



## CLOUDY FUTURE FOR ALBERTA ECOTOURISM

By Andy Marshall



Just because the United Nations has declared 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism, that hasn't stopped a storm of confusion in Alberta over what the term means and heated debate on how the province can benefit from a wave of international interest in the topic.

Whether it's coming face-to-face with a grizzly after a 70-kilometre All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) ride, bouncing down a foaming river on an inflated rubber raft, or staying at a small lodge where the power comes from solar panels, arguments rage on as to what it is.

"Ecotourism is a movement, rather than a distinct sector within tourism," is how Calgarian Joe Pavelka deals with the conundrum. He is co-ordinator for Mount Royal College's recently introduced ecotourism and outdoor leadership degree program. Pavelka likens it to the "green" movement of the 1980s -- "when people did what they could."

"To say this activity is ecotourism and this is not, is as unrealistic as it was to say then what is green or not," says Pavelka.

Does ecotourism include large corporate facilities such as the Chateau Lake Louise, which reduced its power consumption, thus earning a top ranking under the Hotel Association of Canada Green Leaf Eco-Rating? Pavelka is torn over the answer, although he wants to commend the hotel for being a leader in



environmental management. "You want to encourage good activities," he says.

Others are less equivocal and warn against mixing ecotourism with adventure tourism -- the helicopter tours and the white water rafting, for example -- or with what some call ecotourism lite -- hotels proclaiming how responsible they are because they switch off more lights at night and have installed lower-intensity showerheads.

"The label has been misused," says Carol Patterson, the Calgary-based author of a 1997 book called *The Business of Ecotourism*.

### INSIDE

Effects of ORVs in Wilderness .....	5
"Flexibility to Manage" - Who Benefits? .....	7
By Dr. Brian Horejsi	
<b>Alberta Wilderness Watch .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Alberta Scientists Support Expansion of Protected Areas Network .....	10
MLAs Getting Message About Bighorn .....	11
Bill 206 is a Red Herring .....	11
Ecosystem Management in Elk Island .....	12

Castle Wilderness .....	12
McClelland Oil Sands Project .....	13
Grizzly not Listed as Threatened .....	13
Lake Louise .....	13
Lakeland Logging Plans .....	14
Touchwood Lake Poem .....	14
Sour Gas in the Whaleback .....	15
Cheviot Mine .....	15
Oldman River Basin Water Management .....	16
Snake Hunters' Blues .....	17
Artist Profile: James Marshall: .....	19

### Association News

Wilderness Awareness Month .....	20
Wild Alberta Map .....	21
Alberta Wilderness Watch Stewardship Program .....	21
Climb for Wilderness .....	22
Profiles of New Staff and Volunteers .....	24
Upcoming Events .....	25
Wilderness Defenders Awards .....	27



She refers to the International Ecotourism Society for a useful and fairly widely accepted definition: Ecotourism is "responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people." It also should involve a learning experience for the participants.

Despite its rugged, outdoor image, Alberta is a very minor player on the ecotourism scene, she says. With the province's focus on "ski hills and golf courses" to lure people here, relatively few ecotourism operators are in business here.

Yet, a government study identified up to three million people from across North America would be interested in nature-based tourism in British Columbia and Alberta. While noting that nature tourism is not strictly ecotourism, Patterson quotes other studies suggesting that form of tourism comprises up to seven per cent of the total tourism market. With Travel Alberta projecting tourism revenues here of \$4.3 billion this year, that works out to a potentially more-than-\$300-million business in Alberta alone from what is regarded as the fastest growing sector of the overall tourism industry. Tourism, according to government figures, is the province's fourth-largest economic engine (coming after energy, forestry and agriculture), employing more than 100,000 Albertans.

But Patterson points to at least one significant impediment to Alberta benefiting from this potential ecotourism bonanza: Widespread activity by the oil and gas and forestry industries in traditionally pristine areas, coupled with the soaring and largely unregulated use of motorized recreation vehicles.

"We have lots of natural and beautiful areas," says Patterson. "But provincial policies on multiple use create a conflict. Ecotourists don't want to see signs of human disturbance . . . they don't want to go dog-sledding through a clear-cut area."

She and other ecotourism proponents argue the government should set a higher value on tourism as a land-based industry that will bring financial benefits long after the final drop of oil has been wrung from the earth and the last old-growth forest razed.

Officially, the province's strategic tourism marketing plan identifies ecotourism as one of several important "product segments" in leisure travel by Albertans, other Canadians, Americans and visitors from across the world, says Travel Alberta director of communications Don Boynton. He quotes the

plan as stating that "interest continues to increase in travel that is focused on nature and includes an emphasis on environment, conservation and sustainability." It goes on to add: "Alberta, with its diverse culture and spectacular landscapes of mountains, foothills, badlands and prairie (and it probably could have added our woodland areas, says Boynton) . . . is well positioned to attract this market."

As a result, Boynton agrees that a pristine landscape is critical. "It's what our visitors, especially internationally, are looking for," he says. The government, through the Alberta Economic Development Authority, is now reviewing the issue of other conflicting uses in pristine areas. "We're not here to trample the asset that serves the tourism industry so well," he says.

Travel Alberta is "coming around," says Mount Royal's Pavelka, whose ecotourism and outdoor leadership program has attracted 180 applications for 30 spots next fall. "It's pretty hard for them to look at the pictures they use in their brochures and not recognize ecotourism is a huge part of what they do."

Alan Ernst, owner of Aurum Lodge on Abraham Lake, west of Rocky Mountain House, is much less optimistic: "The Alberta government says 'let's cut the trees, get the oil out and give the tourism industry what's left.'"

A former banker, who, with his wife, has invested about \$1 million in the 22-bed, solar-powered lodge, Ernst is dismayed at the damage he sees inflicted by industrial activity and motorized recreation in the southern Bighorn region where he operates.

While mass tourism is a stagnant market, low-impact ecotourism is one of the fastest-growing forms of tourism, says Ernst. Yet, government policies mean that protected lands "are dwindling at an alarming rate . . . land use conflict is the single biggest issue in ecotourism."

Since opening more than a year ago, Ernst has polled his clients. "Ninety six per cent are against industrial development or mechanized recreation in this area," he says. "Tourists who see the damage here won't come back." Discovering the overbuilding of places such as Banff National Park is deeply disappointing to many tourists, he adds. When they go to other areas and see the extent of clearcutting or seismic line damage, "it brings tears to the eye . . . expectations are not being met." Ironically, Ernst is somewhat of a poster boy for Travel Alberta with a top prize last



*Aurum Lodge*



year in the sustainable tourism category of the so-called Alto Awards.

Doug Ritchie, executive director of Frontier Lodge, a Christian wilderness camp near Nordegg, also worries about the damage to some parts of the Bighorn. Because of encroaching industrial activities, extensive ATV use and even high horse traffic, it makes true wilderness experiences harder to find, he says. A compromise is possible, he hopes, but "the government doesn't have much of a background of protecting areas."

Despite Frontier's emphasis on education in such subjects as environmental ethics for the almost 2,000 young people a year who stay at the facility -- a vital principle of ecotourism -- Ritchie agrees even hikers and mountain bikers can have a negative impact on the wilderness in popular areas. "We're trying to mitigate the problem by going to different places, spreading out the use of certain places," he says.

The June, 2002, National Geographic magazine puts another severe dent in Alberta's outdoor image with a detailed indictment of the province's preservation record in the boreal forest. With Canada possessing one third of the earth's vital northern boreal forest, "logging, oil and gas drilling and flooding from hydro power dams are gnawing away at the boreal," writes magazine contributor Fen Montaigne.

He quotes a study documenting a 10-fold increase in logging since 1960 when 96 per cent of the boreal forest was wilderness. Now less than 10 per cent of the boreal forest exists in swaths larger than a few square kilometres. It is criss-crossed with an estimated three-quarters of a million kilometres of roads, pipelines and five-metre corridors for seismic testing.

Montaigne also cites a nine-year University of Alberta study indicating a 20- to 50-per-cent decline in some migratory bird populations. Numbers of grizzly bears in the Swan Hills region have plummeted from about 400 to 80 in the past 50 years. Woodland caribou populations are also in serious decline. Strict ecotourism supporters say these kinds of reports further undermine hopes for a vibrant ecotourism sector here.

Premier Ralph Klein's response was to denigrate the article: "The province is a pretty good steward of Alberta's forests, no matter what National Geographic says," he told reporters.

At quite a different point on the ecotourism scale are people like Bill Marlow, owner of Hinton-based Canadian Rockies Adventures. With a growing fleet of ATVs and snowmobiles, Marlow takes up to 20 people at a time on full-day tours of the region. "We emphasize enjoying the natural area . . . we organize a slow, cautious type of trip," he explains. "'I feel comfortable these activities don't endanger animals or do harm.' Deer, even grizzly, are seen close-at-hand by people who otherwise would never have the ability or chance to hike to remote areas. Don't

confuse them, Marlow adds, with the small segment of ATV enthusiasts who race around seeing how fast they can go.

Ernst has no sympathy for that argument. "There's no justification for putting pressure on the wilderness to allow people to get into areas which they wouldn't otherwise reach," he says.

Patterson sees the controversy over motorized/non-motorized transportation as the biggest conflict surrounding tourism. Many ecotourism purists abhor activities such as helicopter-aided hiking and skiing, although she believes

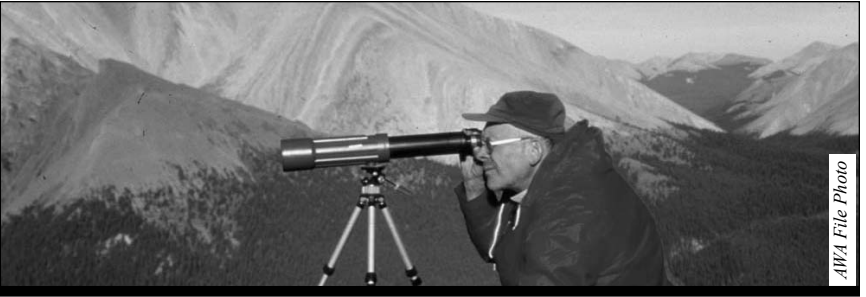
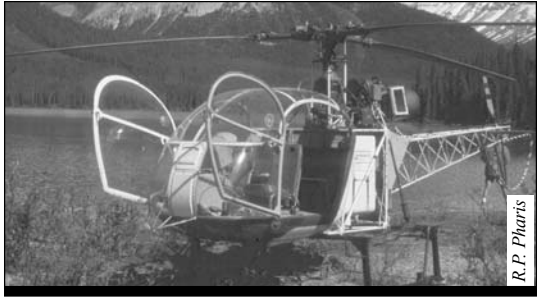


companies such as Canadian Mountain Holidays in Canmore uphold important ecotourism principles. The company works with the local community, for example, and follows a code of ethics and behaviour. As for the white water rafting operations, they "don't generally do a good job on environmental interpretation. The product they sell is an adrenalin rush."

Former AWA president Peter Sherrington has worked as an advisor to a group in Tumbler Ridge in northeast British Columbia to develop an ecotourism industry to help replace the loss of mining there. Building trails and publishing trail handbooks are part of the strategy to attract visitors there seeking a rich natural environment experience. "This is pure ecotourism, based on the local community," says Sherrington. "It's not building large hotels." However, a traditionally-minded town council has so far limited its vision as to how much ecotourism could help it recover from the collapse of its mining industry.

Another view on the spectrum comes from Rob Gardner, an independent consultant from Medicine Hat working for Alberta Trail Net. "Ecotourism is too loaded a word," he says. "When people, especially rural people, hear 'eco,' they think of Greenpeace or the AWA, and that doesn't necessarily resonate with them."





It is important to attract people into wilderness areas so that they'll learn to understand and value them, and, consequently, want to protect them, says Gardner. But most people are intimidated by destinations such as Banff National Park, says the former parks interpreter, where they are bombarded with warnings about bears and because they have little knowledge of how to properly explore the mountain terrain.

