

The Log

Winter 2003

FRIENDS OF ECOLOGICAL RESERVES NEWSLETTER

Wardens' Gathering Delivers Action Plan

by Denise de Montreuil, Eva Durance and Peggy Frank

On a smoky September weekend, an enthusiastic group of Ecological Reserve (ER) wardens, prospective wardens, members and executive of the Federation of BC Naturalists (FBCN) and of the Friends of Ecological Reserves (FER), government officials from the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (MWLAP) and other interested observers met at the Henry Grube Centre in Kamloops. Special guests included Nancy Wilkin, the Assistant Deputy Minister with MWLAP and Rick Searle, author of "Phantom Parks" who gave the Friday evening keynote address. The wisdom and observations of pioneer conservationist Dr. Bert Brink who was in attendance were particularly appreciated.

The Gathering was the culmination of more than a year of planning by Peggy Frank, Eva Durance and Bev Ramey. It aimed to provide an opportunity for current wardens to meet and discuss topics of mutual interest and concern, and for people interested in becoming wardens to learn more about the work. Ministry staff was invited to clarify current MWLAP organization for the wardens. In the continuing upheaval brought on by rampant change, the definition (or lack thereof) of the role of ERs and wardens in the slimmed down organization had become increasingly murky. Specific concerns included government interpretation of allowable public activities in ERs, the status of present and future initiatives in ERs, the role of MWLAP Area Supervisors, the need to improve communication

between wardens and government staff, updating and codifying of the procedures for becoming a warden, and possible future directions of the warden service. Recognition of long-time wardens for their dedication and hard work was a high priority.

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Volunteer wardens with Nancy Wilkin, ADM with MWLAP

The Log

Winter 2003

The LOG is published 3 times 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 next issue of The LOG is March 1, 2004

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Eva Durance welcomed attendees and provided background and logistic details as well as a list of goals.

Following her thanks to the many generous people and organizations who made The Gathering possible, Rick Searle gave the keynote address on the coming crisis facing wardens and ERs, a crisis he thinks represents both a danger and an opportunity.

He cited the general lack of knowledge of and support for ERs from government staff and the public, leaving them vulnerable to policy and value shifts. On the other hand, the lack of public profile has protected the more remote ERs and their role as biodiversity benchmarks and wildlife sanctuaries. The loss of many senior protected area specialists is leading to a loss of corporate memory rendering ERs more vulnerable to a government focused on a revenue model.

“Make raising ecological consciousness your highest priority.”

Rick Searle

Founded on a radical idea, that human use should come second, ERs have enjoyed three decades of expansion based on a scientific, rather than an emotional argument. He praised wardens for their remarkable dedication and selfless devotion as the eyes and ears for the public trust and as the keepers of the history of ERs and stated

that their challenge will be to maintain morale and energy in the face of dwindling attention from government.

His suggestions to meet the coming challenges? “Make raising ecological consciousness your highest priority.” Educate the public about ERs and their purpose. Get to know the media and feed them stories. Create “virtual ERs” for the Internet. Make an ER encyclopaedia on CD (excluding location specifics). Hold public lectures. Generate screensavers or calendars. Reach out to service groups. Hold more gatherings to strategize and to identify needs and formulate action plans to get them met. Recruit new blood to alleviate burnout. Use declining government staffing as an opportunity to take the initiative. Get to know your MLAs and let them know about you and your group’s beliefs since... “politicians don’t lead parades, they look for parades to get in front of.” Above all, he concluded, continue to make the stewardship ethic a guiding vision then set about convincing everyone else around you to think like you.

ADM addresses The Gathering:

Saturday morning, wardens heard “A Letter to the Wardens” by Lynne Milnes saluting the 20th anniversary of Friends and thanking the wardens for their decades of dedication.

Then it was down to business with a presentation by Nancy Wilkin.

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Afternoon discussion group hard at work.



Karen McLaren and Nancy Wilkin

Ms. Wilkin informed the audience that Gordon McAtee (background in agriculture and fisheries) is the new Deputy Minister for MWLAP. She stressed the importance of the ER system and wardens to the ministry, calling them the eyes, ears and the soul of the ERs. She complimented "The Log" as a most useful publication, although she professed to have been somewhat unnerved to see her name in the headline of the Spring 2003 issue.

Ms. Wilkin outlined the Ministry's "Lodge Strategy" (from the Recreation Stewardship Panel's recommendations). Although she acknowledged it did not apply to ERs, she stressed the revenue generation focus of this government. She went on to explain that ERs and the warden service fall under the responsibility of area supervisors and are part of the Environmental Stewardship Division of the ministry.

"Wardens are the eyes, ears and the soul of ecological reserves."

Nancy Wilkin

She said that regional attention is not on ERs (no revenue generation) and suggested that wardens take the initiative, get to know their area supervisors, develop relationships and hold regular meetings with clear objectives. She stressed the need for making information on the importance of ERs available to the public, to MLAs, and



Warden's panel: Malcolm Martin at the podium, John Riley, Karen Willies, Tom Reimchen and Jenny Balke

to business councils and agreed that wardens should have input on management plans for ERs. She would like to see events like the Gathering formalized so that wardens have regular contact with her and senior managers to monitor progress, maintain dialogue and develop a list of proposed ERs and a plan for their creation over the next years.

