be at risk species.



Burrowing Owl

The Western Hognose Snake, Northern Leopard Frog, Swift Fox, Woodland Caribou, Burrowing Owl, Whooping Crane, Pygmy Whitefish, Western Silvery Minnow, Weidmeyer's Admiral Butterfly, Mountain Lady's-slipper, bog adder's-mouth orchid and numerous moonworts are among the species mentioned as being of highest concern. ☘



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GREATER KAKWA, THE FUTURE IS NOW

By Neil Dobson

Greater Kakwa became a reality in January of the year 2001. It is an outgrowth of a group, who, under the leadership of Bob Neufeld led the initiative to establish the Two Lakes recreation Area. The membership is comprised of a group of citizens from all walks of life, who have a common goal, the protection of an area of Alberta that many Albertans have enjoyed.

It was the sudden realization that an area, once considered a wilderness, was being changed as increased human enterprise began to dominate the scene. It was the realization that without action, the quiet serenity of nature which many have enjoyed was likely to disappear.



Kakwa Falls

It was also the realization that this wilderness area is now faced with competition from a number of different sources; industry, hikers, bikers, fishermen, hunters, campers, ATV's and four wheel drive vehicles. How do you fit these all together and still leave space for the birds, fish and animals that exist within this

delicately balanced ecosystem that took millions of years to evolve.

Greater Kakwa does not have all the answers. That is why its mandate is to work with other groups to attempt to piece together a solution which will fit the majority of needs. The land that Greater Kakwa hopes to influence extends from the Two Lakes Recreation Area, south and west to the B.C. Border.

The land is within the foothill county of Alberta and, as such, is a sharp contrast to the prairie regions. The corridor begins with two small mountain lakes at the north end, and the scenic Kakwa falls at the south. It is our hope that this area will remain in a state which will give future generations as much pleasure as it has to the present generation.

It is also our hope that this land will remain in the hands of all Albertan's. One only has to look at the difficulties that have beset the towns of Banff and Jasper to understand the difficulty of private enterprise within a public area.

We are setting the tone for what our children will have to live with. I do not know who made this statement, but it is certainly one I agree with, "We did not inherit this land from our forefathers, we have borrowed it from our children". We need to make wise decisions. ✍

To follow our developments, visit our website at - <http://greaterkakwa.com>

Brian Bildson & Neil Dobson are co-chairs of Greater Kakwa

WATERTON GATE AFFAIR

By Cheryl Bradley

On November 12 Southern Alberta Environmental Group (SAEG) and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) submitted a request through the Sierra Legal Defence Fund to federal Environment Minister David Anderson requesting that the proposed residential development at the entrance to Waterton Lakes National Park be subject to an environmental assessment. Under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Minister has the power to refer to an environmental assessment any project that may cause significant adverse environmental effects on federal lands, which include national parks.

Key concerns are that the development threatens the area's important 'Crown of the Continent' ecosystem, which is home to a wide array of wildlife including grizzly bears, wolves, cougars and elk, and would spoil the scenic vistas for which the park is renowned. The Minister's response, which may be slow in coming, will be a measure of political commitment to protecting the ecological integrity of national parks.

In late November the Prairie Crocus Ranching Coalition (PCRC), a group based in Cardston County concerned about protection of ranchland, decided to request a judicial review of the subdivision approval. They maintain the Municipal Government Act requires the County to submit the Area Structure Plan for the development to public hearing before a decision to approve or refuse, and if approved, adopt the Area Structure Plan into by-law.

A key concern is that approval of the development sets a precedent for fragmentation of ranchland with significant social and economic implications for area ranchers. There also is concern about water supply for the proposed development, particularly given that the Waterton River already is judged to be overallocated.

Funds are being sought to help with these initiatives. Donations can be made to CPAWS, #306, 319-10 Ave. SW, Calgary AB T2R 0A5 for tax receipt, or directly to PCRC, Box 127, Hill Spring AB T0K 1E0. Indicate funds are to go to the "Waterton Gate Affair". ✍



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Alberta Forest Policies are a Disadvantage to Forest Industry

By Jillian Tamblyn, AWA Conservation Specialist

Provincial forest policies must change if Alberta's forest industry is to remain competitive, according to a recent report by the Alberta Wilderness Association and other conservation groups. The report, *Structural Impediments to FSC Certification in Alberta: Overcoming Barriers to Well-Managed Forests*, documents how a lack of protected forests and unmanaged petroleum industry activity severely hampers the Alberta forest industry's ability to become Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified, the only certification process that has broad international support.


