

June Wild Lands Advocate Now Online

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The June issue of *Wild Lands Advocate* is online and in the mail. Much of this issue is devoted to stories about the celebratory side of nature, about why we value opportunities to spend time in Alberta's natural world.

Harry Stelfox opens this issue by taking us on a hike with his grandchildren to Mt. Stelfox west of Nordegg – part of Harry's ongoing efforts to help a younger generation appreciate Alberta's natural virtues, virtues many members of the Stelfox family have furthered for decades. Next Joy Friesen introduces you to the Hungry Bend Sandhills, a nationally significant environmental area southwest of Fort Vermilion. There you will read, and likely be surprised, that this portion of Alberta's boreal forest hosts Canada's most complex orientations of sand dunes. Ross Wein then writes about the importance of providing opportunities for people with a disability to enjoy nature. Ross has spearheaded the creation of the Alberta Abilities Lodge Society and introduces us to its flagship – Coyote Lake Lodge located about an hour west of Edmonton International Airport.

The "Calgary Captured" program, created by Calgary Parks, is an initiative enabling the public to contribute to the accumulation of knowledge about the places we may visit during our time outdoors. As Samantha Managh explains in her description of this program, citizens are invited to assist in the classification of wildlife "captured" by more than sixty motion-activated cameras in the region's parks.

Four other pieces focus on government actions – both positive and negative. The most positive note is struck in Joanna Skrajny's look at three important provincial initiatives that enhance the stewardship of public lands. Those initiatives are increased powers for enforcement officers vis-à-vis public lands, a management plan for the Castle parks, and land footprint/recreation management plans for the Livingstone/Porcupine. By contrast, Joanna's look at the state of protecting and recovering wildlife populations in Canada is a call for action.

Logan Boyer's article, based on the undergraduate research he did (funded in part by the Bow River Basin Council and AWA), underlines the watershed damage that may result from poorly regulated off-highway vehicle recreational activities. McLean Creek, south of Highway 66 in Kananaskis Country, was the area Logan studied.

Madison Warne, one of a series of talented SAIT interns AWA has benefited from, makes the case for more action on mining liability issues in Alberta through one of my favourite approaches to studying public policy – comparative analysis. Her look at British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and the European Union highlights the extent to which successive Alberta governments have put future generations of Albertans at risk of having to bear the cost of reclaiming the landscapes torn apart by oil sands mining.

AWA staff hope this summer will be one where many of you will spend time in Alberta's provincial and national parks. With this thought in mind we're very pleased to feature John Vickers as June's featured artist. John created posters of all 54 Canadian national parks in 2017. He did this to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Canada's birth and to recognize the early Twentieth Century tradition of creating posters to encourage people to visit this country's national parks. John's imaginative posters for Alberta's five national parks are reproduced in the June issue.

Two new conservation specialists, Nissa Petterson and Grace Wark, recently joined AWA's team and we're very pleased to introduce you to them in this issue. Also on the pleasant side of the ledger is

the fact that Wendy Ryan, a longtime champion for protecting the Castle Wilderness, is going to receive an AWA Wilderness Defender award this year. Vicki Stroich presents a brief portrait of Wendy in this issue of the *Advocate*.

You'll also find Nathan Schmidt's recap of this year's very successful Climb for Wilderness in this issue. Through the generosity of participants and sponsors alike the 2018 Climb raised more than \$93,000 to support your Association's conservation work.

Why do we value nature so highly and ask those in government and industry to do so as well? The Louise Guy Poetry corner, featuring the poems of Julia Borden and Krystyna W. Fedosejevs, has answers. So too does Reader's Corner where you'll find reviews of *Places to Bird in the Prairies*, a new birding guide, and John E. Marriott's book *Tall Tales/Long Lenses: My adventures in photography*.

Our June issue ends on a more somber note, with a tribute to Charlie Russell, a great champion of grizzly bears and wild spaces. Charlie passed away in May of this year.

- 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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