

The Log

Friends of Ecological Reserves Newsletter

FOR ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

FALL 1996

Will ecological reserve wardens get Lost in B.C.'s new protected areas?

On a recent, duly-permitted field trip to an ecological reserve we met the volunteer warden, an avid naturalist with an interest in plant life, and his partner, who unofficially cared for the bird life around the site. They lived immediately adjacent to the reserve for several years. They had yet to meet a BC Parks official. The site isn't accessible by car. But it isn't remote, either.

Not long after, a letter from Parks minister Paul Ramsay to the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists addressed the concerns of a member, Rolf Kellerhals, about the ministry's low priority for ecological reserves, as evidenced by its lack of support of volunteer wardens. Past issues of *The Log* have documented Rolf's observations as warden of the Nimpkish River ER.

"Last year BC Parks was reorganized to address the tremendous increase in the protected area system and to 'manage smarter' with few resources," Mr. Ramsay wrote. "During the process of reorganizing, it appears that the volunteer warden program did not receive much attention.

"BC Parks staff and I recognize how very valuable these volunteers are and how much the province depends on them. We are now addressing how to revitalize and restructure the program for optimal management and recognition.

"One approach being considered is to incorporate the old volunteer warden program into a new volunteer stewards program. This new program would reflect the need for volunteers to assist in managing the new protected areas, in addition to the ecological reserves."

"A renewed and revitalized volunteer program will be of great benefit to both the ministry and British Columbians. The management of our protected areas requires dedicated and talented volunteers supported effectively by BC Parks."

The volunteer warden concept is excellent — to help understaffed BC Parks district offices manage and protect all those protected

areas by providing a presence that BC Parks cannot itself. The people entrusted with this responsibility know the sites and live in nearby communities. Depending on their knowledge of ecosystems, environmental expertise and willingness, they can systematically monitor the reserves and document the various assaults and indignities that go with being an ecosystem today.

Reports vary widely as to the state of relations between BC Parks and the wardens. One warden has at least one meeting a year with parks officials about the reserve. Another takes a proactive attitude to management of the reserve and has frequent on-site discussions with BC Parks about such projects as fencing and revegetation. A third has been entrusted with the task of developing the draft management plan for the reserve.

Jennifer Balke, warden of the Tsitika River ER, says it's important to separate two volunteer roles — warden and environmental activist. To be fair, BC Parks' support is only at issue on "wardenly work," which may or may not extend to monitoring and reporting ongoing impacts.

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FRIENDS' NEWS

Meetings & elections

Eleven Friends' directors stood for re-election at the Friends' annual meeting, hosted by Mary Rannie on June 15. All were returned, with the addition of Cheryl Gore, by acclamation.

At its September meeting the board of directors elected these officers: Cheryl Gore, president; Peggy Frank, vice president; Mary Rannie, secretary; Lynne Milnes, treasurer; Pen Brown, membership secretary.

Cheryl Gore fills a post that has been vacant. (Past presidents of the Friends include Bristol Foster, Vicky Husband and David Avren.) Thus Cheryl earns the Friends' gratitude from the start! She is interested in strengthening the Friends' membership and funding bases and has already been busy telephoning non-renewing members.

Cheryl works in government and has diverse interests. With an MA in cultural anthropology, she has been a member of the Victoria Sister City Advisory Committee and on the Greater Victoria Arts Commission finance committee. Cheryl travels extensively, tends her beautiful garden and is a birder.

This year FER supported the Marine Mammal Research Group in three projects around Victoria and paid the fees of two representatives (Briony and Peter) at the grasslands symposium.

Ocean News

The Friends received the latest issue of *Ocean News*, Bamfield Marine Station's learning materials for the classroom. The theme of issue number 5 is biodiversity. The Friends contributed to the cost of its production, and project co-coordinator Adrienne Mason solicited our editorial input on the section about marine ecological reserves.

We're impressed with the result, a 12-page tabloid accompanied by a 24-page spiral-bound teacher's guide and computer disk with a learning program that automatically decompresses into full-colour interactive sequences. The Friends logo is prominently displayed in both the printed products.

Adrienne writes: "We have introduced these materials in workshops and at the Bamfield Marine Station and will continue to offer workshops this fall. These materials make up the first educational package on marine biodiversity available in Canada. As well, in conjunction with previous issues of *Ocean News*, this package makes one of the most comprehensive teaching resources on marine science available in B.C." For copies or information on Bamfield Marine Station's public education program call (205) 728-3301

Wardens and Friends

Ian Whitehead, volunteer warden of the Bowen Island Ecological Reserve, dropped us a line to point out a delay in receiving *The Log* (sorry about that; we're still working on our timing) and wonders who foots the bill for sending the newsletter to the wardens (we do).

On a related point, the Friends welcome wardens as paying members — one may then participate fully in the society's affairs — but it's not necessary. We support the wardens' work by publishing items about reserves and wardens in the newsletter and disseminating it to them free of charge. Wardens who sign up via the invoices we insert in every newsletter will receive membership cards and our gratitude. They then have the right to vote at meetings.

R.C. (Bob) Harris has retired as Bowen Island reserve warden. Mr. and Mrs. Harris have taken memberships with the Friends.

Obituaries

Wilford Medd, Victoria; served for several years as the Friends' membership secretary and treasurer.

Michael Humphries, Qualicum Beach, a life member of the Friends, former chairman of the Islands Trust, piloted myriad aerial photography reconnaissances in the cause of preservation.

James C. Currie, Toronto, founding director and president of Eden Conservation Trust, 1984-1995; a native of Scotland, Mr. Currie was with National Trust for 25 years and a portfolio manager with Cassels Blaikie & Co. beginning in 1981.

British Columbia

A Natural History

by Richard Cannings and Sydney Cannings

Greystone Books / Douglas & McIntyre, 330 pages, \$45

This extravagant book, with 130 photos, 25 excellent maps and 75 line drawings, renders B.C.'s ecosystems in all their complexity. The natural world fairly bursts out of the pages. Anyone capable of astonishment will rediscover our wonderful province herein. This must be the first systematic overview of the components of B.C. ecosystems, pitched to the lay reader. Syd, a director of the Friends, says it's intended to serve as a reference. The book sure has a good feel, with a generous but not bulky 7 1/2" x 10" vertical format, well-stitched and made to lie flat. Good index, too. Well done!

Thanks to Dennis Kangasniemi for leading an excursion into Vietch Creek on June 15. From the Sooke Road we reached the north-facing brow of a rocky ridge and took in the scenic green valley, picking out veteran Douglas firs amid the mostly second-growth.

[Our annual pitch for members and donations]

The Friends and the Vision

Membership with the Friends gives you two issues of *The Log*, access to field trips, often at considerable saving, and other benefits for a mere \$15.

It's also a way to help fulfil the vision of Vladimir Krajina, the late British Columbia ecologist, who inspired our system of ecological reserves. Ecological reserves have multiple scientific uses. They're living museums — benchmarks against which to measure changes in the main. They're storehouses of genetic resources that may vanish elsewhere. They are not intended for recreation, but the educational uses of ecological reserves — just as vital to us — include visits with informed guides.

Dr. Krajina envisioned a system of small samples of land, protected for study and science, representative of every ecosystem, totalling one per cent of the province. We employ Dr. Krajina's vision in looking at the B.C. government's record fulfilling its commitment to this system.

We support research in ecological reserves and other areas where biological diversity needs study.

To cover our modest overhead we rely on the generosity of our members, and we've kept out hand in the research field for 10 years largely through the continuing support of the Eden Conservation Trust. FER also raises money making and selling our laminated floral ecosystem placemats. We'd like to do more fundraising, and we're looking for a volunteer.

Currently our gaze is focussed on grasslands, the most endangered type of ecosystem in B.C. We'd like to establish inventories of grasslands worth protecting in the Cariboo-Chilcotin and East Kootenay regions. Our finding target is \$10,000, and thanks to Darlene Choquette, a generous

donor in Tofino, and Marianne Nahm in Cranbrook, we're already part way there! We're going to make an antelope brush ecosystem placemat to go with our Douglas fir and Garry oak floral placemats, to raise more money.

