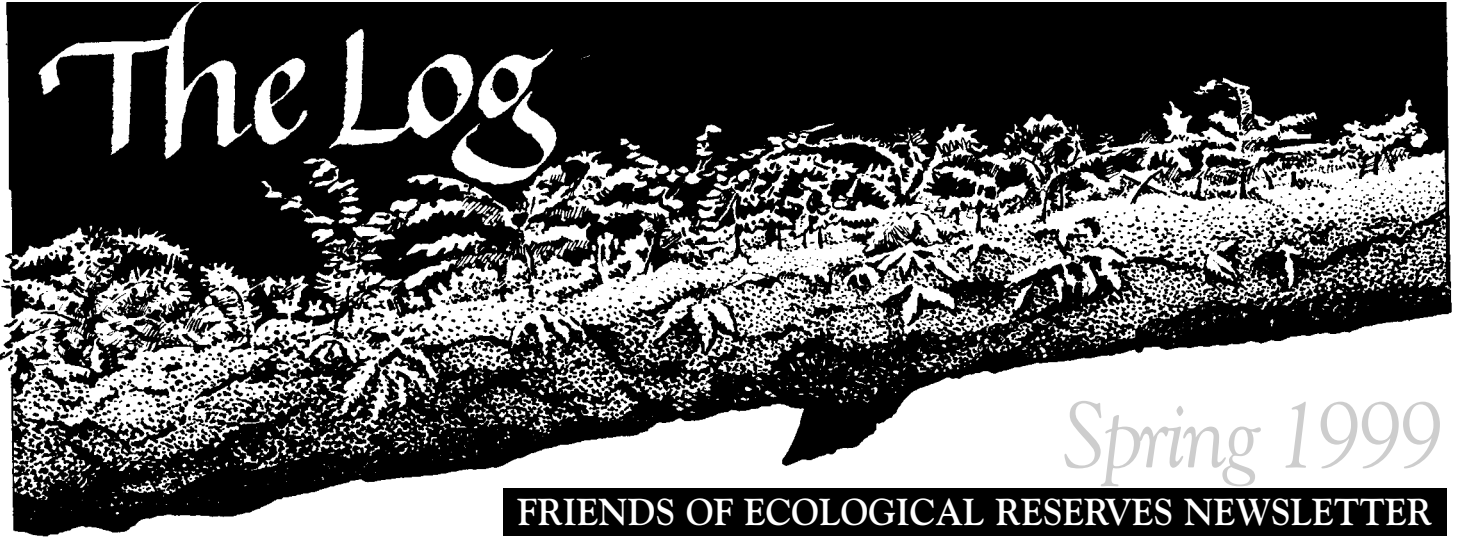


The Log



Spring 1999

FRIENDS OF ECOLOGICAL RESERVES NEWSLETTER

Ecological Reserves: *where have we been; where are we going?*

“The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: ‘what good is it?’ To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering” Aldo Leopold

With the FER Board becoming introspective and analytical in the last few months to try to determine the most useful directions for the Friends to follow, it is timely to see from where the Ecological Reserves Program came. “If you do not know where you came from you are unlikely to be clear where you are going.”

Back in the early 1960s, biologists realized that destruction of the natural environment on the planet was increasing at a geometrically increasing rate. So the International Biological Program was begun to better understand our biosphere and the effect of humans upon it. It was realized that it would be important to be able to return to some of these research sites to document changes. But most natural areas were potentially threatened by logging, draining, spraying, and other unnatural changes. Therefore it was decided that part of the work of IBP should be to set aside natural areas in perpetuity to be used as baseline against which we could measure the impact of humans on the rest of the planet. Research was initiated in the 58 countries that participated, including Canada.

Dr. Vladimir Krajina became the determined and dedicated leader of this work in British Columbia. He had been a freedom fighter in Czechoslovakia in WW 2 and knew how to inspire others to the cause. In the late '60s he had scientific teams exploring the province looking for natural areas that were worth protecting. Once a year he organized meetings in which geologists, botanists, zoologists, foresters and others proposed areas for protection.

The public, often members of naturalists clubs, was encouraged to make proposals as well. At the same time Dr. Krajina was working with lawyers Andrew Thompson and Bob Franson to write the *Ecological Reserves Act and Regulations*.

The Act was passed by the Social Credit Government in the Legislature on May 4, 1971. Twenty-five potential reserves had been waiting in the wings and were created the same day. The Act explained that ecoreserves would be established for research

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The Log

Spring 1999

The Log is published twice a year by the Friends of Ecological Reserves to promote the establishment, management and maintenance of Ecological Reserves in British Columbia. *The Log* is distributed to members, volunteer wardens, affiliates, supporters, government, friends and the enquiring public.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Friends.

Articles for publication are invited. The deadline for submissions for the fall issue of *The Log* is September 1, 1999.

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Thanks to all!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With this Spring 1999 issue of the Log, we welcome our new editor, Dr. Tom Mace, biologist and instructor at Camosun College, Victoria. Tom is knowledgeable and keen and we are delighted that he has agreed to take on this task!

In this issue, we continue to explore our past and future as an organization. To that end, Bristol Foster, long time member, and former Coordinator of the provincial Ecological Reserves Program, has written a piece that complements the historical timeline we presented in the last issue. As well, your Board of Directors took time from their busy schedules and devoted a day to examining our organization and future directions. You will find a summary of that meeting in this issue.

When I look back at 1998 and at the first months of 1999, it seems that British Columbia's land is in the news and so we have tried to bring you a summary and news of what is and has been happening. There are good news stories – for example, at long last, new ecological reserves are in the making ... and there are not-so-good news stories – the crisis in provincial wildlife programs.

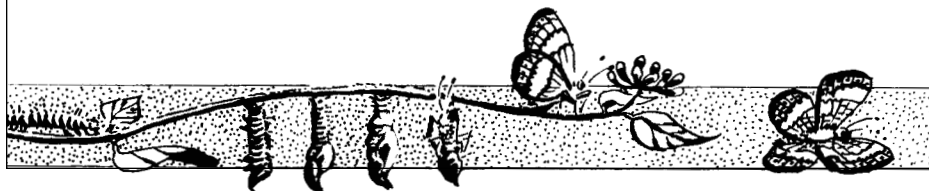
While it is heartening to see the creation of new ecological reserves, I think that conservationists everywhere are beginning to realize that governments cannot always find the money to buy private lands for public purposes. It is becoming increasingly important to look to stewardship and other land-purchase solutions. The Friends of Ecological Reserves continues to work with The Land Conservancy of BC in bringing information about covenants and other stewardship options to landowners and we continue to assist, to the best of our financial ability, land purchase initiatives – such as the Elkington property near Duncan.

Your support, as members of FER, is critical to the on-going success of our initiatives. Your membership dues and generous donations ensure our financial health and ability to respond to requests for assistance from local land conservancy organizations and scholars who do significant research in ecological reserves.

If you have not already renewed your membership for 1999, please do so now and, if you are able, add a little extra to your cheque. Come on our field trips and discover some of the wonders that our ecological reserves protect. Come to our lecture series and find out what the researchers you help to fund are discovering. Give a membership to FER as a gift. Encourage your friends to ask government to set aside as much land as possible. Use your land wisely.