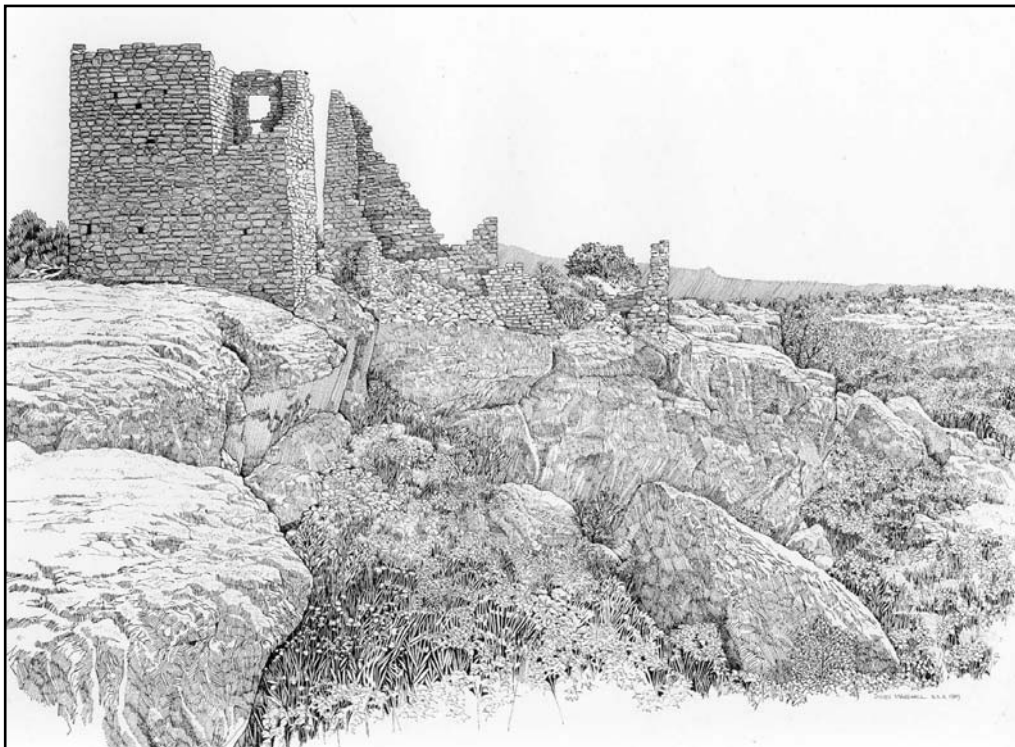
Gardner has served as a consultant for the town of Lodgepole, southwest of Edmonton, helping boost the locals' appreciation for the natural assets in the area. Although some might suggest the town is surrounded by lots of dull bush, "if you live in suburban Edmonton, that bush can be pretty neat." Many people are happy to explore the area -- as long as they don't see too many oil wells -- and "they're tickled pink to see a moose or a coyote. They don't need to see wolverines or grizzly bears to have a good experience," he explains.

Gardner has tried hard to deal with the reality that hundreds of thousands of Albertans own and like to ride mechanized recreation vehicles. "I don't particularly support it, but we have to recognize it as a fact of life." As a result, he has developed a specific series of steps he thinks can reduce the mechanized/non-mechanized conflict. They range from grooming trails for snowmobiles so riders don't move onto other areas when the trails

become too worn and bumpy, to clearer signage letting people know what uses are allowed on trails. "Substantial stress is removed by signs stating clearly who is allowed to use trails," says Gardner. Spreading out the various uses is another obvious, but beneficial strategy.

While he doesn't like to see industrial activity in wilderness areas, it's important to remember, he says, that a lot of people are quite happy in less-than-pristine areas. Aware his views are not popular with many committed conservationists, he sees them as useful compromises to raise broader interest in wilderness values.

Aside from the diminishing supply of wilderness, another inhibitor to the growth of ecotourism here, Patterson explains, is the lower rate of return on capital investments in that form of tourism. A federal government study showed an 18.3-per-cent gross return, less than half the rate considered acceptable from an investment perspective. "The rate of return is not enough to attract big business." That's fine with Ernst who sees ecotourism by definition as the domain of small, independent operators, rather than large corporations taking profits out of the region they operate in and insistent on higher returns for their bottom-line-obsessed shareholders. "Some profit obviously has to be there, but the environment comes first," he says. ✿



Anasazi Ruins - Hoven Weep National Monument, New Mexico

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# THE EFFECTS OF OFF-ROAD VEHICLES IN WILDERNESS



ORV Damage

Off-road vehicle use in Alberta is a contentious issue in certain wilderness areas. AWA has compiled a brief summary of the effects of motorized recreation on wilderness values as part of our position statement on recreation in Alberta's wilderness. The complete position statement can be found on our website in the Resources section under "Catalog".

Off-road vehicles (ORVs) include "any mechanized mode of transport used for recreation off of regularly maintained roads" (Sierra Club). These vehicles can be used for travel on land, water, snow, and ice, and include all terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, motorcycles, trikes, and 4-wheel drive vehicles.

## IMPACTS ON LAND

ORV use can directly and indirectly affect soils, streams, and vegetation. ORV use can cause intense soil disruption through erosion, compaction and sedimentation. Because the damage associated with soil compaction is asymptotic, initial trampling of previously undisturbed areas is critical and should be prevented if possible. Soil and water disruption can result in the elimination of natural vegetation and potential invasion by exotic species to an area.

ORVs widen traditional backcountry trails and break down of the trail edge. A backcountry trail is often defined as 12-24 inches wide, whereas ORV routes are five to eight feet wide. Wider trails have greater ecological effects than smaller trails. The ecological effects of roads and trails are well-documented and include the disruption of natural vegetation patterns, ground and surface water flow, and natural disturbance regimes.

## Figure 1: Motorized Recreation on Crown Land in Alberta

### Land Ownership in Alberta:

Alberta total land mass:	661 190 km <sup>2</sup>
Provincial Crown Land:	56.4% (372 911 km <sup>2</sup> )
Federal Land:	10.6%
Private Land:	28.4%
Other provincial:	4.6%

### Provincial Crown Land where motorized recreation is prohibited:

FLUZ:	4078 km <sup>2</sup>
Wilderness Areas:	1010 km <sup>2</sup>
Willmore Wilderness Park:	4597 km <sup>2</sup>
Provincial Parks:	2077 km <sup>2</sup>
Ecological Reserves:	294 km <sup>2</sup>
Wildland Parks:	17 280 km <sup>2</sup> *
Prime Protection Zone:	3310 km <sup>2</sup> **

**Total:** **32 646 km<sup>2</sup> or**  
**8.75% of Provincial Crown Land**

*Conclusion: Less than 9% of provincial Crown Land is off-limits to motorized recreation.*

\* Maximum figure - includes area of all Wildland Parks even though some Wildland Parks allow motorized recreation.

\*\* Area of Prime Protection Zone not accounted for in other protected areas.

The disruption of soil integrity causes erosion and siltation in riparian zones. When ORVs cross or enter streams, turbidity increases significantly and oil, transmission fluid, or other liquids can be left behind. Water quality, vegetation, and fish spawning habitat may be degraded as a result.

ORVs cause air and water pollution. ORVs expel 20 to 30 percent of their oil and gasoline unburned into air and water. Newer machines have better emissions control; however, they still emit significant amounts of pollutants. Off-road motorcycles and ATVs produce 118 times as much smog-forming pollutants as modern automobiles on a per-mile basis.

### IMPACTS ON WILDLIFE

As vegetation is destroyed, fewer food sources and nesting areas are available for wildlife. Stress caused by ORV disturbance can lead to a weakened physical condition or death, the abandonment of territories, and lower reproduction rates. This is particularly serious during the winter, when environmental stress is at its peak for wildlife.

Roads and trails can cause direct and indirect wildlife mortality, and may lead to the fragmentation, reduction and extirpation of local wildlife populations (particularly through the genetic isolation of small groups of individuals).

ORV use increases and facilitates access to backcountry areas, which contributes to increased hunting pressure and the proliferation of illegal hunting and fishing.

ORV emissions contain pollutants and carcinogens including benzene and carbon monoxide. These pollutants can be harmful to wildlife and may cause respiratory and reproductive problems.

ORV use causes extreme noise pollution. Wildlife are adversely affected by noise in four ways:

- 1) hearing loss - resulting from noise levels of 85 decibels (dB) or greater;
- 2) masking - the inability to hear important environmental cues and animal signals;
- 3) non-auditory physiological effects - including anxiety, increased heart rate and respiration, and general stress reaction; and
- 4) behavioural effects - vary greatly between species and noise characteristics and can result in the abandonment of territory and lost reproduction.



*Mirror Lake, Camrose. Carving in process.*

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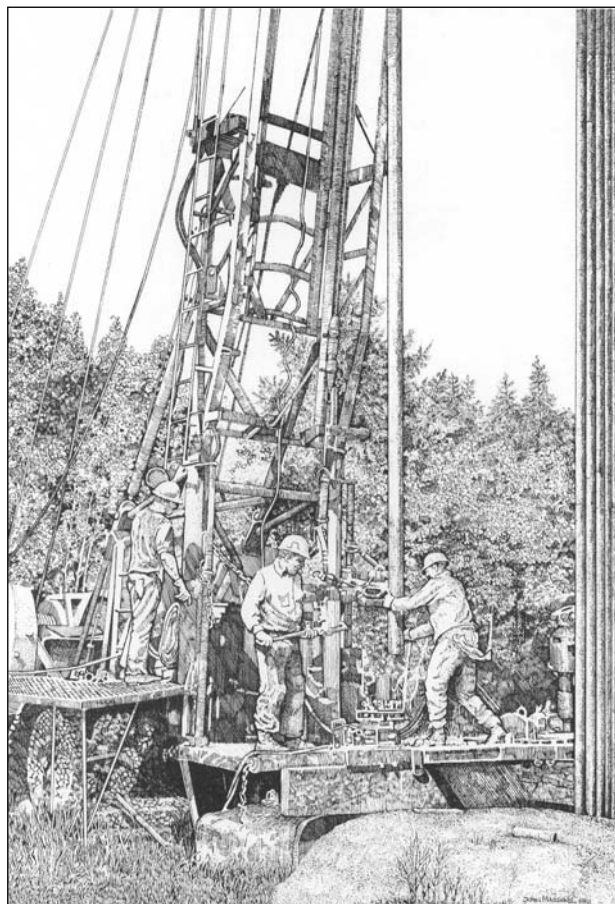
Long-term exposure to noise can cause excessive stimulation to the nervous system and chronic stress that is harmful to the health of wildlife species and their reproductive fitness.

### IMPACTS ON OTHER RECREATIONAL USERS

According to a 1999 Government report, the majority of outdoor users in Alberta participate in non-motorized recreational activities including hiking, backpacking, wildlife viewing, cycling, canoeing and kayaking, skiing, and horseback riding, while only 6.5% of Albertans participate in motorized recreational activities including ORV and snowmobile use.

Most crown land in Alberta is open to all kinds of outdoor recreation, including motorized access. Only about 9% of provincial crown land is closed to motorized recreation (Figure 1). These areas have been designated as protected areas, Forest Land Use Zones, or Prime Protection Zone to preserve wilderness, aesthetic and non-motorized recreation values. The use of ORVs in these wilderness regions is incompatible with environmental protection and non-motorized recreational enjoyment.

Conflicts frequently arise when motorized and non-motorized recreational users access the same areas. Because ORVs are faster and more mobile, they have the ability to use a larger area than non-motorized users. ORVs are noisy, and therefore incompatible with traditional recreationists who cherish the peace and tranquility of public lands. ❧



*Old Drilling Rig*

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# "FLEXIBILITY TO MANAGE"; WHO BENEFITS?

By Dr. Brian L. Horejsi

How many times have you read or heard the plea, from some government bureaucracy or industry spokesperson, "we need flexibility to manage?" "We have to be free to manage" each individual event or development has been the land management mantra in Alberta and British Columbia, and for that matter in western Canada, for three, perhaps four, decades. During that relatively brief period cumulative ecological impacts, resulting from individual decisions and incremental developments, each "shoe-horned" into the landscape under the philosophy of "freedom to manage," have led to explosive industrialization and commercialization of public lands.

The proponents of "flexibility to manage" are primarily public land "managers," which in most of Alberta and British Columbia, is the Forest Service. This allows them to exercise maximum and total control, often at the constant urging of industry and commercial interests who recognize "flexibility to manage" is an open door. Land managers and politicians are openly, and behind closed doors, prodded and lobbied to defend and practice this strategy by land users who fear that cumulative effects will shut the door to their own scheme or project, and more broadly, to expansionist policies typical of industrial and commercial land users on Canada's public lands.

"Flexibility to manage" comes in various forms, not the least of which are "made in Alberta" or "made in British Columbia" solutions. These made-at-home solutions have been proposed, for example, by the Alberta government to attempt to neutralize and delay ratification of the Kyoto initiative, or by the provincial governments of Alberta and B.C. to delay or castrate endangered species legislation, or by the B.C. government, in the form of the Forest Practices Code, to deflect attention from ecologically and economically unsustainable logging practices.

In each of these cases "made in Alberta" (for example) means bar-the-door to the rest of the world's most proven and effective conservation strategies and "we reject the world's best available science," no matter where it originates. The hypocrisy evident in these strategies should not escape us. These are governments who strongly and aggressively support globalization, and whose alliance with industry is forged partly for the purpose of advancing globalization.