Discussion with Government Staff:

A panel on the ministry perspective dealt with a range of subjects. The panel members were Nancy Wilkin (ADM), Laura Darling (Terrestrial Ecologist, Protected Areas Conservation Section), John Trehwhitt (Area Supervisor, North Okanagan) and Bruce Petch (Area Supervisor, Kamloops). Revising the Warden's Handbook, developing standards for gathering baseline information in ERs (for use by wardens to develop inventory data bases) and public use of ERs were discussed. The latter exchange centered on the unique nature of each ER, the effect of the requested use, and whether the same activity could occur outside the ER. Monitoring of public activities and report writing by wardens was not considered by the panel, but is likely to fall to wardens given staff cuts. The panel encouraged wardens to think of ways to "take the magic of ERs to people if you can't take people to the reserves", perhaps using extensive ministry graphics and photo resources, some available on line. Historically, wardens have not been permitted to make public presentations without

government staff present. This, and a package of general information on ERs for public presentations, will be discussed and clarified with Regional Directors. People wishing to become wardens were directed to apply through the Area Supervisor responsible for the ER in question. The panel agreed to facilitate an online list of the Area Supervisors and the ERs under their jurisdiction for the use of wardens and prospective wardens although we have since discovered that this information cannot be posted on the web. (See this month's Websites of Interest for directions to a list of Area Supervisors for each region). Wardens expressed concern that they were being left out of the loop in the permitting process, nor were they notified about adjacent uses. The panel felt this could be addressed by a closer relationship between the area supervisors and the wardens but urged wardens to take the initiative i.e. it didn't seem likely that notification or direct contact of wardens by users would become official policy.

Awards:

Nancy Wilkin then presented the awards for years of service. Honoured were Sandra Kinsey, Laird Law, Paul Linton, Laurie Rockwell, Terry Taylor, David and Claire Oppenheim, Jenny Balke, Linda Kennedy and Karen McLaren. Malcolm Martin, retired biologist, ER warden for Cougar Canyon near Vernon and "undercover agent", received a special award from

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Eva Durance on behalf of Judy Miller, Parks and Protected Area Specialist in Penticton. Harold and Joan King who have been wardens for 23 years, like many other wardens eligible for recognition, were regrettably unable to attend The Gathering.

Wardens' Panel

After lunch, a panel of wardens addressed research, history, education, and the future of ERs and wardens. Speakers were Jenny Balke, Tom Reimchen, John Riley, Malcolm Martin and Karen Willies. Jenny got everyone on their feet for the "ER cheer" rousing us from our post-lunch-break/hot-afternoon daze. Once we were re-invigorated, she went on to emphasize the importance of research in ERs saying that most projects focus on 2-5 years, while science is decades and centuries.

Tom Reimchen gave a fascinating account of two decades of research on habitat/predator/prey interactions. His 15 years of stickleback research at Drizzle Lake set him on the path of questioning a chain of connections leading to a direct correlation between big salmon runs and big trees.

John Riley recounted his many years of conducting programs for young people and adults that led to an appreciation of nature and an understanding of the consequences of human activity on the natural world. He shared his experiences dealing with the public in Skagit River Cottonwoods ER and suggested some strategies for dealing with misuse and ways of defusing potentially confrontational situations.

Malcolm Martin although "sanguine" about the future of ERs, expressed concern that they will become orphans in a government obsessed with the revenue model. He proposed looking outside of the current framework and soliciting support from the World Union for Nature and the World Wildlife Fund. He suggested approaching the Nature Trust or the Land Trust Alliance about managing ERs, and that a geography or ecology program of a BC university or college might set up long term research

programs as an educational tool. Getting students interested in nature within ERs would address concerns for the future and provide opportunities for mentorship.

Karen Willies tackled the problems faced over the last decade by ERs in the Kamloops area and by extension, all ERs. These included lack of enforcement (cattle incursions), campfires, tree cutting and a lack of direction and communication with Area Supervisors.

The rest of the afternoon was given over to small discussion groups on a range of issues. After the supper break, a presenter from each group summarized the results of the afternoon's discussions. These can be viewed in the full report of The Gathering on the Friends website www.ecoreserves.bc.ca.

A Summary of Actions, Outcomes, and Requests for Government Support: 6 months-1 year

- FER and FBCN websites will post MWLAP, Stewardship Division, organization chart with names of Area Supervisors with ERs each covers. (*This has proven impossible but see Websites of Interest Page 16 for more information*)
- Names and contact information of ER wardens in each area will be sent to Area Supervisors
- Process by which people become wardens to be posted on FER website

- Confirmation will be made with government about annual Regional wardens and staff meetings, and Provincial meeting every two to three years
- Cowichan wardens to prepare draft public education materials on ERs for presentations aimed at increasing awareness and appreciation of ERs and will circulate for comments via Eva Durance, Peggy Frank, and Bev Ramey
- Handbook and orientation kit revisions to be drafted by committee: Eva Durance, Art Carson, Peg Frank and government people
- FER/FBCN continue updating of ERs and wardens' information and work towards distribution to all wardens
- FER/FBCN continue periodically to publish list of ERs lacking wardens and to solicit new wardens and 'assistant' wardens
- Explore access on-line to government photo archives on ERs and future storing of digital baseline and other photographs (through Laura Darling)
- Discuss with ministry staff the need for ER-specific signage and a sensitivity-level colour code system for ERs
- Request clarification through MWLAP on the matter of liability insurance coverage for wardens

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Genevieve Singleton shares her group's recommendations.

