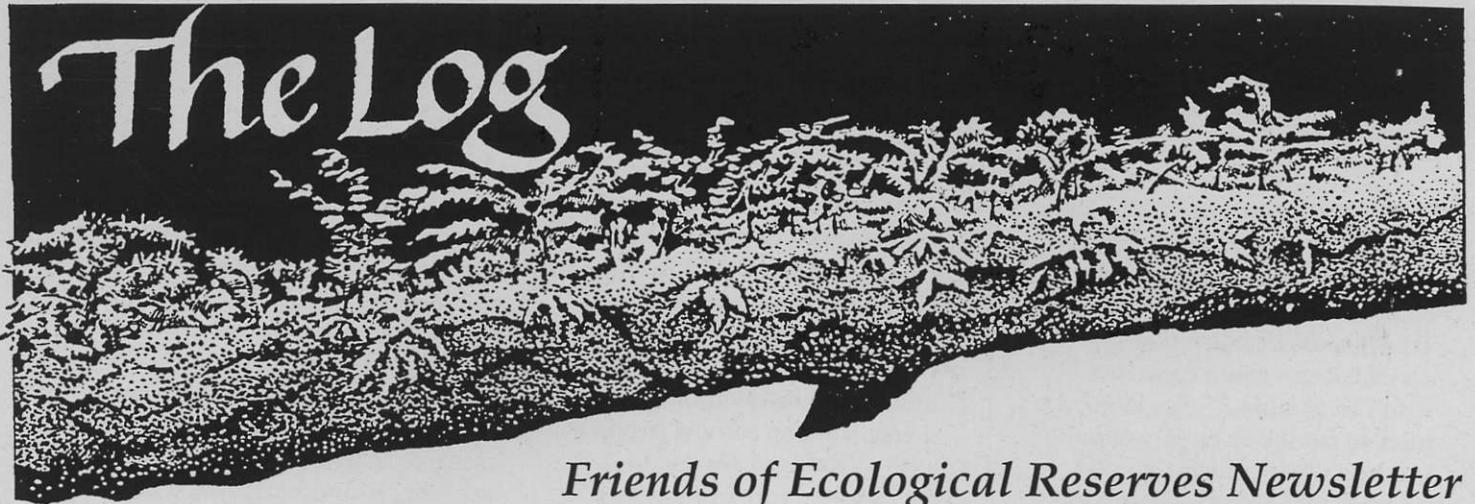


The Log



Friends of Ecological Reserves Newsletter

FOR ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

SPRING 1997

FIELD REPORT

The urban ecological reserve

A tour of the University Endowment Lands Ecological Reserve

A small party met up with University Endowment Lands (UEL) Ecological Reserve warden Terry Taylor and his friend Terry Slack at the Kerrisdale edge of Point Grey, Vancouver's western reaches, last January 5. This was not long after the Big Blizzard. Snow was still deep on the much-used trails of Pacific Spirit Regional Park. Much of the UEL and all of the ER are within the park, to which Terry Taylor gave us a trail map. No trails appear to cross the reserve, but little paths disappear into the dense second-growth forest. Terry Taylor shows us interesting lichens and explains how they work, points out the incidence of mistletoe in the

hemlock, and explains how the volunteer custodians try to minimize some of the myriad impacts the urban reserve is subject to. For example, those inflicted by go-anywhere mountain bike riders. Terry Taylor drags 'n' drops brush across the trails — serious bulk does slow down bikers. Dogs running through the reserve's two little creeks cause worse disturbance to the ecosystem. There are nice ecological reserve signs at the boundary, but signs are needed asking people to keep their dogs out. This is Terry Slack's domain. A career commercial fisher, he sold his licence and is trying to "put something back, after we took so much out." He takes culverts out and restores lost creeks. He tries to get others interested in the challenge of nursing ecosystems back to health. In this locale his care is for a population of a certain animal — he does not like to have this publicised for fear of attracting people bent on destruction — that are uniquely adapted to the low-oxygen environment typical on the south slope of Point Grey in summer, when the water all but stops flowing, trapping them in

the reserve. In this adaptation the species is likely rare. The shortage of water is such that, so soon after being identified, the animal is already endangered. Concerted efforts to get more water from Musqueam Creek, to get a well



installed — *some* way to run more water into the reserve, have not yet paid off. Terry Slack is convinced, nonetheless, that such species will prove well-adapted to the effects of global warming. He tries to get graduate students interested in studying it.

We come to the southern corner of the reserve and cross South West Marine Drive to the Simon Fraser monument and lookout. We stand at the edge of the cliff at the very tip of the lip of the mouth of the

Please turn to page 4

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Notes from the Friends' annual meeting

April 27, 1997

Pen and Betty Brown's home overlooks the Strait of Juan de Fuca, near the point of embarkation for the morning's field trip to Trial Islands Ecological Reserve, off Oak Bay's south coast, led by Adolf and Oluna Ceska. A good turnout for the Friends' annual meeting was the result.

President Cheryl Gore reported on the past year. The year ended on an upswing of enthusiasm thanks to a generous grant from the Eden Conservation Trust and the launch of our grasslands inventory. Treasurer Lynne Milnes circulated the auditor's report, noting a positive financial outlook. Pen, membership secretary, reported stable membership of 150

(plus 80 wardens as "honourary" members) and the assumption of the membership rolls by Tom Gillespie. Office manager Peter Grant reported publishing two newsletters, linking up with the Grasslands Conservation Council, and acquiring an activist president. Cheryl introduced planned changes to the constitution (see the separate notice to members) and announced that there will be an extraordinary meeting called in September to consider the changes. In the election of directors for 1997, there were 13 candidates for 12 positions. After discussion the meeting decided to allow for expansion of the board, and Steve Ruttan was voted in as provisional

alternate director. Lynne presented the 1997 budget and the meeting adopted it. Among several grasslands projects in the budget are the inventory, landowner contact, and a new placemat. The meeting considered and approved funding applications for sea otter research in Checleset Bay Ecological Reserve and harlequin duck surveys in the lower Stein Valley. A Fall field trip to Race Rocks and broom pulling parties to Brackman and Trial islands are planned.

The meeting adjourned and was followed by a sumptuous pot luck supper.

Many thanks to Pen and Betty for hosting!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks for your support!

An ongoing concern for non-profit organizations is where the funds will come from to support the work of the society. We continue to look at ways to meet our constitutional obligations, the first of which is "to promote the establishment, management and maintenance of ecological reserves in British Columbia, including the acquisition of land for ecological reserves." We consciously keep our administrative costs to a minimum so that your support, through membership dues and generous donations, assists local land acquisition initiatives, academic research in areas of ecological significance, and major initiatives — currently, the Grasslands Inventory project.

This year, after much debate, your board of directors decided to raise membership fees. Generally, this brings howls of protest from members, who find their discre-

tionary dollars already stretched to the limit. However, we have not raised membership fees for several years and have tried to do it in a way that will not cause financial hardship. So, beginning in the new calendar year, individual and family, and schools/library/affiliate memberships will increase by \$5; a new category — students and seniors — remains at the current fee for individuals (\$15). This small increase will assist in meeting costs associated with your membership.

We are also actively pursuing other fund-raising initiatives — field trips to local ecological reserves are always popular and the third in the series of our beautiful placemats will be available for Christmas giving. As well, we hope to establish a modest lecture series in the fall, featuring some of the research projects we have funded in the past. Watch future issues of *The Log* for details.

While we continue to make application to major funders, we recognize and give our heartfelt thanks to you loyal members and supporters without whom we would not be able to fulfill our mandate. Thank you all!

Cheryl Gore
President

Dues to change

By a resolution passed at the FER annual meeting, the membership dues will change as of calendar 1998, as follows:

Individual	\$20
Family	\$25
Student (under 17 or with student card)	\$15
Senior	\$15
School, library, affiliate	\$25
Mail to addresses outside Canada, add	\$10

PROTECTED ECOSYSTEMS

Suspense at the Sooke Hills press conference

It was exciting to gather with other interested parties on January 28 for the official news of the B.C. Government's decision regarding the Greater Victoria Water District surplus lands. Unaware that printed copies of the announcement plus details were available on a table near me, I waited with naively baited breath for finance minister Andrew Petter's words of vindication.