I hope you find this issue informative and enjoyable and please share this issue with someone else, once you are finished with it. ■

Cheryl Borris, President



New Ecological Reserves

On January 25, Premier Clark announced the protection of Mt. Liumchen and the Yale Garry Oak forest as two ecological reserves.

Liumchen Ecological Reserve is situated within the Northwestern Cascade Ranges ecoregion and possesses a high diversity of biogeoclimatic sequences. Containing 2,190 hectares, the new reserve includes a portion of a ridge southeast and above Cultus Lake. Its location also will enhance the viability of International Ridge Provincial Park. Liumchen protects important spotted owl habitat and significant old growth values. The slopes of the ridge have predominant gullies, particularly on the northwest facing slopes. Most of the forests are montane steep types with some subalpine and upper elevation montane types. The ecological reserve will protect unique subalpine fir and amabilis fir ecosystems on limestone bedrock.

Yale Garry Oak Ecological Reserve, located at the south end of the Fraser Canyon and encompassing 11.65 hectares, protects a rare stand of Garry oak trees.

The new ecological reserve is on the east side of the Fraser Canyon, a short distance above Yale. This site is one of only three known Garry oak sites in the Lower Mainland and is the most easterly example of a Garry oak ecosystem in the province.

From his studies of the middens now known as "the Milliken site", the father of BC Archaeology, Dr. Carl Borden, found the area to be one of the earliest sites of human occupation in North America. Close by the Milliken site is a grove of Garry Oaks which has been shown to pre-date Caucasian settlement in B.C. The grove is believed to be "anthropogenic", i.e. established by humans, probably from acorns brought as food

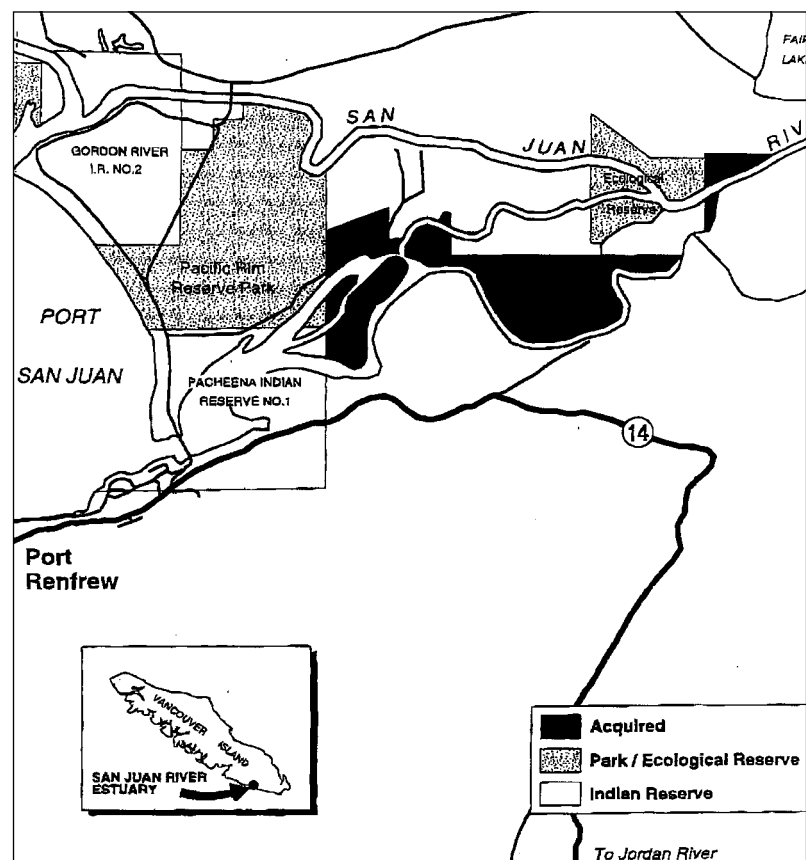
by the first people. Dr. Borden found acorns and native cherry pits to be common in the ancient middens. Closely associated with the Garry Oaks are vernal pools with some rare, or at least very uncommon, BC annual plants. The oak trees are scrubby but are of interest to science because, as a disjunct population, they are free of the insects and fungi associated with oaks on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Apart from a few Garry Oaks on Sumac Mt., the grove represents the only "naturally" established oaks on the BC mainland, although there are many trees in nearby Whatcom County, Washington State.

The location of the reserve is spectacular – where the Fraser breaches the great cliffs of the Coast Range, a last barrier to the lowlands. Today, the river waters are fast and turbulent. However, 9000 years ago, the land was depressed and rebounding from the weight of the ice sheets and the ocean reached the entrance to the canyon. Children playing by the river's edge undoubtedly played by waters quieter than those seen today.

The Yale site, relatively isolated from the time of the Gold Rush, is now being visited by increasing numbers of river rafters. The preservation of the area as an ecological reserve is particularly timely. We should extend our thanks to Mr. Mel Turner, BC Parks planner, who help process the application for reserve status through the channels in Victoria. It should also be noted that Dr. and Mrs. G.P. Akrigg have made funds available to establish a kiosk that would illuminate the natural features of the area as well as recognize the pioneering archaeological work of Dr. Borden.

In addition to the establishment of the two new reserves, the government has also added significant acreage to two existing reserves. A government agreement with TimberWest has allowed the addition of 110 hectares to the San Juan River estuary adjacent to the San Juan ecological reserve (see map) and 256 hectares to the Vancouver Island Marmot Habitat at Haley Lake ecological reserve. ■

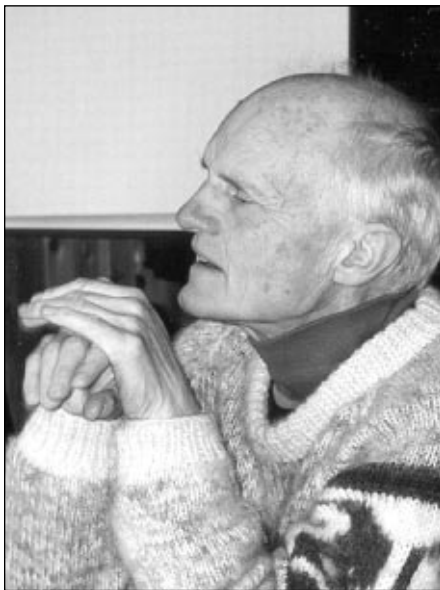
– with thanks to Vernon Brinks



Continued from page 1

AND serve as outdoor classrooms, on both natural AND disturbed land so scientists could study the rate of recovery. Not all MLAs supported the Act. Pat McGeer thought the Act was "window dressing". Tiny natural areas would be protected while industry would continue business as usual elsewhere. Today, some think he was prophetic.