Other priorities for support, should funding permit, include study of an inland rain forest area, a contribution towards the purchase of ecosystems in the Coastal Douglas Fir zone (we helped the 1995 Jedediah Island purchase).

We're not big, but we can make a difference. One new member said, "What the Friends do is so important." All contributions are appreciated, and we issue tax-deductible receipts promptly.

Donation and membership application / renewal forms are included with this issue. Dues are still just \$15 per calendar year, \$20 for families, agencies or other groups. Please do take the time to renew or start your membership with the Friends.

(We've changed our practices in reminding members to renew. We will mail a reminder before the new year. If feasible we will attempt to reach non-renewers by telephone before the next newsletter. But we won't mail out the spring 1997 issue of *The Log* unless renewals are received.)

Friends' personnel

President

Cheryl Gore (250) 477-8793

Vice president

Peggy Frank (250) 653-2350

Treasurer

Lynne Milnes (250) 598-1567

Secretary

Mary Rannie (250) 478-8936

Membership secretary

Pen Brown (250) 598-1171

Office manager

Peter Grant (250) 595-4813

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CALENDAR

Field Trip

UBC Endowment Lands Ecological Reserve

Sunday, January 5, 1997

This 90-hectare reserve near the University of British Columbia has the largest Sitka spruce population on the Lower Mainland. The well-watered site, on the south slope of Point Grey, was logged in the 1890s, and the growing forest harboured a heron rookery in the 1970s. Recently an unusual species of cutthroat trout has been identified in the creeks. Various disciplines at UBC use Ecological Reserve no. 74 for research.

We'll meet volunteer warden Terry Taylor at 9 am at 29th and Imperial for a four-hour tour of this urban reserve. (Plenty of parking along the west side of Imperial.) Terry, a librarian (retired) with the Vancouver Public Library, does lichen research out of a lab in UBC's department of microbiology.

Now incorporated into Pacific Spirit Regional Park, the reserve is managed by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) parks department. Terry adds that people from BC Parks' district office in North Vancouver come out every year for a discussion of management issues relating to the reserve.

Business meetings

10:15 am, Saturday, January 19, 1997

10:15 am, Saturday, March 15

Stone House Pub

2215 Canoe Cove Road

North Saanich (656-3498)

The Friends will begin holding meetings at this regular place and time (third Saturday in January, March, June and September). The Stone House is just a hop, step and jump away from the Swartz Bay ferry terminal, enabling Salt Spring Island directors to make a quick sortie.

Grasslands Roundup

Grasslands Symposium

Big Bar Ranch, June 21-24

This timely event packed the living room of a log lodge in the rolling upper grasslands of the Cariboo plateau. Organized by the BC chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), the group considered the urgency and the difficulty of getting grassland areas protected, especially in the rapidly urbanizing Okanagan-Osoyoos axis. The Empire Valley Ranch, not far from Big Bar, was another focus.

Presentations at the symposium covered topics from biology to politics. Michael Pitt, plant science professor in UBC agriculture, traced the coevolution of grasslands and grazing animals (inducing one of the greatest changes in nature since the Cretaceous) and reviewed the basics of grass physiology (bud is hidden in crown; high proportion of biomass is recycled) and ecology (grass root systems recover well from light grazing, badly from heavy; grasslands are among the most diverse of habitats). Dr. Pitt philosophised about the conditions needed to modify human impacts, suggesting that we must strive to "replicate natural systems," and invited everyone to "enjoy the humble elegance of the grasslands."

In the course of the symposium several participants paid tribute to the work of Williams Lake biologist Anna Roberts in identifying grassland-dependent species. Ms. Roberts enumerated some of the denizens of the lower, middle and upper grassland associations in the Cariboo-Chilcotin.

Lynne Atwood, a graduate biology student at UBC, traced the elements, characteristics and functions of the microbial crust, the community of visible (lichens, mosses, liverworts) and microscopic life binding the soil surface of grasslands.

Bill Henwood, a planner with Parks Canada, one of the sponsors of the symposium, outlined the linkage between the Temperate Grasslands Network, a project of the IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, on which he serves, and efforts to negotiate the purchase of B.C. grasslands for a national park.

Kevin McNamee explained the advocacy role of the Canadian Nature Federation, outlined some of the difficulties encountered in trying to create grasslands parks on the prairies and pointed to a US success story, the Z-Bar Ranch in Kansas, to illustrate the combined natural history and heritage value of a protected ranch.

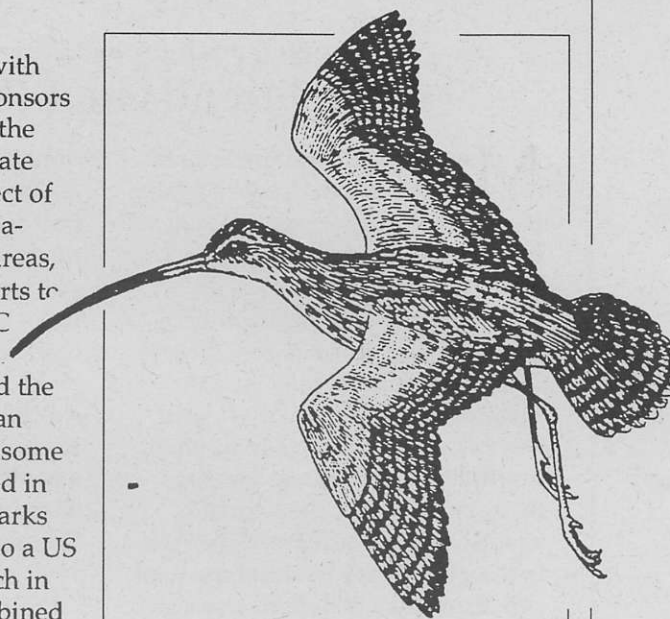
Dennis Lloyd, ecologist with the Kamloops Forest Region, introduced the land-use initiatives in his region, including the Kamloops Land and Resources Management Plan (LRMP), the only one in the province to have reached consensus on protected area proposals.

Geoff Scudder (UBC Zoology) reported on the progress of the South Okanagan Conservation Strategy, focussing on the Antelope Brush ecosystem.

Rancher Laurie Guichon introduced himself tongue-in-cheek as a "wholistic manager who raises a few cattle on the side" (he has 14,000 acres in the Nicola Valley) and showed a taped television show profiling the Guichons' commitment over three generations to environmentally sustainable ranching.

The evening discussion group agreed that subdivision is the primary threat to BC grasslands, not overgrazing, and pondered the urgency of reacting to this threat.

Nearby Churn Creek Protected Area was the destination of the Sunday field trip, via the antique Gang Ranch bridge over the Fraser. The microbial crust was minutely examined. We had to be content to survey the Empire



*The long-billed curlew, "poster child" of the new BC Grasslands Conservation Council.
Drawing by Donald Gunn*

Valley spread from the road.

A post-symposium meeting evolved a vision statement that looks toward creation of "an ecologically-viable system of representative grassland conservation areas, combined with ecologically sensitive stewardship of grasslands outside protected areas, throughout British Columbia's grassland regions." Short term issues requiring action included the composition and orientation of three LRMPs (Okanagan-Shuswap, Merritt and Lillooet, about which more below) and two special cases: the South Okanagan Nature Legacy and Empire Valley Ranch.

The meeting established the British Columbia Grasslands Conservation Council. Briony Penn will represent the Friends on the council, and the board of directors has affirmed our participation. CPAWS-BC sends us drafts of the Conservation Strategy for British Columbia's Grasslands, as well as updates on the issues, and the proceedings of the symposium are in preparation. A second grasslands symposium will convene in Naramata, December 6-8.

Cariboo-Chilcotin grassland issues

Opportunities for protecting grasslands in the Cariboo-Chilcotin are almost exclusively in land privately-owned. This region was one of four to opt for the CORE regional land-use negotiating process. Now, as the dust settles, the message from the Cariboo-Chilcotin is clear: as far as Crown land is concerned, the protected areas system is complete. Gap analyses for grassland variants (see the last issue of *The Log*) show how inadequately represented some variants are.