Thank-you!!!

Grateful thanks to the many individuals, agencies, and organizations that made The Gathering possible. For funding: thanks to Federation of BC Naturalists, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Endswell Fund of Tides Canada Foundation, the BC Grasslands Council and Friends of Ecological Reserves. For help with organisation and support: thanks to Sue Hammond, Gary Hunt, Alan and Frances Vyse (Kamloops support), Peter Bardon (catering), Denise de Montreuil (writing), Maria Hamann (registration), Peggy Frank, Eva Durance, Bev Ramey (planning), Jeremy McCall, Don Eastman (FBCN and FER Presidents), Karen McLaren, Margaret Graham, Bill Merilees (assistance) and members of the wardens panel: Jenny Balke, Tom Reimchen, John Riley, Malcolm Martin, and Karen Willies and the wonderful WARDENS!! ■



Malcolm Martin accepts his special award from Eva Durance



Discussion groups mull over Ecoreserve concerns.



Jenny Balke on the Wardens' Panel.



Linda Kennedy receives service award from Nancy Wilkin



Lunch preparations

Ecoreserves Again

by Jim Pojar

Late this past August, towards the end of what was a magnificent summer in the northern hinterland, I was a guest at the marriage of two friends and colleagues – both keen botanists and naturalists. It was a moving ceremony, not least for me because the groom is the grandson of Ray Williston (in attendance and still alert) and the reception was held at a lodge overlooking nearby Burnt Cabin Bog Ecological Reserve. As a cabinet minister, Mr. Williston was persuaded by Dr. Vladimir Krajina and other concerned biologists of the value of ecological reserves, and was instrumental in getting crucial legislation passed in 1971 – the Ecological Reserves Act. Even in those days of the buccaneering politics of W.A.C. Bennett and his Social Credit provincial government, some cabinet ministers and astute senior bureaucrats understood the clear purpose of, and need for, natural areas permanently set aside for scientific research and educational use. They also understood that ecological reserves were different than parks.

As I mused upon the joy, hope, and anxiety that the young couple must have been feeling during their wedding, I also reflected on my hopes and fears for ecological reserves. How difficult (but ultimately rewarding) it has been to get some of them established: Burnt Cabin Bog was proposed in 1973; I helped Dr. Krajina survey it back then; 27 years later it was finally established. How easily some reserves have been damaged or compromised, by unauthorized uses (hunting, fishing, livestock grazing, four-wheeling, and so forth) that stem in large part from an inability or unwillingness by government agencies to enforce regulations and manage ecological reserves in the

spirit of the legislation.

Ecological reserves are legally protected natural areas where human interference with natural processes is supposed to be kept to a minimum. The major purposes of ecoreserves are:

- scientific research and educational use
- establishment of representative “benchmark” areas against which to measure the effects of change in natural and managed ecosystems
- protection and maintenance of genetic resources and biological diversity
- protection of rare and endangered organisms in their natural habitat
- preservation of unique, rare, or outstanding natural phenomena.

You and I know that’s what ecoreserves are for. You can find a similar version of the above on the B.C. Parks website. Sometimes I wonder if cabinet ministers and their advisors have read the material posted on “their” websites.

Ecological reserves are **not** parks. Ecoreserves are established primarily for their scientific and educational value; research and educational use are encouraged under permit. They are not created for outdoor recreation, although most are open to the public, for non-destructive observational use (i.e., natural history). They were not intended for commercial backcountry recreation, or for use by privateers masquerading as outdoor educators.

Even more recently, this September I helped lead a field trip for a group of Bulkley Valley citizens uneasily but earnestly engaged in the current form of limited participatory democracy in resource planning on provincial Crown land – aka land and resource management planning, in this case the Morice LRMP. The group had many questions about ecology and forestry, including a set revolving around the differences between wild young forests and commercially managed young forests. In the middle of the 19,000 ha Swiss Fire, I lead them through the latter to the

former, to the edge of the Morice River Ecological Reserve, ER#81, established in 1977, mostly burnt over in the 1983 fire. Twenty years later, the Morice River Ecoreserve supports a dense young forest of mostly lodgepole pine: no salvage logging, natural regeneration, no planting, no spacing or thinning, lots of snags and downed logs. The differences between it and the adjacent managed forest were clear and easy for people to observe and think about and discuss. What’s more, in 1983 we researchers established permanent plots in the reserve, and have been monitoring ecological succession there for 20 years. Such long-term data sets are rare indeed in B.C. There was much for the group to see and learn and talk about. Were it not for ER#81, it would be difficult to find a reasonably accessible, wild young forest for such comparisons, within 100 km of the town of Houston. There is plenty of young forest in the area, but the silviculturists have been assiduous and most such stands have experienced some sort of management intervention. I was reminded once again, and forcefully, of the scientific and educational value of ecoreserves.

