

Spring Wild Lands Advocate Now Online

May 28, 2018



The Spring 2018 issue of Wild Lands Advocate is online (<https://albertawilderness.ca/publications/wild-lands-advocate/>) and in the mail. The first article focuses on what will be a major preoccupation of AWA's work in 2018 - the management of public lands in Alberta. There Joanna Skrajny suggests that one problem with public lands management is how successive governments have talked about public lands. Confusing language, obsfuscation, and a long list of governing laws and regulations have contributed to public confusion and disillusionment about how our public lands are managed. Semantic inaccessibility helps sustain unacceptable levels of public physical inaccessibility to these lands.

AWA has developed a series of videos on public lands in Alberta as part of your organization's efforts to educate and shine light on public lands issues. The issue invites you to watch and share those videos. The link to access the series is [youtube.com/user/AlbertaWilderness](https://www.youtube.com/user/AlbertaWilderness) and the videos in the series all share "Our Public Lands" in their titles.

Jim McLennan, one of AWA's favourite writers, fly-fishing instructors, and musicians, takes issue with AWA's support for the fishing closures that initially were part of the province's North Central Native Trout Recovery program. While AWA believes there was value in the proposed closure, Jim raises the important concern that the proposed closures asked anglers - historically among those most concerned with the health of wild species and their habitats - to pay too high a price. The government withdrew its plans to

close those fisheries this year. I'm sure Jim joins AWA in looking forward to announcements from Minister Phillips about the measures her government will take to address the root problem - degraded fisheries habitat.

Joanna offers you the best assessment I have seen of the province's land-use and recreational management plans for the Livingstone-Porcupine. There is much promise in those plans - their legal weight and the anticipated restrictions on so-called "open motorized" trails stand out. But the plans' concessions to industry - to allow for extra industrial motorized access and the failure to include utility corridors, seismic lines, and pipelines in the linear disturbance limits - also need to be highlighted. Any organization committed to educating the public about these plans should do exactly what you'll find in Joanna's article - present a balanced assessment of what government intends.

Lorne Fitch's article outlines the ethic we must embrace if healthy and healthier landscapes are to figure in our future. Limits to growth, tipping points, and thresholds are the focal points in Lorne's essay on our need to brake for the planet.

I had the pleasure of writing about Courtney Taylor, a young rancher whose family's life on the land is animated by the concerns and values articulated in Lorne's essay. Courtney's essay and talk on sustainable range management garnered her first place in the Society for Range Management's international High School Youth Forum competition. Her ethic towards the land is one that promises to improve the stewardship of Alberta's grasslands.

In this issue I also comment on the stimulating lecture Chris Turner offered to those who attended the 2017 Martha Kostuch Annual Lecture. With climate change as his focus, Turner challenged his audience to think about how their understandings of conservation and urban living may need to change in order to address climate change successfully.

In addition to Nick Pink's look at the federal government's proposed coal mine effluent regulations this issue also offers eight wilderness watch updates. Information on caribou conservation, orphaned black bear rehabilitation, using fresh water for fracking, oil sands leases, surveying nighthawks, grizzly bear deaths, and the Calgary's possible 2026 Winter Olympics bid is presented there.

We're also happy to devote the Louise Guy poetry corner this year to recognizing those who have won that award in the past. Rick Collier and his poems about the Castle are the first to be reprised.

Finally, the art of Colleen Campbell a devoted friend and defender of wildlife graces this issue.

- Ian Urquhart, Editor

For more information contact:

Ian Urquhart, Alberta Wilderness Association, 403.283.2025



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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