Three of the world's five largest wood buyers - IKEA, The Home Depot and Lowes - actively support FSC and give buying preference to suppliers who are FSC certified.

At the time the report was released in November, PriceWaterhouseCoopers was having its annual Forestry Industry Conference: Forestry in Alberta - Increasing the Value. The Global Outlook Panel mentioned certification several times. Robert Ascah from Alberta Treasury Branches felt that environmentalism and branding are a challenge for the forest industry.

Doug Hayhurst of PricewaterhouseCoopers pointed out that environmental pressures are not going away. In fact, Centex and Staples have hired PWC to design their environmental procurement policies. Catherine Mater of the Pinchot Institute for Conservation in Washington, D.C. presented forest certification as one of the five key industry trends and it was clear from her presentation that certification is strong in the marketplace.

Forestry practices need to improve in Alberta, not only for the environment, but also for forest dependent communities. This is an opportunity for companies to improve their practices significantly and gain a growing consumer market. To move FSC along we have asked the Alberta government to support three key recommendations:

1. Establish a network of protected areas for each forest ecoregion in Alberta capable of maintaining species and ecosystem biodiversity.
2. Until the network is established, allow forest companies to protect sensitive forest ecosystems from all other industrial use.
3. Reform government policies regarding the Alberta oil and gas industry forest use and ensure the petroleum and forest industries work together to properly manage forests.

The report and news release are available at AlbertaWilderness.ca. Previous articles on FSC can be found in past issues of Wild Lands Advocate. 

IS FORESTRY IN ALBERTA SUSTAINABLE?

By Jillian Tamblyn

In October the Sustainable Forest Management Network and the Environmental Research and Studies Centre hosted a well-attended panel discussion on the topic of sustainable forestry in Alberta. I was surprised to see that four of the five panel members had at least some concerns about the sustainability of Alberta's forests. Although I was pleased to have a confirmation of many of my thoughts on the issue, it was disconcerting that the Deputy Minister of Sustainable Resource Development was the only one on this diverse panel who felt that things were looking good.

The panel consisted of Dr. David Schindler, Killam Memorial Professor of Ecology at the University of Alberta, Edmonton; Dr. Glen Armstrong, University of Alberta Assistant Professor, Landscape Forestry and Integrated Resource Management; Dr. Bob Fessenden, Deputy Minister of Sustainable Resource Development; John Thompson, Senior Economist, Natural Resources Conservation Board; Peter Lee, Global Forest Watch.


The two questions addressed were: 1.

Do you think that forestry in Alberta is on a sustainable path - Why or why not? 2. Given that we are still learning about sustainability, what do you think is the most important information/action in getting Alberta on a sustainable path, or in achieving sustainability?

Many of the speakers had similar concerns that relate not only to the sustainability of forestry as a fibre extraction industry, but also to the sustainability of Alberta's forest ecosystems. The key topics included policy, fire, multiple land uses, management and climate change.

Some of the action items suggested included changes in policy to allow for exchange of wood between mills around the province, no new allocations of forests, and better land use planning policy, including cumulative effects assessment. Ecosystem based management was a suggested solution to many of the biological concerns. Ecosystem based management generally has been accepted by the government, but most policy still works on a sustained yield or wood flow model.

Fire is a concern biologically and from the perspective of annual allowable cut (AAC). Fire is not dealt with very efficiently in the AAC and large catastrophic fires have caused serious concern with the flow of wood for some companies. Glen Armstrong pointed out that some of his research indicates that there is only a 50% chance that a rate of harvest at 85% of the AAC can be sustained past 50 years. If this is correct then we are not achieving a sustainable yield.

If industry cannot even sustain forests for wood supply, how can we expect them to sustain forests as ecosystems? 

Biographies of the panellists and video streaming of the discussion are available on line at

<http://sfm-1.biology.ualberta.ca/english/events/eseminar.htm>



C. Bruun

ASSOCIATION NEWS

FOOD, FUN AND FUNDRAISING A GREAT SUCCESS AT THIS YEAR'S WILDERNESS CELEBRATION

By R. Bob Hogarth

AWA's Wilderness Celebration 2001, held the night of October 20th at the Glenmore Inn in southeast Calgary, attracted a crowd of



300+ supporters to a spirited evening of music, mingling and more than a little wheeling and dealing. With more than 160 items to be auctioned, ranging from dog sled rides to original works by renowned artists, there was something to whet the appetite of all those in attendance.