Combined, "flexibility to manage" and "made in Alberta" or "made in British Columbia" are pseudonyms for defying public and scientific accountability. These are trickle-down effects from

the ministerial discretion that paralyzes most parliamentary legislation; the latter allows direct appeal by industry for ministerial variance (exceptions) to any decision viewed as unfavorable to their interests. To make these ministerial overrides less onerous to the political system, although not often less onerous to the public, government ministries and departments are encouraged to be malleable - "flexible" - to ease the Minister's decision.

This fluidity is dependent upon rejection of science as a tool for decision-making. While science has its uncertainties, it is far more universal and evidentiary than policy; "it contributes to rationale decision making when it reveals the extent to which assumptions are supported by verifiable evidence"(Caldwell 1993). In other words, integrating science narrows the policy and political options, and obviously, the land use options. Quite a frightening notion to policy and flexibility wonks, particularly in today's "new era."

From a strategy and conceptual perspective, "flexibility to manage" incremental effects without goal orientation and outside the framework of cumulative effects, leaves all the options open for government and special interests land users, be they oil and gas, timber, agriculture or real estate. But it has the exact opposite

effect for ecological sustainability and public involvement. These are goals and activities that require limits, or thresholds, to activities that erode ecological integrity and democratic involvement.

As the "flexible to manage" track broadens, the path of ecological options narrows. And so do the options for effective, or even inclusive, public involvement. "Flexibility to manage" means the tools of science, legal action, and inclusive and accessible public hearings are not available to the public. These are activities, that, while in the public interest, and

capable of allowing members of the public to act in their own interests, inhibit political manipulation and bureaucratic flexibility.

What are the consequences for public participation of the Alberta Forest Services' "flexibility to manage" shield? First, legal avenues to hold public servants and elected officials accountable so they act in the public interest and respect the public's will and their decisions are largely unavailable to the public. No decision can be "pinned down" or enforced under the mantra of "flexibility to manage as we see fit."



Burmis Tree

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Mural

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Equally as devastating, the public, collectively (as in class action), and individuals are rebuffed by the courts because to acknowledge, let alone entrench, their right to challenge fetters flexibility to manage. It automatically would say there is another player on the field, and worse yet for industry and government departments, the public would be signaling they want the ball occasionally. On a playing field dominated by industry, government bureaucracies and political deals, "standing" for citizens acts like a referee and allows the public to be a player.

How else does "flexibility to manage" exclude the public? Given the deliberate and planned absence of a legal right to be involved, even the most dictatorial of governments occasionally has to concede to public demand to be part of the decision making process. To avoid effective public participation, but cast out the perception that the public is participating, stakeholder, round table and consensus processes were created.

These have flourished in the last decade as conservative and corporate influence on government has intensified. These are processes characterized by selective participation by representatives of special interests, the participants almost exclusively chosen by the government (usually elected, sometimes bureaucratic). But these processes, and the "bodies" they create, have not influenced the doctrine of "flexibility to manage"; they are selectively consultative or advisory bodies, as opposed to statutory, decision-making bodies. Their recommendations are (sometimes) then "fed into" the "flexibility to manage" stream.

Instead of contributing to democratic decision making, they do what they were created to do - reward "friends of the agenda" and divide the public into two camps: a minority that is invited (stakeholders) and the vast majority, those that are excluded. There will always be those members of the public who like to be "deal makers"; they exercise their "privilege" at being invited to sit at "round tables," where they rub shoulders with special interests, and seem taken in by their new-found exclusivity. They accept that the public will be degraded to the status of client and decisions will be "product."

But the vast majority of citizens are shut out of these processes, and become disillusioned, angry, and resentful. After years of this kind of treatment, they often go away, only to have their "disinterest" used against them. Unfortunately, "flexibility to manage" gouges a deep and damaging gap in people and democracy.

Another component of "flexibility to manage as we see fit" is the ever-intensifying exhortation to rely of market solutions to

protect public lands, parks, and even endangered species. If you rely on the market of course, there are no limits, no constraints, and someone else, somewhere else, gets to make the decision for all the people, no matter who or where they are, and more importantly, no matter what their interests may be. Simply put, if grizzly bears or roadless landscapes or biodiversity can't pay for themselves now, sorry!

While most Albertans sat quietly on their hands as Alberta Energy and the National Energy Board approved natural gas and oil exports ad infinitum, only the insightful and informed could see the demand building and the conventional supplies dwindling. As the squeeze intensified, a sleeper, coal bed methane, began to awaken. Grizzly bear habitat that had previously looked as though it might begin to recover from its wounds, was "suddenly" exposed to the markets.

Want another market solution? Take a look at softwood lumber exports and the future of endangered woodland caribou in Alberta and British Columbia. The whole scenario brings to mind a quote from one of Canada's earliest conservation minded citizens, Grey Owl, who said "If we can say that there some things that are not for sale, that there are some things that belong to all of us and to future generations. Then maybe other people will hear us and begin to say it too. And some day there will be enough of us and we'll believe that can be done. That we can change the world. But only if enough of us stand up and say it loud enough: the earth is not for sale." I think he was right; parts of the earth belong to the public, all of us, and the biggest threat to our ownership is "management flexibility."

"Flexibility to manage" has built a potent reinforcement system around itself. Bureaucracies, like the Forest Service, sing the blues to politicians, and they in turn are serenaded by politicians. The song goes like this: We need flexibility to manage, because, after all, each clearcut is different, each road is different, each grizzly bear is an individual, each ski hill is unique, and each old growth stand is a challenge. This plays very well with politicians, because no government likes to inherit something from the previous administration (was there one in Alberta?). And the feedback to government departments from on high is positive: keep it loose, keep it flexible, because we don't want any limits to what we can do. In other words, flexibility, like legislation and regulations, is hereditary; better to pass "flexibility to manage" from government to government than accountability.

The strategy has worked well for decades because it minimizes public "interference" with government agenda's. We've all heard the politician say he/she was elected to lead. An interesting argument, but one deadly to the public interest. Government was established to protect the public interest, and manage public assets, according to the wishes of the people. Without these, we don't need government, and because we are learning we don't actually have much of these three fundamentals, we can see that much of the government we have is of little use to us. In fact, in many cases, it is doing us great damage.

There are many things about our powerful and seemingly insatiable neighbor, the United States, that we may not want to emulate. On the other hand, this is a country that has the most





impressive and democratically controlled public lands network and system in the world. It is not perfect, and never will be, but then, neither will we achieve that distinction. At this time in our history, we have still to put in place the system, then we can worry about fine tuning it.

But the U.S., and Americans, cope relatively effectively with a gluttonous industrial complex driven partly by a human population ten times the size of Canada's. It does this thanks to some extremely visionary and industrious people in the 1960s and 70s, who recognized the danger of the "flexibility to manage" urge glinting in the eyes of the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. And they set out to do something about that flexibility.

They worked tirelessly and effectively to translate absolutely brilliant ideas, ideas that originated from the public and independent scientists, into pieces of legislation (and regulations) like the Wilderness Act (1963), the Endangered species Act (1973), The National Forest Management Act (1978), the Administrative Procedures Act, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (1969). However effective we may rate these, why do they work at all?

The simple answer is, they limit the flexibility of government bureaucracies and elected politicians to make decisions. They impose the rule of law on federal and state bureaucracies and that limits flexibility to manage. In an informative discussion of these limitations Caldwell (1993), in a paper entitled "Achieving the NEPA intent; new directions in politics, science and law" points out how bureaucracies, such as the Forest Service, objected to questioning of agency expertise. They were particularly offended that they could now be questioned by citizens; people who were not from some other "official" body (which included industry), but people who were interested, informed, and now free to demand that they be players in decision making.

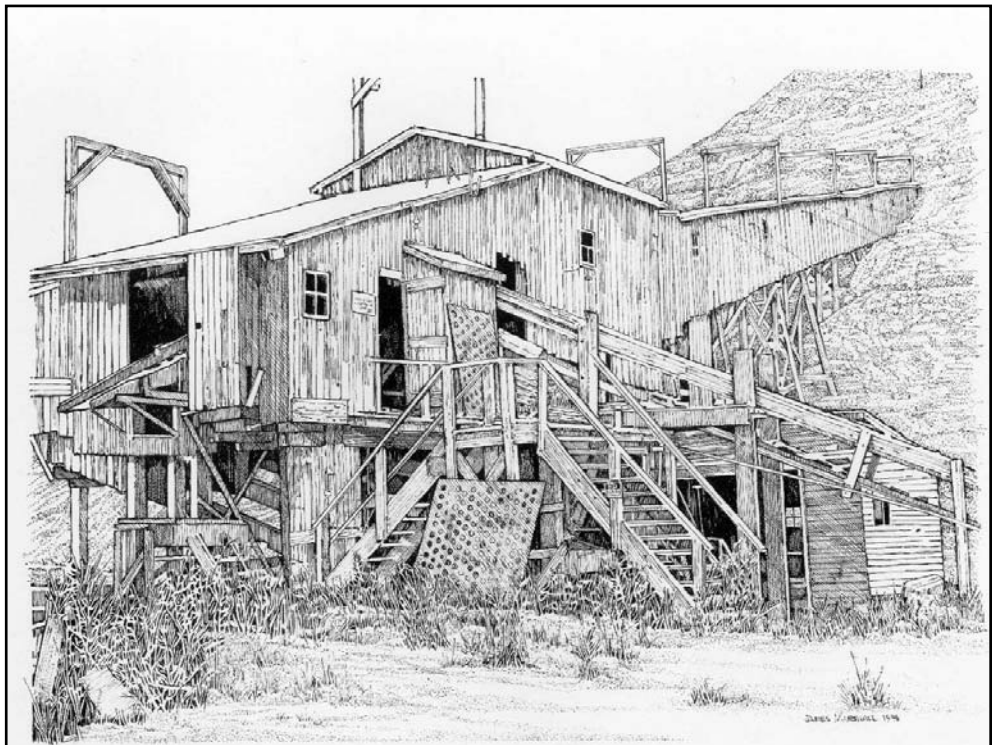
As Caldwell says "agencies that customarily felt free to plan dams, highways, airports, drainage projects, and other environmental- shaping activities with little if any public interference" now had legislation to direct their actions and people willing and able to question their actions. "The agencies were seldom obliged to tell the public anything about their plans and were not accustomed to being questioned by persons without official standing. It had been standard operating procedure in many agencies to delay public hearings until the bulldozers were ready to roll and it was too late to alter plans or stop the project. "The full disclosure provision of NEPA, ...was an affront to bureaucratic autonomy and expertise. NEPA produced a new dimension of public interest which

qualified and sometimes contradicted the attitude that the agency knows best".

Gone were the days of "flexibility to manage," thanks not to political leadership, or bureaucratic benevolence, but to public vision and persistence. And gone too, were the days when the only decision that could be made by citizens was every two or four years at the ballot box. With the passage of amazingly participatory legislation, citizens became fully involved in making hundreds of decisions between elections, decisions that can be made independent of which political party or which government is in office. In my view, the path is well defined for Albertans and Canadians. It's time now to take that path.

We all know we can, by way of analogy, turn the cows out on the range, and try to manage them one by one or herd by herd. But at the end of the season, or better yet, after ten or twenty, or fifty years, when we look back there isn't anyplace that hasn't been grazed, trampled, and pooped on. All this does is drive the public ragged, and eventually the frustration and anger drive them away completely. That is, after all, one tacit objective of "flexibility to manage."

Or we can build some very good fences (laws and regulations, and land use designations), hire some good herders (professional public service accountable to the laws and regulations), and turn management over to the public (public hearings, third party citizen lawsuit provisions). It's not a panacea, but it's the only strategy that shows a light at the end of the tunnel. There is no other way to guarantee each of us, and our society, a chance at social, economic and environmental well-being. ✍



Atlas Tipple - Coal mine, East Coulee

© J. Marshall

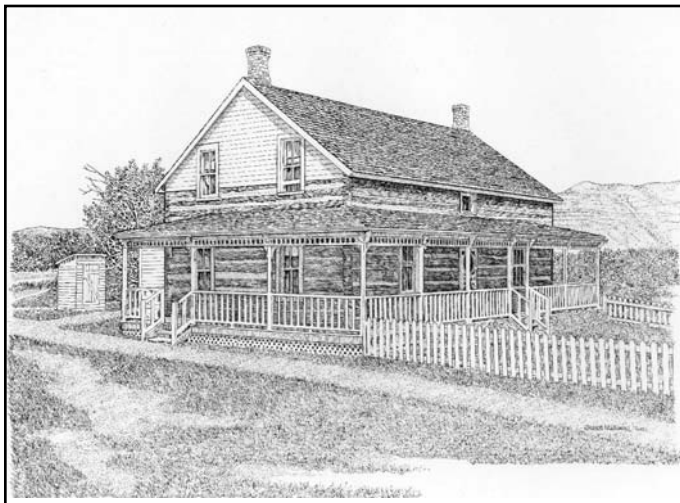


## ALBERTA SCIENTISTS SUPPORT EXPANSION OF THE PROTECTED AREAS NETWORK

A letter was delivered June 5 to Premier Ralph Klein on behalf of over 70 Alberta scientists who support the establishment of more protected areas in the forests of Alberta. This action follows and supports the recent National Geographic article on the boreal forest the deleterious effects of industrial use of Alberta's forests on migratory birds, grizzly bears and woodland caribou.