Nowadays ecological reserves seem to have been relegated to second or third class status by the provincial government and its responsible management agency, B.C. Parks. In fairness, the relative neglect is unfortunately not a recent phenomenon. And of course, it is largely because Parks simply doesn’t have the resources to manage our parks, much less protect ecoreserves. But it is very worrying when some Parks people seem to regard ecoreserves as nuisances. Our leaders and their handlers seem also to lack the original clear vision of the purpose and value of ecological reserves. Some could be prisoners of ideology, some perhaps are ethically ambiguous, most are ecologically challenged. That’s nothing new, but the lack of checks and balances in governance is.

Although the legislation remains clear,

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the regulations governing ecoreserves contain loopholes that can be exploited. Now more than ever ecological reserves need all the friends they can get, and all the support that the Friends can provide. ■

Jim Pojar's involvement with ecological reserves goes back to the '70s when ERs were first established. Following his graduate research at UBC, where his study areas were Manning Park alpine and subalpine meadows and Long Beach bogs and salt marshes, he went to work for the Ecoreserves. As a botanist, back in the good old days when there was an Ecological Reserves Unit in the provincial government, he helped prepare baseline data lists for each new ER. This included a complete botanical and wildlife survey and determination of the original boundaries of the Gladys Lake reserve. He and his wife Rosamund, warden of ER#68 have returned on four occasions to Gladys Lake and have made several visits to Spatsizi Park. As a forest ecologist, author and speaker, Jim has dedicated 30 years of his life to the forests of British Columbia.



Visit www.ecoreserves.bc.ca

Call for Research Proposals

Each year, the Friends of Ecological Reserves welcomes applications for funding in support of biological and ecological research related to ecological reserves in British Columbia. Check our website for a list of suggested topics for 2004.

Applications should include:

- title of research project
- name of applicant(s)
- mailing address of applicant
- institutional (college or university) affiliation
- a brief description of the research and its relationship to ecological reserves in BC
- any other pertinent details
- two letters of reference supporting the project

Financial information should include:

- total budget required for project, with an indication of contributions from other sources
- amount requested from FER

Note: If the project is a multi-year proposal, provide an indication of how the project is to be supported/funded through its duration.

Applications will be judged on the merit of the project, the financial viability of the project and the financial need of the applicant. Research grants are generally between \$500-\$2000. As a condition of award, applicants are asked to submit regular reports on their research findings and may be required to present a public lecture on their research.

Applications for funding for the current calendar year should be received by **January 31st**.

Send applications to:

Friends of Ecological Reserves
PO Box 8477 Stn Central
Victoria BC V8W 3S1



Correction

In the last issue of *The Log* in the profile of Campbell Brown Ecoreserve, we mentioned that Linda Kennedy wanted to hear from anyone with photos of the entrance to the rattlesnake den that might indicate whether some of the rocks have been disturbed. If you have such photos, please send them to Linda's new address at 13601 Ponderosa Way, Coldstream V1B 1A2 or phone her at (250) 545-2026. ■

Ecological Reserves of the Okanagan – PART II



ER 5 – Lily Pad Lake

- Located 12.5 km S of Lumby
- 101 ha
- Conserves an undisturbed highland lake, an excellent example of a small, slightly acidic bog lake undergoing natural eutrophication, a condition in an aquatic ecosystem where high nutrient concentrations stimulate blooms of algae (e.g., phytoplankton). Lodgepole pine dominates the young forest with some areas of Engelmann spruce, trembling aspen and Mountain and Sitka alder. Shrubs and flowers include pinegrass, arctic lupine, twinflower, bunchberry, black gooseberry and common horsetail.
- Warden: Peter Blokker
Peter reports no real problems or changes.

ER 6 – Buck Hills Road

- Located 11 km S of Lumby, 1.15 km NNE of Nicklen Lake
- 16 ha
- This reserve protects a stand of western larch of all ages from seedlings to large mature trees associated with



ER 6 Buck Hills Road

piles of large weathered granitic boulders which may have played a role in protecting the trees from fire. Numerous bird species have been noted as have an unusual abundance of pikas well removed from their usual alpine talus slope habitat. The northern alligator lizard, rare in continuously forested areas takes advantage of the boulder landscape as well.

- Warden: Peter Blokker
Peter reports no real problems or changes

ER 27 – Whipsaw Creek

- Located 10 km SSW of Princeton
- 32 ha.



ER 5 Lily Pad Lake

- Maintaining representative stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, this reserve varies from open grassland to fairly dense forest. Exotic weeds have invaded largely as a result of heavy grazing of the grassland by livestock. Elk and mule deer are common in winter and spring. Typical birds include mountain bluebird, Townsend's solitaire, pygmy nuthatch, American kestrel northern flicker and Williamson's sapsucker.