This year's Celebration was the Association's 13th annual general fundraiser, the objective of which is to raise funds for AWA's work in protecting wilderness. But it is also AWA's annual party, meant to give members and friends alike the opportunity to gather for some fun and recognize everyone's efforts on behalf of the Alberta's glorious wilderness.



Silent Auction Items

Executive Director Christyann Olson beamed as she surveyed the throngs enthusiastically pouring over the displays of auction items. "The turnout has been great. There are so many familiar faces, and many whom I've met for the first time tonight. The volunteers have done a wonderful job of organizing for this event."

Pausing for a moment, she pondered the significance of the event. "This celebration is important for us for a number of reasons. It gives us the opportunity to meet with some who sit on opposite sides of issues, and because the funds we raise here help



Making the Pumpkin Centerpieces.

support the work we do to protect Alberta's wilderness through awareness and action."

Like everything else provided by AWA, guests got more than their money's worth out of the evening. Passing through the reception area and past the cash bar, a continuous slide show of photographs of Bighorn Country served as a reminder of what it is all about.



Jim Broughton and James Campbell were recognized by the AWA and Ducks Unlimited for their outstanding contribution on behalf of Ventus Energy on the Hay Zama Management Committee. AWA president, Cliff Wallis, presented them with hand-crafted duck decoys.

Then on to the banquet room where the auction items were displayed. What a selection it was! The bucket raffle (ten tickets, ten bucks) included bookstore gift certificates, weekend getaways, gardening tools and framed prints. Silent auction items provided a diverse selection: limited edition prints, hand crafted hope chests, carvings, books, fishing trips, more weekend getaways, personal pampering, golf packages, carving tools.

David Galvin generously offered his services again as auctioneer. Live auction items included a beautiful hand made fall jacket by Calgary alderman, Druh Farrell, original oil paintings by such famed artists as Matt Lindstrom, Rene



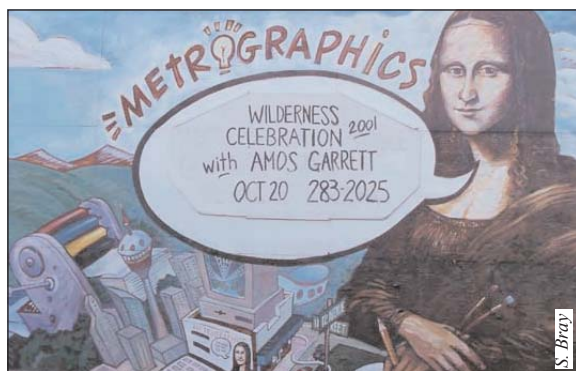
Amos Garrett and the Eh Team

Thibault, and Susan Woolgar, guided day hikes and a limited edition print donated by Robert Bateman.

The extensive buffet supper served up by the Glenmore chefs continued the overall theme of excellence for the evening,

catering to the tastes of both herbivore and carnivore alike. Dinner wines, as selected by well-known and longtime AWA supporter Richard Pharis, represented the best from Down Under – whites from New Zealand, a red from Australia.

As if one's senses weren't already reaching saturation, Amos Garrett and the Eh Team took to the stage for two sets of rhythm & blues standards. Amos, truly one of the world's eminent guitarists, is also a long-time supporter of AWA. "It's near and dear to my heart."



Mona advertises the Wilderness Celebration

Part of the joy of the evening was the sense of bond held by all in attendance. Perry Hilkewich, part of a contingent of eight from Husky Oil Environmental Division, was attending his first Celebration. "This has been great. We're enjoying ourselves, we've met a few of the people with AWA, and we've bought a few things. We're big supporters of the organization."

Richard Pharis echoed the sentiments. "Another great dinner and evening. And I'm happy to see the growth in the number of active members." He also was pleased to recognize the success of AWA. "Our best allies now are the industries. They recognize the value of the wilderness," though he cautioned, "We need to get more young people in. These are the people who can help to bring the message forward to the governments."

Successful evenings such as this will go a long way to help this small organization with a big heart to continue to be heard. Electric, eclectic evenings like this make it easy to participate. Mark your calendars for Wilderness Celebration 2002, October 19, at the Glenmore Inn. ✂

(R. Bob Hogarth is a Calgary-based freelance writer/editor. He has won a National Journalism Award for Environmental Writing for his coverage of oil exploration issues.)