In making a presentation to the special commission last June for FER, we stressed the importance of acting now to ensure a natural heritage for the future, especially since the land in question need neither be purchased nor further studied for its value as a sensitive ecosystem. The urgency of action was implicit in the low figures indicating the state of protection in the biogeoclimatic subzone variants represented in the Sooke Hills: in the Coastal Western Hemlock Zone, a mere 1.66 per cent of the total area in the CWHxml variant

is protected; in the Coastal Douglas Fir Zone, the CDFm variant, on the eastern periphery of the Sooke Hills: less than 3 per cent. We asked the commission to con-

sider the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory and CRD Parks' assesment, which identified many endangered plant communities, like the Idaho fescue - junegrass - bunch grass community. How important it is to maintain connections between protected areas. A large ecosystem which allows for the migration of species is much more valuable than fragmented ones that can actually hasten the extinction of localized species, or inhibit migration in the midst of climate change.

How important it is to maintain connections between protected areas. A large ecosystem which allows for the migration of species is much more valuable than fragmented ones that can actually hasten the extinction of localized species, or inhibit migration in the midst of climate change.

The minister satisfied all our concerns, laying stress on the importance of conservation biology. First, the Sooke Hills will remain a semi-wilderness sea-to-sea park — the total preservation option proposed by the Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

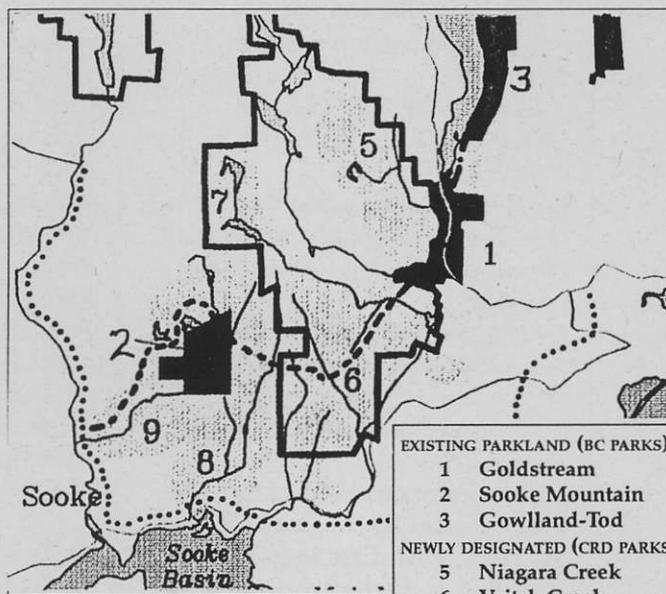
The park, 4 900 hectares in size, will maintain biological diversity, provide a natural corridor for mammals as well as provide greenbelt, recreational corridors and other benefits. The new park will be administered by CRD (Capital Regional District) Parks. It's a major commitment to the land and to the quality of life and water for people in Victoria.

The minister also announced replacement of the GVWD board of directors by a regional water commission. Raising the Sooke Lake reservoir will be delayed pending a public process and district-wide water conservation.

Cheers of relief greeted each statement and without much delay champagne was uncorked to celebrate the three protected watersheds (Veitch, Niagara and Waugh) and the two, Charters and Ayum, that remain unprotected.

FER wrote to environment, lands and parks minister Cathy McGregor about long-standing ecological reserve proposal (ERP) #320, to protect floral communities on Ragged Mountain and Buck Hill in Metchosin. They're among the dozen smaller parcels and two watersheds WCWC is now working to get added to the park. The special commission recommended a review of these very lands.

Mary Rannie



Your 1997 FER

Board of Directors

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| President | Cheryl Gore |
| Vice-President | Peggy Frank |
| Secretary | Mary Rannie |
| Treasurer | Lynne Milnes |
| Membership Secretary | R. P. (Pen) Brown |
| Directors | Syd Cannings |
| | Sue Carr |
| | Trudy Chatwin |
| | Bristol Foster |
| | Evelyn Hamilton |
| | Vicky Husband |
| | Briony Penn |
| Steve Ruttan | (alternate) |

Congrats!

Congratulations to Sue Carr and Syd Cannings, whose daughter Madeleine Dorrie Carr Cannings was born on May 4, weighing 8 lb 12 oz!

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Meeting to amend the Constitution of Friends of Ecological Reserves

1 pm, Saturday, September 21, 1997

Faculty Common Room, Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific, Metchosin

To enact changes to the Friends' constitution and by-laws, Section 9 of the Bylaws states that:

"The Constitution and Bylaws of the Society may be amended at any general meeting of the Society by a Special Resolution passed by a majority of not less than 75 percent of the voting members present.

"Proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws must be placed in writing before all Members of the Society at least 90 days before the general meeting at which the amendments are to be presented."

And Section 4 states that "ten members at any duly called general meeting shall constitute a quorum."

The meeting will follow our September field trip to Race Rocks Ecological Reserve.

(Directions to Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific are in the field trip announcement opposite.)

In the following proposed changes to the constitution and bylaws, deletions are indicated in italics and with [brackets]. Additions and changes are in bold.

These changes are proposed to the ARTICLES:

2. The purposes of the Society are:

(b) To promote understanding, communication and cooperation between the people of British Columbia and [delete: *the Ecological Reserves Unit of*] the Government of British Columbia.

[*(d) Delete: To assist the Ecological Reserves Unit in publicizing its activities, its needs and its offerings.*]

(e) To bring to the assistance of the [delete: *Ecological Reserves Unit*] government on a voluntary basis the talents and abilities of the

public at large, particularly with regards to volunteer wardens.

The following changes are proposed to Section 6 of the BYLAWS:

6. BOARD OF DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(a) There shall be a Board of Directors of 12 people which shall be made up [delete: *as hereinafter provided*]:

(1) *those persons elected at the Annual General Meeting by the Society,*

(2) *the Coordinator of the Ecological Reserves Unit]*

of those persons elected from the membership by those members of the society who are in good standing and who are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting of the Society.

(b) Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be called by authority of the Directors. At least 14 days notice must be given in writing to all members of the Board of Directors stating date, time and place, also items of business to be considered. **Four** Directors shall constitute a quorum.

(c) (1) The Officers of the Society shall be a President, a [delete: *First*]

UEL Ecological Reserve (from p.1)

Fraser River. Hundreds of log booms are tied up below, awaiting their trip to the mills. Terry Slack points to a part of the shoreline.

"Fifty years ago my family had seven float houses moored there." They lived on the water and worked on the water, sorting logs. You could say Terry Slack knows the area.

Thanks to Terry and Terry for the tour. Good to know "our" reserve is under such tender stewardship!

Vice-President, [delete: *a Second Vice-President*], a **Recording Secretary, a Membership Secretary,** and a Treasurer, to be elected . . .

The following changes are proposed to Section 7 of the BYLAWS:

[Delete: *(d) The Second Vice-President shall preside at all meetings as defined in (b) in the absence of the President and the First Vice-President and shall render assistance to the President in the execution of his/her duties.*]

(e) The **Recording Secretary** shall conduct the correspondence of the Society, shall be responsible for the keeping of the records and minutes . . .

(f) The **Membership Secretary**, in addition to acting as a representative. . . shall be responsible for collecting the membership fees . . .

Cheryl Gore

President

Members may obtain copies of the Friends' constitution for \$1 at the meeting, \$3 if mailed within Canada. Please use the enclosed form to order.

In the mail

May 1, 1997

Dear Friends,

Just a short note to thank you for getting me over to Trial Island safely (and back!) and for letting me see the amazing place in full bloom.

I do know a little about plants, especially mosses and liverworts. If you ever want a bryophyte "sub-interpreter" I would be delighted to share what knowledge I have.

Sincerely,

Ross Priddle

Victoria (250) 595-1893
yb396@freenet.victoria.bc.ca

Field trip
Race Rocks Ecological Reserve
Saturday, September 21

Warden Garry Fletcher and students at Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific will guide the Friends to this reserve, beleaguered by fame and threatened with removal of nearby lightkeepers.

We'll embark from the Pearson College dock at 9 am. Space is limited to 23 FER members. Cost is \$15. *Please register* by contacting the office manager at (250) 595-4813 or at pgrant@islandnet.com or at Box 8477, Victoria V8W 3S1.

While September usually has fine weather, the possibility of rough conditions makes the trip conditional.