The Government of Alberta has made many commitments to establish protected areas by endorsing documents such as the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, the national Forest Strategy, the Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy and the Alberta Forest Legacy. All of these documents outline the need for large protected areas. However, there are no protected areas in the southern and western boreal forest that meet the 4,000 sq. km. Minimum size requirement recommended by the Canadian Environment Advisory Council to maintain the biodiversity of the region.

"Time is quickly running out," says Cliff Wallis, AWA president. "To prevent Alberta's forested crown jewels from being irreparably scarred by logging, mining and oil and gas development, it is imperative that they are afforded legal protection. Albertans strongly support protection of our remaining wilderness and critical wildlife habitat areas and we are hopeful that the Premier will rededicate the Alberta Government to expanding the protected areas network. With this sign-on letter we wanted to demonstrate to the Premier that there is broad support for new protected areas, not just from the public and conservation organizations, but also from the scientific community."



Woolfrey House - Ecco-Dale Park, Medicine Hat

© J. Marshall

Dear Mr. Klein:

**RE: Need for Additional Protected Areas**

*Many scientists in Alberta are concerned about the lack of carefully selected protected areas in many forested ecoregions of our province. Although over 12% of the province is in protected areas, and this is fairly good performance relative to other countries, the bulk of this area is in Wood Buffalo National Park and the mountain parks. In some natural subregions of Alberta, such as the Foothills and Dry Mixedwood, less than 2% of the area is protected. In other northern areas, such as in Finland and Sweden, this level of protection has generated serious problems with biological diversity as the landscapes have been logged, and now these countries are working hard and seriously to restore natural forest land in a system of reserves. It turns out that this restoration is both costly and challenging. Wouldn't it be much simpler to plan for this protection from the start?*

*Protected areas in the order of 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> and larger were recommended for complete biodiversity and wilderness protection by the Canadian Environment Advisory Council in 1991. However, with the exception of northeast Alberta, there are no protected areas in the boreal forest that exceed 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> in size.*

*As documented in the attached list, the Government of Alberta has made and continues to stand by commitments to establish representative protected areas. These commitments are highly visible through our endorsements of the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy and the National Forest Strategy. The Alberta Forest Conservation Strategy, and the Alberta Forest Legacy provide more detail on the purpose and requirements for those protected areas. While we applaud the verbal and written commitments that Alberta has made to forest conservation, we grow increasingly uneasy that we will have the pristine forest available to meet these commitments. Your government must act quickly if it wishes to be taken seriously on this matter.*

*Protected areas, free of industrial use, contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, provide opportunities for scientific research, and ensure the preservation of wilderness. We urge you, Mr. Klein, to ensure that your government honours your commitments to protected areas, by establishing a new science-based process to identify and protect satisfactorily large representative areas within each of the natural subregions of our province.*

*Yours truly,*

*Cliff Wallis P. Biol., on behalf of over 70 Alberta scientists*

The complete news release, letter, signatories and background information can be found on our website in the Wilderness and Protected Areas section under "Issues".




## MLAs Getting the Message About the Bighorn

By Tamaini Snaith,  
AWA Conservation Specialist

Our campaign for the Bighorn is progressing well. We are moving ahead in our efforts to raise public awareness and political support. Jillian Tamblyn and I spent the May long weekend hiking in the Bighorn Wildland. We spent the night near Abraham Lake, and watched a herd of about 40 bighorn sheep graze by the water. We spent time talking to campers and hikers, providing information brochures and sample letters, and asking them to go home and call or write to their MLAs. This public pressure has become one of the central components of our campaign. We have to keep up the pressure, and it is more important than ever to let your government representatives know how you feel about the Bighorn.

### Take a few minutes...for the Bighorn.

Please, take the time to write a note or call your MLA. Ask them to protect the Bighorn as a Wildland Park, not to allow industrial development, and to uphold the prohibition on motorized recreation. Contact me if you want some pointers on what to say. 



*Ya Ha Tinda*

## We're Writing a Bighorn Book!

If you plan to be in the Bighorn this summer or have some great photos of the Bighorn we want to hear from you! Please email, phone or write AWA and we will give you the details.



## Bill 206 is a Red Herring

By Jillian Tamblyn,  
AWA Conservation Specialist

In the final days of the legislature this spring, Bill 206, Fisheries Amendment Act was passed, despite scientific evidence showing that the bill was only treating symptoms. Bill 206 allows the Minister to order any measure deemed necessary to control any animal or bird that is perceived to be harming fish or fish habitat.

The Bill addresses both natural fish populations and fish farms with the same sweeping brush. The bill, sponsored by Lac la Biche MLA, Ray Danyluk is aimed at controlling increasing populations of double-crested cormorants and their predation on fish farms and lakes.

In the Legislative Assembly Hansard Mr. Danyluk states "In the same manner that Alberta farmers have the ability to control pests that prevent them from achieving maximum efficiencies in their agricultural endeavours, Alberta's aquaculturists will be able to practice the same manner of control over pests that affect them. Through this legislation I think we can recognize the importance of the Alberta fishing industry."

"Pests come in all sorts, Mr. Speaker, whether they are mosquitoes in the park, gophers in the field, or coyotes in the pasture. We have come to accept that pests like the ones I have just mentioned need to be controlled. The cormorant is another pest just like them, and it is essential to the stability of Alberta fisheries that we start to implement measures of control over the cormorant."

The problem is that all of these animals are part of the natural ecosystem which humans have altered. Danyluk's argument is not ecologically sound. "Targeting the cormorant is a real red herring," says Dr. Richard Thomas, AWA spokesperson for this issue. "Studies one on lake Winnipeg a, and Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division's own data conclusively demonstrate that increased numbers of cormorants are actually a symptom and not the cause. The actual cause is human overexploitation of the province's fisheries."

This Bill it allows the government to look like they are doing something to protect the fisheries when they are doing nothing.




*Cormorants*

Studies have shown that the fish populations are much healthier in lakes where there is reduced fishing pressure. The studies also show that the cormorant populations did not increase until after the decline of walleye populations. That is likely because cormorants feed on the same fish as the walleye. When walleye populations are reduced the small baitfish populations increase, providing more food for cormorants.

Representatives of AWA discussed this information with Mr. Danyluk, however it did not sway him. Fortunately the information did get out to the opposition parties and they used it well during assembly. Unfortunately, the Bill was still passed.

The AWA supports helping our fish populations and their habitats. To do that we need to treat the causes not the symptoms.

*Our news release and background information can be found on our website in the wildlife section under "Issues". *





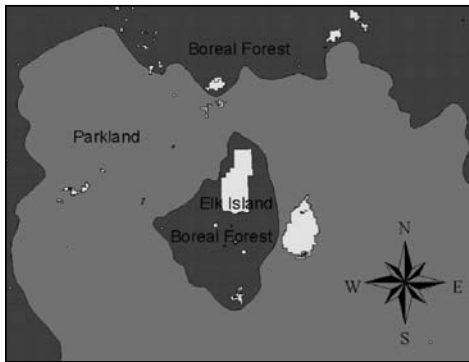
## Ecosystem Management in Elk Island -- AWA Reaches Understanding with Parks Canada

By Shirley Bray, WLA Editor and Cliff Wallis, President

When criticisms of Elk Island's management plan were not adequately answered, ecological consultant Dr. Graham Griffiths and AWA Conservation Specialist Jillian Tamblyn turned to the federal environmental petitions process to obtain a more complete response. According to the website for the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the petitions process is a formal means for Canadian to bring their concerns about environmental issues, policies and enforcement to the attention of federal ministers and obtain a response within 120 days.

AWA's petition concerned vegetation management in Elk Island National Park (EINP). Park management was based on the assumption that the park is situated in the Aspen Parkland Natural Region. There was an extensive prescribed burn program proposed to restore parkland habitat. The idea that the vegetation of EINP is mostly or completely Parkland comes from air photos taken in the 1920's that show extensive open areas that have been progressively invaded by aspen. The open areas were considered natural parkland, when in fact they were largely due to human disturbance, mainly the clearing of land for agriculture.

Soils and vegetation scientists classify the park as part of the Boreal Mixedwood Natural Region, with only much lesser inclusions of true parkland. The current Natural Regions map



*Natural regions in Elk Island area*

used by the A l b e r t a G o v e r n m e n t shows the park as part of an island of boreal forest. This map was prepared by Dr. Peter Achuff, head of the Ecological Integrity Branch of Parks Canada.

The proposed management was seen as compromising the ecological integrity of the park and, therefore, violating one of the principles of the National Parks Act. "I was particularly concerned by proposals for an extensive prescribed burn program to create a parkland environment," says Dr. Griffiths, who has worked extensively in the area. "Creation of parkland is, in my opinion, unattainable on grey-wooded soils."

Following submission of our petition, Elk Island National Park staff invited us to meet to discuss our concerns. We met with the Elk Island National Park superintendent, Mr. Rod Blair, his staff, and a member of the park's Science Advisory Committee. We offered our apologies for some inflammatory language used in the petition but reached an agreement that provides a satisfactory resolution to our key issues.

Our petition arose out of legitimate concerns although our understanding of the evolution of the park's position was

somewhat outdated. Many of our concerns are being incorporated in revisions to the park's management plan and to field operations. The park's outdated ecosystem conservation and fire management plans are being scrapped.

The revised park management plan recognizes that the area is representative of the southern Boreal Plains and Plateaux Natural Region and associated fire regime. There is no longer any intent to restore this to Aspen Parkland and fescue grassland. Management will consider the protection of rare and unique natural and culture resources, some of which may require no burning while burning may assist with the protection of others. While AWA recognizes an important role for fire at Elk Island, much of the previous ecological damage has arisen from the overpopulation of ungulates in this closed ecosystem rather than the lack of fire.

With some agreed upon wording changes to the management plan and with understandings reached on a mutually supported prescribed fire/habitat workshop for the western National Parks and appointments to the Science Advisory Committee, AWA's concerns were satisfactorily resolved and we are looking forward to strengthening our cooperative relationship with the park. ✍

*Background information can be found on our website in the Elk Island section under "Issues". To obtain a copy of our petition, contact AWA.*

## Castle Wilderness: Proposed Resort Expansion Threatens Wildlife and Water Quality

Flying in the face of an earlier ruling by the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB), recent government decisions could allow an extensive expansion of the ski hill and residential development on Castle Mountain, without any environmental assessment.

Castle Mountain Resort (CMR) is located 35 km west of Pincher Creek, in the Westcastle Valley, in the Castle Wilderness. In 1993, the NRCB reviewed a similar development proposal for the Westcastle Ski Hill. After reviewing a full environmental assessment, the Board ruled that an expansion of the ski resort could only proceed if protection of the surrounding public lands was first secured through the designation of the Waterton-Castle Wildland Recreation Area (WCWRA). The Board stated furthermore that the WCWRA be established whether or not the development proceeded. The current development proposed by Castle Mountain Resort Inc. is similar to the 1993 proposal, but no environmental assessment has been required.

The CCWC has written to the Hon. Lorne Taylor, Minister for Alberta Environment, requesting his intervention in this matter. This request has the endorsement of the Alberta Wilderness Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Calgary-Banff Chapter), Trout Unlimited Canada (Alberta Council), the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, the Sierra Club - Chinook Chapter, and the Mountain Parks Watershed Alliance. ✍

*For the full news release see our website.*





## McClelland Oil Sands Project Steaming Ahead

By Jillian Tamblyn, AWA Conservation Specialist


Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB) has set July 2, 2002 as the start date on the hearings for TrueNorth Energy's Fort Hills Project at McClelland Fen. According to the notice "The proposed development includes an open pit, truck and shovel mine, two bitumen processing trains, infrastructure associated with the mine and facility, water and tailings management plans, and an integrated reclamation plan. The project is designed to produce approximately 30 000 cubic metres of bitumen per day."

"TrueNorth has applied, ...for the approval to construct and operate an electrical power plant located at the project. The cogeneration plant will consist of two 80 megawatts gas turbine generators, each fitted with a heat recovery steam boiler."