Thank You to Our Volunteers!

The AWA is fortunate to have a roster with more than 250 individuals who volunteer for the association. Volunteers range in age from 10 to 87 and come from each corner of our province. Each individual contributes in unique ways to the work we do. Without the support and tireless efforts of volunteers, we simply could not achieve our mission to "Defend Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action". December is the month that we honour our volunteers and remember the contributions they have made this past year. On behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff of the association we thank each and everyone of you!

(Featured here are some of our regular volunteers and this year's volunteer party.)



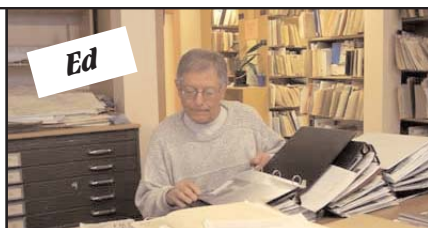
Jerry



Margaret



Sheila & Doug



Ed



Linda



AWA Takes On Stewardship of Plateau Mountain

By Nigel Douglas

In October 2001, the AWA became Volunteer Stewards for the 2,322 ha Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve, at the southern end of Kananaskis Country. John Geary's article in the October Advocate detailed the AWA's current stewardship inventory (Stewards of the Beehive Natural Area since 1987; founding member of the Milk River Management Society in 1990; and in 1995, stewards of the Historic Bighorn Trail as part of the Adopt-a-Trail program), and Plateau Mountain is a welcome addition to these sites.

Plateau Mountain was designated an Ecological Reserve in 1991, after a considerable amount of work by the AWA and Husky Oil amongst others. It is a site not quite like any other. As its name suggests, it is a large, flat-topped mountain, swept continually by strong winds coming off the Livingston Range. It can and does experience snow in any month of the year. The winds tend to prevent the accumulation of deep snow during the

winter months, which makes this a very important site for wintering Bighorn Sheep. Many of the plants and landscape features of Plateau Mountain are more typical of Arctic areas, which makes it particularly important in an Albertan context.

The AWA is now looking at ways to build on its stewardship program, and to increase volunteer involvement. We are looking for people who are able to commit themselves to a minimum of 2 visits per year to sites such as Plateau Mountain or the Beehive, to report on the general state of the site, and any disturbance problems (e.g. unauthorized vehicle access). Any biological records (e.g. birds or plants seen) will add to the knowledge that we have of these sites.

We are also looking at ways that volunteers can become involved in a more practical way. Kananaskis rangers have identified a problem with the boundaries of Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve. The borders are not at all clear on the ground, and it is difficult to tell if a hunter, (or a forestry company!) is operating inside or outside the boundary. So we are planning a trip next summer to mark out the boundaries of the site using permanent boundary markers, which should help them in their enforcement work. ✂

If you are interested in becoming involved in this stewardship work, please call Nigel Douglas at (403) 283-2025.



Staff Profile: Tamaini Snaith

I'm the new "conservation specialist" at the AWA Calgary office, and I am very pleased to have joined an organization with such an amazing team of staff, directors and volunteers. I have been asked to write a short bio to introduce myself, and this paragraph may give you some idea of who I am, but doesn't help me to know you. Please call or email me anytime to introduce yourself, your interests, and your involvement in AWA. I look forward to hearing from you.

I have an undergraduate degree from Simon Fraser University in Archaeology and Anthropology. During this degree I became involved in studying orangutans, and I moved on to complete a Master's degree from the University of Calgary in Anthropology/Primates. Through my years working with orangutans, I have been involved in studies of wild and ex-captive orangutans, worked at an orangutan rehabilitation centre, and worked with the Orangutan Foundation on a number of conservation projects. In the past couple of years, I have become more involved in conservation work in Canada.

I completed a Master's degree at Dalhousie University in Environmental Studies looking at protected areas planning and wildlife/habitat conservation. I have worked as a volunteer with the Ecology Action Centre and CPAWS to protect public lands in Nova Scotia, and with an IFAW team doing conservation research on North Atlantic Right Whales. ✂

In Memorium

The AWA mourns the loss of Gordon Meadows, a friend and member of the association for many years. We offer our sincere sympathy to his colleagues, family and friends. The AWA is honoured to have been named by Gordon and his family to receive donations in his memory.