Bring heavy rain gear; boots; lunch. Hot lunches may be ordered from the college cafeteria at a modest price; please sign up when registering, inform us if your dining plans change, and pay in the cafeteria.

The three-hour trip will be followed by a general meeting of FER and then by a board meeting.

Getting there: Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific is on *Pearson College Drive, Metchosin*.

From the Colwood overpass on Highway 1, drive west on Highway 14 and bear left onto Metchosin Road. Drive south to Happy Valley Road and proceed through the T intersection onto William Head Road. At about 4 km, Pearson College Drive is on the right. The parking lot is at the end of the road below the college.

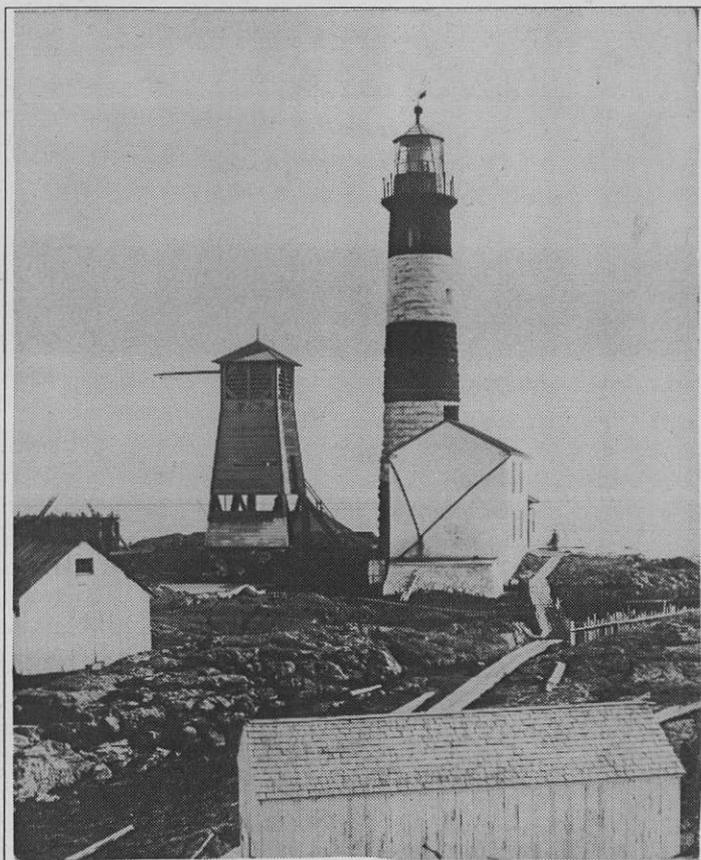
Telephone: 391-2411.

Garry reports that the Canadian Coast Guard was prevailed on to postpone closure of the Race Rocks light station. Thanks to an anonymous donor,

Race Rock foreshore not used by the station. Until the college has a lease in hand, it cannot undertake to raise the \$1.2 million it seeks to endow the education centre and operate the light station.

There may be a need to create a multi-zone special management area on Great Race, with the area of buildings, lawns, gardens and walkways that Pearson College wants to lease separated from the ecological reserve by an upper-shore buffer zone and from the CCG area, including the tower.

Whale watching tours are posing a real threat to the continued presence of killer whales in the reserve, to judge from a lightkeeper's recent report. One pod stayed for two hours in the absence of tour boats. Another pod vacated the area when chased by "about 35 boats."



Pearson College was able to keep the light keepers on the light after the March 31 deadline and contribute to the management of the station for a year. The station overlooks wildlife habitat — sea mammals and seabirds, high-current intertidal life — that has become a boating and diving destination of unsettlingly commercial proportions. Pearson College's proposal would transfer parts of the station to the Province for lease to the college to run as a marine education centre. One element in the equation is the designation of parts of the Great

The Friends will be staging benefits for the endowment of the Race Rocks marine education centre. We have engaged sea otter researcher Jane Watson for shows in Nanaimo and Victoria this fall.

About our field trips

THE FRIENDS TAKE GREAT CARE TO ENSURE OUR FIELD TRIPS ARE SAFE AND ENJOYABLE.

HOWEVER, NEITHER THE SOCIETY NOR ITS MEMBERS WILL BE LIABLE FOR INJURY, MISHAP OR PRIVATION INCURRED FOR ANY REASON

BCARS HP 1190

WE WILL REMEMBER

David William Rayment An ordinary hero, a great guy

On May 21, 1997 David Rayment, dear partner of Peggy Frank, the Friends' vice president, was tragically killed in a crane accident in Ganges Harbour on Salt Spring Island.

Dave loved to fish and hunt. He built things and made beautiful turned wooden bowls — the bigger the bowl the more interesting it was for him. He was one of those guys who wore jeans and a T-shirt and drove a diesel truck. He always had a big smile and twinkling eyes and a heart so big that he touched everyone he met.

A week prior to his death, Dave had purchased another plane which he planned to restore. Dave liked nothing better than to take off from the little airstrip on Salt Spring Island with Peggy, and fly to remote beaches or glaciers. "Indiana Dave" as his friends called him, had skis for his plane which he could download if the terrain called for it, and big tires that would easily roll onto beaches.

Four years ago, Dave was one of seven divers who risked their lives searching underwater for the

occupants of a capsized boat in Active Pass. He was awarded the Governor General's Medal of Bravery for his efforts, but Dave, a private man of few words, rarely talked about the event. He did not consider himself brave. "I just happened to be there," he said.

A Jack-of-all-trades during his short 43 years, Dave was a competitive marksman, commercial fisherman, teacher, diver, pilot, sailor, woodworker, welder, adventurer, and friend to many.

"Indiana Dave" returns to the sea and the air which he loved.

"To risk life is to risk dying."

A fund to support the development of small businesses on Salt Spring Island is being set up in memory of Dave. Donations can be made out to the Salt Spring Island Foundation, #2 — 101 Purvis Lane, Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 2S5. Please direct the donation to the Dave Rayment Salt Spring Island Small Business Development Fund.

Lynne Milnes

Our heartfelt condolences go to Peggy.

Patrick G. Strachan

Our member Mrs. Jean Strachan wrote to tell us of the death of her husband Patrick on November 11, 1996 at the age of 88. Mr. and Mrs. Strachan were the first people in B.C. to guarantee future protection of a donated park using legislation that allows non-government groups to hold covenants. In December 1995, Mr. and Mrs. Strachan donated their three-quarter-hectare property in Langford to the city for a wildflower preserve, with the Nature Conservancy of Canada

appointed to hold a conservation covenant to monitor the city's long-term use of the property. The Strachans bought the rocky, upland property on Setchfield Road in 1942 for \$650 and moved into a "two-room shack with no plumbing, water or heat." Mrs. Strachan's opinion of the property has improved since then. "I have many beautiful flowers in the Spring — Easter lilies, *Camas dodecatheon*, and my pride and joy, quite a few *Calypso bulbosa*, the fairyslipper orchid."

Michael Humphries

Amelia Humphries reponded to our request for information about her late husband Michael. (Both took life memberships with the Friends in 1984.) A World War II fighter pilot, Mike Humphries renewed his pilot's licence in 1987 and bought a Cessna 172. With a wing-mounted video camera he flew more than 25,000 miles between 1990 and 1995, filming every ecologically significant coastal watershed between the south coast and Alaska. In 1995, at age 72, he was killed in a plane crash.

"I have yet on my shelves over 100 8-mm video films of those mid-coast to north coast valleys and watershed systems he had planned to catalog the winter following his fatal crash — to leave for the libraries, he said, as a record of what once was.

"It's a vast coastline and oh, what you can see from the air — the beauty, the vastness, the wholeness, and yes, the destruction.

"The Raincoast documentaries "North Among the Fjords" and especially "Legacy" have won award after international award and "Legacy" following the Banff Film Festival (November 1996) is being shown internationally.

"Another job left undone was our desire to assist the local Streamkeepers who have worked tirelessly to protect the remaining small salmon streams on the mid-east coast of Vancouver Island — areas around Qualicum Beach and Parksville. A good winter project — the north coast then inaccessible — we could choose our days and before the geese headed north again have aerial video surveys of every stream from source to the Strait of Georgia. The value of aerial surveys with video camera is you can see it all, become intimately acquainted with the behaviour of streams — and of man."

Communications notes

We will begin offering electronic posting of The Log to E-mail addresses. Members who would prefer paperless publication should check the box in the enclosed form.