On May 28, 2002 the Alberta Wilderness Association, Toxics Watch Society, Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development, and the Canadian Federation of University Women- Alberta Chapter requested that the Board convene a hearing to determine whether oil sands mining in the McClelland Lake Wetlands Complex is in the public's interest.


The groups are seeking the pre-determination on this issue affecting oil sands development in the vicinity of McClelland Lake. The groups submitted that any scheduled hearing date should be dedicated to examining the question of whether mining the McClelland Lake Wetland Complex under any circumstances is in the public interest, rather than addressing the merits of a particular application.

In their response (June 6) the Board said that if Sustainable Resource Development decides to change the Integrated Resource Plan to allow mining in the Complex, a decision that will be made shortly, then evidence and presentations on the impact to the Complex would be expected to be made at the hearing. TrueNorth is apparently prepared to discuss this issue during the hearing.

The McClelland Lake Wetlands Complex is considered one of largest and best-developed wetlands in the boreal forest. Its ecological values include patterned fens, sinkholes and regionally environmentally significant fish habitat and waterfowl staging. The fen has a high abundance and diversity of rare plants including bryophytes, ten of which are listed as rare species. McClelland Lake and its surrounding wetlands also have an inherent aesthetic and wilderness value to residents of Fort McMurray and other communities in the region. 

### Lake Louise Convention Centre

To find out more about this development and to help protect Lake Louise from further commercial development go to the action centre at:

[www.wildcanada.net/new\\_site/action\\_centres/llac/llac.asp](http://www.wildcanada.net/new_site/action_centres/llac/llac.asp) 

#### *Are There Lessons for Canadian Foresters Lurking South of the Border?*

By Jack Ward Thomas,  
Boone and Crockett Professor of Conservation,  
University of Montana, Missoula, Montana.

*This article is on our website in the Forests  
section under "Issues".*

### **Province Refuses to List the Grizzly as Threatened**

Dear Premier Klein:

*I am writing to express the deep concern of the Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) over the Government's lack of action in response to the recommendation to list the grizzly bear as a threatened species in Alberta.*

*Two government-appointed scientific committees found that Alberta's grizzlies are in danger, and recommended that they be uplisted to "threatened" status. The scientific review found that habitat degradation/destruction and human conflict are the primary factors affecting grizzly populations. We believe that the Government's focus on the effects of hunting is misplaced, as hunting was clearly not identified as a leading factor threatening current populations.*

*AWA urges you to reconsider your decision, and to immediately list the grizzly as a threatened species so that appropriate management and recovery strategies can be put in place. A study of the effects of hunting can then be conducted within the framework of the species recovery plan.*

*Minister Cardinal has been quoted as saying that we need to keep our wildlife wild. We applaud this sentiment, but remind you that, first and foremost, wildlife require habitat to remain wild. Without large, undisturbed and unroaded wilderness, the grizzly will not survive in Alberta.*

*In the broader picture, this situation highlights the flaws of a system where endangered species are listed through a political process, rather than a scientific one. When political will can undermine and override clear scientific evidence, our wildlife and wild lands will continue to be degraded and the threat of extinction will only increase.*

*Please take immediate action to list the grizzly as threatened and implement recovery action.*

*Sincerely,*


*Tamaini Snaith, AWA Conservation Specialist*



## **AWA Boreal Expert gives National Geographic Author Tour**

Dr. Richard Thomas, a boreal forest expert, gave National Geographic author, Fen Montaigne, a tour through Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park (SWCPP) to show him the nature of and the issues facing Alberta's boreal forest. The article is featured in the June 2002 issue of National Geographic.

In the article, Dr. Thomas noted that, unlike the spectacular scenery of the Rockies, "the boreal forest is more subtle. It takes more effort to appreciate... And because it's subtle, the boreal forest doesn't get the respect it deserves.... The key to the boreal forest is the interconnections between the forested area and the wetlands. It's a mosaic."

In 2001, Dr. Thomas wrote a briefing paper to the Assistant Deputy Minister for Parks and Protected Areas detailing problems and outlining solutions for SWCPP. Dr. Thomas has long been concerned with the effects of fragmentation of the boreal forest, especially on migratory birds. 



## AlPac Holds Open House on Lakeland Logging Plans

By Jillian Tamblyn, AWA Conservation Specialist

Al-Pac's new logging plans were unveiled at a Lac La Biche Open House in April. The area follows some of the Northern boundary of Lakeland Provincial Park and Recreational Area. According to their plans Vanderwell will begin logging the coniferous stands in November. AlPac will begin deciduous harvest in June 2003. The company provided a map showing logging locations but did not provide the actual logging plan, even when requested.

The Lakeland area West of Lac La Biche is an important recreation area for locals and other Albertans and an area of concern for AWA. Part of the Central Mixedwood Natural Sub-region, it is recognized as having wonderful biodiversity including old growth forests, birds, and woodland caribou. Many feel that the area protected is too small, likely leading to the loss or important features over time. In the past conservation groups supported a northern expansion that encompasses the entire area now proposed for logging.

The plans leave a 100m buffer around the park, and cut-block roads will be at least 200m from the park. There will be 50m buffers on either side of the recreational trail by Touchwood Lake campsite and Touchwood Lake Road.

The companies believe logging will reduce fire by creating fire breaks and do a better job of imitating fire disturbance. However, the deciduous components of mixed wood stands are already effective fire breaks and there are numerous lakes in the area. Their plan includes reducing road requirements and harvesting over a short period of time.

Although this may reduce disturbance to wildlife from one perspective, habitat is still being fragmented and deforested. New industrial access to the park is being created which will reduce the usage of the recreation trail by oil and gas companies, but still allow for industrial development in this park.

Dr. Richard Thomas told the Lac La Biche Post that "logging does not replace fire...they are additive, not compensatory. Fire-proofing the forest a) cannot be done and b) is a scam to allow even more cutting."

In response to the proposal Lakeland County Council has asked Al-Pac to double its buffers. AWA and other conservation groups involved in the Forest Stewardship Council are evaluating the logging plans for these high conservation value forests and have been discussing it with AlPac. The company has expressed interest in FSC certification and is working on the challenges of understanding the requirements and coordinating with other industry players. A revised plan is expected this summer.

*For more information or to make comments on the logging plans:*

Alberta Pacific (AlPac) (780) 525-8061

Vanderwill Contractors (780) 849-3824

*To comment on the need to have Lakeland expanded with no industrial development contact:*

Mike Cardinal, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development  
Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Community Development

*For contact information see our ActionKit on our website under "Resources".*

## TOUCHWOOD LAKE

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

~Tom Maccagno



Mule Deer at Touchwood Lake

T. Maccagno

## Sour Gas Drillers Want More Land in the Whaleback

By James Tweedie

The ranching community of Maycroft, located at the southern tip of the Whaleback Wildland Park, is once again bracing itself for a face-off with an aggressive sour gas exploration company. Polaris / Ricks is an "empty shell" joint venture company that makes its way in the oil and gas business world by brokering investment funds for high risk exploration activities. In the present case, Polaris is planning to drill a critical sour gas well at the very edge of the newly created Bob Creek Wildland and adjacent Black Creek Heritage Rangeland - areas that were designated to provide protection for "the Whaleback", following the rejection of Amoco's similar proposal in 1992/3.

Polaris is exploiting a privately deeded subsurface half section mineral right to try to open up the Whaleback and the Maycroft area to oil and gas activity for the industry. On the basis of these rights alone the company does not hold sufficient lands to allow them to pursue their drilling application. For a sour gas exploration well the company must hold the rights to a full section of land. The surrounding lands are either part of the



Chimney Rock

Wildland Protected area or are held by the Nature Conservancy, as part of an agreement reached with Amoco Canada to ensure the protection of the private lands that were not able to be included in the Wildland.

Polaris is gambling that the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB) will force the Nature Conservancy to partner with them to meet the full section requirement, ("forced pooling", as it is called in the industry). Should the AEUB take this course they will be jettisoning any remaining credibility they may have in the local ranching community as the arbiter of the "public interest".

Speaking for the newly merged BP Amoco Group, when announcing the partnership with the Nature Conservancy in 1994, Joseph H. Bryant stated: "We fully appreciate the national significance of this area. Creating this environmental legacy is the right thing to do. Our partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada ensures that oil and gas development will never occur in the Whaleback Protected area."

The current play by Polaris threatens to make such assurances meaningless. There would be value in people writing to the Nature Conservancy to encourage them to hold firm in their resolve to protect these lands from industrial activity. ✍

### ***Letters of Objection to this exploration well should be addressed to:***

**Stephen Smith**, Applications Division  
Alberta Energy and Utilities Board,  
fax: 403-297-4117, [stephen.smith@gov.ab.ca](mailto:stephen.smith@gov.ab.ca)  
and CC'd to:

**Premier Klein**  
fax: 780-427-1349  
(particularly remind him of his commitment to "this magnificent landscape")

**The Hon. Dave Coumts**, MLA Livingstone-Fort Macleod  
fax: 780-415-4853, [Livingstone.Macleod@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:Livingstone.Macleod@assembly.ab.ca)

**The Hon. Lorne Taylor**, Minister, Alberta Environment  
fax: 780-422-6259

**The Hon. Gene Zwozdesky**, Minister,  
Alberta Community Development  
fax: 780-427-0188

**The Hon. Mike Cardinal**, Minister,  
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development  
fax: 780 -415-4818

**The Nature Conservancy**  
contact: Larry Simpson  
602 - 11th Ave., Calgary, T2R 1J8  
ph: 403-262-1253, fax: 403-515-6987  
e/m: [alberta@natureconservancy.ca](mailto:alberta@natureconservancy.ca)

*For more detailed contact information see our Actionkit on our website under "Resources" and our Fact Sheet on the Whaleback and other background information in the Whaleback section under "Issues".*

## Cheviot Mine

Since Luscar received approval to go ahead with the Cheviot Mine, there has always been talk of opening it as soon as the coal market improves. Recently Cardinal River Coals announced that, given rising coal costs, they wanted to have approvals in place for an alternate plan. Originally the company planned to build a processing plant at the Cheviot Mine site and a railroad from Cadomin to Mountain Park. The alternative is to build a truck

haul road from the Cheviot lease property at Mountain Park to the existing coal cleaning plant at the Luscar Mine, adjacent to the present road from Cadomin to Mountain. The size of this road would create significantly increased environmental damage, and would mean traffic through this corridor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Residents in Cadomin are very concerned about the road.

✍





# WATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING FOR THE OLDMAN RIVER BASIN ENCOUNTERS ECOLOGICAL REALITY

By Cheryl Bradley

I and other participants in planning the future of water management in the Oldman River Basin are faced with an immutable ecological reality - if the health of our rivers is to be sustained, we need to accept that limits to the amount of water that can be diverted from the Oldman River and its tributaries have been reached or exceeded. Recent modeling of water availability in the basin has led Alberta Environment to conclude - "any new licences issued would have a high risk of not obtaining water in drier years" and "there is no water available for new licences" in the southern tributaries to the Oldman River (St. Mary, Belly and Waterton Rivers). Modeling also shows minimum flows for the southern tributaries stipulated by the 1991 South Saskatchewan River Basin Water Allocation Regulation are "hardship flows for fish or drought condition flows".

This ecological reality, made painfully clear during the last few years of drought, has had a sobering effect on those participating in the Oldman River Basin Advisory Committee. No one wants to see the death of our rivers. A variety of stakeholders, including rural and urban municipalities, irrigation districts, industry, agriculture and recreational interests and conservation organizations are currently grappling with how to restore water to already stressed rivers as well as how to meet the demand for water for future economic and population growth in the region.

According to an Alberta Environment report, population in the Oldman River Basin is predicted to grow between 40 percent and 80 percent over the next 50 years with a median projected increase of 58 percent or 240,500 people (Hydroconsult, 2001). In the same period, demand for water withdrawals is expected to rise about 80 percent in order to support expanding population as well as predicted expansion of intensive livestock operations, food processing, and light industry and services. Currently, about 90 percent of water licensed for withdrawal in the Oldman River Basin is for irrigation, most of this diverted from rivers into canals owned by irrigation districts. It is obvious that to maintain health of our rivers and to accommodate population growth and economic diversification, water conservation and reallocation of 'saved' water to purposes other than irrigation, including aquatic ecosystem protection, will be required.

Water allocation transfers can proceed once a water management plan is approved by an order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Phase 1 of the Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin is currently before Cabinet (May, 2002). The Phase 1 Plan defines the matters and factors that must be considered by the Director in considering applications for water allocation transfers. The Water Act provides that up to 10 percent of an allocation of water that is being transferred can be withheld if it is in the public interest to protect the aquatic environment or implement a water conservation objective. It has been recommended that the Director not accept any new applications for allocations from the southern tributaries of the Oldman River and that he exercise his authority to hold back 10% of any transfers.