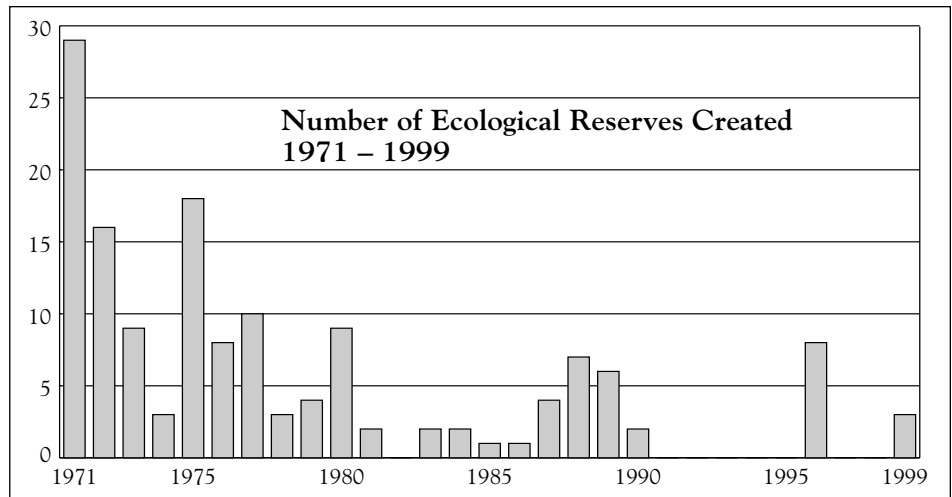
The work of searching for new reserve proposals continued to be done by scientists and naturalists. Don Pearson in the Ministry of Lands, Forests and Water coordinated receiving the proposals and submitting them to cabinet for approval. The years of W.A.C. Bennett produced a steady stream of new reserves.



Bristol Foster, former coordinator of ERs reflects on the future of FER.

Then, in 1974, the NDP established the full time position of coordinator of ecological reserves and I left the Royal BC Museum to take that post. I moved from a museum of dead things to one of live nature, both necessary for understanding our biosphere. In the late 1970s Jim Pojar, Trudy Carson (Chatwin), and Hans Roemer joined the Ecological Reserves Unit.

Life was so much simpler in those days. Even though every reserve proposal had to be approved by all



relevant government ministries, we got to know all the contact persons personally since they were all in Victoria. This expedited proposals immensely.

The annual scientific meetings continued to be held. Summer surveys by the staff and others resulted in new proposals which were passed on to the ER Unit for feeding into the bureaucratic maw.

A formal board was established to give advice to the government on the program. We met annually and had the council and support of people like Ian McTaggart Cowan, Andrew Thompson, Chief Forester Bill Young, professor Marc Bell, and of course Vladimir Krajina. We needed the board to give us bureaucrats apolitical broadly-based ecological advice. This was useful in tricky situations. For example, when Rogers, a politically connected individual, wanted to build a dam in the ecoreserve on Bowen Island, it was the board who turned him down.

In the late 70s, we realized that a staff of three located in Victoria could never look after scores of ecoreserves scattered over the almost million square kilometers that comprise our province. And they needed looking after. Cattle and sheep grazed some reserves, others had children building log cabins, some needed to be occasionally burnt while some should never have a fire, and so on. Lynne Milnes was hired after Trudy left and Lynne started the Ecological Reserves

Warden system. The government provided money to the wardens for their expenses in visiting their reserve and paid for an annual gathering. A real sense of camaraderie and spirit was developed. The personal connections made were essential for the smooth functioning of, and commitment to, the program.

Not long after Lynne was hired she had the idea of starting a Friends of Ecological Reserves to support the tiny struggling staff. The Friends have turned out to be highly successful in raising money to aid ecological research in ecoreserves, to pressure for the creation of new reserves and to inform the public about ecoreserves through public lectures. Research by Dr. Tom Reimchen and Sheila Douglas, for many years at the Drizzle Lake ecological reserve, is unequalled anywhere else in the province, if not in all of Canada. Lets say in the world while we are at it!!!!!!

The Social Credit government returned to power again in 1977. Premier Bill Bennett's government began to slow up the creation of new reserves. Some pause was justified. We then had acquired 80 ecoreserves and while our eventual goal was stated at about one-half of one percent of the land area of the province, other resource users, especially forestry, were worried that we wanted an inordinate area.

In 1980 the ecoreserves unit consisted of Lynne, Hans and myself. Hans the botanist had the job of

determining how many more reserves we needed based on Dr. Krajina's biogeographical zone ecosystem classification. This was highly technical work and well beyond the capabilities of politicians or most senior government officials to understand. Consequently the rate of creation of new reserves approached zero.

In 1983, discouraged by the lack of government support for the program, Lynne left and her position was not replaced. By 1984, the Orwellian year of doublespeak, big brother is watching, and baffleleg had become reality in government. Progress in the ER Unit had slowed to a crawl. By then, I had ten years in the unit and felt it was time to move on. Louise Goulet took my place.

It was always a question where was the most logical place for the eco-reserve unit in government. We began in the Dept of Lands, Forests and Water because Dr. Krajina had convinced Minister Williston of the need for ecoreserves and most of the land in the province was in the Lands Branch. Since we were often at loggerheads with the Forest Service in trying to create reserves in forested areas, this was not a comfortable place for us. We avoided for many years being lumped with the Parks Branch because our mandate was significantly different (research, education) and we did not want to appear to be just another kind of park. By 1985, the Forest Service had taken over most of the province (whether treed or not). The advantage in being in Lands was less and the ecoreserves unit moved to the Parks Branch.

About the same time, the ecoreserves Unit, like much of the government, was being decentralized. Park staff in the regions tried to run the ecoreserve program with varying kinds of enthusiasm and results. The functioning personal relationships that had evolved in Victoria were lost and the procedures for getting support for ecoreserve proposals became far more difficult. The easy, fun, satisfying and successful days of the mid-70s were long gone.

The Ecological Reserves Act was passed 28 years ago. We now have 136 reserves covering 1/10 of 1% of the land area of the province. This is the best record of any province in Canada, but far from the goal Dr. Krajina had set and very far from what is needed, even when combined with parks, to protect our biodiversity.

The Ecological Reserves Act was passed 28 years ago. We now have 136 reserves covering 1/10 of 1% of the land area of the province.

The study of islands indicates that when two islands are of the same ecology but one is ten times the size of the other, the larger island will have twice the number of species. In other words if we protect 10% of the province in ecoreserves and parks we shall lose about half of our species. The provincial and national goal is 12%, not much better.

So what can the Friends do? We can, along with other environmental organizations, encourage the public to pressure the government to set aside as much land as possible, and more importantly, to encourage the wise use of other land in which ecosystem integrity and therefore biodiversity is maintained. This can be done, for example, with selective logging rather than clearcut logging, or stewardship of grassland.

The ways the Friends communicate and educate the public is through the wardens, public lectures, field trips and *The Log*. Contact directly to the politicians and top bureaucrats can sometimes lead to quicker results. Letters from constituents force elected officials to listen.

The Friends raise seed money for research; much has been done with very little. However, on balance, very little research has been done in eco-reserves.