Canada Post has accepted the Friends' application to register as a publication. This saves postage but requires a make-over of the newsletter cover. Beginning with the next issue, the Log will be mailed flat without envelopes.

The Friends have signed onto several Email newsgroups. BC Wild compiles excellent daily B.C. newspaper summaries of environment and land use issues. Contact houligan@helix.net. The Landwatch discussion group, which the BCEN Forest Caucus uses, runs lengthy discussions and reports — like Sierra Legal Defence's shattering study of widespread non-compliance with Forest Practices Code regulations in logging operations. That's at landwatch@onenw.org. Someone with a modem and an interest in keeping abreast of breaking environmental issues could keep the Friends informed via The Log. An active member who's up to the strenuous challenge of work on the front lines in the war in the woods could take part in the Forest Caucus. Contact coordinator Jim Cooperman (who also edits the excellent BC Environmental Report magazine) at coop@mail.netshop.net

The Friends contemplated opening a website on the Internet. The potential for electronic publishing is exciting. Our message could reach a much larger audience and material relevant to ecological reserves would circulate far quicker than is possible in print. We could sell our placemats worldwide! Start-up and running costs are prohibitive for now.

Board Members at Risk

Duties and liabilities of directors of non-profit societies

I attended this seminar, put on as a public service by the Victoria Real Estate Board in January. Presenter Mike Mangan, formerly a trial lawyer, was an excellent speaker. He pointed out to the audience of about 100 that there are some 50,000 directors of not-for-profit societies in B.C. Doubtless many are not aware of their legal duties and liabilities.

In common law, judges view board members as *fiduciaries* — people who "because of their position, must act primarily for someone else's benefit." As a fiduciary you owe your society these duties:

- full disclosure
- complete loyalty — no conflict of interest; confidentiality
- skill and diligence

Mr. Mangan elaborated on the terms set forth in Section 25 of B.C.'s Society Act:

"(1) A director of a society shall
"(a) act honestly and in good faith and in the best interests of the society and
"(b) exercise the care, diligence and skill of a reasonably prudent person in exercising his powers and performing his functions as a director."

From the notes:

"Honesty: tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; be completely candid with other board members and totally honest with the society's members

"The best interests of the society: always put the society's interests ahead of your own. Ask: What would the members expect me to do in the best interests of the society?

"Loyalty: avoid conflicts of

interest; don't put yourself in the position where what's best for you personally differs from what's in the best interests of your organization...

"Duty of care": act carefully; be cautious; use common sense

"Diligence: be thorough; don't rely on other board members to take care of things; you have the right to be kept informed of the society's affairs; to inspect your society's records; to receive motions and minutes of meetings.

"Duty to manage: maintain formal records and important documents; hold meetings with all necessary notices sent to members on time

Regarding "activities beyond the society's powers," Section 32 of the society Act is very important:

"(1) The funds and property of a society shall be used and dealt with only for its purposes in accordance with its bylaws."

"Board members are personally liable for actions outside the society's powers or their authority as directors.

"It is critical to have copies of the society's constitution and bylaws and read them" — and to read the Society Act of B.C.

"How to limit your risks: act defensively; attend board meetings; ask questions; if you dissent, insist that the minutes record it...."

Seminars can be provided where required for any number of people. The 40-page booklet contains the essential material of the seminar and is available separately for \$20, \$4 to participants. Contact Mike Mangan Seminars Ltd. at (604) 682-3319.

Pen Brown

GRASSLANDS

Empire Valley Ranch

Empire Valley Ranch, an 11,332-hectare privately-owned ranch surrounded by Churn Creek Protected Area, west of the Fraser River near Gang Ranch, has been purchased by a consortium of companies and is currently being logged. The ranch is on the market once again and must be purchased to ensure its grassland - ranching values are protected.

Churn Creek Protected Area was established in February, 1996, with the intention that Empire Valley Ranch would be purchased and added to the protected area.

The ranch was up for sale for \$6.5 million, yet appraisals estimated the market value at around \$2 million.

It was sold in April 1997 to a consortium of companies for an undisclosed amount. (The deal reported in the last issue of *The Log* fell through.) The buyers have started to log. Principal interests are Anderson Lindaas Logging Ltd. of Burns Lake and Vesco Contracting Ltd. of Prince George. Anderson Lindaas recently purchased and logged Wiggins Ranch, south of Dog Creek, on the east side of the Fraser. Logging practices were very poor; steep roads were constructed and timber removed on steep terrain. The grasslands were significantly impacted during road construction and timber removal.

The ranch is listed on the market once again. The owners may have overestimated the value of the timber or encountered high costs in transporting the logs to mill.

The Cariboo Tribal Council's public information campaign enlisted the assistance of the Kamloops television media for coverage that aired locally.

The BC Grasslands Conservation Council is urging the BC Government to help buy the Empire Valley Ranch to ensure it remains a working ranch with intact grassland values, including many rare and endangered species.

from dispatches by
Audra Fast and Nichola Gerts

To David Zirnhelt, MLA, re: Empire Valley

May 28, 1997

David Zirnhelt
MLA, Cariboo South
Parliament Buildings, Victoria

Dear Mr. Zirnhelt:

It has come to our attention that the Empire Valley Ranch, adjacent to the Churn Creek Protected Area, in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region, has been sold to a Prince George forest company, whose principals intend to strip the timber off the property and sell the ranch at a loss or else resell the ranch at a profit. This is a matter of the greatest concern to the conservation community interested in protecting remnants of British Columbia's vanishing grasslands. Empire Valley is of key significance to future conservation in the Cariboo-Chilcotin grasslands region.

We would like to remind you of the Province's commitments to buy the ranch and make it part of the Cariboo Chilcotin Protected Areas System.

The intent of the BC government was explicit in the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land Use Plan (CCLUP) of October 1994, creating the Churn Creek Protected Area, and the subsequent Implementation Process Report (IPR), February 1995. The thrust of these decisions were as follows:

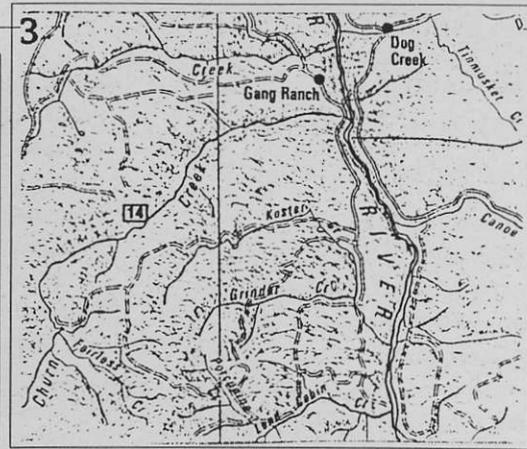
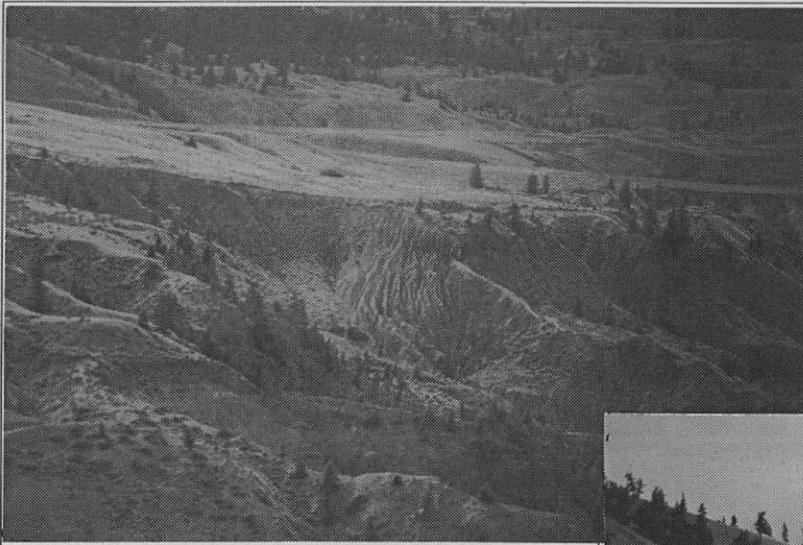
- The CCLUP assigned protected status to 12 per cent of the Cariboo-Chilcotin region — 17 new protected areas, increasing the system by 480,000 hectares
- One of the 17 new protected areas was the 36,100 ha. Churn Creek Protected Area, with rare grasslands, important wildlife values and high recreational opportunities
- The IPR for the CCLUP specified that in the Churn Creek Protected Area, placer gold mining leases would continue in force and provided for access and utility corridors and the continuation of "all existing uses"
- The IPR acknowledged that private lands within Churn

Creek's boundary would be included as part of the total for the protected area, with "the long term intention... that these lands... be acquired through negotiation to form part of the protected area."