Teachers in Training Raise Awareness Among Children About Our Watersheds

By Nigel Douglas

The AWA has been running a 'Masters of Teaching' program this fall, in conjunction with the University of Calgary. First year teaching students have been learning about watersheds in Alberta. They have then been using their new-found knowledge to give presentations to school children throughout Calgary and the surrounding area. By the end of the year, students will have presented to 70 classes in 24 schools, talking to nearly 2000 children.

This is a great cooperative program, where the teaching students have been learning; the school children have been learning; and the AWA has had a unique opportunity to raise awareness about a wilderness issue that is of crucial importance to us all. ✂

In Memorium

The AWA mourns the loss of James Leslie. James (Jim) was a well-known gentleman who dedicated a good deal of support to conservation issues in Alberta. Jim and his wife Marjorie have been members and supporters of the AWA for a number of years. Jim had a very real concern and appreciation for wilderness in Alberta and died suddenly while hiking with friends in Banff National Park. He shared his hope and vision for wilderness with many. The AWA is very appreciative that in remembrance of Jim's dedication to wilderness his family named the Alberta Wilderness Association to receive memorial donations for Jim. The Association offers sincere sympathy to Jim's wife Marjorie and his many friends.

AWA Presents First Alberta Wilderness Defenders Award

By Peter Sherrington

I have been a member of the Alberta Wilderness Association for about 28 years. It was, however, only during the last ten years as a member of the Board and as President that I fully came to appreciate the enormous amount of work done by volunteers and staff in our struggle to preserve wilderness in Alberta.

At the same time it struck me forcibly how much of this work goes unrecognized and, perhaps more importantly, how we have failed to learn from and draw inspiration from those who went before. Compare this situation with that in fields such as sports, entertainment and industry that are perpetually, it seems, celebrating themselves and their achievements. Yet working for wilderness protection in Alberta must rank amongst the most challenging of all human endeavours; and it's getting harder.



Peter Sherrington unveils the first Alberta Wilderness Defender's Award for Orval Pall

Just how profound the government's lack of environmental understanding is was brought home to me last week when I viewed a short video produced by the Government of Alberta to introduce the aims of their Future Summit. This process is designed to find what Albertan's priorities are in a number of policy areas for the next twenty years. The image chosen to introduce the section on the environment is....a man driving a golf ball on a mountain valley golf course! As I said, it ain't getting any easier.

In 1999 Christyann Olson, our executive director, asked me if I could think of a project that would be appropriate for Federal millennial project funding then available. I had no hesitation in suggesting an "Environmental Hall of Fame". Needless to say the application was not successful but the idea stuck with Christyann. The result was the inauguration of the Alberta Wilderness Defenders Award in conjunction with the Association's First Annual Lecture on November 2.

I talked earlier about the importance of recognizing achievement, but why do we do it? Firstly it is a way of saying thank you for a job well done and secondly a tangible way of remembering people and their contributions. But beyond this any organization needs role models from whom we can learn (within a few years I can envisage a book and visits here from school groups) and draw inspiration: individuals really can make a difference. Lastly, as an organization we are ourselves honoured by those we honour, and we become stronger as a result.

I am pleased to see that the nomination criteria for the Alberta Defenders Award are broad:

- conservation work must be based in Alberta,
- it must focus on wilderness-related areas, or contribute to our understanding and protection of Wilderness,
- the nominee may be working or retired, deceased or living (which is about as broad as it gets!)

Nominations may be submitted to the AWA by anybody, and the plan is to make one award each year in conjunction with the Alberta Wilderness Trust Annual Lecture. I would, however, like to make a plea for multiple awards for the next few years: we have a lot of catching up to do, and the book and school visitors are waiting!

Finally, in recognition of the fact that awards are more memorable if they have a catchy name - Oscars, Genies, Tonys, etc - I suggest that we call ours an ERNIE. This is partly after Ernest our splendid owl logo (for we are indeed earnest in what we do and believe), together with perhaps combining the ideas of Environmental Recognition with our goal of preserving Naturally Intact Ecosystems.

It was a great honour and pleasure for me to induct our first recipient of an ERNIE, Orval George Pall. 