- Warden: Ken Yingling
I have just begun as a warden after spending time at the Kamloops seminar at the beginning of September.

I went to the site with Graham Kenneth, B.C. Parks staff based at Manning Park, on Oct 8, 2003. We found that the fence needed repairing as a result of cattle knocking the fence down. We decided we could not repair the fence until we were sure the cattle were not inside the ER. Graham was going to direct this problem to the rancher in the area in hopes they would repair the fence. There are signs of Black Bears, cougars and lots of deer in this area. On Nov 8, 2003 I returned to the site with the Vermillion Forks Naturalist and snow on the ground prohibited from us from identifying plants and the cold weather limited the opportunity to identify the birds. Fossils were discovered on the hike in – nice walking trails, open country.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BC PROVINCIAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS BRANCH

PHOTO COURTESY OF BC PROVINCIAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS BRANCH



ER 27 Whipsaw Creek

PHOTO COURTESY OF BC PROVINCIAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS BRANCH



ER 33 Field's Lease

PHOTO COURTESY OF BC PROVINCIAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS BRANCH

ER 33 – Field's Lease

- Located W of N end of Osoyoos Lake
- 4.2 ha.
- Protecting a small sample of the driest valley-bottom shrub-steppe ecosystems in Canada, Field's Lease Ecoreserve represents the northern extreme of the Upper Sonora Life Zone extending from northern Mexico to southern B.C. Trees are absent with the three plant communities present falling into either the grassland or the shrub – grassland

types. Rare plants noted in the reserve include Douglas' rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*), pale evening-primrose (*Oenothera pallida*), tufted phlox (*Phlox caespitosa*), and long-leaved phlox (*Phlox longifolia*). Wildlife recorded here includes blue racer and bull snakes, coyotes and a great variety of birds.

- Wardens: Harold and Joan King

ER 100 – Haynes' Lease

- Located adjacent to N end of Osoyoos Lake, 6 km NNW of Osoyoos

- 101 ha.
- The reserve protects near-natural ecosystems representative of the driest biogeoclimatic subzone in BC and Canada. The zone is very restricted in extent and much disturbed by human activity, therefore this small remnant is of extreme importance. It probably harbours in total more rare plants, vertebrates, and invertebrates than any other ecological reserve in the province.
- Wardens: Harold and Joan King
Harold and Joan say there are no problems in either Haynes Lease ER or Field's Lease ER. Occasionally they encounter people cutting through but the problem is usually solved once the trespassers are informed about the protected status of ERs. The new nearby Desert Centre has taken a great deal of pressure off Haynes Lease and Field's Lease is protected from incursion by the surrounding vineyards. Harold and Joan are troubled that groups who have been using the reserves for decades for bird counts and other observational purposes and who have never abused the privilege are being denied permits by Parks staff. As of this year, Harold and Joan have been wardens for 23 years – bravo! ■



ER 100 Haynes' Lease

PHOTO COURTESY OF BC PROVINCIAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS BRANCH

To Act or not to Act – the future of the Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve

by Lynne Milnes

Last spring the Friends of Ecological Reserves learned the provincial government under the Ministry of Water, Land and Air protection (WLAP), Joyce Murray Minister, was considering issuing commercial ecotour licenses in the Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve.

Gladys Lake is one of the largest Ecological Reserves in the ER system comprising 44, 098 hectares within the Class A Spatsizi Wilderness Park. It is considered the jewel in the ER crown as it is a large reserve with an even larger buffer set aside to protect the habitat of caribou, stone sheep, mountain goats and bears. These species are hunted in the rest of the Spatsizi Park, all 656,785 hectares of it.

Due to government cutbacks most provincial conservation officers were terminated including Curtis Rattray, the Tahltan First Nation Conservation Officer in Spatsizi who the FER executive met in 2001 when we visited the Reserve. Mr. Rattray's dedication to the land and his job was obvious and his vast knowledge of the park and Ecological Reserve was impressive but he too lost his job in 2003.

This June FER learned that Mr. Rattray was forming an alliance with a commercial guide outfitter for an ecotour license over all the Spatsizi including the Gladys Lake ER. FER executives met with Mr. Rattray informally and urged him to re-consider his

position. While we appreciated his need for economic opportunity in the north we urged him to respect the integrity of the Ecological Reserve and ER Act. What happens in one Reserve will affect all the others, we explained.