Numerous representations have been made to the provincial government to purchase this property. While the Empire Valley Ranch has been for sale for the past year, we are not aware of any government response with offers to buy. We ask that you intervene to ensure the B.C. Government meet its obligations in the CCLUP.

Should the ranch remain alienated, we would like to know how the B.C. Government intends to make up the nearly 12,000-hectare shortfall in the Cariboo-Chilcotin Protected Areas System.

The Empire Valley Ranch is an extremely high priority for the conservation groups because of its biological significance and its role in preserving rare and endangered species....



Above: Empire Valley Ranch, showing distinctively eroded, benched grasslands, west side of Fraser River and side drainages south of Churn Creek

Right: Brown Lake, Empire Valley, en route S to ranch buildings

Above right: Map (1:600 000) of Empire Valley Ranch vicinity. Nearby Gang Ranch is about 80 km W of 100 Mile House

New land trust could play a role

Empire Valley Ranch has been bought and sold three times in six years. It appears the asking price kept moving up, staying ahead of the appraised value by a very significant amount. In hindsight, the B.C. Government would have done well to bite the bullet and purchase when the ranch was first available. It's possible the current buyer made a mistake about the real value of the ranch, or that the appraisal was wrong.

Governments are limited in the amount they can offer when purchasing land. They must obtain an appraisal by a qualified appraiser. An appraisal by the most qualified appraiser is only an estimate of the real value, and the owner of a property can set the asking price at any figure (s)he wishes. When the asking price exceeds the appraised value by a

significant amount, however, governments have a problem. Unless they choose to use their powers to expropriate, they must negotiate with the owner. If the owner is able to find a buyer who is prepared to pay more than government can justify, using their appraisal, the owner has every right to do so.

Is there a better way? Perhaps.

Land conservancy organizations, sometimes called *land trusts*, are usually not subject to the same rules or bureaucratic regulations as government. Typically conservancies can raise money from committed members of the public, corporations, foundations, and sometimes even government. Conservancy organizations are able to find innovative methods of funding purchases or recovering some of the land costs over time, including

the ability to actually operate a property — in this case, as a working ranch — if appropriate.

The newly-formed Land Conservancy of British Columbia (TLC) is one such organization. TLC is a membership organization with an interest in protecting plants, animals, natural communities and landscape features that represent the diversity of life on Earth, and areas of scientific, historical, cultural, scenic or compatible recreational value. Directors include Bill Turner (president), Briony Penn (treasurer) and seven others.

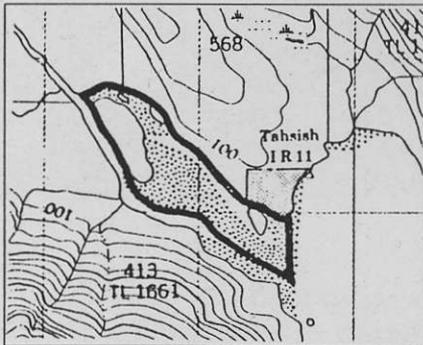
A partnership between TLC, other trusts and the Province could still play a part in saving this vital piece of B.C.'s grasslands.

Bill Turner

ECOLOGICAL RESERVES

Tahsish River ER bear kill trial update

Had a call from a man who said he was doing research for clients he didn't name. Did we have an opinion about the adequacy of signs posted on ecological reserves — say, with respect to warning people away from illegal uses? We allowed that it's a complex issue, involving much more than just the presence or absence of signs, on which subject we are ignoramus. The gentleman mentioned the name "Tahsis," by which we understood he meant the Tahsish River Ecological Reserve, in Kyuquot Sound, there being no ecological reserves on Tahsis Arm, in Nootka Sound.



Map (1:50 000) detail of ER #119 — Tahsish River in *Guide to Ecological Reserves in British Columbia*, 1992

Last year, we recalled, charges under the Ecological Reserve Act followed a bear kill in the estuary reserve. We suggested calling the conservation officer. Did we have an opinion on what would be adequate information posted about the ecological reserve? Hunters, we responded, would know that the Kwois and lower Tahsish valleys are premier wildlife habitat and, whether part of 10 829-hectare Tahsish-Kwois Provincial Park or the 70-ha. Tahsish River Ecological Reserve, closed to hunters.

By this time a light began to glimmer. Who were his clients? Some or all of the very persons who were charged. He began to

expatiate on his clients' "diligence" in seeking information about their destination. We broke off, pleading an engagement. The gentleman called back and left his number on our answering machine, but he did not return our message. Another person reports receiving a similarly disturbing call. We had to resort to the telephone book to discover that the caller, Dwight Whitson, is a lawyer in Victoria. We wanted to remind him that B.C.'s Wildlife Act requires non-resident bear hunters to be in the company of a resident with a permit issued by the regional environment authority. B.C. hunters' primary source of information about areas where hunting is restricted is the annual *B.C. Hunting and Trapping Regulations Synopsis*. Readers seeking information about ecological reserves find that besides prohibited hunting, trapping and fishing, the discharge or even possession of a firearm, bow or crossbow is prohibited. Readers are referred to the Ministry of Parks for "detailed maps and legal descriptions."

The trial of four men, Soren Ervig of Sooke, Jorgen Hansen of Vancouver, and "filmmakers" Poul Madsen and Jens Rafn of Denmark, is slated to begin on October 28 in Port Hardy.

Marmots take to the air

This article appeared in Briony's regular Wild Side column in Victoria's Monday Magazine in April.

Three years ago I wrote a Wild Side column on the Vancouver Island marmot, one of the world's most endangered mammals. At that time, the population was estimated to be between two to three hundred. The column was written as September frosts of 1994 were just touching the mountain tops between Nanaimo and Strathcona where they live. Half the marmots were heading down

traditional burrows in the sub-alpine meadows for their winter hibernation. The other half were heading down burrows constructed in clearcuts. What had been discovered was that marmots were mistaking clearcuts for meadows and the population was declining because of it.

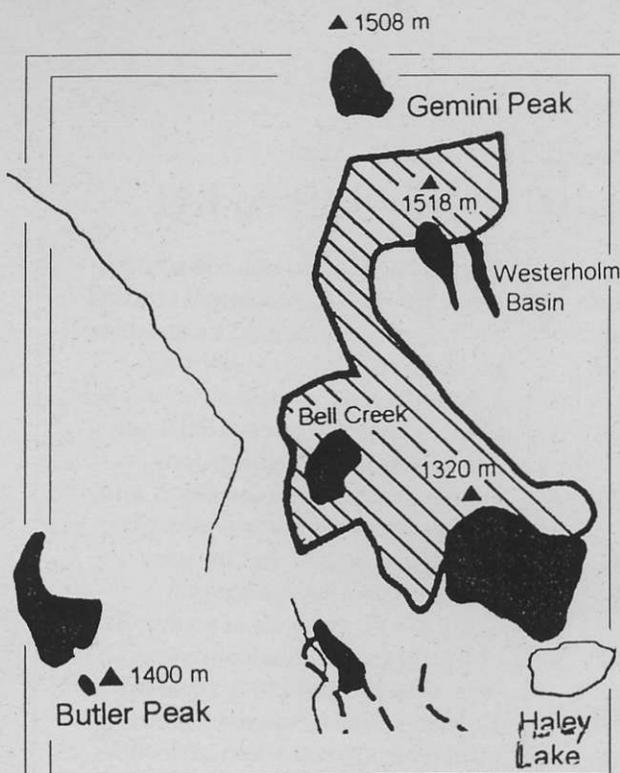
The 1994 story was pitched as a good news story because a strategy had been proposed for reintroducing these distinctive chocolate brown mammals into some of their traditional meadow colonies to spread the risk.

[An article in *The Log* (Winter 1994-95) included the above information.]