The CORE region was congruent with the Cariboo Forest Region. Strict adherence to the 12 per cent formula for protected areas was the bottom line for forestry and range interests. There was a lot of controversy over how much the 12 per cent should include of Wells Gray park at the eastern border, and Tweedsmuir park on the west.

Grasslands already protected in the region included about half of 257-ha Big Creek Ecological Reserve and a third of the 27 ha Westwick Lake ER south of Williams Lake.

Protected areas new since 1995 include some grassland: much of Churn Creek Protected Area (24,368 ha.) and the Junction Sheep Range Park (4,573 ha.), formerly a wildlife management area excluding grazing. Grazing leases continue in Churn.

A short list of candidates for Goal 2 / Special Feature protected area status, totalling 26,758 ha, was forwarded to Victoria at the end of 1995 preparatory to sub-regional planning. Proposed sites with grasslands were Bechers Prairie (total area: 817 ha.) and China Flat (total 466 ha.)

Purchase of the Empire Valley Ranch, the "hole in the donut" of Churn Creek, the long-sought protected core grassland area, was key to the regional strategy. The Empire Valley deal has fallen through, sadly. Following the death of the European owner, who was willing to sell to the BC Government for its ceiling offer, which was tied to the appraised value, his son put the ranch on the open market. Research into the identity of the buyer discovered a registered number in Alberta and dollars that government couldn't match. An equivalent area ($\pm 12,000$ ha.) should be added to the Cariboo-Chilcotin protected area system. The authorities will have to be pressed to do it.

As a footnote, the Williams Lake Forest District, while subtracting the new protected areas from the forest land base, refused to "net down" the AAC to reflect the withdrawal of 324,000 hectares for parks. The Sierra Legal Defence Fund, acting for the Cariboo-Chilcotin Conservation Council in BC Supreme Court, got the *Forest Act* enforced. The cut will be recalculated.

East Kootenay grasslands

No grassland areas of Crown land were voted protection by the East Kootenay Land Use Plan. A few protected areas have small grassland components. Most grasslands are privately-owned. Private initiatives have resulted in a few purchases or stewardship agreements in the border area. A profile of the outlook in the East Kootenay region in the next issue.

Grasslands inventory

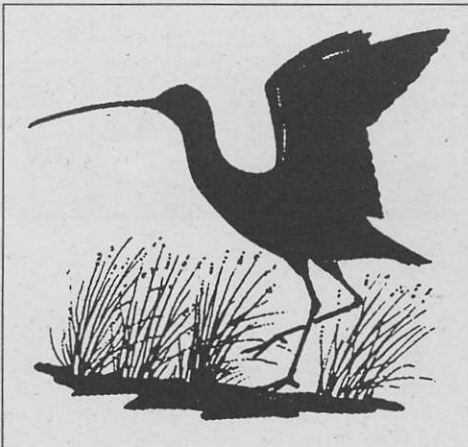
Inquiries with people in the field have helped the Friends develop a model for grasslands projects in the Cariboo-Chilcotin and East Kootenay. The time may be inopportune for even the most diplomatic approaches to landowners. Attitudes are unyielding in the wake of the land-use negotiating tables brokered by CORE in those two regions. We hear of ranchers who won't let government biologists on their land to do baseline work, citing incidents of trespass.

Ranching is one of the province's oldest industries. Some spreads were started by the ancestors of the present owners, who take their responsibilities seriously. And we appreciate that grazing beef cattle has less impact on grasslands than subdivisions or ginseng farms, which totally alter the ecosystem.

It's also clear, however, that the pace of ecosystem change is quickening. The record of grassland protection is the same here as virtually everywhere: less than one per cent. Yet effective protection may be as simple as changing grazing schedules.

Eventually, a landowner contact specialist may be able to negotiate the conservation of intact grasslands through purchase, establishment of conservation covenants or of agreements on stewardship. Right now, two university students could complete the land-use research in directed studies. We're trying to raise \$10,000 to support their training and work. Beginning with interviews of knowledgeable people in the Cariboo-Chilcotin and East Kootenay regions, they would compile lists of areas with potential for protection. The research continues in Victoria, where most information is located. The result will be maps and tabulations of all information for each area.

For more information about this exciting project contact: Briony Penn at (250) 653-4880.



Grasslands Roundup

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains and the Lillooet LRMP

The Southern Chilcotin Mountains, on the dry eastern flank of the Coast Mountains, support grasslands extending to 2500 metres above sea level, and appeals for their protection go back to the Charlie Cunningham Wilderness proposal in the 1930s. Ecological reserve proposals above Tyaughton and Gun creeks have languished while the larger wilderness, made part of the Lillooet Timber Supply Area, under the jurisdiction of the Kamloops Forest Region, was tagged for multiple-use. During the 1980s logging proceeded up most of the Southern Chilcotins' seven valleys under the Spruce Lake Integrated Resource Use Plan. Government imposed a moratorium on logging in 1990, and hopes soared when the Southern Chilcotins got interim protection as a Protected Areas Strategy study area. The northern third of the Charlie Cunningham Wilderness became Big Creek / South

Chilcotin Provincial Park in June 1995. This magnificently scenic 65,982-ha. park was forwarded by the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land Use Plan, whose area was contiguous with the Cariboo Forest Region.

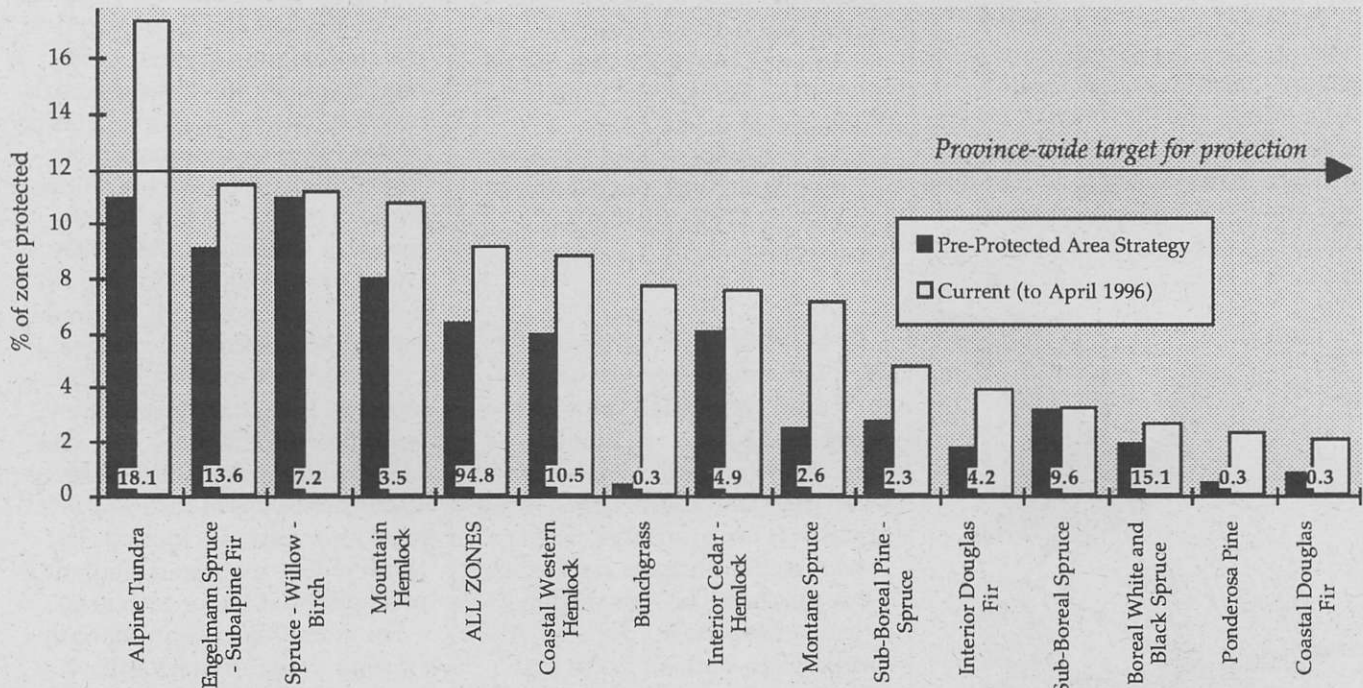
The Southern Chilcotin Mountains, no less magnificent but still unprotected, falling within another jurisdiction, the Kamloops Forest Region, suffered serious downzoning to offset the impact on timber supplies of establishing Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Provincial Park (107,191 ha., 65,358 of it newly protected) in November 1995. The moratorium on logging was removed for some 80,000 hectares of the Southern Chilcotin wilderness, including all of Slim Creek and the scenic eastern approaches to the Spruce Lake area. At the same time, the government established the Lillooet Land and Resources Management Plan (LRMP) process, with a two-year mandate to create "a locally

developed land-use plan" for the Lillooet Timber Supply Area, assisted by the Land Use Coordination Office. The Harcourt government endorsed the Lillooet and District Community Resources Board after efforts by this organ of Lillooet's resource extraction interests to be recognized as the LRMP negotiating table.