Phase 2 of the South Saskatchewan River basin planning process is now underway. The next challenge for the Oldman River Basin Advisory Committee is to make recommendations to the Director for the establishment of water conservation objectives (WCO) in the Oldman River and its tributaries. A WCO is the amount and quality of water necessary for protection of the aquatic environment, for protection of tourism, recreational, transportation or waste assimilation uses or for management of fish or wildlife. This task will rely heavily on the current science regarding instream flow needs for fish, riparian vegetation, waste assimilation and channel maintenance. There will be opportunity for public input at various stages of the process. I welcome your comments and suggestions. You can reach me by phone (403) 328-1245 or e-mail [cbradley@telusplanet.net](mailto:cbradley@telusplanet.net). ☘



Oldman River

*(Cheryl Bradley is a conservation biologist living in Lethbridge. She and Cheryl Fujikawa, also of Lethbridge, are representing the ecosystem protection interest on the Oldman River Basin Advisory Committee. Organizations included in the ecosystem protection interest are Alberta Wilderness Association, Bert Riggall Environmental Foundation, Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition, Crowsnest Environmental Action Society, Friends of the Oldman River, Lethbridge Naturalists Society, Southern Alberta Environmental Group and Trout Unlimited Canada-Alberta Chapter.)*

## On the web:

*Guidebook to Water Management by Alberta Environment in cooperation with the Bow River Basin Council:*

<http://www.brbc.ab.ca/pages/publicat.html>

*Alberta's River Basins site:*

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/water/basins/basinform.cfm>

*Results from Water For Life Public Consultation:*

<http://www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca>





# THE SNAKE HUNTERS' BLUES: A TRUE STORY ABOUT ADVOCACY

By Jonathan Wright

I have been interested in snakes since I was knee-high to a short frog, or about the time I saw my first garter snake, which, come to think of it, may have been foraging for a short frog. I was three years old, although I didn't know it at the time. Luckily I didn't look like a short frog, but rather more like a hesitant little monkey. Not garter snake fare, anyway.

It was only later that I found out I was a freak. Other people didn't like these wonderful creatures, (they didn't usually like me either, to tell the truth), which is probably why they went on to do uninteresting things like law, or accounting. They just didn't know any better, poor souls.

I went on to be a snake hunter, one of the highest incarnations a person can aspire to, and an indication of great character, which only then builds on itself to become greater still. Which is why I am always surrounded by women.

A snake hunter, not a killer of snakes, mind you, and let's make the distinction right here. A snake hunter in the sense that hunting is pursuit. Killing is just killing. It's what you do when you have to, like when your neighbor runs over a snake with his lawnmower, intentionally or not. Or maybe even if you're starving.

One of the best things about being a snake hunter, besides finding snakes, is that you are a kind of action hero. I very much see myself in that light. Not only am I Canada's foremost authority on the Bullsnake, one of our best snakes, I am a sort-of rural superman, sans cape. Or the six-million dollar man, with old dishwasher parts and a monacle.

One of the worst things about being a snake hunter is the fact that just when you find a great spot to hunt snakes, they began to disappear, as one more sign of the utter unsustainability of our societal model. This has been the underlying theme of my life as a snake hunter - the snakes are slowly disappearing - and is why I miss a lot of days of potential snake hunting, lying in bed in a deep depression.

Or not so slowly disappearing.

I'll tell you a story about that...

They reminded me of the rabbits in the book "Watership Down." The ones that were being kept by the farmer, fed and watered and generally secure from worrying about making a living like the rabbits in their wild, free, natural state have to do. All very nice work if you can get it except that the trade off was that the farmer could, and indeed would, kill and eat you at some unpredictable point. Your only condolence being that

there were just so bloody, unnecessarily many of you. Hopefully, you were a ways down the queue from the ax.

I mean, at first glance they seemed normal enough, the bunch of them in that sterile, charmless trailer at Ralston, Alberta, but there was an underlying strangeness, like a barely tangible odor of carrion, but no carcass in sight. They had about them a resigned deadness (though certainly they were alive enough to be moving about the kitchen in a close knit unit, making gentle murmuring, mewling sounds to each other, assembling sandwiches for their little buckets, and making me feel like I'd wait before I made my sandwich). Just like those rabbits, I tell you!

Or perhaps it might best be compared to the weirdness you might feel if you were to join your local choir and find out, by and by, they were all castratos, and that's why they sang a different tune than you were capable of.

The leader among them, the buck, was especially was weird. Menacing, even, in a way that could never be fulfilled. Suspicious, as though he saw something in me, even though I had been hired as one of them, that was deeply

disturbing to him. Imagine that! I got this all from his first fishy, unfriendly glance.

Then I had to sleep in a room with the lot of them, on bunk beds in a hutch at the back of the makeshift warren, as though we were kids at summer camp, not adults wanting and deserving privacy. The fact that they seemed to think this was a suitable arrangement is where I began to form my own suspicions. At least I got my own bunk. (You have no doubt guessed by now that I am talking about my job with the Canadian Wildlife Service.)

I was a "hired gun" without a gun, a fitting job anyway for an action hero. I was to catch snakes on the newly designated Suffield National Wildlife Area. To help study them. And catch snakes I did. Thousands of them, really giving them bang for their buck (or was it two?)

But then disturbing things began to become apparent. Starting when a pronghorn buck was hit by an oil and gas worker traveling at least 100 km/hour on a gravel road (in a truck, not on foot) posted at 50, as was their habit, and right along the wildlife area, too. The buck was virtually pulverized, carried hundreds of metres, spreading hair all over, with every protuberance protruding the wrong way. ❧



*Prairie Rattlesnake*



I saw that there was potential good to be wrought from this inauspicious situation. This speeding problem was chronic, I had learned that quickly. I said to the warren-members who were there with me, "It will be easy to find out who hit it. His truck will be dented."

They fixed me with blank gazes, clearly requiring more.

"Let's find out who it was, and make an example, in the fashion of our society, and then the rest of them will fear for their livelihoods and drive slower."

Suddenly, they all got that look like the farmer was coming.

"Oh, no! NO. No, no, no, no, NOOOOOOOO! We can't ever do that!" they chorused.

Later, mind you, while watching "Grumpy Old Men" back at the warren, having never explained to me why we couldn't do it, the one that looked like a lawn ornament suddenly became defiant, rising from the cheap couch and shouting in a bellicose voice, while looking somewhere above my left ear,

"Bloody right! Bloody right we will! There IS something we can do!"

I assumed he was talking about the pronghorn.

But maybe not. He lay back down, and still later yet, nothing ever happened.

This was a pattern emerging, you're probably cunning enough to have guessed.

There were too many cows out there, too. So they closed off a small piece of the 'protected' area, and said, "No cows." (Had the farmer died?)

Then the PFRA manager came along and said, "No way."

He let the cows in there.

The warren exploded into action, complaining and threatening, all of them, angry as hornets, except, unlike hornets, mostly from inside the hive.

"This will not stand!" they said.

Good, I thought. Times are changing; rabbits have put away their Walter Mathau collection in exchange for Monty Python documentaries depicting rabbits who demanded respect.

Three weeks went by and the cows were still there, having caused three weeks trampling devastation to the sensitive, 'protected' riparian zone.

The snakes were being slaughtered on the roads at unsustainable levels. That had become clear very early on, but nothing so far had been done. Three years had passed, and now the data were suddenly published, surprising everyone, mainly because they'd given up hope that it ever would be. But so what? Now we had the data to spearhead some real measures! After waiting for three years, a period during which untold thousands of snakes died not waiting, the data were published.

They hired me again, but this time I was alone. They had learned about action heroes, at least. No rabbits around to thump their feet loudly before sitting back down.

It was one of the best times of my life.

They said, "Find out if the snakes are dying."

I lay down in my bed, in a deep depression. More studies were not going to save something we already clearly knew was in trouble. Action was required. But then, suddenly, I got up

again! For a moment I thought, "Why am I up?" But then I remembered. I had thought of a shrewd plan...

I would become a weasel. Which meant I probably wouldn't be allowed to hang around with rabbits, or even run the slightest risk of being perceived as being a member of their warren. Too bad.

I wrote a bunch of letters telling the world, "We're running out of carrots and the rabbits are doing nothing!" And the farmer doesn't even like carrots.

The world responded immediately, decisively! - disappointingly. I was told I would no longer be allowed to hang around with the rabbits.

I wrote more vexing letters. Other kinds of rabbits, (wild, healthy rabbits!) and vultures too, and farm dogs - especially the farm dogs - began to finally get concerned. It was the farm dogs - who until now had just watched from the porch, thinking themselves omnipotent, above all this ruckus as the first ones entitled to the farmer's trough other than the farmer himself - who realized it was too hard to keep the weasel out of the hen house complaining about the carrot patch. Weasels are hard to dissuade by rabbits, or even farmers.

So it was probably the farm dogs that finally did something. That's their job, where weasels are concerned, you know? Even if they are essentially lazy, they still know that they have a job to do. They know it, so eventually they'll do something - anything - to shut the weasel up so they can go back to their porch, worry an old bone, grunt, belch, and snore. That's their trade-off. Sooner or later, they have to go after the weasels, and other varmints too, sometimes.

But the vultures wanted something done, too, they were aggravated, and clamoring for the clean death of the issue. I mean, some of them had even been farm dogs at one time. Impossible? I went from being an action hero to a weasel, remember.

Oh sure, some of the warren rabbits were probably losing their pelts in worry, looking patchy, ghastly. More worried than ever that the farmer was craving Hassenpfeffer. But it wasn't the rabbits, and you and I know it wasn't, because when was it ever them in this story? It was the farm dogs. They became embarrassed and unsettled, as even a lazy farm dog has a measure of work ethic, and some of them were probably even thinking that the farmer might require some rare southeast Asian dish for a change, given the circumstances in the carrot patch.

So measures are being taken. Still, it's going to take a long time for the carrots (or the snakes - was I talking about snakes? Are you kidding?! I'm always talking about snakes!) to come back like they were, if ever. But at least the weasel has shut-up.

For now.

Until the vultures swarm again.

That's the snake hunters' blues.

But I got a new territory to hunt, and nary a rabbit in sight! There's good to be had as long as there's good to be had. ☺



# BRICK MURALS ARE REAL WORKS OF ART

By Andy Marshall

Using bricks made in his native Medicine Hat, James Marshall has metaphorically and literally built up a reputation as one of Western Canada's most unique artists. Chiselling the grey-tan bricks with intricate detail to create larger-than-life, bas-relief scenes ranging from the legendary origins of his birthplace city to the crucifixion of Christ, the 63-year-old man has more than carved out his niche in the province's art history.

His brick murals are, indeed, works of art. Examples can be found throughout the world, from Japan to Siberia. But, most of the more than 60 commissions he's done, since turning to this art form 19 years ago, adorn Alberta sites, including several in Calgary. One of the largest, 50 feet by 10 feet and made from about 1,500 double-sized bricks, celebrates the history of the Blood Indians at Standoff, in the province's southwest.

He's created pieces for churches, schools, the British Army, shopping centres, seniors' homes, conservation groups and the police. In all of them, he's continued to use bricks made by I-XL Industries in Medicine where he worked for 10 years from 1969 to 1979.

"It is a tremendous amount of work," the affable Marshall acknowledges from the large studio in his Medicine Hat home, bordering on the South Saskatchewan River. Although he's in good shape, he sees the day not too far ahead when he will have to concentrate on a less strenuous art form, such as the pen and ink drawings he's been producing as a professional artist for almost 25 years.

"I'm getting older, but I want to keep working," he says.

The inspiration for the brick murals stems from his days as director of marketing services for I-XL Industries. Hooked on drawing from an early age and keen on commercial art after completing a graphic arts and lithography apprenticeship and working for 10 years in his father's Medicine Hat print shop, Marshall first started building brick displays at industry conferences.

"The idea was to attract architects to our outlet," he explains. "That's what planted the seed."

He perfected the method he still uses for his brick murals of assembling the individual bricks into a large wooden frame or easel. After carving them, he adds a surface colour glaze. Each numbered brick is then fired in a kiln before being taken to the site and reassembled with mortar.

"I try to get the same detail as my line drawings. It's definitely pushing the envelope," he says with humorous understatement.

The positive response to his creations eventually prompted him and his wife, Lorine, who, as a fabric designer, had developed her own following, to devote their lives full-time as artists. In 1977, they formed Grassroots Studio, specializing in

pen and ink drawings, brick murals, pottery and textiles. They also raised three children, one of whom still helps with the brick murals, and now they have seven grandchildren.