It's now 1997, the good news (sort of) is that a reintroduction was finally conducted in the summer of 1996 and one marmot at least was just spotted at the new site on April 22 having survived a winter. The bad news is that there aren't very many animals to transplant — numbers have dropped back to less than 150 — and the clearcuts still have 97 years to grow back if they're left alone.

Phase 1 of the recovery strategy involved helicopters transporting some marmots across those clearcuts to traditional marmot colony sites where they could re-establish themselves. In June of last year, six were transported to an traditional site. Four animals stayed on the site, the other two left, one of which was found dead. This week "Bob Dole" (named after a mean-spirited republican politician of the USA bent on destroying the Endangered Species Act of the United States) was spotted emerging out of his burrow, so one at least has survived.

The recovery team have proposed an intensive program of relocations, a pilot captive-breeding program at Toronto zoo and a captive-breeding facility constructed on Vancouver Island. When I spoke to Andrew this week



Above: Marmot colony location, vicinity of Haley Lake Ecological Reserve (not to scale) in Management Plan for Haley Lake Ecological Reserve, South Vancouver Island District, BC Parks, May 1996

about the expectations of the recovery plan he had three things to say. The population is at such a low point that there is nothing to lose and everything to gain by spreading the risk and moving some to slightly more protected areas like Strathcona Park. The Russians and Europeans saved their marmots by a breeding and reintroduction program. Zoos can keep the species from extinction until the forests grow back and we adopt better forest practices on private and public lands. Since both seem to be a very slow, unpredictable process he didn't anticipate a rapid recovery.

Three years ago I remarked that marmots, with their fat whiskered cheeks, looked like WAC Bennett, the premier of my childhood, who told us he would extract the rich resources from shore to mountain, give us a metropolis of houses with cellulose drapes and that we

would fly around in helicopters. Bennett got his unfortunate way in most respects but the small irony I took comfort in was that a bunch of marmots were more likely to be flying around the island in a helicopter than you or me — which gave me grounds for hope. Now to have the future of the species resting on a single marmot that looks like WAC Bennett and is called Bob Dole seems too absurd to be anything but hopeful.

The Vancouver Island Marmot Recovery Project requires urgent assistance to ensure the

future of this species. You can adopt a marmot with names like Bob Dole for \$100 to aid this important project. Contributions can be sent to

The Marmot Project
c/o The Nature Trust of B.C.
808-100 Park Royal South
West Vancouver, B.C. V7T 1A2.

You will receive a poster, an adoption certificate, tax receipt and a year-end report on your marmot.

Briony Penn

Endangered species bill

The proposed federal Endangered Species Protection Act died on the order paper last Parliament, to the chagrin of many who have waited years for better protection than the red and blue lists afford, with their less than regulatory power. The Endangered Species Coalition (ESC) is keeping the heat on with a Vancouver workshop June 24-25. Contact campaign co-ordinator Kate Smallwood (604) 601-2507 or call West Coast Environmental Law at 1-800-330-WCEL. For ESC documents consult the WCEL website at vcn.bc.ca/wcel/esc.

Woodlot near Mara Meadows ER deferred

Friends member Steve Ruttan passed on a letter he received from Janna Kumi, assistant deputy minister of the Ministry of Forests' operations division, written on February 5 in response to his letter of concern about establishment of woodlots for small-business logging up to the borders of the Mara Meadows Ecological Reserve, which protects a fragile, diverse, calcareous fen. (*The Log*, Fall 1996, flagged this issue.) "Staff of the Salmon Arm Forest District have informed me that the woodlot advertisement... has been postponed, pending the outcome of the Protected Areas Strategy decisions... from the Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) table. This land-use planning process has incorporated the values of the Mara Meadows ecological reserve in its review of the potential areas for protection in the LRMP planning area... I am hopeful that the LRMP process... will provide recommendations... in late 1997."

Summer travel

Spring Island, Checleset Bay

West Coast Expeditions again offers the Friends an attractive 15 per cent discount for its 1997 program based on Spring Island in the spectacular Kyuquot-Checleset area on Vancouver Island's West Coast. Family-oriented, power-boat supported expeditions focussing on human and natural history: six days, \$652 (Cdn) all inclusive from/to Fair Harbour, \$686 from/to Campbell River. Also sea kayaking packages. Trips begin Sundays and end Fridays until mid-September. For more information call WCE toll-free 1-800-665-3040; or the telephone/fax at (604) 926-1110.

THE CUMMINS VALLEY, PART 2

Overcutting and highgrading in the Golden Timber Supply Area How the Cummins became the "only" valley left to log

The Cummins Valley (Log, Fall 1996) occupies less than two percent of the 921-square-kilometre Golden Timber Supply Area (TSA), from the Rocky Mountain Trench north of the Mica dam to the upper Columbia River south of Golden. Located at the north end of the TSA, the Cummins is hemmed in by high ridges that narrow on the river's final run to Kinbasket Lake. It's probably the least accessible drainage in the TSA. Much of the old forest, while of great age, is of poor quality as fibre. After the "easy wood" in the TSA was logged, the Cummins somehow became the "only" valley to log in an area larger than all but the largest park in British Columbia, and the threat of logging the unique valley was not removed when a money-losing sawmill closed.

Pattern established in 1960s

Golden is one of the most timber-dependent communities in British Columbia, and it has the highest degree of forest industry concentration. But Golden is far from unique. The timber famine just happened here first.

Evans Forest Products Ltd. is the only major mill operator in the Golden TSA. The company acquired a sawmill at Donald Station in 1969 and built the Golden plywood mill. The entire allowable annual cut (AAC) in the Golden TSA, 650 000 cu m a year, supplied little more than three-quarters of the fibre for Evans' mills. Buying wood from outside cost almost a quarter more.

According to views expressed in a letter to a Golden newspaper in December 1996, the cause of Evans' present financial difficulties is the Mica dam: "If the government doesn't help to bail out this town, they damn well should, they had a big hand in causing this

situation when they let BC Hydro build the Mica dam. And where were the environmentalists then, when they flooded hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of wood, also the old Big Bend Highway, which would have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in road building?"

"Evans has a long history of

Evans marshalled outside clout to get cutting permits, sidestepping established procedures

unprofitable operations," the BC Government's December 1996 rescue plan explained: "It is clear that a primary reason is the high cost of logs in the Golden TSA. In 1972 the Mica dam was built, and the Kinbasket Reservoir was created. When the valley floor was flooded, the most productive timber areas were drowned and the highway system was destroyed. Ever since that time, forestry operations were faced with having to use more expensive and difficult-to-access fibre. The reservoir is of limited use for transportation of logs because it is frozen for part of the year, and the water levels vary so much that constructing log dumps and operating on the lake is a problem."

Evans' forerunner, Kicking Horse Forest Products (incorporated 1959), began the pattern of taking the best and most accessible wood in the supply blocks nearest Golden. The Forest Service asked to Kicking Horse to transfer its cut into the Mica reservoir basin, but the company refused. Later, the

environment and land use committee of the B.C. Government studied the resources impacted by the dam and found, says consultant Ken Farquharson, that timber volumes were "markedly overstated," using "very optimistic assumptions about what was harvestable," and he suggests the purpose was to "build up the cut" in "the easy stuff in the valley bottoms."

In 1976 an analysis of economic opportunities in the Kootenays was already predicting a decline in Golden's forest industry "if strong initiatives are not taken to encourage better utilization of the forest base. With the cutting of easily accessible and more productive sites, the industry now faces the prospect of harvesting timber from more remote or inaccessible sites."

Evans marshalled outside clout to get cutting permits, sidestepping established procedures. For years, a company representative called a senior forests ministry official in Victoria in November, asking for a short-term override of planning requirements to keep the mills from closing. Every December, the Forest Service issued more cutting permits for logging in low-cost, high-value forests.

Evans made profits and brought prosperity to the western Rockies, for a while. Golden was a boom town. Evans had a spiffy downtown Vancouver office. But when the easy wood ran out, Evans did not readily accept responsibility.

Toward sound management

The public interest has been brought to bear on logging in the Golden TSA but slowly.