Orval George Pall 1951 - 1986

Orval Pall, a dedicated and enthusiastic wildlife biologist, devoted his life to understanding the behaviour and place of wildlife in nature. Cougars, wolverines and woodland caribou were the primary focus of his research. Like the animals he loved and studied, Orval thrived on wilderness. His vision for wilderness protection and support of the Alberta Wilderness Association has inspired friends and colleagues through the years. Orval died June 6, 1986 while surveying bighorn sheep from the air in Kananaskis Country.

The dramatic story of the search for Pall's downed plane and the legacy of the Alberta Wilderness Trust can be found at
www.AlbertaWilderness.ca/AWA/Endowment/Legacy.htm



© V. Pharis



David Schindler gives the First Annual Lecture for the Alberta Wilderness Trust

Annual Lecture

Preventing a freshwater crisis in Canada

"Increased research and a national water strategy offer the only hope for preventing a freshwater crisis in Canada," says David Schindler, the guest speaker for AWA's First Annual Lecture. This special event celebrates our new endowment fund, the Alberta Wilderness Trust, and is held in conjunction with the Alberta Wilderness Defenders Awards. Schindler spoke about the effects of climate warming and other human stresses on Canadian freshwaters and what his research is uncovering. Guests were able to meet with Dr. Schindler at a reception prior to the lecture. The abstract for Schindler's talk and a biography can be found on our website AlbertaWilderness.ca under events. A copy of his paper on the subject from Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Science 58: 18-29 (2001) can be found on the NRC Research Press web site.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OPEN HOUSE PROGRAM

Calgary:

Location: The Hillhurst Room,
AWA, 455 12th St NW
Time: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Cost: \$4:00 per person; children free
Contact: 283 2025 for reservations

Tuesday January 15th 2002
Swift Fox - Back from the Brink
With Clio Smeeton

Tuesday February 5th
Wolves in the Central Rockies
Their Ecology and Conservation, with Carolyn Callaghan

Tuesday March 5th
Ranchers and Conservation
With Hyland Armstrong (to be confirmed)

Tuesday April 9th
Snakes of the Alberta Plains
How they live and die, with Jonathan Wright

Edmonton:

Location: Strathcona Community League,
10139 87 Ave
Time: 7:00 - 9:00 pm
Cost: \$4.00 per person, children free
Note: **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

Thursday March 28th
Wolves in the Central Rockies
Their Ecology and Conservation, with Carolyn Callaghan

Editorial Disclaimer: The opinions expressed by the various authors in this publication are not necessarily those of the editors or the AWA. The editors reserve the right to edit, reject or withdraw articles submitted.

Casino: May 15-16, 2002

Casinos require a large volunteer team to fill positions including cashiers, chip runners, and more for two days. AWA is pleased that Mel Dunford will return as Casino Manager for the May casino that will be held at the Elbow Valley Casino in Calgary. If you are interested in volunteering for this great fundraising event, please call the Provincial office in Calgary (403) 283-2025 as soon as possible.



Climb for Wilderness™: April 20, 2002

Hello! My name is Nichol Turner and I'm extremely excited to be on-board with the AWA as Event Manager for this year's Climb for Wilderness at the Calgary Tower. Planning is already in progress and I'm looking forward to being involved in the best tower climb event ever! Event information and registration forms will be sent out in February/March. If you have any immediate questions or concerns, please call the AWA Calgary office at 283-2025. Happy holidays and let's make the 2002 Climb for Wilderness an event to remember!

Thank you!

Each year, The United Way Donor Choice Programme supports the Alberta Wilderness Association with donations that have been designated by individuals to be given to the AWA. We don't know who the individuals are, but we extend a heartfelt thanks for your support and for the support of the United Way.

Editorial Board:
Shirley Bray
Peter Sherrington
Andy Marshall
Graphic Designer:
Tammy L. Nischuk
Printer:
MRC Document Services

Web Host: qbiz.ca

Please direct questions
and comments to:
Shirley Bray
Phone: 270-2736
Fax: 270-2743
awa.wrc@shaw.ca
www.AlbertaWilderness.ca

Dear Members and Supporters:

During the past ten months, I have been working with the staff and directors of the AWA as the Executive Director. These months have been challenging and rewarding. The AWA has renewed its organizational capacity and developed clear goals and planning processes for its work.

The development of the Association's grassroots network has been of paramount importance and the growing numbers of interested members and supporters who have become involved in programmes where the opportunities are only limited by our ability to be creative encourages me. Moral fibre, the corporate memory of wilderness and tenacity continue to be the AWA's trademark.