Research must increase or we shall be criticised as to the roles and needs for ecoreserves. The fact that some scientist might like to use a reserve some day is not very compelling as that day is likely to be beyond the next election. The Friends can help by encouraging local schools and universities to do research in ecological reserves and to publicize their findings once the research is completed.

The Friends can make a difference by numbers. Encouraging family members and friends to join FER, to go on field trips and to attend lectures shows the government that people do care about biodiversity and Ecological Reserves. ■

Bristol Foster

SAVING BURNS BOG

Saving Burns Bog from development will cost millions of dollars. The Land Conservancy of BC and the Burns Bog Conservation Society hope to raise some of those millions with a fundraising campaign announced yesterday. Pledge forms and car or bike stickers advertising the Save Burns Bog initiative are available at Mountain Equipment Co-op and other Lower Mainland locations including Vancouver Island. "What we're hoping to have is a negotiating tool," TLC executive director Bill Turner said of the fundraising effort that will support government action on the Delta property. Although TLC would like to save the entire bog, Turner explained that a compromise might be to keep enough to ensure that the bog won't die. Although part of Burns Bog is used for a landfill and part is mined for peat, the 22,250-hectare area is considered a special ecosystem. It is the habitat of everything from bears to frogs and more than 200 species of birds and has been described as the "lungs of the Lower Mainland."

Report on the Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Ecological Reserves was held on February 26, 1999, at the University of Victoria. President Cheryl Borris welcomed participants and reported briefly on the highlights of 1998.

Generous grants from the Vancouver Foundation and EcoAction 2000 have continued to give sound financial footing to our current major initiative, the Landowner Contact Project. During 1998, the focus of this phase of the project was to contact ranchers and other landowners in the Cariboo-Chilcotins in order to provide advice about stewardship and conservation covenants. As a result of this we have gained the support of the BC Cattlemens' Association, which is of strategic and essential importance to the project and, as a result of work done during the summer months, critical fish habitat on the Horsefly River will be preserved and enhanced.

"In 1999," Cheryl said, "the Landowner Contact Project moves into the East Kootenays. We are pleased to continue our relationship with Bill Turner, and our partnership with the Land Conservancy – one of the most important conservation organizations to surface in British Columbia in the past five years."

Three successful field trips took place in 1998. A sunny day trip was made in April to ER 132, – Trial Islands, – with interpreter Adolf Ceska. In May, the Friends organized a day trip to Winchelsea Island in conjunction with The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC). Cheryl pointed out that although Winchelsea Island is not an ecological reserve it is

an important ecosystem. In 1998, TLC successfully negotiated the purchase of the island. Finally, in August, there was a memorable 3-day boating trip to Robson Bight ER. In addition to being educational, these field trips continue to raise awareness about the importance of Ecological Reserves, allow for the monitoring of protected species and provide an opportunity to raise funds for specific projects.

Cheryl went on to say that generous support from other donors, some of whom choose to remain anonymous, have allowed us to sustain solid support for land acquisition – the Elkington property in Duncan, the McFadden Creek heron rookery on Salt Spring Island and the Ayum Creek connector in Sooke have all benefited in 1998. She continued, "As well, the generous financial support of our members allowed us to be responsive to the needs of four dedicated scholars. On their behalf, thank you so very, very much!"

Several board members traveled to the Okanagan in May, to the first annual Meadowlark Festival. A week of painting and sketching with local artists produced images which have been beautifully replicated on the third in our series of botanical placemats. These placemats provide a showcase for native plants as well as being a fund-raiser for the Friends.

1998 saw improvements to our newsletter, *The Log*, thanks to editor Eileen King, and we took the time to reflect on our past achievements and chronicle them in the fall issue.

Chair of the Nominating Committee, Syd Cannings, presented the election slate for the 1999 Board of directors. Nine of the 1998 board of directors stood for re-election, and three additional candidates were put forward. All 12 were elected by acclamation.

A special resolution was passed conferring Honorary Director status on retiring Board members Vicky Husband and Trudy Chatwin in recognition of their service towards ecological reserves in British Columbia.

Vicky Husband was honoured with the establishment of a scholarship in her name at the University of Victoria. Beginning in 1999, the FER will make an annual award to a student in third or fourth year Environmental Studies, who has academic merit and who has made outstanding contributions to the volunteer sector.



President Cheryl Borris (right) presents Vicky Husband (a former president of FER) with an award for her service.

At the conclusion of the business portion of the meeting, Doug Biffard of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and warden for Satellite Channel ER, gave an illustrated presentation on protected areas around Vancouver Island.

The meeting was followed by an illustrated lecture by 1998 award recipient Dr. Tom Reimchen, who spoke about his research into the relationship between black bears, Chum salmon and the health of forests on BC's West Coast. ■



Director Syd Cannings talks with Tilman Nahm of Grimrod.

The British Columbia Conservation Data Centre

British Columbia is Canada's most biologically diverse province. How do we balance development with our responsibility to protect this diversity? One of the first steps is to identify those species and ecosystems that have become most vulnerable. The second is to compile the information so that it is accessible and usable. The BC Conservation Data Centre (CDC) was established in 1991 in order to achieve these goals.

The CDC is an integrated data management system. Information from scientists, naturalists, published and unpublished reports and museum collections is augmented and updated with field work by the CDC scientists and cooperators. A combination of computer, map and paper files offers an effective approach to retrieval and analysis of the location of threatened and endangered elements (plants, animals and communities) in B.C. The CDC is networked with compatible systems in more than 80 other provinces, states and countries.

The system has been designed so that decision makers with diverse needs can use the information for their own purposes, whether for acquiring new park land, designing a forest harvesting plan or evaluating alternative routes for a new highway. The CDC provides site evaluations that define the rare elements or features in a particular area being managed. In addition, the abundance and distribution of special plants, animals or communities or other natural features of concern can be compiled in a variety of formats. The data can also be used to determine the distribution of species and ecosystems in protected areas.

The Conservation Data Centre began as a cooperative project of four sponsors – B.C. Environment, The Nature Trust of British Columbia, The Nature Conservancy (United States) and The Nature Conservancy of Canada. Co-sponsors include: BC Parks, British Columbia Telephone Company, British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, Canadian Wildlife Service, Cariboo Lumber Manufacturers Association, Council of Forest Industries, Hamber Foundation, Teck Corporation, University of British Columbia, and the Vancouver Foundation.

Check out the website : <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/cdc>

excerpted from the CDC brochure, BC Environment

Each year, the Friends of Ecological Reserves makes a number of awards to scholars in British Columbia who are doing research in ecological reserves or whose studies contribute to the understanding and needs of the intricate relationships of organisms within an ecosystem.

This year the Board of Directors has given awards to: **Dr. Tony Sinclair** and **Leanna Warman** of Vancouver, for their continued study of the application of complementarity and irreplaceability as a methodological tool for biodiversity assessment. Tony and Leanna are working in the South Okanagan Conservation Strategy Area. This is the second consecutive year that the Friends has funded this project.

Chris Engelstoft and **Kriistina Kovaska** have been funded for their long-term study of the sharp-tailed snake (*Contia tenuis*) on North Pender Island. Chris and Kriistina have been engaged in this work since 1997 and are to be congratulated for their efforts to educate and involve the Gulf Islands community in the habits and importance of this "small and secretive" snake, which is on the endangered list.