Silviculture regulations added to B.C.'s Forest Act in 1987 required forest licensees for the first time to do the paperwork and supervision

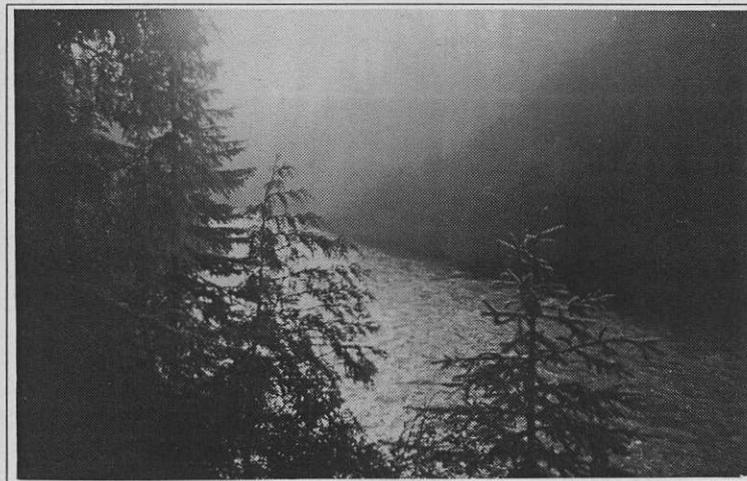
and pay the bills for reforestation on land they logged. Pre-harvest silviculture prescriptions (PHSP) had to be signed off by registered professional foresters and publicly-reviewed before cutting permits were issued. Evans lagged on fulfilling this basic responsibility.

Evans flouted integrated resource management (IRM) guidelines intended to protect wildlife, scenery, biodiversity and other values. To prevent the Beaverfoot Valley from being overcut, the B.C. Trappers Association sued the forest district. Representing the trappers, the Sierra Legal Defence Fund (SLDF) argued in B.C. Supreme Court that the ministry had illegally issued cutting permits before completing the required

in Evans' initial five-year plan were rejected by district staff for failing to meet IRM objectives.

In 1993 the BC Government created Forest Renewal BC (FRBC), a Crown corporation dedicated to renewing the forest sector by reinvesting logging revenues in "the forests, forest workers and forest communities." To fund FRBC it doubled stumpage fees and royalties on logged timber. The "super-stumpage formula" increased BC's cut of forest industry revenues from \$816 million in 1993 to \$1.76 billion in 1995. Evans, however, won concessions worth millions on its stumpage payments. Average stumpage paid by Evans in the first three quarters of 1993 and in 1994 was significantly

lower than other wet belt operators. The company continued to claim it was seriously affected because it does not receive adequate



period of advertisement, to a forest licensee without a valid development plan. In the two years it took for the case to come to court, three of eight areas were logged, the Forest Service cancelled three permits, and the court deemed the charges moot. The B.C. Court of Appeal dismissed the case because the Forest Practices Code (FPC) was in effect. The FPC was B.C.'s first legislated logging regulation, instituting real control over logging and roadbuilding, making it mandatory to plan silviculture and IRM. In 1994, half of the cutblocks

allowances.

A Forest Service timber supply review wound up at the end of 1994 with a 17 percent downsizing of the AAC in the Golden TSA. The cut should have been far lower. "The degree of difficulty experienced by District staff in locating wood indicates to me that an appropriate harvest level must be substantially below the current AAC," wrote the Province's chief forester. The cut was pegged at 540 000 cubic metres a year — "the smallest possible reduction consistent with the accommodation of

the overriding requirement" to protect "the long-term productivity of the forests of the Golden area." Evans' response to the new AAC was to sue the Province, claiming the cut could be higher. The suit was thrown out of court.

Such initiatives as the timber supply review, FRBC and the Forest Practices Code were positive signs of the advent of at least minimal long-term stewardship in southeastern B.C. Adoption of the East Kootenay Land Use Plan in 1995 initiated a modest increase in the area under protection. These initiatives do not reduce the cut to even close to the sustainable level. Other companies absorbed the financial impact and have still shown profits.

The Cummins by default

From the second quarter of 1994 to the last quarter of 1996, Evans' operation lost a total of \$25 million. In 1994 the owners, a group of former Evans managers who came aboard in 1987, sold 40 percent of company shares to an investment fund for some \$11 million. Departing shareholders spurned sound business practice of reinvesting in the company or at least paying down its debts, and Golden had a few instant millionaires.

Enter B.C.'s job protection commissioner (JPC) to study Evans' viability. A March 1995 report recommended closing the Donald mill. The Golden plywood mill, considered an efficient producer, could be upgraded, as could the cedar mill at Malakwa, near Salmon Arm. "The company's own projections show the Donald mill losing \$11,200,000 in 1995 if it remains open," the report reveals. "The only way the mill could come close to breaking even would be if it ran at full capacity." Evans argued for keeping the Donald mill operating. The JPC's consultants concluded that "the company's projections are overly optimistic."

The Cummins Valley (continued)

Evans' 1995 five-year development plan appeared to forest district staff to have only "enough wood identified for about three years of harvest and requires \$20 million in road building over the next two years to access identified timber," the JPC reported. "The consultants think it necessary to log the lower Cummins because not enough accessible timber is left in other parts of the Golden TSA to allow Evans to harvest its AAC, let alone catch up on its undercut." The Cummins was touted to supply three-quarters of Evans' wood for five years, when "other areas will be available to provide Evans with a continuing through reduced log supply." Evans' president Len Pettman gave it out in Golden that the most logging the Cummins would support was six months.

The Cummins isn't necessary to Evans' survival, the JPC noted: "If the Cummins River drainage is removed, the AAC may [be] reduced to 285 000 cubic metres from 1997 on. This compares favourably with the 1994 actual cut. It is not enough wood to fibre the Donald mill, but does provide Evans with enough fibre, when combined with the other sources available, to operate the Golden plywood mill and the Malakwa cedar mill."

A corporate welfare case?

In November 1995, Evan's stockholders decided to sell the company. Sale awaited approval of the economic plan developed under the Job Protection Act. Then a U.S. financier, Georges St. Laurent, bought controlling interest for \$15 million.

The Donald sawmill closed in April 1996, awash in red ink. The closure threw 216 people out of work. Evans upgraded the plywood mill, improving the lathe to process smaller diameter peelers. The search began for ways to add

value to wood in manufacturing. In September 1996 the Province approved a \$7 million loan for a \$21 million investment in new plant and equipment to produce laminated veneer lumber (LVL).

In October, St. Laurent said he would no longer cover the company's losses, and the Golden plant closed. Angry logging contractors, some unpaid since August, protested publicly for more than a month. Evans filed for bankruptcy, bargained for and got millions in loans, loan guarantees and outright grants. The government's announcement enumerated \$8.2 million in new provincial support and \$6 million of FRBC funding in an overall economic plan worth \$44.4 million and involving 13

"I see value in protecting the Cummins," Says logger Ewald Huebert.

"We're not using the resource properly."

signatories. "The plan, which will return only 50 cents on the dollar to creditors, with the balance to be paid in installments to January 1999, is being reluctantly accepted by Evans contract loggers. Many are owed hundreds of thousands of dollars," the *Vancouver Sun* reported. "The full cost of the government package has not been made public. The provincial commitment [could be pushed] much higher. FRBC agreed to guarantee loans for Evans logging contractors and other creditors in Golden, who will only receive 50 percent of their money right away. The amount of the FRBC loan guarantees remains unknown."

The Province gave Evans a deferral on stumpage payments on top of many money deals, and it provided more concessions on the

forest management side. The government committed to providing "access to 235 000 cubic metres of second pass timber, subject to the biodiversity and wildlife constraints." This involved relaxing the greening provisions from three to two metres in a "pilot project" to see about "changing the Forest Practices Code greening requirements province-wide." Such concessions undercut "basic environmental rules," SLDF's Greg McDade said. "Restrictions on 'green-up' and 'second-pass harvesting' have been Ministry of Forests policy for over a decade. These rules are essential to the survival of wildlife in these valleys."

The government committed the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program to "enter into a joint venture, on a pro-rated basis" to develop Kinbasket Creek and Prattle Valley, "a significant step to developing more timber for the years ahead."

The gleam in Golden's eye

There's plenty of good wood in the Golden TSA, enough to sustain a cut of 450 000 cu m a year, says Ewald Huebert, an independent logger in Golden and a former Evans employee — and his company makes a profit every day. Evans' continued existence depends on its losing money, he thinks. For starters, the Golden TSA presents a difficult forest species profile, little suited for plywood manufacture.

There's a future for value-added manufacture in Golden. After more than two years of negotiation, a finger-jointing plant is set to go.