At this time FER sought legal help. Andrew Gage from Westcoast Environmental Law looked into the matter and wrote a thorough and candid letter to the Minister outlining his legal opinion *"that a permit for ecotourism cannot be legally issued under the Ecological Reserves Act."* He also wrote, *"...if your government is committed to environmental values, you will undermine the few areas in the province that are designated exclusively for ecological values. While this situation arose in the context of Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve, this situation could arise in the context of any of the ecological reserves. We hope that your government will not open this door, but will send a loud message that tourism is not appropriate inside the province's ecological reserves. The ecological reserve designation is not merely another type of park but is reserved for areas of particular value for biological diversity and/or scientific interest."*

In response to this letter to the Minister the Assistant Deputy Minister of Parks, Nancy Wilkin replied: *"It is this ministry's belief that educational use under the Ecological Reserves Act can include carefully controlled activities that provide an approved educational program for participants. For Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve educational programs could focus on natural ecosystem function, wildlife ecology, boreal vegetation ecology, species and plant communities at risk, geological features and processes, role of humans in the ecosystems, and the role of the Gladys Lake Reserve in the ecological reserve system. Guided activities could be conducted by qualified commercial guides, educational institutions or not-for-profit organizations such as Friends of Ecological Reserves. In all cases, guided activities for Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve will require specific authorization by our agency. Permits will establish time frames for activities, number of participants,*

access, educational objectives and program details and qualification of guides"

This is the same reply sent by the Minister to the Federation of BC Naturalists in September, 2003. In both cases the author of these letters does not address the legalities of commercial operations in Ecological Reserves under the ER Act nor the provincial staff required to actively monitor these activities on the ground. In 2001 FER executives witnessed first hand what commercial use in the Reserve can lead to when we observed damage done by horses and humans in the Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve. (see *The Log*, Summer 2001)

As it stands now there is no one in the field from the provincial government in charge of protecting the Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve. The message we get from the province is the need for money from crown lands even if it means destroying the environmental protection of our vulnerable ecological areas. Ecological Reserves make up one-half of one percent of the provincial crown land base. Those in a position to protect Ecological Reserves within the present government do not seem to understand their scientific purpose or their fragility.

As a result FER Executives have been talking about the future of all ERs and the need for permanent protection at a federal level such as a National Park status. This would eliminate the whims of provincial governments and uphold environmental protection of Ecological Reserves for everyone forever. For the moment the Friends are watching the provincial government cautiously and proceeding with the legal assistance of Westcoast Environmental Law. We would appreciate all and any donations to this cause. If you would like to register your own comments about the future of the Gladys Lake Ecological Reserve please write to Gordon Campbell, Premier or Joyce Murray, Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC. ■

Abkhazi Gardens Hosts 2nd FER Board Retreat, November 11, 2003

By Peggy Frank

Almost the entire Board was present for an afternoon of examining our past successes and our movement towards achieving stated goals from the last FER retreat (see *LOG* March '99). Perhaps it was the good spin put on things by our kind and generous facilitator, Colin Rankin, but we concluded that, historically, FER was meeting its own goals. Board members seem to suffer from an unjustified, but understandable, complex about not getting enough done and not being able to make significant strides towards ensuring that Ecological Reserves are recognized for their potential to protect the province's biodiversity. Apparently, organizations with an environmental perspective often seem under appreciated. FER may be unique, in that it is a volunteer organisation without full time support staff. Given that perspective, we were content with the historic and current picture of FER, but what about the future?

As discussion focused on thoughts for upcoming years one theme sang out. We need to know the current state of the Ecological Reserve System. How are existing Reserves doing in protecting Provincial natural resources? Where are the gaps? Who, in government, has Ecological Reserves on their radar? What other NGOs have an interest in ERs? Which Reserves need wardens? Is there ecological damage? Are there threatening activities nearby?... It seems that once a "State of the Ecological Reserves" report is compiled, that FER will be better placed to identify research priorities, assist wardens in critical areas and continue to act effectively. Some of the work has been done by provincial government, some of this work was been done planning for the Gathering, and all the data needs to be compiled centrally. FER needs to bring all scattered bits of information together, where it would serve as a guide to the next few years. We may have just the researcher to do that. Watch the *LOG* for more on this topic over the next few months.

We discussed wardens and their incredible value to the system and our limited ability to support this critical link in the system. The Board also talked about fundraising and fun arising from our friendships, membership and member links, outreach and overstretching our key people, regional representation and losses to far away regions. There will be changes and there will be more of the same great old stuff. It was a highly productive few hours in an afternoon – and as always the tea and cookies were great.

Colin Rankin guided us through this 5 hour process as a service to Friends. Colin, thank you from us all. ■

Good Bye and Welcome

Alas, two of our board members have abandoned the gentle south for the rigours of the Yukon. Sue Carr and Syd Cannings, with young Madeleine and JJ in tow have decamped to Whitehorse. The Friends are sad to see them go and thank them from the bottom of their hearts for their many years of faithful service to the cause of Ecoreserves. Best of luck to them in their new adventure.

And double alas, our faithful office manager Daphne Munroe is leaving us to take up expanded family duties – as if she isn't busy enough already. Not only that, she's ramping up her research efforts for her PhD. and fund raising for her team to go to the Dragon Boat Worlds in South Africa. We don't know how you manage it all with such grace, Daphne. A big thanks for your yeoman service. We'll miss you.

Now for the good news... Saila Hull has taken up the office manager position and is already hard at work. She can be reached at ecoreserves@hotmail.com or by mail. ■

Visit www.ecoreserves.bc.ca



Satellite Channel ER announcement:

Changes to Satellite Channel ER boundaries were introduced into the legislature in Bill 55 in the spring 2003. The Bill recently went through second reading – Oct 20, 2003 and the Minister announced the following:

Hon. J. Murray: I'm pleased to confirm that I will be introducing an amendment to withdraw the amendment to the boundaries of ecological reserve 67, Satellite Channel. The boundary adjustment will not be going forward because as the member opposite mentioned, there has been a change in the status of the Duke Point power plant project's progress. With that said, I move that the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House...