As well, generous anonymous donations have enabled the Friends to continue to support **Dr. Tom Reimchen** of Victoria in his research on the relationship between black bears and chum salmon, and the consequences this relationship has on forest productivity and to provide funding to **Dr. Jane Watson** of Nanaimo. Jane continues her long-term research into the habits of sea otters in the Checleset Bay Ecological Reserve, and this grant represents the second year of a three-year funding commitment.

As a condition of funding, grant recipients are required to submit a report on their findings for publication in *The Log* and to participate in our public lecture series. Congratulations and wishes for success to all of our award winners.

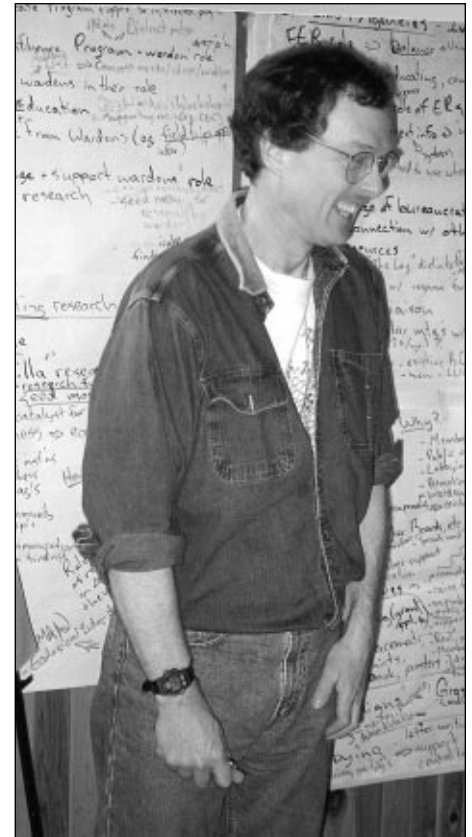
Applications are considered once a year for a spring deadline of April 1. Look for criteria in the fall issue of *The Log* or write to us for more information. ■



The Board Retreats !



Policy retreat on Saltspring Island with leader Colin Rankin. FER hard at work.



Colin Rankin and FER verbrage at the Policy retreat

On Sunday, March 7, most of the Board of FER leapt onto the ferry and spent the day at a retreat on Saltspring Island. The first hour was spent in trying to address the question **“What are we doing here?”** The consensus was that the Board should have a look at itself and at FER in order to see whether we have changed in response to a changing political environment. Consequently, the Board assembled a shopping list of topics to be addressed during the remainder of the day. As occurs in most sessions of collective navel gazing, the list was too long to be adequately tackled in one week, let alone one day. Nevertheless, some specific topics were discussed at length. These included:

“How is the FER different from other organizations?”

This question was asked in response to the concern that the FER was becoming just another environmental NGO. It was decided, however, that the organization possesses some unique and valuable attributes. For starters, we deal exclusively with ecological reserves. We have a high profile and established credibility. We have excellent connections through partnership with government and the warden system. Perhaps most importantly, we serve as a corporate memory in regards to the ecological reserve system.

“What is the role of the FER in influencing government agencies?”

Throughout the discussions it became apparent that the FER played a significant role as a liaison between ecological reserves and the provincial government. This became defined as being a watchdog over government activity, providing an awareness of current issues in order to influence government policy and, finally, connecting government with the ecological reserves and other NGO's. The FER can fulfill these efforts with publication of *The Log*, funding of research and the organization of field trips. In addition, the FER has a further role in targeted campaigns (i.e. grasslands and the “landowner contact” campaign) and the organization of public talks or lectures.



Two of the Wrangellian Gumboot dancers, directors Briony Penn and Peggy Frank at FER policy retreat.

“How does the FER support the Warden Program ?”

Support for the Warden Program also emerged as an important and possibly overlooked role of the FER. It was decided that there needed to be more direct involvement with the wardens and greater encouragement for research. The Board and FER should also provide advice to the wardens and provide support through workshops, surveys and publications. Finally, it was decided that the warden program requires a higher profile within the system. The FER will communicate information about the warden program to interested parties and will increase coverage of the program in *The Log*.

The last part of the day was occupied by an in-depth discussion of the structure and role of the Board. This could be summarized as follows. The Board tasks are:

- to set priorities for FER
- to encourage research in ecological reserves
- to develop new ideas for FER business
- to oversee production of *The Log*
- to fundraise, and
- to lobby on behalf of existing and potential ecological reserves.



Directors Briony Penn, Syd Cannings and Peggy Frank (left to right).

The retreat was considered a great success by all participants. It was highlighted by an excellent lunch and a brief walk. We were particularly fortunate that two members of the Board are also stars in the Wrangellian Gumboot Ensemble and were persuaded to give us a display of the ancient, greatly revered Saltspring Island Gumboot Dance. (This rich, cultural experience was also featured at the recent Garry Oak Meadow Symposium at UVic, May 5 – 9).

The Board particularly wants to recognize the fact that the retreat would not have worked without the dedication and enthusiasm of Colin Rankin who facilitated discussion and provided multicolored pens for the collection of notes. ■

Wildlife And Programs In Crisis

The following memo is from Tom Burgess, a recently retired Wildlife Biologist who was employed by BC Environment from 1973 to 1997. Now living in Sooke, he is associated with the Federation of BC Naturalists. Recently, Tom contacted many of his former colleagues, and put together this alarming picture of the current Wildlife Program. The FBCN hopes to gain the support from other Conservation groups to mount a concerted effort to turn things around.

Wildlife staff indicate that they have lost all control of the Program.

Recent inquiries have revealed a most disturbing picture of the state of BC's wildlife, habitat and Wildlife Program. Government cuts over the past five years have already reduced staff numbers by 40%, and another 10% cut is anticipated. With budgets covering little more than salaries, all travel has been seriously curtailed. Base budgets no longer provide for any inventory or research. In addition, previously provided outside funding sources are rapidly drying up. In spite of this, the demands to undertake new tasks have never been greater (i.e. threatened and endangered species, Forest Practices Code provisions, native land claims and treaties). Nor has there ever been a time when public expectations for effective management of wildlife have been higher. We have reached the point where staff can no longer adequately address many of the most pressing wildlife needs.

Threatened and endangered species are not being adequately addressed. One half time position in

Victoria attempts to cover T&E issues. In Regions, the Rare and Endangered Species biologists (RESs) have primary responsibility. But, the Kootenay position has been cut, and all other RES are in jeopardy. Government provides totally inadequate resources. Results? No effective legislation, policy or programs; no Biodiversity Strategy; no Species Recovery Plans for more than 65 vertebrates and many more plants; no T&E inventory or research.

Our still rapidly developing Urban Areas, source of most red-listed species problems, have no cohesive program to address wildlife habitat issues. Results? Continued losses of wetlands, riparian areas, and special habitats on private lands. And, continuing unhappiness by many municipal governments who would like to cooperate, but have no-one to deal with, and no procedures or program to fall back on.