At the same time, Golden has the potential to become a regional outdoor centre, and the Cummins figures in the equation.

The Cummins is the most northern of a series of side valleys terminating in glaciers on the Rockies side of the Trench. The southernmost is the Blaeberry.

With hanging lakes and cascading waterfalls and impressive landforms at every turn, the spectacular scenery in all these valleys rivals any landscapes in the Rockies. Protection of the upper Cummins could be a harbinger of new economic life for Golden. The extraordinary biological features of the lower Cummins certainly qualify it for inclusion in B.C.'s ecological reserve system. The Cummins' gently meandering rivercourse would provide an appropriate corridor for guided ecology-interpretive touring. Experienced climbers can hike across Cummins Pass (el: 2000 MASL) travelling northwest from near the head of the Cummins into the Wood River Valley. Trails are built or planned up to Fortress Lake, in Hamber Provincial Park, to Jasper National Park, and across historic Athabaska Pass. The vast Clemenceau icefield beckons advanced nomads.

As a supply and service centre, Golden could function as does Canmore, Alberta in the eastern Rockies. In the way B.C.'s neighbour has developed its mountain towns, says consultant Ken Farquharson, "Alberta has successfully capitalized on the resource value of the national parks." Golden's location is superior. Varied terrain on both sides of the Trench has more to offer for back country recreation. So far, the Golden area has not embraced orderly re-development.

"I see the value in protecting the Cummins," says logger Ewald Huebert. "An area like that should be saved. It should be left alone. We're not using the resource properly. Maybe in the future someone will be able to make better decisions than we have."

Please direct letters asking for protection of the entire Cummins Valley, intact, to Premier Glen Clark, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4.

Mapping project will study the Cummins' features

Little is known as yet about the features of the Cummins Valley. That's about to change.

The Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program is conducting a terrestrial ecosystem mapping (TEM) project in the Cummins Valley. Biologist Doug Adama co-ordinates the project, which aims to "provide more detailed biological and geographical information for the entire Cummins drainage."

The project will "provide detailed ecosystem information at 1:20 000 to ensure sound ecological management in the Cummins Valley regardless of the eventual land-use decision," Adama told a recent meeting of the East Kootenay Environmental Society in Golden.

Secondarily it will "obtain benchmark vegetation, wildlife and ecosystem information."

Mr. Adama outlined the current plan for the project's three phases:

1. Base terrestrial ecosystem mapping (1997) will set up overlays that will provide information on vegetation, terrain and surficial material; biogeoclimatic classification; wildlife suitability ratings for identified species; the locations of identified wildlife sightings and rare plant observations
2. Wildlife and vegetation surveys and information collection (1997-

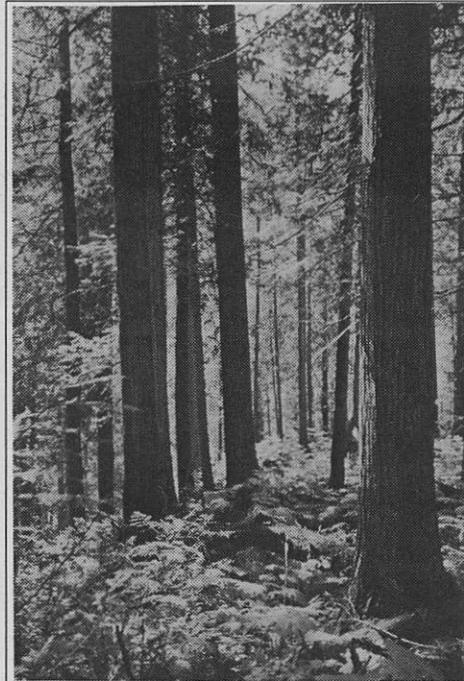
98) focussing in 1997 on "rare plants and rare plant communities" in "the alpine and wetland systems." In 1998, pending funding, wildlife surveys will be conducted in the Cummins for (1) non-tropical song-birds, (2) raptors, (3) amphibians and reptiles, (4) bats, (5) ungulates and (6) wide-ranging carnivores. "The data collected from these surveys will be incorporated into

the final TEM product and will provide benchmark vegetation, wildlife and ecosystem information that can be incorporated into map overlays and data analysis procedures." 3. Production of overlays (1998)

Compilation of field information, data analysis, map digitization and produc-

tion. "Along with the base TEM map and wildlife database, a number of overlays can be developed." Examples: applications to the biodiversity guidelines and to habitat evaluation.

Besides providing the basis for "sound ecological management within the Cummins Valley," the presentation concluded. "the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program will obtain benchmark information for this undeveloped watershed relevant to management practices throughout the Big Bend area."



Death of an Okanagan wetland

Below our childhood home near Penticton was a large marsh on the flood plain of the Okanagan River at its outlet from Okanagan Lake. In the early 1950s the channelization of the Okanagan River cut off its direct water supply and Highway 97 divided it in two — but the marsh persisted. The strange, pumping calls of bitterns and squeals of rails still emanated from the cattails on summer nights, and waterfowl lingered on their southward journey in the autumn. But perhaps the most welcome denizens of the reeds were the Red-winged Blackbirds that returned early every spring and made the dry, brown cattails come alive with their loud onk-er-ee! cries and flashing red shoulders.

But over a period of more than a decade the marsh died a slow death. Clean Fill Wanted signs ringed the edges, and the cattails were slowly and inexorably smothered in earth and concrete rubble. Eventually, the only water that remained was in the narrow ditch

between the fill and the highway — and there a few remaining blackbirds made their home in the last of the cattails. And with the cruel irony that seems to accompany so many developments, the new walled community that rose from the march was named Redwing Estates.

Richard Cannings and Sydney Cannings

From British Columbia A Natural History (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 1996). Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Multiple congratulations to Syd and Dick Cannings. **British Columbia A Natural History** won the Bill Duthie Booksellers Choice Award at the B.C. Book Prizes in Vancouver, the B.C. Historical Federation gave it the Lieutenant Governor's medal for historical writing, and the Canadian Science Writers Association awarded the many-faceted book first prize in the science and society adult book category.

Grassland Gleanings

We're delighted to report that our grassland inventory project is in high gear. Nichola Gerts, who just received her BSc, has returned from a tour of the Cariboo-Chilcotin with leads on sites of ecological value. Nichola and Jason Lesage are registered in directed studies courses in the department of environmental studies at UVic. Thanks to a generous grant from Earthlife Canada Foundation (BC Wild), we're able to promise pay for work far beyond what's needed to earn credits for one course. One property has already been earmarked for landowner contact, and the Friends are building on the momentum by approaching several major funders for support enough to put a land securement specialist in the field for part of every month from July to October and again next Spring.

A promised report on the state of grassland ecosystems in the East Kootenay will be in the next issue, along with a report on the South Okanagan Conservation Strategy.

Ayum Creek purchase campaign

The Friends wrote in support of the purchase of Ayum Creek, near Sooke, by the Victoria Natural History Society's Habitat Acquisition Trust. The 5.2 hectare Ayum Creek estuary is threatened with townhouse development. Protected, it will provide a vital link in the Sea to Sea Greenbelt corridor, a chain of protected ecosystems stretching from Salt Spring Island to Sooke. At present there is no protected waterfront on Sooke Basin. The sea to sea greenbelt is incomplete without it.

The campaign is seeking to raise \$625,000. Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to: Habitat Acquisition Trust, VNHS PO Box 5220, Station B Victoria, B.C. V8R 6N4

For more information about Ayum Creek contact the society for Protection of Ayum Creek (SPAC) at 642-7278. Or visit the Field Naturalist, 1126 Blanshard Street, Victoria (388-4174).

For information about Western Canada Wilderness Committee's letter-writing campaign, call 388-9292 or visit 507 - 620 View Street, Victoria. WCWC asks that the BC Government "place a covenant on the GVWD non-catchment lands (see inside, page 3) prior to their transfer to the CRD to assure their full protection from any logging or development," and that it "complete the greenbelt by adding the Crown land parcels in Ayum and Charters valleys to the Sooke Hills" park.

The Log

Friends of Ecological Reserves Newsletter

Spring 1997

Editor: Peter Grant

Published twice a year and distributed to members, volunteer wardens, affiliates, supporters, government, friends and the enquiring public.

We promote the establishment, management and maintenance of ecological reserves in British Columbia



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