The Friends are joining the BC Grasslands Conservation Council in calling on the BC Government to **restore the original Southern Chilcotin Mountain study area**, including Bonanza, Taylor and Cinnabar basins, upper Slim and Nichols creeks and the unlogged portions of lower Slim Creek, and to ensure that the LRMP table is open to representation of wilderness and tourism interests. Word has it Mike Kennedy and Kevin Scott have established their credentials for sitting at the table to represent the conservation interest. The table has yet to meet, however.

Percentage of each Biogeoclimatic Zone under protection

(numbers inside bars = total area in millions of hectares in the zone)



LAND USE

Mill Farm to be preserved

The largest remnant of old-growth Douglas-fir in the Gulf Islands will be protected, thanks to an \$800,000 purchase of the 65-hectare Mill Farm settled on October 17. The Mill Farm was on a roller coaster all summer after being put up for sale for offers on \$1.3 million. The first offer (rumoured to be under \$900,000) by a logging consortium had some subject-to clauses which were never met, so the property went back on the market. During this time the Salt Spring Island Conservancy raised over \$100,000 for the purchase. The Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy teamed up with the Conservancy put in an offer of \$600,000 that involved a purchase and sell-back deal to some of the owners with the core old-growth area retained by the Crown. The owners rejected this deal—not enough money, they said—and it went back on the market. A second offer was put on the property by, it was rumoured, another logging consortium. Meanwhile, the

Capital Regional District entered the stage. Salt Spring Island has now joined the CRD parks function. This normally would require an island referendum and acceptance by all the other CRD directors. The carrot was having an immediate half a million put into park acquisition on Salt Spring—and guess where \$400,000 of the money went? Meanwhile Salt Spring Island Conservancy raised close to \$100,000 more. (Peggy and I contributed \$200 from the Friends after selling watercolours made for the Douglas fir placemat.) The successful bid was put together by the Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy, the CRD and the Conservancy, whose members say it is the first land-use “win” ever for Salt Spring.

The Mount Tuam/Mount Bruce protected area proposal that was put forward by the Friends and featured in the last issue is moving along briskly. I have joined ranks with a realtor and an economist to prepare a long term strat-

egy which focuses on the possibility of a protection of the full 7000 acre area through a variety of tools and management types. This is being done in conjunction with the Conserving with Covenants project that Bill Turner has been working tirelessly on.

A variety of conservation strategies will be required to protect this area:

1. Crown lands to be designated protected areas
2. Willing landowners to negotiate covenants for tax credits
3. Buffer-zone properties that come up for sale are bought through a rotating endowment fund, covenants are placed on the land, and the land is resold with cost recovery at no less than 75 per cent
4. Forest reserve lands are placed under low intensity management to encourage landowners to undertake stewardship responsibilities.

Briony Penn

Eco-treasures of the Greater Victoria Water District closer to protection

There are hopeful signs that the non-catchment lands of the Greater Victoria Water District — lands in the Sooke Hills between Saanich Inlet and Sooke Basin that do not supply water to the city — will soon receive full protection.

Public concern over the governance, water conservation and land-use issues in the GVWD resulted in the appointment in April of a special commission to gather information from municipal councils and the public. FER has been monitoring the process and helping make a case for conservation, and at this year's annual meeting we endorsed the protection of off-catchment lands in their natural state. Evelyn Hamilton and

I got together to analyse several technical tomes, including CRD Parks' assessment of greenspace and park values in the non-catchment lands, the Protected Areas Strategy gap analysis and the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory report. In June I made a presentation to the special commission, arguing the importance of the Sooke Hills for the maintenance of biological diversity on Victoria's perimeter. The GVWD non-catchment lands embrace one of the last large, contiguous forested areas transitional between the Coastal Douglas Fir and Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zones. These lands are already in public hands, we argued, which

makes the task of protecting their ecological integrity fairly simple — if the public will is there. The size of the area makes it immensely valuable to wildlife species that need large forested areas for survival and migration. FER supports some combination of parks, ecological reserve and protected corridor that will maintain the integrity of the landscape.

The commission's report released on October 23 recommended major changes, notably total preservation of non-catchment lands under the CRD.

Continued vigilance and pressure will be required to secure the protection of these lands.

Mary Rannie

ECOLOGICAL RESERVES

Race Rocks B & B?

The southernmost bit of land in B.C. is Race Rocks, near Sooke. The eight treeless islets are famous for their high-current tidal life and well-known as a marine mammal haul-out and seabird nesting area. The 220-hectare Ecological Reserve no. 97 protects both land and subtidal, except for Great Race Rock, on which stands the second oldest (by three days) light on Canada's west coast.

A divers' register at the dock recorded more than 1300 divers last year. Uncounted sport fishers, whale watchers, kayakers and other boaters visit Race Rocks. Fortunately, there is a presence. The Race Rocks lightkeepers maintain a daily vigil for the safety of visitors on the often dangerous waters. They responded to some 650 radioed requests for information and appeals to assistance last year and have done life-saving rescue work. Sometimes they intervene when boaters stampede roosting sea lions or land on rocks where seabirds are nesting.

Students in marine sciences and diving service at Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific, in nearby Pedder Bay, use the reserve as an outdoor laboratory. Under teacher Garry Fletcher they serve as the assistant wardens of the reserve. They're there as often as four days a week during the fall and spring, Fletcher says. Pearson has started some of the numerous monitoring and research installations since the reserve's establishment in 1979. They have an awesome Race Rocks web site on the Internet at <http://www.pearson-college.uwc.ca/pearson/pcserv7.html>. Want to review the draft of Garry's management plan for the reserve? try <http://www.iceonline.net/home/garry1/classwk/mnagplan.html>.

Pearson is there for the long-term, but the alert on-site presence will soon be gone — unless some

11th-hour solution can be found. The Canadian Coast Guard is, in the face of coast-wide protest, automating 35 light stations on the West Coast to save \$3.7 million annual operating costs. They've begun installation of automated equipment at Race Rocks and given the lightkeepers notice of layoff for March 1997. The outbuildings will be razed. The stone Race Rocks light, a National Historic Site, will be preserved.

Pearson College has confronted this void with a proposal to run the lightstation, provided the Province acquire it. The Pearson concept is to create a \$1.2-million endowment and, under contract to BC Parks, operate an education centre on Race Rocks, paying the lightkeeper as staff of the college, for an estimated annual cost of \$140,000. Pearson is asking Canada and B.C. to kick in \$600,000 and the Government of Canada to contribute the \$300,000 it saves by not demolishing the outbuildings. Buildings would be converted for use as a classroom/wet lab and dive centre, with "limited accommodation for students, researchers, artists, writers, etc." (Sign us up!)

The BC Government, meanwhile, has been studying the costs and benefits of acquiring the lightstations. A consultant's report, Preliminary Assessment of Potential Alternative Uses for Lightstations in BC (Cornerstone Management Group for the Ministry of Employment and Investment, July 30, 1996), contains this unequivocal statement: "It is the desire of the government of British Columbia that these [35 stations] remain staffed where at all feasible/possible.... The Government of BC seeks to identify potential alternative uses for lightstation sites.... The presence of multiple compatible uses provides a rationale for maintaining a staffed presence at the sites."