I have had the privilege of witnessing directors, members and others doing their part to participate meaningfully in the democratic process. The AWA has more than 300 volunteers throughout the province who in 20, 30 or 40 years from now will know what they have done to protect wilderness in Alberta. These outstanding volunteers support the staff of the AWA with their passion and concern.

As I traveled and spent time enjoying wild, free and beautiful Alberta I was frequently reminded of the beauty of our wilderness areas and just how fragile the balance of nature has become. Whether I traveled to the parklands, the open, unfenced prairies, the foothills or the mountains, there is one universal concern from citizens throughout Alberta.

Water. Water quantity perhaps even more than quality is on everyone's mind. Albertans are experiencing drought conditions. The value of our watersheds and the need for their protection has always been recognized and now, it has become an issue provincially and globally. During 2002, the AWA will focus efforts on our forests in the Boreal and the Foothills of Alberta. We are seeking protection and forestry industry practices that demonstrate Alberta's ability to lead the way in planning for our future. The Bighorn Wildland is a primary concern for us. We want regulated protection for the pristine valleys, essential watershed and magnificent ranges of the Bighorn Wildland Recreation Area.

We have a vision for the southern part of our province that will mean no industrial logging operations south of the Trans Canada highway. We expect the Meridian Dam project to be eliminated and critical landscapes in the southeastern corner of our province to achieve legislated protection.

Our work in this year will require not only significant financial resources but also the tenacity and creative ability of staff, directors, volunteers and supporters. Strategies and tactics will be renewed with vigor and an intensified sense of urgency for wilderness protection in Alberta. I hope you will get involved. Visit our website AlbertaWilderness.ca or call our office in Calgary (403) 283-2025 or Edmonton (780) 988-5487 for opportunities.

Christyann Olson, AWA Executive Director



Christyann Olson & Ranger in Bighorn Wildland

"Our quality of life, our health, and a healthy economy are totally dependent on Earth's biological diversity. We cannot replicate natural ecosystems. Protected areas are internationally recognized as the most efficient way to maintain biological diversity" - Richard Thomas

The Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) is dedicated to protecting wildlands, wildlife and wild waters throughout Alberta. Your valued contribution will assist with all areas of the AWA's work. We offer the following categories for your donation. The Provincial Office of the AWA hosts wall plaques recognizing donors in the "Associate" or greater category. Please give generously to the conservation work of the AWA.

Alberta Wilderness Trust - an endowment fund established with The Calgary Foundation to support the long-term sustainability of the Alberta Wilderness Association. For further details, please contact our Calgary office (403) 283-2025.

Membership - Lifetime AWA Membership ☐ \$25 Single ☐ \$30 Family

Alberta Wilderness Association	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wilderness Circle	\$2500 - \$5000
<input type="checkbox"/> Philanthropist	\$1000
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporter	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

Alberta Wilderness Resource Centre	
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron - greater than \$1000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$1000
<input type="checkbox"/> Partner	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	\$100



☐ Cheque ☐ Visa ☐ M/C Amount \$ _____

Card #: _____ Expiry Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Prov. _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone (home): _____ Phone (work): _____

E-mail: _____ Signature _____

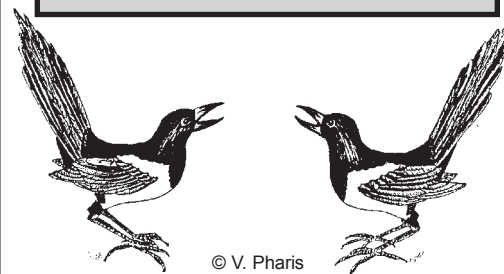
☐ **I wish to join the Monthly Donor Programme!**

I would like to donate \$ _____ monthly. Here is my credit card number OR my voided cheque for bank withdrawal. I understand that monthly donations are processed on the 1st of the month (minimum of \$5 per month).

printed 11/01

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*A winter
celebration of
wilderness
in Edmonton.*



The AWA respects the privacy of members. Lists are not sold or traded in any manner. The AWA is a federally registered charity and functions through member and donor support. Tax-deductible

*donations may be made to the Association at:
Box 6398 Station D, Calgary, AB T2P 2E1.
Telephone (403) 283-2025 Fax (403) 270-2743
E-mail a.w.a@shaw.ca
Website <http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca>*



The Alberta Wilderness Association
Box 6398, Station D
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E1