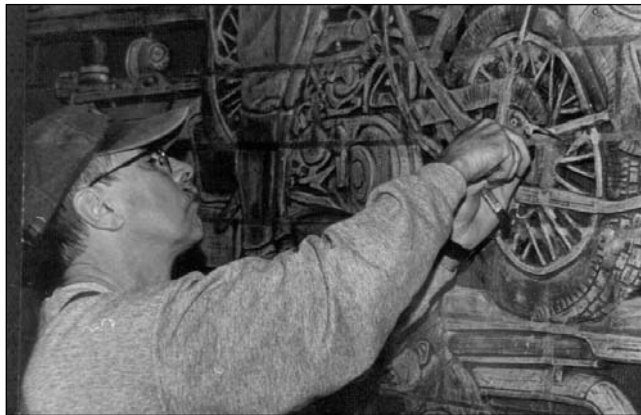
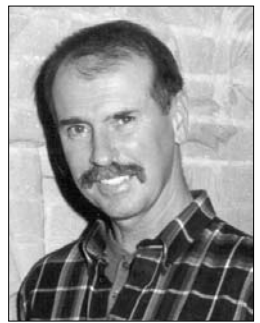
An important break early in his career came from a commission from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation to complete 40 pen and ink drawings of historic subjects around Alberta and a subsequent exhibition of "historic Alberta" featured in several towns and cities. Marshall's deep interest in history and preservation is the foundation for much of his art. Travelling throughout the province in his camper, a prime motivation was to bring to public attention some less-well-known sites. "People admire the ancient buildings in Europe," he says. "We have to start allowing our buildings to get older."

Highly active in his community as a volunteer, Marshall cites conservation, paleontology, archeology and anthropology as other special interests. He has worked extensively with First Nations people and, for the past 20 years, he and Lorine have spent as much time as they can in the southwest United States studying the Anasazi civilization. He is actively pursuing a new art technique, adding colour washes into his pen and ink drawings. He

hopes that will lead to a new exhibition.

His pre-occupation with preservation extends, of course, to natural areas and the prairie landscape he loves to roam and ride across. He may be discouraged by the modern world's record for holding onto what is valuable. "We're taking a long time getting smart as a culture," he says. But, he remains hopeful about the future. "I see a lot of young people catching on," he notes.

*Jim Marshall can be contacted at (403) 527-2774.*



*James Marshall at work on a mural*



*Cemetery, Waterton Lakes*

© J. Marshall



# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## Wilderness Awareness Month

### JULY 2002

"In wilderness is the preservation of the world."

~Henry David Thoreau

We invite you to explore Alberta Wilderness with some of the province's most renowned biologists, outfitters, ranchers and conservationists. Join us in an exciting month of activities for all ages to learn more about wilderness.



ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION  
**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26**  
**(1:00 - 9:00 PM)**

*You are invited to our Calgary office  
(455-12 St. NW) for an open house!!*

*Featuring:*

- the launch of our "Wild Alberta" map (copies available for purchase)
- displays of important watershed areas, Kananaskis and Bighorn Wildland
- activities including wildlife track printing, wildlife face painting and pond bugs



**Refreshments!  
Door Prizes!**

- meet the staff, volunteers, directors and KC the grizzly bear, our mascot
- view a spectacular "Wilderness in Alberta" slide show at 7pm

#### Sunday July 7

##### **Take a Bighorn Bus Trip**

Roll along the Cowboy Trail through Sundre to the Bighorn Wildland. View the breath taking vistas, waterfall and magnificent plains and elk habitat that provide a buffer for Banff National Park. Listen to raconteur and guide JW Campbell, Natural History experts and Biologist and Bighorn explorer Vivian Pharis.

#### Saturday July 13

##### **Explore the Cypress Hills with Rancher Hyland Armstrong**

Cypress Hills, in southeastern Alberta is an oasis in the desert; the hills are the highest point east of the Rockies, forming an island of mixed forest and fescue grassland, surrounded by short grass prairie and ranchland. Learn how range management can benefit wildlife.

#### Saturday July 20

##### **Discover Abraham Lake in the Bighorn Wildland with Outfitter Doug Ritchie**

The Bighorn Wildland represents one of the largest, most pristine wilderness areas left in Alberta. Come and learn about the beautiful Abraham Lake area, its history and its wildlife. Well-known for its elk and moose populations, as well as important numbers of grizzly, wolf and wolverine, this is one of Alberta's secret gems.

#### Sunday July 28

##### **Join a Plateau Mountain Walkabout with Dr. CC Chinnappa**

Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve in southern Kananaskis Country has an incredible diversity of landscape features including talus slopes, alpine tundra and sub-alpine forest, a cirque lake and ice caves. There are also rare plants, bighorn sheep, hoary marmots, white tailed ptarmigan and water pipits.

*The AWA Outreach Team will be happy to meet you  
at farmers markets, visitor centres, fairs and malls throughout the summer.*





## Alberta Wilderness Watch: Building Our Land Ethic

By Tamaini Snaith

*A land ethic reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity.* - Aldo Leopold

Environmental degradation due to human influence and overuse is a widespread and growing issue throughout Alberta. AWA recognizes the responsibility of both individuals and societies to respect and care for nature.

**Alberta Wilderness Watch** is an AWA initiative in environmental stewardship. Environmental stewardship involves respecting nature, striving to understand it, and accepting responsibility for the health of wilderness. With this program we hope to strengthen the land ethic among Albertans while monitoring and protecting our wilderness.

The objective of the new program is to monitor the status of wilderness in Alberta, document negative effects of human use, and find practical and creative solutions to protect wilderness from degradation through inappropriate use.

The program will consist of a variety of projects ranging from monitoring and reporting to intensive data collection, damage mitigation and restoration activities. The accompanying table describes some of our exciting stewardship projects throughout Alberta. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer steward to participate in any of these projects, please contact AWA.

**Bighorn Historic Trail** - AWA conducts annual volunteer trail maintenance through SRDs Adopt-a-Trail program. This project represents true stewardship where AWA is actively and physically involved in maintaining environmental quality.

**Bighorn Environmental Impact Monitoring** - We have made a proposal for funding, and if we are successful, we will initiate a pilot project in the Bighorn Wildland to monitor the effects of human activities, particularly recreational use, on

wilderness. The project will be applicable to other areas AWA has stewardship responsibility and will be broadened over time to include other areas of concern and other environmental effects. This project will involve a large component of data collection that will be useful for developing an understanding of the effects of human activity on wilderness, and will involve the development and implementation of damage prevention, mitigation, and restoration activities.

**Milk River** - AWA is engaged in cooperative stewardship with local ranchers.



Bighorn Trail Maintenance Trip 1996

**Beehive Natural Area and Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve** - AWA is volunteer steward and is responsible for providing a twice-yearly report to the government on the status of the area.

**Areas of Concern Reporting** - AWA will collect information about the general status of our areas of concern throughout the province. This project involves basic monitoring activities. As AWA builds the capacity of Wilderness Watch, activities throughout the province will progress towards true stewardship. ♻️

## Wild Alberta: Mapping Alberta's Wilderness

For almost four decades, AWA has been advocating for wilderness conservation and the completion of a protected areas network in Alberta. The identification of existing wilderness is essential to our work, as is communicating our vision to our members and to the broader public. To this end, we have been working very hard to put together a map of Wild Alberta with the help of AWA Board members, Cheryl Bradley of the Southern Alberta Environmental Group, the Miistakis Institute, University of Calgary, SAIT, Rick Schneider of the Boreal Forest Research Centre, and Glen Semenchuk of FAN.

This map will depict existing protected areas and other wild spaces throughout the province. These wild spaces were identified using the best available science, and document the extent of Alberta's remaining wilderness. The map will help us to identify protection and management priorities throughout the province. *We will be launching our new map on June 26th, at our AWA Open House to mark the beginning of Wilderness Awareness Month.* ♻️



# PEOPLE: ONE OF THE KEY RESOURCES IN SUCCESS OF AWA TOWER CLIMB

By John Geary

Every spring, people from Calgary and the surrounding area, people from all walks of life, people ranging in age from three to 87 gather at the Calgary Tower for the Canada Life Climb for Wilderness.

This year marked the event's 11th anniversary. Close to 1200 people were involved either as climbers or volunteers, raising close to \$62,000. Christyann Olson, the Alberta Wilderness Association executive director, was very pleased with the results.

"The numbers are slightly better compared with last year's," she says. "We had many new participants, many families and a lot of enthusiasm from companies."

protection, the event itself is as much about people as it is wilderness - people coming together to enjoy a physically active event and its subsequent camaraderie.

Ward Neale, this year's most prolific individual fund-raiser, agrees that feeling of togetherness is one reason he keeps coming back.

"It is a good get-together," he says. "We see many of the same faces every year, people we often meet elsewhere, hiking or skiing."



Phyllis Hart echoes that sentiment. At 87, she has been the oldest female climber since she began participating six years ago. She finds the participants' enthusiasm to be contagious, and that rubs off on others, encouraging them.

"I noticed it this year, especially," she says. "I knew I wasn't going to climb a lot of times, and as I stopped, people who are now starting to recognize me stopped to talk. They don't know my name, and I don't know their names, but we talk, and it gives me a bit of a rest. It's just wonderful to talk to all these people every year."

One area that saw a dramatic increase was the number of participants in the Enviro-Fair. In 2001, eight conservation groups took part in the event; this year, 23 groups participated.

"I think it's partly due to a greater awareness about the AWA and the work we've been doing," says Olson, "plus the fact we've been collaborating more with other NGO's and corporate groups."

While the event's main purpose is to raise money for wilderness

Like Hart, Neale was at one time the oldest climber. Richard Guy, a first-time climber this year, took over the honor of oldest male climber. Neale still came in as the best individual fundraiser, bringing in \$1,730, raised through his own efforts at sponsorship solicitation. His main sponsors included the Geological Survey of Canada, and three Calgary-area outdoor clubs of which he is a member.

"That's the best I've ever done," says Neale, who also raised the most money as an individual in 2001 and plans to keep going each year. "As long as there is a wilderness, there will always be a need to protect it."

"I think the AWA does a marvelous job. It is one very highly informed environmental group. They have all their facts right and I've always been very impressed with them, as have most of my fellow seniors."



Neale's group, the Unitarian Church of Calgary, raised the most money as a group.

Eldon Karabonik earned the distinction of climbing the Tower the most times, climbing the 802 stairs 30 times in five hours. He broke the previous record of 28 in 2001, and tied that mark this year.

"I think that's going to be hard to beat," he says. "I don't even know if I'll ever beat it."

This was his fourth climb, and while he enjoys the event's fitness aspect, he also likes to help protect wilderness.

"Because I enjoy hiking so much, because it's an awesome experience to be out there in nature, I like to keep some spaces for future generations "

Olson recognizes different people have different motivations for participating, and the AWA always works toward improving the event, based on participant feedback.

"Some people have a real competitive nature and want to push themselves physically; others just find that walking the stairs is a great addition to their usual fitness regimen and they look forward to it," she says. "Next year, we may try to make the competitive side a little stronger for those who want to focus on that."

Non-climbers also play a vital role in the success of the event. More than 100 volunteers and staff organize and run the climb.

"We can't thank them enough for their willingness to work so hard to make sure it's a safe, enjoyable event," says Olson. "We also can't say enough about the help we get from the Calgary Tower staff and from Bentall." ❁

Visit [www.climbforwilderness.ca](http://www.climbforwilderness.ca)



Calgary Mayor  
Dave Bronconnier



A real wildcat  
AWA President Cliff Wallis



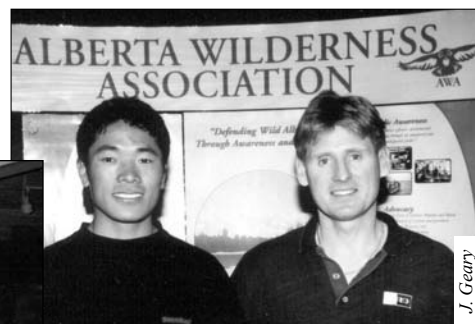
Jane Ebbert & Eldon Karabonik



Phyllis Hart and JW Campbell



C. Bass



Mingma Tenji Sherpa and Byron Smith,  
Everest Summiteers



Canada Life Team



Joe and Barry Hertz



Bailey's Beads



Unitarian Team & JW Campbell

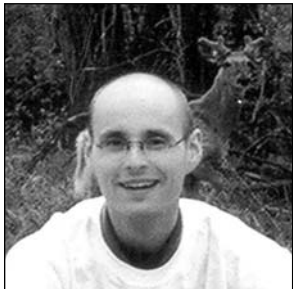




## Profile: Luana Tibrea

I am here at AWA on a work-experience placement from the YWCA Canadian Employment Skills Program. I am from Romania; I arrived in Canada a year ago with my husband and my daughter, Patricia. I really love Calgary: the mountains, the water, the wildlife! I have a bachelor's degree in geography in the environmental field, and in

Romania I worked for an environmental non-profit organization similar to the AWA. I am doing office work at AWA, and have already learned a great deal of office skills as well as developing my environmental knowledge. I really love working here - the team is very friendly, open, and always eager to help. I am very happy to be working for an organization that works to protect nature in Alberta. I would like to thank AWA for giving me the opportunity to learn about conservation and to develop my employment skills at the same time.