Some lightstations may be well-

situated and suited for conversion to a bed-and-breakfast or camping establishment. The Pachena and Carmanah lights are on the West Coast Trail. Race Rocks isn't. There's no drinkable water. Winds can be fierce and unabating. Rough water can quickly render landings impossible. The report identifies Race Rocks as having "good potential for local sea kayaking tours." The fact that Race Rocks already attracts numbers of recreational visitors doesn't mean it should have even more. Ecological reserves are supposed not to have any recreational use, although it's clearly the purpose of many divers. Pearson's track record as educational users gives its proposal tremendous weight as against any tourism ventures, in our opinion. An endowment would ensure the enterprise's future support.

Pearson recently got the word that the Canada-B.C. Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy fund can't be applied to sites on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Where next? The clock is ticking.

New woodlot to border Mara Meadows ER

Salmon Arm Forest District is establishing woodlots on the east, south and west sides of Mara Meadows Ecological Reserve, near Salmon Arm. The Mara Meadows Reserve protects a rare and fragile calcareous fen with many rare and endangered plant species. (The Spring 1996 issue of *The Log* documented a continuing threat to the reserve from another direction: the District of Salmon Arm's plans to impound water in the Larch Hills, above Mara Meadows.)

The BC Forest Service will issue a 15-year licence for a 520-hectare woodlot bordering the reserve on the east and south, with an allowable annual cut of 1000 cubic metres. The Friends wrote to the

Forest Service in May supporting establishment of a 500-metre buffer zone in the woodlot. We recently spoke with district woodlot for-ester Gary Nielson. Nielson has walked the reserve with BC Parks staff and reserve warden Peter Bailey, and the Forest Service hired an engineer to do a hydrology study. Based on the engineer's report, from which, Nielson says, "it's well understood that the water movement in Mara Meadows is 99 per cent subsurface," and given an existing 350-metre-average forested buffer between the fen and the boundary of the reserve, the Forest Service rejected the additional buffer. The woodlot licence has been advertised.

Mr. Bailey has a hunch that with numerous little creeks feeding Violet Creek, disturbances could have a significant impact on Mara Meadows, and he would like to map those little side drainages.

Bear hunt, kill filmed in Tahsish River ER?

Were hunters filmed shooting bears in the Tahsish River Ecological Reserve to promote hunting on Vancouver Island?

A late October news release out of a Nanaimo environment ministry office detailed the charges laid in Provincial Court in Port Hardy against four men for violations of the *Ecological Reserve Act* — hunting, camping, operating a motorboat, producing a commercial video, photographing wildlife and staging a mock hunt in an ecological reserve [without permits] — and under the *Firearms Act* for carrying loaded firearms. It's "believed to be the first such charges in the Ecological Reserve Act of B.C." the October 28 Port Hardy North Island Chronicle reported.

"On May 13, a conservation officer and a park ranger, both from Port Hardy, responded to a public complaint. [They] found

two resident hunters and two Danish filmmakers in the Tahsish River Ecological Reserve with the bodies of three black bears.

"Filmmakers Poul Erik Madsen and Jens-Henrik Rafn were allegedly producing a commercial video of a black bear hunt by B.C. resident hunters Soren Erving and Jorgen Hansen."

An October 28 story in the Campbell River Courier-Islander reported that Erving, "of Sooke," and Hansen, "from the Lower Mainland," were "said to have restaged a mock hunt for the cameras."

The case goes to court in Port Hardy on December 3.

"Maximum penalty for each of the offenses under the two acts is a \$2000 fine and and-or a six-month prison term." (Courier-Islander)

Blasting away around Mt. Tuam ER

A huge private road has been blasted "one inch from the line" at the northwest corner of the Mt Tuam Ecological Reserve on Salt Spring Island to access Lot 38, Briony Penn reports. The developer was refused permit to put a road through nearby Crown reserve (Log, Fall 1993 and Spring 1994), so he bought two lots and just blasted away — for eight months. Briony went up with warden Bob Andrew "It's unbelievable — they blasted 60 feet into a cliff." The developer reportedly intends to get the road designated a public road so that he can apply for a subdivision permit. The road crosses the watershed that drains into the reserve. Look for impacts to show this winter. Already, "silt and stuff" line the edges of creeks on the reserve. "It looks like cement."

The owner of a Cape Keppel property has abandoned plans to build a subdivision there by illegal use of the road through Mt. Tuam Ecological Reserve! This is good news for the reserve.

OFF THE WIRE

New grassroots park stewardship program

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's (CPAWS) B.C. chapter has started a grassroots park stewardship program to help ensure the ecological integrity of our protected area system. The BC Grassroots Park Stewardship Program has the support of EarthLife Canada Foundation (BC Wild) and the endorsement of the Parks and Wilderness Caucus of the British Columbia Environmental Network.

The program will focus on park stewardship activities of grassroots (volunteer) groups, with the intent of improving communication among stewardship groups and implementing stewardship initiatives. Park stewardship includes involvement in park planning and management processes, interpretation and education, monitoring, research, "watchdog" duties and advocacy, trail building and facilities maintenance.

Its first task has been to create a park stewardship network connecting grassroots groups and individuals involved in park issues. So far more than 30 groups and numerous individuals have signed up. Evelyn Hamilton has volunteered to represent the Friends in the network.

CPAWS is organizing a park stewardship workshop for January 24 to 26, 1997, to address issues raised by the groups and to decide future courses of action.

CPAWS has started to collect material on park stewardship in BC.: newspaper articles, newsletters, bulletins, journals, pamphlets.

For information or to join, please contact:

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Park Stewardship Program
CPAWS - BC, Vancouver
(604) 685-7445; fax (604) 685-6449
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FIELD REPORT

Conservation covenants on properties in a new subdivision

The new order in Highlands District

In a small, recently-incorporated district municipality near Victoria, the forest canopy and unsullied views bespeak a local interest in living harmoniously with nature. In Highlands District, pop. 1400, natural values are certainly protected on the more than one-third of the 3800-hectare municipality that is in parks. Conservation is the keynote on the majority of private land, as well. Very conservative residential zoning enables the District to maintain stringent controls and to exercise leverage over property development not available in most jurisdictions.

As the name Highlands suggests, the landscape is rugged. The exquisite Gowlland Range forms an escarpment rising to 430 metres above Saanich Inlet, the only fjord on the east side of Vancouver Island. East and south lies a hilly plateau, where forests of predominantly Douglas fir alternate with grassy boulders with arbutus and Garry oak. Access to this plateau is difficult. Once in the hills the Highlands' three thoroughfares dwindle to driveway size. Naturally, when one turns off Ross Durrance (Millstream Lake) Road and drives up Hazlitt Creek Road and then Old Mossy Road one sees only minimal signs of subdivision. The roads follow the contours. The

forested properties are an average 3.2 hectares in size. Their park-like setting is ensured in writing.

Elliott Gose, a nearby resident and member of the conservation group the Gowlland Foundation, has great enthusiasm for the subdivision. He helped discover the old logging roads used for the

Highlands councillor.

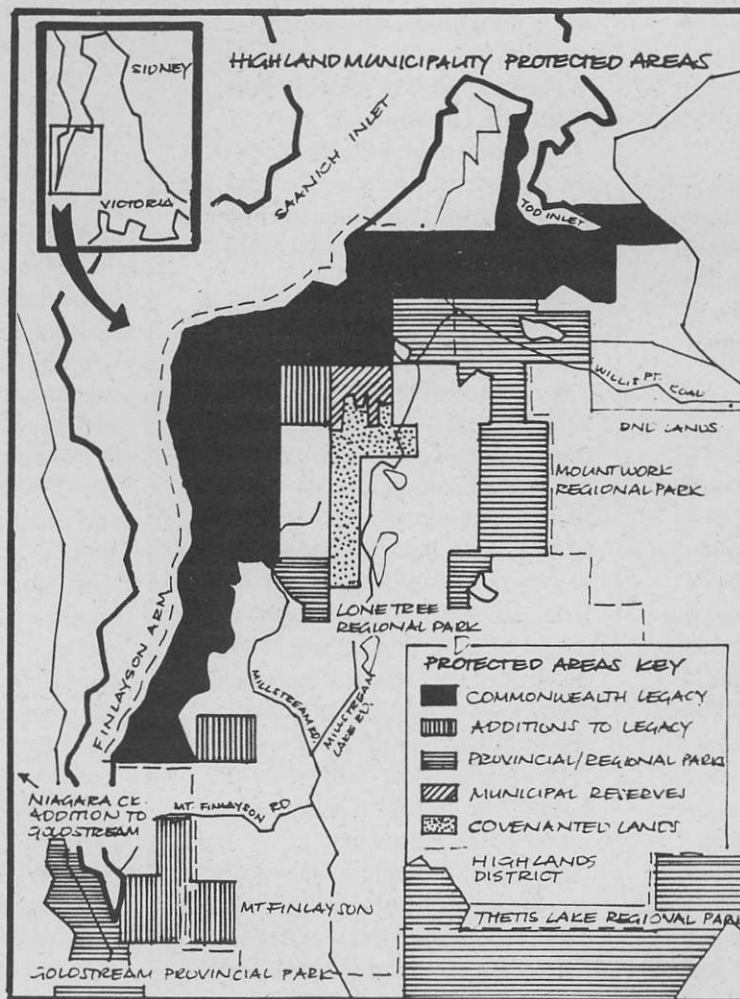
The big story in Highlands may be about parks. But the real story is about a fertile rapprochement between communities and real estate developers.