We need to become better informed, and much more involved.

With the current implementation of the Forest Practice Code and Jobs and Timber Accord, valuable wildlife habitat is falling under the axe at an even faster rate than before. Virtual "Right to Log" legislation, combined with Forest Ministry and Industry intransigence creates such an immense workload for shrinking staff levels, that only the most critical issues are being addressed, leaving much unprotected. Historical winter ranges are no longer safe. Managing ungulates for harvestable surpluses is no longer supported by Ministry of Forests staff. Neither the recently announced Managing Identified Wildlife Strategy, nor the Landscape Unit Planning provisions still held up by Industry and Government have any provision for added Wildlife staff or resources in the coming year.

In a larger context, several other initiatives have been seriously

curtailed. Wildlife Management Area designation and management is largely stalled, due to a combination of staff and budget shortages, and bureaucratic resistance from other government agencies. (In some areas, critically valuable wildlife Crown Lands are being offered for sale, to increase government revenues). The BC Wildlife Watch Program, which promises to deliver economic values in the hundreds of millions of dollars, is reduced to mere project level, in two Regions. The Strategic Plan process, useful in guiding the program, with input from the public, languishes, and is used only for cutting staff and budgets. A \$100,000 report recommending ways to reduce problems with black and grizzly bears, is not acted upon, and BC experiences its worst year on record, costing the Conservation Officer Service nearly one million dollars, and the lives of 1,654 bears, many of which might have been saved.

Wildlife staff indicate that they have lost all control of the Program. Many field staff have little or no idea what is happening with most of their wildlife populations.

What are we to do? We need to become better informed, and much more involved. Governments usually do what they think the public will support. We need to tell them:

- 1 stop the cutting**
- 2 replace the losses to the Wildlife Program**
- 3 find new sources of revenue to ensure that our wildlife gets the resources required even when fiscal times are tough!**

And we need to demonstrate a willingness to work with government to make this happen.

Contact:

Tom Burgess, 250-642-0015,
tomburgess@bc.sympatico.ca

or

Anne Murray, President, FBCN,
604-943-0273 ■

Identified Wildlife Management Strategy Information Sessions and Workshops

On February 18, 1999 the BC government announced the release of the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (IWMS) as a component of the Forest Practices Code. Identified Wildlife are species at risk that have been designated by the chief forester (Ministry of Forests) and deputy minister of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks as requiring special management attention during forest and range operational planning or higher level planning. This strategy provides certainty to licensees and clarity to statutory decision makers on the:

- 1 biology of identified wildlife;
- 2 procedures to be followed in designating Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs); and
- 3 mandatory forest practices within WHAs. Operators will be required to adhere to general wildlife measures (GWMs) when carrying out activities in a wildlife habitat area.

Higher level plan recommendations are also provided for three species. The IWM Strategy will be implemented as wildlife habitat areas are identified and mapped, their locations are made known to licensees and this information is incorporated into forest development plans.

Schedule of Training Delivery

IWMS training will contain 2 sessions:

1. A morning 'overview' session from 9:00am – Noon for MELP, MOF district staff, licensees, consultants, contractors and representatives from environmental and naturalist non-government organizations. Planning foresters and engineers are encouraged to attend, as well as FDP planners and biologists. We recommend attendance should include district managers, operations managers, and anyone involved in silviculture prescriptions, timber, the small business program, or compliance and enforcement.
2. An afternoon 'workshop' session from 1:00pm – 4:00pm for FDP planners and biologists from all sectors. The afternoon session is for staff who will deal with the IWMS on a day to day basis. Includes MELP RES and FES, FES supervisors, and MELP regional wildlife and habitat staff as key participants.

While sessions have already taken place in Kamloops and Nelson, the remainder of the schedule is reproduced below:

CARIBOO May 10 – 12

- * May 10 Williams Lake – Cariboo Region; Williams Lake Forest District; Horsefly Forest District; Chilcotin Forest District
- * May 11 Quesnel – Quesnel Forest District
- * May 12 100 Mile House – 100 Mile House Forest District

PRINCE GEORGE May 13 – 21

- * May 13 Prince George – Prince George Region; Prince George Forest District
- * May 14 Prince George – Prince George Region; Prince George Forest District

- * May 17 McBride – Robson Valley Forest District
- * May 18 Vanderhoof – Vanderhoof Forest District; Ft. St. James Forest District
- * May 19 McKenzie – McKenzie Forest District
- * May 20 Ft. St. John – Ft. St. John Forest District; Dawson Creek Forest District
- * May 21 Ft. Nelson – Ft. Nelson Forest District

PRINCE RUPERT May 25 – 28

- May 26 Terrace – Kalum Forest District; North Coast Forest District
- May 27 Houston – Lakes Forest District; Morice Forest District
- * May 28 Smithers – Prince Rupert Region; Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District (incl. Dease Lake); Kispix Forest District ■

(*morning session only)

ORCAS ADDED TO ENDANGERED LIST

We note with sadness that our Pacific population of killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) has been added to the endangered species list. Resident populations are now considered threatened (likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed) while transient populations are now considered vulnerable (that is, of special concern because of characteristics that make them particularly sensitive to human activity or natural events).

Wanted – Bull Frog and Green Frog Sightings

Evidence is accumulating that the introduced Bullfrog has out competed and displaced native amphibians from large areas of Washington, Oregon and California, and the lower Fraser Valley. Aside from amphibians, adult Bullfrogs are known to eat turtle hatchlings, ducklings and other birds, and even garter snakes.

Bullfrog introductions seem to be the result of unsuccessful attempts at farming them for their meaty legs and their subsequent release into the wild. In B.C., the first records of Bullfrogs are from the Burnaby Lake area, around 1940. They now occur in the lower Fraser Valley from Vancouver to Chilliwack and on Vancouver Island from Victoria to Parksville and even on some Gulf Islands.

Green Frogs were imported for the pet trade and as tadpoles for aquatic gardens, and subsequently escaped into the wild. The first records of Green Frogs from BC are from Little Mountain, near Hope, around 1948. They are now found in parts of the lower Fraser Valley as well as around Victoria. The impact of the Green Frog on the native fauna is not clear.

The purpose of my study is to map the occurrence of both of these introduced species in the Greater Victoria Region. Some ponds will be intensely surveyed in areas of high densities of these exotics to estimate population sizes and the co-occurrence of other amphibians. This study will provide baseline information for developing my doctoral project at the University of Victoria. The project will focus on the impact of these introduced species on the community structure of ponds and the associated native fauna. The results may provide insights for the conservation of local amphibians and for the control of the Bullfrog.