## Profile: James Peard

Hi, my name is James Peard and I'm working with AWA this summer as an 'outreach specialist'. Over the next several months I'll be travelling across the province raising awareness of our Association, and encouraging people to participate in our conservation efforts.

This summer's outreach programs include visits to prominent retail locations, campsites, and farmers markets as well as visits to ecological centres in Lethbridge and Red Deer. In addition, we've added a 'northern and central Alberta' component to our popular guided hikes programme. It should be a very busy and productive summer for AWA outreach programming!

I have worked for many years as an environmental and cultural education specialist. My experience includes work as a park interpreter in Kananaskis Country and director of interpretation of the Cochrane Ranche Provincial Historic Site. Last fall I had the opportunity to work with AWA as a university student participating in the 'Masters of Teaching' programme. I enjoyed very much our work teaching junior-high school students the importance of conserving Alberta's watershed areas. I am pleased to have this opportunity to work with AWA again this summer.

## Profile: Darkie Kamunduuoo



Dumelang! (Hello), I am Darkie Kamunduuoo from Botswana in Africa. I love nature. I am a Curator by Profession. For now I will be with Alberta Wilderness Association and I will be here for only three months. I am on a To-Canada Cultural and Skills Exchange Program initiated by the Canadian Crossroads International (CCI). It was once said by Ambrose Paine thus that: "What you do to nature you will do it to your

child."

I am very happy to learn from other cultures and share ideas on how we should behave to nature. I do hope and trust that I will learn a lot from AWA and I will, as well, share the little knowledge that I have in conservation with them. For now I am doing a research study on the little Smoky Environmentally Significant Areas.

Everything you see around you is part of NATURE. So let's try to keep the uniform of nature for our coming generations. In the Bible the book of Genesis tell us about the authority that Men were given over all that was created by God. So authority means responsibility. And that responsibility should mean a lot to us.

In brief, I only want to say: Let's keep the Tropic Levels balanced. We are elements of the Food Chain. So let's work for the sustainable development of our resources.

## Profile: Adam Martin



Hi, my name is Adam Martin and I am currently taking the library technician program at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. I just finished a 3-week practicum at the Alberta Wilderness Resource Center in Calgary. I had a great time and thoroughly enjoyed my experience during my time here. I checked out the webpage and learned a great deal about what AWA is all

about, and the extent of their efforts. I learned a great deal from Shirley Bray, which will help me a lot in the future. During my time here I catalogued maps and videos, and helped around the library. I would like to thank Shirley and all the staff at AWA for giving me this great opportunity.



Mural

© J. Marshall



## THANK YOU JILLIAN!

Jillian Tamblin has chosen to return to B.C. and has taken a position with the Okanagan Native Fisheries Council. AWA would like to thank Jillian for her hard work and conservation efforts in northern Alberta.





Calling all  
Volunteers !!

# SUMMER OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

During the summer we will be setting up displays about the activities and campaigns of the AWA at various locations throughout Alberta, trying to raise the profile of the AWA, and encourage people to become more involved in wilderness issues in the province.

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| • Saturday June 8thst  | Mountain Equipment Co-op, Calgary           |
| • Saturday June 15th   | Red Deer Farmers Market, Red Dee            |
| • Saturday July 6th    | Millarville Farmers Market, Millarville     |
| • Saturday July 13th   | Capilano Farmers Market, Edmonton           |
| • Sunday July 14th     | Callingwood Farmers Market, Edmonton        |
| • Saturday August 10th | Barrier Lake Visitor Centre, Kananaskis     |
| • Sunday August 11th   | Peter Lougheed Visitor Centre, Kananaskis   |
| • Saturday August 17th | Northland Village Mall, Calgary             |
| • Wednesdays -ongoing- | Hillhurst Sunnyside Farmers Market, Calgary |

We need  
your help!!

We need volunteers who would be willing to spend a couple of hours helping to man our display at any of these venues. All necessary training and information will be provided! If you can spare the time to help, then please contact: **James Peard, Outreach Project Staff, at (403) 283 2025, [awa.cp@shaw.ca](mailto:awa.cp@shaw.ca)**



## ANNUAL SUMMER MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

*It's time to help us reach more Albertans!*

*AWA would like to increase our membership to expand our networks, raise awareness, and get more people involved in wilderness conservation in Alberta.*

### WIN PRIZES!!!!

**Any member who finds two new members will be entered into a draw.**

### ***Grand Prize: Weekend for two at Aurum Lodge\****

Alberta's unique eco-tourism wilderness inn  
located in the Rocky Mountains adjacent to the Bighorn Wildland.  
Prizes will be drawn on July 20, 2002, Canada's Parks Day.



***Have two of your friends become members***  
(make sure they mention your name when they sign up)

***OR Purchase two gift memberships***

***Lifetime memberships cost \$25.00 (single) or \$30.00 (family).***

\*Thanks to Aurum Lodge for this very generous donation.

Prize includes two nights stay for two people in a standard room. Breakfast included. Subject to availability.





## SUMMER HIKE PROGRAM

All hikes are Day Hikes.

Cost: \$20:00 per hike

*Pre-registration is required*

*More information on each hike on the  
AWA website: [www.AlbertaWilderness.ca](http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca)*

**Saturday June 29 2002**

**Porcupine Hills**

*With Vivian Pharis*

← **FULL**

**Saturday, July 13 2002**

**Cypress Hills**

*With Hyland Armstrong*

**Saturday July 20 2002**

**Bighorn Wildland**

*With Doug Richie*

**Sunday July 28 2002**

**Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve**

*With Dr. C.C.Chinnappa*

**Saturday August 4th 2002**

**Little Smoky**

*With Amber and Percy Hayward*

**Saturday August 17th 2002**

**Mount Lorette**

*With Peter Sherrington*

**Saturday August 25th 2002**

**Lakeland**

*With Richard Thomas*

**Saturday August 31st 2002**

**The Beehive Natural Area**

*With Judy Huntley and James Tweedie*

**Saturday September 7th 2002**

**The Whaleback**

*With Bob Blaxley*

← **FULL**

**Saturday September 21 2002**

**Galatea, Kananaskis**

*With Vivian Pharis*

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### EDMONTON:

**March 8, 2003**

## Wilderness Celebration in Edmonton

**Volunteers Needed!**

For this exciting new event.

An evening of good food,  
entertainment and silent auction.

We have two great organizers in Edmonton for  
this event and they need your help. Contact  
our Calgary office

403-283-2025 or [awa@shaw.ca](mailto:awa@shaw.ca)

### CALGARY:

**Saturday, October 19, 2002**

## Wilderness Celebration 2002

**at the Glenmore Inn, Calgary**

Dinner, Entertainment and live and silent auctions.

Tickets \$75.00, call 283-2025 to order.

**Friday, November 1, 2002**

## Alberta Wilderness and Wildlife Trust Annual Lecture and Awards

***Post Cowboy Economics:  
Pay and Prosperity in the New  
American West***

With **Dr. Thomas Power**, Professor and Chairman of the  
Dept. of Economics, University of Montana, Missoula,  
Montana. Dr. Power will discuss his new book and its  
relevance to Alberta. Tickets \$25.00. Reception at 6pm,  
Alberta Wilderness Defenders Awards at 7pm, Lecture at  
7:30 pm. Call 403-283-2025 for reservations.

# Alberta Wilderness Defenders Awards



November 2nd, 2001, AWA launched its Environmental Hall of Recognition with the presentation of the First Annual Alberta Wilderness Defenders Award. Orval George Pall (1951-1986) was the first recipient of the award. The award is affectionately known as "The Ernie" after the name of our Owl Logo, Ernest.

Nominees for the awards are exemplary environmentalists who in their work or in their endeavors focus or have focused during their life time on the conservation, understanding and protection of wilderness and wildlife in Alberta. The awards are presented at the AWA Wilderness and Wildlife Trust Lecture held in November of each year.

***Nominations will be accepted by mail, email or fax and must include the following:***

- a brief description of the individual being nominated that includes at least three specific points about the contribution made by the individual.
- complete contact information for yourself and the individual or the individual's family.

*Send nominations to Alberta Wilderness Association, "The Ernies", Box 6398, Station D, Calgary T2P 2E1, email [awa@shaw.ca](mailto:awa@shaw.ca) or fax (403) 270-2743. All nominations must be received by September 1, 2002.*

## Red Deer River Naturalists Go Solar

The Red Deer River Naturalists are installing photo-voltaic cell heating in their new office at the Nature Centre as a demonstration project. They recently hosted a forum on solar power at Red Deer College. It generated a lot of interest and they have been asked to arrange another one. They would now like to set up a group to keep the interest alive and further promote the use of solar power to City Council, developers etc. While promoting alternatives to fossil fuels is certainly connected to protecting healthy ecosystems, this is a bit outside the usual activities of a Naturalist Society and most of their activists are busy with other conservation issues. If any AWA members in the Red Deer area would like to help with this project, they would be most welcome. Please call Bill Heinsen at 403-346-3981 or leave a message at 403-347-8200. ☸

For all the  
latest news,  
check our  
website:

**[www.AlbertaWilderness.ca](http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca)**



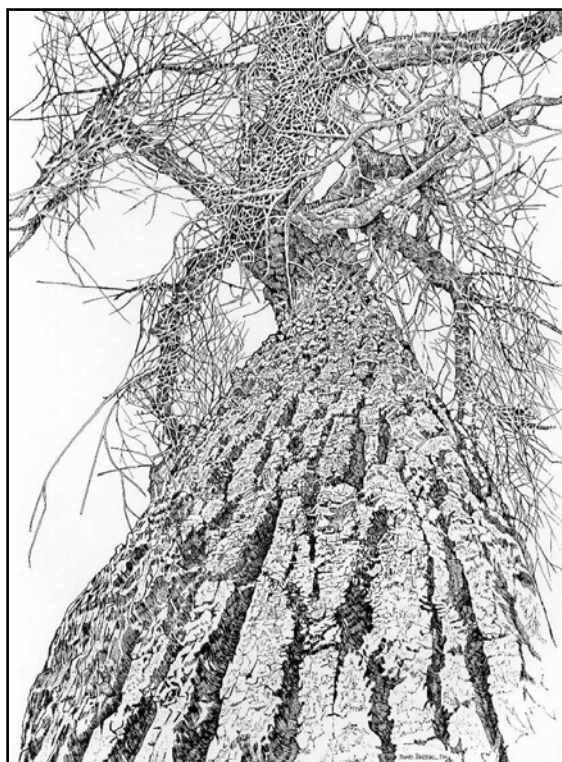
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Please direct questions  
and comments to:  
Shirley Bray  
Phone: 270-2736  
Fax: 270-2743  
[awa.wrc@shaw.ca](mailto:awa.wrc@shaw.ca)  
[www.AlbertaWilderness.ca](http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca)

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.

## AWA States its Position

AWA is in the process of updating and refining our Position Statements on a variety of issues. These statements reflect our philosophy regarding various uses of wilderness and include a brief review of relevant background, scientific data, or policy information. We have recently completed statements on recreational use of wilderness, helicopter use and the G8. The complete documents with references are available on our website in the Resources section under "Catalog". ☸



Cottonwood

© J. Marshall



"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 1<sup>st</sup> of the month (minimum of \$5 per month).

*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>*



## "Thrill of a Lifetime" Raffle

**You and a friend will go riding on the range with singer/songwriter Ian Tyson in June 2003. Gourmet Lunch Included**

Draw : October 19th, 2002 at the Wilderness Celebration Dinner and Auction.

- Day to be arranged at a mutually agreeable time
- Prize must be accepted as offered
- Travel to and from the Tyson Ranch (Longview, Alberta) not included
- Lunch must be picked up by the winner
- Winner releases AWA and its agents and assumes all risks related to the prize

**TICKETS: \$10.00 Each**  
License #R733875

**Purchase Tickets by Phone or Mail from the:**

**Alberta Wilderness Association**  
Box 6398 Station D, Calgary AB T2P 2E1  
(403) 283-2025  
[www.AlbertaWilderness.ca](http://www.AlbertaWilderness.ca)



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