Much of the Highlands is zoned Greenbelt II, with a 12 ha (30 ac) minimum lot size, "imposed as an

impediment to development in 1987 when there was no market for large lots" (so the *Times-Colonist*). The proposed development of a 663-ha. tract of the Gowlland Range by First National Properties of Vancouver hinged on the relaxation of this minimum lot size. For several years of intense wrangling, residents maintained a vigilant presence at public hearings convened by the Capital Regional District (CRD) in considering rezoning applications to allow first 650, then 350, lots, with 530 ha. allocated for park. The Highlands was an unorganized electoral area. Their CRD director was elected by a wider electorate, and management was supportive of conventional

development. Residents could only react to proposals. But 300 people would turn out to challenge proposed zoning changes!

In 1993, for the fifth time in 25 years, Highlands residents petitioned the Province for the right to incorporate. A local referendum



new road rights-of-way. "This is a good example of what can be done if developers don't have to follow Highways standards." Servicing harmonizes with the environment in numerous such ways. Vestigial trails lead to the sunny ridge of a nature sanctuary, named for a late

provided the option of amalgamating with Langford, but the community voted heavily in favour of having a separate identity.

Incorporation of the District of Highlands in 1993 coincided with Bill 59, amending the *Municipal Act* to enable "amenity zoning." Local governments can now change density or lot size entitlements on a portion of a large property — an invaluable tool in swapping, rather than paying, for greenspace (Smaller development areas also

The public purse is not depleted by a cent for either park or greenspace in the subdivision

cost the developer less to service.) Highlands has tremendous leeway on lot size with the 30-acre-minimum Greenbelt II zone.

The Gowlland Foundation, meanwhile, had been searching for the elusive financial key that would secure the Gowlland Range. They found it during deliberations over a nearby property known as Western Forest Products (WFP) North. WFP, a large forest company controlled by Duncan businessman Herb Doman, owns several Highlands properties. Doman wanted to donate the isolated north side of the 243 ha. (600 ac.) WFP North property as parkland in exchange for a relaxed lot size in the smaller area suitable for development. Originally, the vehicle contemplated was a title known as "bare land strata" under the *Condominium Act*. "A lot of things happened at the right time," says real estate agent Bill Turner. Amenity zoning was perfectly suited for Gowlland Range! Soon the Highlands, the Province and

other parties reopened negotiations with First National Properties. The result was part of "the largest single purchase of land for greenspace in B.C. history," the Commonwealth Nature Legacy. Announced on March 30, 1994, the agreement provided for the acquisition of 1000 ha. for protection, including 703 ha in the Gowlland Range, at a cost of \$17.5 million, plus donations of land. The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks bought the Gowlland property from First National for \$8.5 million. To allow the Province to recover a portion of the acquisition costs, the Highlands rezoned 121 ha. near Lone Tree Park to permit lots with an average size of 2 ha. for housing development.

Gowlland-Tod was possible, Bill Turner points out, because the NDP government realized it could "do deals" — finance park acquisitions on the expectation of a partial return. It's a creative solution to an intractable problem near cities, where parkland costs dearly.

WFP North was the first major rezoning applicant the District of Highlands considered. Agreement between the developers and the community created:

- a 70-ha. municipal park, the Cal Revelle Nature Sanctuary
- a 92 ha. addition to Gowlland Tod Provincial Park
- an 81-ha. subdivision of 22 lots.

Eighty per cent of each lot in the subdivision, moreover, is greenspace. The ratio is fixed in a covenant attached to the title. Under section 215 of the amended *Land Title Act*, accredited non-government organization can holds covenants. (Formerly only the Province could.)

The capper, Turner says, is that the public purse is not depleted by a cent for either park or greenspace in WFP North.

A dramatic change in the tone of public debate was remarked on by municipal manager Bruce

Woodbury at the rezoning hearing. Previously a hundred residents would turn out at a meeting opposed to a proposed rezoning. In this case, 60 or so spoke in support of the WFP North development. The difference? "They helped to design the process."

Thus a process of development through continual dialogue has created a subdivision plan with rare acceptance by all parties.

(Cal Revelle Nature Sanctuary is not a park intended for regular use by groups. Occasional visitors may park on the turnaround at the end of Old Mossy, taking care not to block driveways. A ±200-m. corridor to the nature sanctuary begins near the cement dry hydrant. Visitors should also be careful not to trespass on private property to reach the sanctuary.)

Sooke Hills catchments

The Friends wrote a letter to Paul Ramsay, Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks, endorsing total preservation of non-catchment GVWD lands and the protection as well of the two sections of the Ragged Mountain Ecological Reserve Proposal (ERP 320), repositories of many rare and threatened vascular plants. The two sites (the second is Buck Hill) are already owned by the Crown Provincial.

Caught up with Ray Zimmermann after he made an excursion into Ayum Creek with a fisheries technician. They found Coho salmon, cutthroat and rainbow trout and steelhead in a dry stream during summer. "Nancy Turner thinks it has the best water in Sooke Basin," Ray enthused. He is raising money to buy the 14-acre property at the mouth of Ayum, on the northeast side of Sooke Basin. The asking price is \$600,000. "We'll never get another chance like this."

RESEARCH

Marbled Murrelet News

This year I completed a second season of research on marbled murrelets in the forests on the Sunshine Coast. My work on nesting habitat, primarily in high elevation old-growth forests in the Bunster Range, just north of Powell River, co-ordinates with Simon Fraser University's at-sea population studies in the marine waters of Desolation Sound. With support from Forest Renewal BC and a Wildlife Habitat Canada scholarship, a crew of 11 focused on finding a significant sample of nest trees for habitat analysis. Using dawn surveys of murrelet activity, Tom Ainsworth and John Kelson climbed more than 350 trees. They located 23 trees containing 30 marbled murrelet nests. With the eight nests located in 1995, we now have a sample of 31 nest trees in the area. We will evaluate habitat selectivity using habitat data collected at these nest sites and random sites. This analysis should identify habitat features important for nesting murrelets in the area. In this high elevation old-growth habitat, yellow cedar is an important nest tree species (29 nests). Nests were also found in Douglas fir and Western hemlock trees.

Observations and evidence collected at the nest sites have revealed new information on murrelet nesting biology. Only four of the 30 nests found this year were successful. Eggs disappeared at two nests after common ravens flushed incubating murrelets. Piles of murrelet feathers, evidence of adult murrelet predation, were found above a nest branch and at the base of a nest tree. A sharp-shinned hawk we saw in the area may be responsible. Birds were observed reusing two nest sites found in 1995. One nest site failed in 1995, was reused and failed in 1996. Reuse of two nest sites

within the 1996 breeding season was also documented. It is not known whether the same birds reused the nest sites. All attempts failed during the egg stage.

Management plans for marbled murrelet habitat in this area are being developed, and planning of nesting habitat reserves is underway. Two nests were found within a timber sale that was approved and sold prior to their discovery. The sale had not been logged due to low pulp prices. An additional nine nests are within planned cutblocks. The situation should provide a trial run for applying Biodiversity Guidelines and Managing Identified Wildlife Guidelines to murrelet habitat protection.