I seek the help of Friends in the Victoria region to locate all ponds where either of these two species may be found. If you have seen or heard either of these two frogs in your neighbourhood, please call:

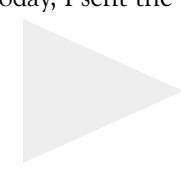
Purnima Price,
Department of Biology, University of Victoria
Phone: 472-4684(W) or 477-7600 (H)
Fax: 721-7120
E-Mail: purnimap@uvic.ca

I greatly appreciate your help in this project. ■

From the Wardens

We have received the following information from Heather Kellerhals, Volunteer Warden, at Claud Elliot Lake. It is an excellent example of the vital roles played by our wardens. Because they know and constantly are able to observe the reserves, they are valuable allies in the constant battle to maintain ecological integrity. Recently Heather wrote to us:

“We’ve been trying so hard to keep a road out of the area as it is one of the few intact and still very rich areas on the East side of the island. A road just above this Protected Area and right across from the Eco Reserve would be so destructive in this small valley. You just can’t separate the two hillsides from the marshlands below. Today, I sent the following letter.



BROOM BLITZ

Broom Blitz on Mt. Tzouhalem ER. **Saturday May 29** and **Saturday June 5**. Meet at Cowichan Community Centre, in Duncan, at 9:30 a.m., under the Hockey Stick, or at Kingsview Road, off Maple Bay Road, at 9:30 a.m. Bring lunch, drinking water, work gloves, and loppers (if you have them).

For more information call the ER Warden Sid Watts at 746-5768 or Diana Angus at 746-6659. ■



Dear Cathy McGregor,
re: Claud Elliot Creek

Last October I went with Kirby Villeneuve, Parks Supervisor for Northern Vancouver Island, to look at one of the newest Protected Areas Claud Elliot Creek, in the Tsitika drainage area. I am very familiar with this area because I am the Volunteer Warden for the Claud Elliot Ecological Reserve which lies on the slope directly above the new Protected Area.

This area was initially put forward as a candidate for Protected Status by our local naturalists group – the Mitlenatch Field Naturalists, an affiliate of the Federation of B.C. Naturalists. We initially proposed a larger area, which was subsequently given the highest ranking in the Vancouver Island Core process. This high ranking came about for several reasons:

- i) Even though small by stream standards, the Claud Elliot system ranks among the ten most valuable fish streams on Vancouver Island. When we were there last October the sockeye salmon run was in full progress. I have seen the creek on past occasions literally full with spawning salmon and with black bear wandering the banksides – almost a vision from times past, at least for Vancouver Island. This drainage system also contains one of the few remaining viable summer steelhead runs.
- ii) The proposed Protected area encompassed an old fishing corridor, stretching from Claud Elliot Lake along the creek and eventually into Fickle Lake. On both sides of the creek there are wetlands – some of the most valuable and extensive that I have seen on the North Island. They are home to an elk herd (we saw maybe 10 on our last visit with Kirby Villeneuve, including two magnificent bull elk), black bear, deer, and the occasional wolf.
- iii) The area forms a perfect pocket wilderness, encompassing the two lakes, creek and surrounding wetlands, bounded by the Claud Elliot Ecological Reserve on the north west side and on the south east by a steep mountain side characterized by steep stream gullies emptying into Fickle Lake and the adjoining wetlands. Our initial, larger proposal included this mountainside.

Unfortunately, our original larger proposed Protected Area was whittled down, as a result of discussions from which we were excluded. This left the steep mountain side in the MB Tree Farm Licence. Now MB wishes to push an existing road further along the east side of Claud Elliot Creek to access the timber above the wetlands of the Protected Area. They have requested permission to put a road through part of the new and already much smaller Protected Area as this is the cheapest route to access this timber. From conversations with both Kirby Villeneuve and Bill Woodhouse of your Miracle Beach office, I understand that permission to go through the Park has been turned down and that there has been a request for further studies on viewscapes from the Protected Area and on terrain stability.

Those of us who are familiar with this area are very happy with the decision made by your Parks Department. As Kirby Villeneuve has pointed out, there are tremendous wildlife viewing opportunities in this area if handled carefully. At the present time a short, rough trail leads down to Claud Elliot Lake from a Canfor logging road. When we accompanied Kirby Villeneuve on the recent site visit we put a canoe in there and were able to paddle across the lake and down the creek towards Fickle Lake. At the present time, even this much smaller Protected Area exhibits a true wilderness character surrounded as it is by slopes and mountains. There is presently no logging visible from the Park area, hence the importance of careful viewshed studies.

We anticipate that there may be some pressure exerted on your Department by the Ministry of Forests to allow a road through this new Park. After the recent example of a TimberWest road in Strathcona Park I am sure that public opinion would not look kindly on another incursion into a Protected Area. We would like to applaud your Parks Department people here for their recent decision in the Claud Elliot area. I would also like to comment on Kirby Villeneuve's enthusiasm and vision in defending park values. He is making a great effort to familiarize himself with the particular nature of each Protected Area. We hope you will support this recent decision. Thanking you,

Yours very truly,
Heather Kellerhals, Volunteer Warden ■

Prescribed Burn In Tranquille Ecological Reserve (#29)

BC Parks conducted a burn of approximately 60 hectares of Tranquille ecological reserve in April of this year. Parks staff were assisted by the BC Forest Service, Agriculture Canada and volunteers from the community in the planning and implementation of the burn.

Prescribed burning, to replace fire histories, is becoming an important science in British Columbia.

Fire can have a large effect on ecosystem assemblage, in the same vein a lack of fire dramatically influence a system. During this century, fire suppression activities have considerably increased fire intervals. In recent times, fires have been excluded for 30 to nearly 90 years in fire maintained ecosystems.

Prescribed burning, to replace fire histories, is becoming an important science in British Columbia. It is known that before European settlement that many areas were burned regularly by aboriginal peoples, who set frequent (5 – 20 year cycles) low intensity wild fires. These fires reduced fuel loads of forests near settlements to reduce fire hazard and insect problems, encouraged ungulate populations with improved browsing or increase the availability of important plants for food and materials.

Natural fires also contributed to changes in forest dynamics.

When a fire burns through the bark of a tree, but does not kill the tree, a fire scar is created, and every subsequent fire then leaves a mark on the scar. Dendrochronology is used to determine fire periodicity. Archival photographs, ash and pollen samples in lakes, soil cores and the accounts of early settlers and elders are also used. Fire dates have been recorded in the Dewdrop range (Tranquille location) from 1542 to 1967 when the last fire burned in the area. The mean fire interval for the region was 18.4 years.

When a system is subject to a disturbance regime for hundreds or thousands of years, it adapts. Ponderosa pine, with its thick fireproof bark, is very successful in areas where historically, fires have burned. Plants such as lodgepole pine depend on the heat of a fire to release the seeds from their cones. Conversely, Douglas fir is thin barked and shade loving, and succeeds in areas where fire is infrequent. Shade tolerant plants increase and shrub and herbs vegetation becomes less diverse and productive under conditions of fire suppression.

Species put at risk by forest in-growth in BC include the horned lark, vesper sparrow, Flammulated owl, yellow badger, and Columbia sharp-tailed grouse.

The burn in the Tranquille reserve was set to reduce the fuel hazard and potential for an extreme fire, and to help restore ecological balance. Successful fire suppression over the years has cause forest encroachment – movement of trees into adjacent grassland areas – impacting bluebunch

wheatgrass and artemesia populations. The Tranquille forest was also growing thick – forest in-growth – changing from an open Ponderosa pine stand to a forest mixed with Douglas fir. The canopy in these conditions closes, and the floor is shaded – changing the environment in favor a different species composition. Species put at risk by forest in-growth in BC include the horned lark, vesper sparrow, Flammulated owl, yellow badger, and Columbia sharp-tailed grouse.

