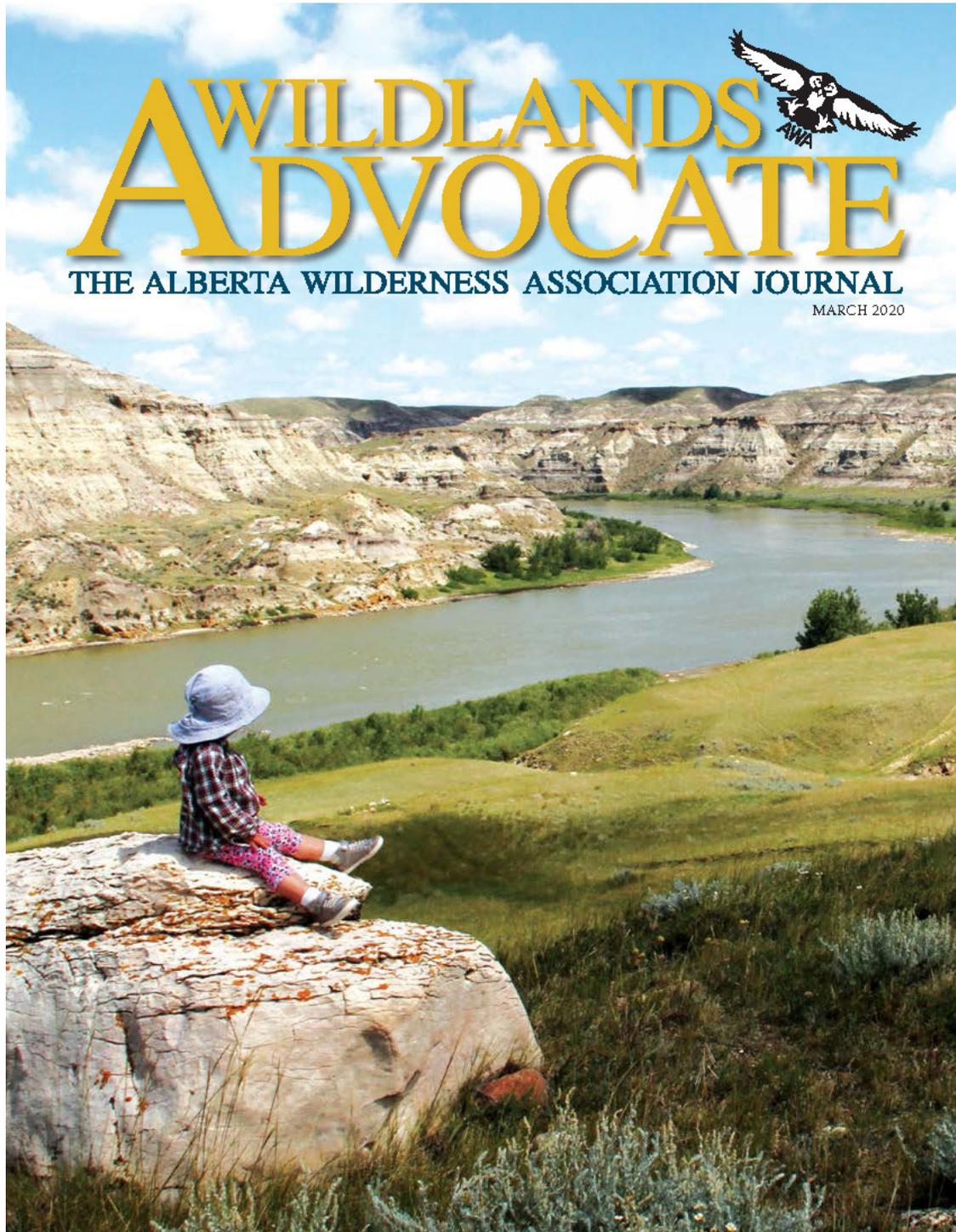


March Wild Lands Advocate Now Online

April 10, 2020



The March issue of *Wild Lands Advocate* is now [online](#). Given the

extraordinary times we are living in I hope the Easter bunny treats all of you very well – but, of course, from a safe distance! Seriously, the Board and staff at AWA wish that you and those you care about will cope as well as possible with what these times demand.

If you'd like to keep abreast of what's going on in the environment while you're staying at home, I hope you will spend some of your time looking through the March issue of the *Advocate*. Alberta's decision to remove 164 sites from the provincial parks system prompted our first offering. There I write about a very special evening I spent years ago at one of the locations the government thinks no longer merits a place in Alberta's parks. I also take that opportunity to urge you to send us your memories of times you've spent in spaces like those the government plans to take away from you.

Next, the University of Calgary's Shaun Fluker volunteers his insights into the government's decision to let Fortress Mountain Ski Resort go into the water bottling business. There Shaun underlines how illusory public participation is with respect to assessing the environmental impacts of natural resource development. Alberta's legal framework offers too few opportunities for meaningful public involvement.

In our third Features article, Joanna Skrajny introduces you to Alberta's native bees – the hundreds of species that, through their pollination, offer a vital ecological service to nature and humans alike. Despite their importance, we know too little about them and could do more to ensure their continued presence in our environments.

Grace Wark then foreshadows what we're likely to see either later this year or in 2021 – proposals to “modernize” Alberta's parks system. Grace invites you to consider the values AWA believes should animate that system and prepare to join AWA in defending those core values from the excessive commercialization some suspect will be central to the province's definition of modernization.

After I question the wisdom of Ottawa's proposal to introduce a sandhill crane hunt in Alberta, Nissa Petterson makes a case for why Alberta should follow examples set elsewhere and increase responsible access to public lands.

The Association News section of this issue is devoted to detailing the Martha Kostuch Annual Lecture. Dr. Mark Boyce, world renowned population ecologist, delivered the 2019 lecture. Mark combined a forthright assessment of current challenges with encouraging words about how university research, if embraced by governments and industry, could address positively those challenges.

The updates in the Wilderness Watch section canvas the following

issues:

- the Teck Frontier tar sands mine,
- the ongoing provincial cuts to environment and parks

functions,

- the Parks Canada decision on the Mt. Norquay gondola,
- the federal ban/phase out of strychnine use to control prairie

gophers,

- the likely conversion of prairie grasslands to potato farming,
- the province's latest initiative to address the blight of

abandoned petroleum facilities in Alberta.

Sadly, this issue also marks the passing of Dr. Richard Guy – a dear friend of AWA and ardent supporter of our mission. While we mourn his passing, we hope you will join us in ensuring that Richard's values animate our lives.

*- Ian Urquhart
Editor*

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Dedicated to the conservation of wilderness and completion of a protected areas network, AWA inspires communities to care for Alberta's wild spaces through awareness and action.

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