Irene Manley

(Irene Manley is a graduate student in biology at Simon Fraser University. Her analysis of marbled murrelet surveys in the Walbran Valley appeared in The Log, March 1992. Irene has generously consented to represent the Friends on the Marbled Murrelet Recovery Team and promises to report on its activities.)



OFF THE WIRELESS

Community-based subtidal monitoring

The Marine Life Sanctuaries Society of B.C. (MLSS) is developing a stewardship and monitoring program for British Columbia marine protected area.

Objectives of the program are

1. to provide marine-oriented educational opportunities for coastal communities

2. to implement ongoing, community-based stewardship and monitoring efforts.

The program will address both intertidal and subtidal stewardship and monitoring concerns in an effort to provide coastal communities, scientists, and fisheries managers with pertinent data about the health of marine protected areas.

Among other things, we hope to develop a simple and effective program to enable people with limited understanding of scientific methodology to collect subtidal habitat and species-specific data. It will be field tested in the proposed MPA at Gabriola Passage.

A number of intertidal and coastal stewardship programs exist; we're unaware of any community-based subtidal monitoring programs focussing on the collection of "habitat data" rather than species-specific fishing results.

Contact MLSS to find out about the program, how to get involved and how to help implement it.

Sean Standing

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Caren Range protected

More than 2800 hectares of the Caren Range, on the Sechelt Peninsula, will be protected under the Lower Mainland Protected Areas Strategy announced on October 28 — including stands of yellow cedar believed the oldest living trees in Canada.

B.C.'s Inland Rainforests



Clearing right of way north of Revelstoke for the Big Bend Highway, 1930s. A 7-mm-tall faller stands in the road at centre, holding an axe. This part of the Columbia Valley is in the wettest subzone of the Interior Cedar Hemlock Zone.

Temperate (coastal) oldgrowth rainforests have been the subject of considerable study and debate by ecologists, foresters and environmentalists in recent years. Much less attention has been directed to their inland counterparts. This is unfortunate. While temperate rainforests occur in at least six different regions of the world, oroboreal (inland) rainforests are unique to western North America.

The term rainforest is usually applied to two geographically separate regions of British Columbia: the Coastal Western Hemlock Zone (CWH) along the coast; and the Interior Cedar - Hemlock Zone (ICH) in inland regions. Although the term is often used to refer to the CWH as a whole, in the ICH only the wettest subzones (wk, vk and vc) are properly described as rainforest.

Inland rainforests occur only in southeastern B.C. They occupy a discontinuous longitudinal band between 51°N and 54°N on the windward slopes of the Columbia Mountains and, to a lesser extent, the Rocky Mountains. Some of the

most spectacular rainforests are found in the upper Adams, upper Seymour and Robson valleys. Areas of comparable humidity and continentality combined are unknown elsewhere in the world.

Many of B.C.'s oldgrowth forests have originated as a result of wild fire and are no older than the oldest trees within them. Environmental continuity in the oldest inland rainforests may pre-date considerably the oldest trees. Such forests are termed "antique." In most portions of the ICH, fire return intervals vary between 100 and 350 years. In antique oroboreal rainforests, environmental continuity may go back a thousand years or more. Such forests are inevitably confined to "toe position" sites — valley

bottom localities — where they are highly resistant to incursion by wildfires. They are much more limited in extent than younger oldgrowth forests. Current rates and patterns of the timber harvest have made them among B.C.'s most endangered ecosystems.

Antique forests contain richer assemblages of oldgrowth-dependent organisms, especially epiphytic (tree-dwelling) lichens. In one study, more than a dozen "oceanic" macrolichens were reported within 60 kilometres of the Alberta border. A majority of these species had not previously been reported east of the coast ranges. Antique forests thus appear to be of critical importance for the long-term maintenance of regional biotic diversity. As such, they deserve special consideration as candidates for protected status.

"Inland rainforests occur only in southeastern B.C."

We hope representative stands of the oldest of B.C.'s inland rainforests will be permitted to persist both as outdoor laboratories for coming generations of forest research and as centres of dispersal for the many rare lichens and other depend on them.

**Trevor Goward and
Andy MacKinnon**

Trevor Goward has published more than 30 papers and books on the lichens of B.C. Andy MacKinnon is co-editor of Plants of Coastal British Columbia and Plants of Northern British Columbia.

LAND USE

The Cummins Valley

Intact rainforest ecosystem in the Rockies

"The changes of climate and consequent difference in the character of the country and its production which takes place in the course of a few minutes walk would to a person who had not experienced it appear almost incredible," writes Hudson's Bay Company governor George Simpson in his journal after coming through Athabaska Pass in the Rockies and down the Wood River valley on his first trip to the Pacific coast in 1824. "No sooner do we descend the West side than we fall on the most noble trees I ever beheld, principally Cedar, Hemlock, White & Red Pine and Ash all of prodigious size..."

The Wood River lies east of what used to be called the Big Bend of the Columbia River, now the site of the Mica high dam. Like the Wood, the Cummins River, in the next valley south, empties into the east side of Kinbasket Lake, the gigantic Mica reservoir. Amid these monumental works the 20,000-hectare Cummins is a tiny piece of good nature news. In 1995 its scenic alpine reaches were designated Cummins Lakes Provincial Park. The upper Cummins is distinguished by "a connected series of three spectacular waterfalls and two glacial lakes set against the backdrop of the Clemenceau Ice Fields," in the words of the 1995 East Kootenay Land Use Plan (EKLUP). The 6,109-ha park has "nationally significant recreation values for mountaineering and ski-touring... opportunities for wilderness expeditions into a remote and spectacular area... important habitat for grizzly bear, caribou and mountain goat."

In the 14,000-ha lower Cummins the river meanders along a flat valley floor for nearly 20 kilometres. Here the news is mixed. It's



The broad, U-shaped lower valley of the meandering Cummins River in the Rockies east of the Trench.

It's the only such valley in the Rockies that's intact, and it may harbour an ancient inland rainforest. Ungulates use the valley as a migration corridor and spring feeding habitat.

good news that at least one intact rainforest ecosystem exists in the Rockies. The EKLUP singled out the lower Cummins for deferral and study. "The watershed, which is complete and large enough to be viable, is one of the last undisturbed, complete watersheds in the area. It provides highly productive riparian and old growth habitats and it would contribute significantly to seriously underrepresented ecosystem types, particularly at lower elevations."

(The Cummins is, of course, not complete: the bottom of the valley is submerged. Columbia's waters stand at 750 metres above sea level

When Mica's reservoir is filled — nearly 200 metres vertical above the Cummins' original mouth, not far north of the much smaller, very scenic, original Kinbasket Lake.

(The south side of the present lower valley is in the Wells Grey Wet Cool Interior Cedar Hemlock variant, ICHwk1, and the north side, the Golden Moist Warm ICH variant, ICHmw1. Gap analysis reveals that little of either is protected in the Central Park Ranges.)

The lower Cummins' old-growth forests of spruce, hemlock and cedar are more significant than any numbers could suggest if they harbour an ancient inland rainforest as described by Goward and MacKinnon in a separate article. How rare would an ancient Rocky Mountain rainforest be? The inland rainforest only occurs between the latitudes of Revelstoke and Prince George, more commonly in the Columbia Mountains than the Rockies. Of six drainages on the Rockies side of the Trench

south of Mica, the Cummins is the only one that remains pristine. A logging road south from Valemont is well into the Wood and another north from Donald is in the Kinbasket, just south of the Cummins. Add to that its flat-bottomed valley and the lack of evidence of fire (suggested by a former Fish and Wildlife officer in Golden, who has surveyed the Cummins several times). In other words, the Cummins may be unique.

The lower Cummins is also a corridor and resort for large animals. "Large populations of Moose, Grizzly, Black Bear, and Caribou are all present in the lower reaches of this drainage," wrote Ellen Zimmerman, a member of the East Kootenay Environmental Society (EKES) in Golden, in a brief prepared for the EKLUP. "The trapper in the area has testified to these species and to Caribou movements from the Selkirk Range, over the lake, and into the lower Cummins, during winter. The lower Cummins is critical winter feeding habitat for Moose. Fur-bearers were numerous.