This research will have applications for the future, in helping us to better understand our historic landscapes, and build our understanding of fire restoration and consequence.

Agriculture Canada has set aside research plots to monitor changes from the burn. Similar research is currently being conducted in Haynes Lease Ecological Reserve (#100), where wildfire spread through nearly half of the reserve in 1991. There are six research permits for this reserve, with scientists measuring a variety of responses – regeneration of wildflowers, grasses and weeds, soil seed banks, invertebrate response and use by animals. This research will have applications for the future, in helping us to better understand our historic landscapes, and build our understanding of fire restoration and consequence. ■

Nichola Gerts

Nichola Gerts is part of the Landowner Contact team that will be working to establish stewardship agreements with landowners in the East Kootenays this summer, thanks to generous support from the Vancouver Foundation.

Yes, Your Voice Sometimes is Heard in Ottawa !

For 21 years, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has been working to annually update Canada's list of species at risk of extinction. Key to the Committee's success has been its foundation in science-based expertise. The Committee includes a number of independent scientists, representatives of the conservation community, and federal, provincial, and territorial government scientists. This diverse and balanced composition of government and non-government expertise has ensured an effective, impartial process for designating species at risk.

Unfortunately, proposed changes to COSEWIC's structure would upset this balance and impede its ability to function as an impartial committee. In September 1998, Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial wildlife ministers decided to remove the voting rights from the Chairs of the scientific sub-committees, who are largely academic scientists. Should these changes be implemented, all voting positions will be filled by those employed or selected by government. Traditionally based on sound science, the assessment of extinction risk for species could well become, or be seen to become, subject to political influence.

In mid-March, FER, sent a letter to Ottawa that stated our concerns over the proposed restructuring of COSEWIC. The letter was in response to a formal campaign organized by the Canadian Nature Federation, Canadian Wildlife Federation, and World Wildlife Fund.

The campaign clearly had an affect, as witnessed by the following letter from campaign headquarters:

Good news for Canada's endangered species

Canada's wildlife ministers have reversed their initial decision to bar independent scientists from determining which species are at risk of extinction. The voting rights have been reinstated to the Chairs of COSEWIC's scientific sub-committees (COSEWIC is the committee responsible for developing the national list of species at risk). This decision was due in large part to the fantastic efforts of Canadians in demonstrating their support for scientific integrity in wildlife conservation. Refer to the Globe and Mail article below for more information.

THANK YOU to all who supported the sign-on letter for a scientific listing process. There is no longer a need to forward the letter to the wildlife ministers, as they have already made the requested changes.

The federal government will soon be tabling endangered species legislation. The Canadian Nature Federation will be working strategically to mobilize action at critical stages throughout the legislative process. Please let me know if your organization is interested in participating in our endangered species campaign by responding to this e-mail (species@cfm.ca). Participation will be varied and flexible (i.e. writing letters, education, meeting with MPs,). We will send participants regular electronic updates to keep them informed of the status of the legislation and opportunities for action.

Marc Johnson, Canadian Nature Federation

B.C. ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

The Friends of Ecological Reserves have supported the nomination of Harold and Joan King by the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society for a BC Environmental Award.

I first met Harold and Joan King 16 years ago at the Osoyoos Hayne's Lease Ecological Reserve. The Kings were (and still are) volunteer wardens of the reserve and I was the Warden Coordinator. We decided that part of the Reserve needed to be fenced and the Kings with all the local naturalists provided their volunteer labour for this enormous task. I'll never forget Harold King on his tractor delivering fence posts and wire to all the crew.

Besides being the wardens of the Ecological Reserve, the Kings are active in the Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society, driving from Osoyoos every month to attend the meetings – they never miss.

This long term dedication to the Ecological Reserve and to the Parks Society is essential to the healthy integrity of our environment. The Kings don't just talk about the natural world. They are out there day after day, month after month, year after year enhancing, preserving and protecting the environment. ■

Lynne Milnes



Web Sites of Interest

“Marine Region 15: Northeast Pacific”

Miles Croom, Robert Wolotira and William Henwood assembled this site as “A Report to the World Bank Environment Department”. It is an excellent and comprehensive review of the marine resources of this region. Topics include detailed descriptions of the biogeography, oceanography and coastal geography and geology of the northeast quadrant of the Pacific, extending from Panama to the Aleutians. These descriptions are followed by reports of the various ecosystems as well as a section on species diversity. The latter includes a list of threatened and endangered species as well as estimates of bird population sizes for the endemic species. The final section contains a detailed description of Canadian and American Marine Protection Areas. This site is perfect for anyone who need access to scientific information about the marine waters around BC.
<http://www.environment.gov.au/librariy/pubs/mpa/chap15.html>

“The Birder Homepage”

This site is a must for any birder, avid or occasional. It contains up to date checklists for any Canadian province or American state. There are comprehensive subsections. “Birding”, for example, has the addresses for bird-watchers chatlines as well as links to related sites. Trivia, photos and dates of bird conferences and festivals are found in “Fun and Games”. “Birder’s Mall” has sites for purchase of equipment and software, plus a list of Bed and Breakfasts and tour operators that cater to birdwatchers.
<http://www.birder.com>

“State of the Environment Report”

The BC Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks maintains the site which is a comprehensive review of the state of our air, water and land. Sub-sections include “Protected Areas”, “Wildlife Populations”, “Species at Risk” and “Groundwater”. This is an excellent site for people wanting hard, recently acquired data. For example, “Wildlife Populations” contains estimates of population size and status (increasing, stable or decreasing) in both graphic and tabular format for all of the major mammal species in BC.
<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/spp/soerpt>

“Sounds that go Bump in the Night”

This site is for the person who has a sound card and an interest in the sounds of nature. Major sections include the sounds of insects, Costa Rica and North American songbirds. A great deal of fun. Sounds may also be purchased on CDs.
<http://www.naturesongs.com>

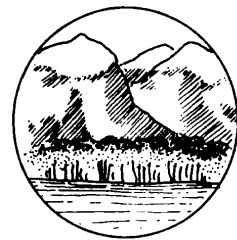
Recovery – An Endangered Species Newsletter

This newsletter is published by the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada in order to provide information and views on species at risk in Canada. In particular, the newsletter focuses on recovery efforts underway throughout the country to protect and conserve our wildlife species in jeopardy.
<http://www.ec.gc.ca/cws-scf/es/recovery/archive.html>

“Invasive Plants of Canada”

The (IPCAN) project that grew out of an initiative in 1991 by the Habitat Conservation Division, Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) to compile information on invasive exotic plants of wetland and upland habitats in Canada, provides a wealth of information and insights into species that are presently of local or regional concern but which may become of national concern if suitable monitoring and control are not initiated.
<http://www.infoweb.magi.com/~ehaber/ipcan.html>

The Log



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