You can find the text in Hansard for Oct. 20/03 afternoon session including preceding feisty remarks on Bill 55 by Joy MacPhail on page 51 at:

<http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/hansard/37th4th/H1020pm-02.pdf> . ■

CALENDAR

Friends of Ecological Reserves Annual General Meeting

March 5, 2004

Meeting: 7P.M., speakers to follow

Location: TBA

For more information call Saila Hull at 250 383-5358
or check the website.

Website: <http://www.ecoreserves.bc.ca/>

E-Mail: ecoreserves@hotmail.com



Species At Risk 2004: Pathways to Recovery

March 2 – 6, 2004

Victoria Conference Centre, Victoria, B.C.

Website: <http://www.speciesatrisk2004.ca/index.html>



Pacific Rim Whale Festival

March 12 to 21, 2004

Various locations along the west coast of Vancouver Island
Theme: celebrate the annual Pacific Gray Whale migration.

Website: <http://www.island.net/~whalef/>

Phone: (250) 726-7742 (event hot line)

Phone: (250) 726-4641 (Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce)

Phone: (250) 725-3414 (Tofino Chamber of Commerce)



Globe 2004

March 31 – April 2, 2004

Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre
999 Canada Place, Vancouver, BC

Conference and trade fair showcasing technology solutions
to the world's environmental problems

Phone: 1-800-274-6097 Fax: (605) 666-8123

Website: <http://www.globe2004.com/>



Wings Over the Rockies Bird Festival

May 3 to 9, 2004

Website: <http://www.adventurevalley.com/wings/>

Wings Over the Rockies Bird Festival

RR#4, #2-1535-14th Street, Invermere, BC Canada V0A 1K4

phone: (888) 933-3311 or (250) 347-2207

Fax: (250) 342-9221 E-mail: wings@AdventureValley.com



Race Rocks Revisited

by Mary Rannie

A baby female elephant seal was on hand to greet and delight the 22 adventure lovers on FER's annual trip to Race Rocks ER # 97. She lolled sleepily beside the path leading up from the dock, then snarled good morning with prominent upper lips, gazing at us through eyes larger than a harbour seal's (Syd explained that these would aid her pursuit of squid at great depths). Enraptured, we followed our guide, biology instructor Gary Fletcher for an excellent tour of the lighthouse rock.

The day had threatened gale force winds but we had carpooled to Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific in hopes of getting to the islands. Gary and his cohort, Chris Blondeau, waterfront coordinator at Pearson, loaded us into 2 boats. Four 1st year students were a happy complement to our group. Former Board members Syd Cannings and Sue Carr and family, soon to leave for the Yukon, joined us for this, their final adventure before the move.

Syd raised our hopes of seeing the single reported crested auklet. It was not to be but we had marvelous views of Thayer's and Heermann's gulls and of course northern and California sea lions on their various haulouts. As we awaited quieter seas for access to the Race Rock dock, Gary gave us a fascinating talk about the working of the Marine station. We noted the impressive current, constant except for short lulls at tide turnings. It was a big clue to the rich diversity in this ER (An undersea monitor, operating 24/7 for 3 years now, records the variety of sea life while a land-based camera, with views movable at the computer, shows activity on the rocks). Those on the smaller boat watched in awe as a sea lion flung and tore apart a salmon. In a lull we made a successful landing. We moved past the elephant seal to the base of the lighthouse, automated in recent years. Gary pointed out the cannon on display with its oval bore, rendering it useful only for ballast, and found on a nearby shipwreck. The rock used to build the lighthouse had come all the way from Britain. A privileged view of the composting toilet in the nearby house made us laugh at the inescapable irony that Race Rocks are in the path of Victoria's daily sewage outflow. We finished the morning with a look-see at Pearson's biology lab back on the Pearson dock and lunch at MyChosen Cafe. A super outing! ■



PHOTO CREDIT: DAVE QUINN

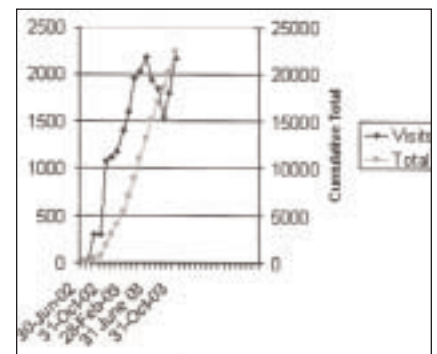
Visit www.ecoreserves.bc.ca

Call For New Board Members

Friends of Ecological Reserves is looking for three new board members to fill positions left vacant by the recent departure of Sue Carr and Syd Cannings for the Yukon and to fill a third position. The board would like to make two of these positions regional ones so proximity to the Victoria area is not a prerequisite nor is personal attendance at Board meetings. If you are interested in a position or would like to suggest or nominate someone, please e-mail ecoreserves@hotmail.com or write to FER, Box 8477 Stn Central, Victoria BC V8W 3S1. ■

www.ecoreserves.bc.ca

Our gallery of photographs is a major website attraction. Visitors continue to log in from around the world. Website visits slowed a little over the summer but the number of visitors remained well above the number reported a year ago. ■