"When we flew over the area in early May, 1995," Zimmerman's brief continues, "we were surprised to find the Cummins well advanced into Spring, with the snow gone and green-up throughout, while other, narrower drainages south of the Cummins were still frozen. It obviously represents an important spring feeding area for wildlife."

The great value of such a corridor lies in its joining two large core areas together, she points out.

"Other species are yet unknown, as no inventories have been undertaken to date. However, extensive inventories are being planned. The Cummins is generally acknowledged as a unique ecosystem, a Rocky Mountain Rainforest, and may give rise to some significant findings through a complete inventory."

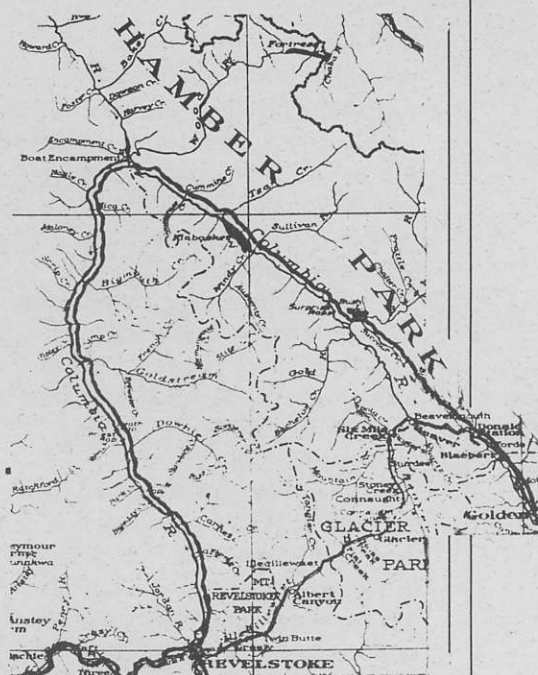
An inventory of the Cummins's resources, funded by the Mica Wildlife Compensation Fund, has proceeded to the mapping stage.

The Cummins is unique for another reason, being the only untrammelled watershed remaining from Hamber Provincial Park, at 984,182 hectares larger than Tweedsmuir Park, the largest today. Established in 1941, Hamber protected the Trench and adjacent Selkirks from Glacier National Park north to Mt. Robson Provincial Park. Within four years Hamber Park was downzoned to Class B, industry permitted, following a damning report by C.P. Lyons, then an employee of the Parks Branch, BC Forest Service. Hamber Park's recreational value was poor, Lyons wrote after taking a drive along the Big Bend Highway. "The Provincial Park System is saddled with some 3,800 square miles of park, which are, except for spot areas, utterly useless for park purposes." Timber Licences along the Canoe and Wood Rivers that hadn't been worked in decades furnished the rationale.

Downzoning Hamber did nothing for the economy of the Big Bend area. But in June 1961, following the signing of the Canada-US Columbia River Treaty, the BC Government converted most of the original Hamber Park to Provincial Forest.

A tiny (presently 24,949 ha.) remainder of Hamber Park, the alpine area around Fortress Lake, reverted to Class A status. The now-conservation-conscious BC Government did create Bowron Lake Provincial Park (present size 114,410 ha) in the ICH zone some 150 km northwest of Big Bend.

Construction of the Mica dam involved wholesale remodelling of 285 kilometres of the Trench and the consequent loss of habitat for an estimated 2,000 moose and 3,000 black bears. BC Hydro flooded the timber — enough, the EKLUP



Detail from map in 1941 BC Parks booklet, a souvenir of the opening of Hamber Park. "Cummins Cr." is NW of the original Kinbasket Lake

notes, "to have run the Skookumchuk pulp mill for 30 years."

So the Cummins is valuable for two reasons (for wildlife and for representation) and is unique twice over (only intact U-shaped drainage in the Trench; may have only intact Rocky Mountain rainforest ecosystem). How unique does an ecosystem have to be to earn protection? For, despite lobbying and publicity by EKES, the weight of the land-use planning process and NDP promises as recent as the last election campaign, the Cummins still isn't protected. The reason sure isn't demand for fibre to feed the Golden district's roaring mills. As of the beginning of October, no mills were functioning. The news out of Golden is so bad it couldn't be worse. Still the threat of logging the Cummins remains.

(This story will be continued in the next issue: the gutting of the Golden Timber Supply Area; the Chief Forester's response; Ben Parfitt's analysis; current arguments for logging the Cummins and debate about timber values.)

Wardens from page 1

While Jenny wholeheartedly supports Rolf's activism, it's not strictly relevant, she thinks. "Our role as wardens is to do whatever jobs BC Parks sets us to."

Signs of rededication at the official level are surfacing. The south Vancouver Island volunteer warden meeting convened by BC Parks on October 24 was warmly welcomed. We hear that BC Parks officials are calling and writing wardens to check up.

What's in store, we learned from talking with Bill Shaw, manager of extension services with BC Parks in Victoria is this: the ecological reserve wardens will be subsumed under a larger protected area stewardship program, with liaison provided by the area supervisors in BC Parks districts, as they do now. Rather than enrolling hundreds of new volunteers, however, BC Parks will be initiating discussions with natural history societies and other local groups aimed at partnering on clusters of protected areas. While continuing to work with the present ER wardens as individuals, BC Parks will begin to sign agreements with groups, and the groups will in turn co-ordinate warden assignments and activities.

B.C. Parks has been a steward of land and resources for almost as long as the B.C. Forest Service, but it's only now becoming a land manager with authority. A relevant factor has to be the beefing up of provincial park legislation that provides real sanctions for offenses. We wish BC Parks every success with its new initiative. We only hope that with so few employees on the ground, BC Parks can co-ordinate a vastly expanded warden program — not to mention policing vastly expanded protected areas. May we also hope to see a beginning made to resolve the intractable management issues that dog a number of ecological reserves, not just the Nimpkish River?

Actions

Letters to the BC Government are needed on these issues:

Southern Chilcotin Mountains (p 6): Denis O'Gorman, ADM, Parks; Derek Thompson, ADM, LUCO: restore the original PAS Study Area boundaries; ensure the openness of the **Lillooet** LRMP negotiating table

Sooke Hills / Greater Victoria Water District (7, 11): Hon. Paul Ramsay, Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks: adopt full-preservation option; protect both the Ragged Mountain and Buck Hill parts of ERP 320

Race Rocks (8): Hon. Dan Miller, Minister of Employment and Investment: support the endowment of the learning centre proposed by Pearson College

Mara Meadows (8): Salmon Arm Forest District: exclude roading or logging within 500 m of the ER boundaries unless proven no risk of affecting the fen.

Lower Cummins Valley (14-15): Premier Glen Clark: protect it!

South VI wardens meet

October 24, 1996

Enthusiasm and commitment were in abundance during the first volunteer warden meeting for BC Parks' South Vancouver Island District in three years. Both BC Parks, who sponsored the meeting, and the wardens who attended were behind B.C.'s ER system. BC Parks' vision for the future of ERs is bright. New ERs have been added to the system after a "dry spell." BC Parks would like to redefine its relationship with the volunteer wardens to allow area supervisors to work more closely with them and serve as a resources for queries and problem-solving. Staff passed around forms for monthly reports, research permit applications, and the like. Several wardens balked at the paperwork they saw looming ahead. BC Parks' position, they were reassured, was "reserve specific" — details to be worked out between each warden and area supervisor.

The message came across that funding for more ERs requires a well-documented argument from the public. South Vancouver Island is under severe pressure from development and BC Parks would like to have inventories of ERs. 22 in all, including the new ones. Management plans for Gowlland Tod Provincial Park (60 per cent of which is proposed for an ER) and Haley Lake ER were also provided.

The wardens' reports were colourful and deeply informed. They demonstrated the dedication and inherent activism that wardens bring to this commitment. Perennial problems threatening protection were reported, underlining the need for continuing and vigorous education of the public.

Mary Rannie

The Log

Friends of Ecological Reserves Newsletter

Fall 1996

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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