Friends of Ecological Reserves Placemats for Christmas

Want to help out the Friends with your Christmas buying? Consider our lovely placemats for those hard-to-buy-for people on your gift list. The names of those who contributed their talents to this project read like a who's who of BC nature artists. Uses for the four mats are not confined to the table – they make good posters as well as useful weatherproof field guides for that next hike with the kids. They can be ordered by using the orderform on the next page or by going to our website at www.ecoreserves.bc.ca ■

E-presents for Christmas:

Looking for eco-friendly Christmas presents online? Try these websites:

<http://www.ecomall.com/> A huge listing of links to eco-friendly products and companies online as well as a newsmagazine on green issues. It bills itself as the largest environmental portal on the net.

<http://www.nwf.org/shopping/> The (American) National Wildlife Federation's gift shop has cards, books, tools, and other products. I especially liked the "mad bluebird" card.

<http://www.natureconservancy.ca> *Homes for the Holidays* is The Nature Conservancy's latest holiday gift-giving program. Send them \$30 for habitat conservation on someone's behalf and they will send them an endangered species calendar and a copy of the NCC's newsletter.

<http://tlc.bounceme.net/store/> The Land Conservancy has books, jewelry, cards, prints, birdsong CDs and the 2004 *In A Victoria Garden* calendar with proceeds going to support the Abkhazi Gardens. ■

FRIENDS OF ECOLOGICAL RESERVES MEMBERSHIP FORM

Box 8477 Stn Central Victoria BC V8W 3S1

- Renewal for 2004 New membership

NAME (please print) _____ Date _____

Membership Category

- INDIVIDUAL: \$ 20 STUDENT/SENIOR: \$ 15 FAMILY: \$ 25 INSTITUTION: \$ 25

ADDRESS _____

Postal Code _____

PHONE () _____ E-MAIL _____

I/we enclose Payment for:

___ year(s) membership \$ _____

Donation \$ _____

___ copy(ies) Constitution & Bylaws @\$1 each \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Tax receipts issued for donations of \$20 or more
(Charitable BIN#118914597RR)

I am interested in volunteering for:

- Assisting with Field Trip organization
 Contributing articles/photos to *The LOG*
 Fund-Raising telephoning Other

Please apply my donation to:

- Land acquisition projects
 Scholarships for post-graduate research
 where most needed

ORDER FORM FOR PLACEMATS AND FENWICK LANSDOWNE PRINT

Lansdowne "Meadowlark" Numbered Limited Edition Print (200) – \$50.00 each

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Shipping, Handling and Postage for Placemat Orders	\$4.00	
Total Enclosed (Cheque or Money Order)		\$

Websites of Interest

BC Government Directory

At this fall's wardens' gathering in Kamloops, the Friends made a request to MWLAP staff for an online listing of Area Supervisors. The idea was to facilitate communication between wardens and area supervisors, especially in the current climate of change in the ministry. Unfortunately, due to concerns over inappropriate use being made of the information, the ministry has declined to do this but with a bit of sleuthing online, we've come up with an alternative. Fair warning – it's a bit convoluted. The URL below will take you to the B.C. Government Directory. Click on "Ministries" and choose Water, Land and Air Protection. Seven pages of listings will pop up. Go to Page 5 and look for "Environmental Stewardship Division". Look for your region and click on "Protected Areas Section". You'll get a listing of the Area Supervisors for your region although it does not specify which one is responsible for your particular ecoreserve. From there, it might take a couple of phone calls but if you've managed to read this far, you're probably determined enough to track it down.

<http://www.dir.gov.bc.ca/>

James Miskelly on the web:

Our favorite butterfly researcher has been profiled on the University of Victoria communications webpage since July of this year. James' work on butterfly habitat is briefly outlined and some of his observations are quoted with regard to how anyone can get involved in the conservation and appreciation of these delicate creatures. <http://communications.uvic.ca/releases/mr030722b.html>

Travel to warm climates:

If you're thinking about traveling somewhere warm during the cold winter months but aren't interested in the standard tourist destinations, the following websites are worth a look:


<http://www.adventuretravelabroad.com/search.cfm> is a comprehensive international education and alternative travel database. Here you'll find opportunities to work study, volunteer and teach abroad as well as adventure travel options.

<http://www.ecotourism.org/travelchoice/index.htm>

The International Ecotourism Society lays out some environmental, cultural and economic impacts to consider before you book your next holiday and provides links to low impact tourism operators.


<http://www.worldsurface.com/> promotes sustainable tourism through education and action. Click on the "Responsible Travel" button and have a look at the Independent Traveler Code for advice on getting the most out of your trip with minimum negative impact. ■

The Log



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Victoria BC V8W 3S1
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